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**CLARKE'S COMMENTARY  
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I THESS. - REVELATION**

*by Adam Clarke*

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THE NEW TESTAMENT  
OF OUR  
LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST  
THE TEXT

CAREFULLY PRINTED FROM THE MOST CORRECT COPIES OF THE PRESENT

*AUTHORIZED TRANSLATION,*

WITH

A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES;

*DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER  
UNDERSTANDING OF THE SACRED WRITINGS*

BY ADAM CLARKE,

LL.D., F.S.A., etc

FOR WHATSOEVER THINGS WERE WRITTEN AFORETIME FOR OUR  
LEARNING; THAT WE, THROUGH PATIENCE AND COMFORT OF THE  
SCRIPTURES, MIGHT HAVE HOPE. — ROMANS 15:4

*VOLUME VI(B) THESSALONIANS TO THE REVELATION.*

SAGE Software

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## *EDITOR'S NOTES*

Preparing Clarke's Commentary on the Old and New Testaments for an electronic format has been a task of considerable dimensions. The Digital Library edition is the labor of love of Sulu Kelley of Concord, NC, USA. "Mr. Sulu" converted the original text from the six volume edition (originally published in 8 volumes) authored by Adam Clarke between 1810 and 1826. We thank Mr. Kelley for giving us permission to include this the first electronic edition of a most helpful and inspiring work.

The reader is advised to note the following characteristics of this version:

1. There are no Hebrew vowel pointings nor are there any Greek accents. These were not a part of the published editions of Clarke's Commentary.
2. Most capitalizations and many breathing marks were omitted from the Greek text.
3. Adam Clarke had an exceptional knowledge of Biblical languages and the languages of the earliest (known) Biblical texts. The author provides numerous references to versions in various languages which contain nuances and/or insight into the meaning of a given text. These references frequently contained phrases printed in Arabic and Anglo-Saxon among others. We anticipated few of the Library readers would have an appreciation for these references, particularly since the script and dialects of many of them were outside the scope of almost anyone's experience or education. Since these references are usually transliterated and/or explained by Mr. Clarke, we have omitted these scripts. We have observed the following abbreviation conventions when the associated language/script has been removed from the text: [AS] Anglo-Saxon; [A] Arabic, Arabian; [P], Persic, Persian; [S] Syriac, Syrian; [H] Hindu.
4. The printed version contains material not included in this electronic version: The King James text, from which the author worked, and associated cross references are omitted as each phrase discussed is quoted in the analysis itself. Several tables with obscure material are omitted as it was felt that archaic data on, for example, the motion of

the planets, information long since revised and corrected, would not enhance and may even obscure the timeless portions of the commentary.

5. The printed version contains a number of archaic forms of punctuation and capitalization. These were retained if they did not seem to obscure the meaning of the text.

## PREFACE

TO THE

**FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO THE

## THESSALONIANS

THESSALONICA, now called by the Turks Salonichi, a mere corruption of its ancient name, is a seaport town of Turkey in Europe, situated on what was called the Thermaic Gulf, and was anciently the capital of Macedonia. According to Stephanus Byzantinus, it was embellished and enlarged by Philip, king of Macedon, father of Alexander the Great, who called it Thessalonica, or the Victory of Thessalia, on account of the victory he obtained there over the Thessalians; prior to which it was called Thermae. Strabo, Tzeizes, and Zonaras say that it obtained the name of Thessalonica from Thessalonica, wife of Cassander, and daughter of Philip.

In 1431, it was taken from the Venetians by the Turks, in whose possession it still continues. It is still a large, rich, and populous city, being ten miles in circumference, and carrying on an extensive trade in silk, the principal merchants being Greek Christians and Jews.

Christianity has never been extinct in Thessalonica since the year 51 or 52, in which it was planted there by the Apostle Paul; see Acts 17, etc. It contains at present thirty churches belonging to the Greek Christians, and as many Jewish synagogues, besides some Mohammedan mosques. Thessalonica is the see of an archbishop; and is well fortified, being surrounded with walls flanked with towers, and defended on the land side by a citadel; and near the harbor, with three forts.

St. Paul, in company with Silas, first preached the Gospel in this city and the adjacent country, about A. D. 52 or 53. Though the Jews, who were sojourners in this city, rejected the Gospel in general, yet a great multitude of the devout Greeks, i.e., such as were proselytes to Judaism, or the descendants of Jewish parents, born and naturalized in Greece, believed and associated with Paul and Silas, and not a few of the chief women of the city embraced the Christian faith. Acts 17:4.

As the Jews found that, according to the doctrine of the Gospel, the Gentiles were called to enjoy the same privileges with themselves, without being obliged to submit to circumcision and other ordinances of the law, they persecuted that Gospel, and those who proclaimed it; for, moved with indignation, they employed certain lewd fellows of the baser sort — the beasts of the people, set the city on an uproar, assaulted the house of Jason, where the apostles lodged, dragged him and certain brethren before the rulers, and charged them with seditious designs and treason against the Roman emperor! The apostles escaped, and got to Berea, where they began anew their important evangelical labors: thither the Jews of Thessalonica, pursuing them, raised a fresh tumult; so that the apostle, being counselled by the brethren, made his escape to Athens; Acts 17:5-15. Thus he followed the command of his Master: Being persecuted in one city, he fled to another; not to hide himself, but to proclaim, in every place, the saving truths of the Gospel of Christ.

It does not appear that St. Paul stayed long at Athens; he soon went thence to Corinth, where Timothy and Silas were, but probably not before Timothy met him, for whom he had sent, Acts 17:15, to come to him speedily; and whom, it appears, he sent immediately back to Thessalonica, to establish the believers there, and comfort them concerning the faith; 1 Thessalonians 3:2. While Paul abode at Corinth, Timothy and Silas came to him from Thessalonica, and hearing by them of the steadfastness of the Thessalonian converts in the faith of Christ, he wrote this epistle, and shortly after the second, to comfort and encourage them; to give them farther instructions in the doctrines of Christianity, and to rectify some mistaken views, relative to the day of judgment, which had been propagated amongst them. See the preface to the second epistle.

Who the persons were who formed the apostolic Church at Thessalonica is not easy to determine. They were not Jews, for these in general persecuted the apostle and the Gospel in this place. We are therefore left to infer that the Church was formed, 1st, of Jewish proselytes, called, Acts 17:4, devout Greeks. And 2dly, of converts from heathenism; for, on the preaching of the Gospel to them, it is said; 1 Thessalonians 1:9, that they turned to God from idols, to serve the living and true God. Though some of the Jews believed on the preaching of Paul and Silas, Acts 17:3, 4, yet it is evident that the great bulk of the Church was composed of Grecian proselytes and converts from heathenism. Hence we find in this epistle but few allusions to the Jews, and but few references to the peculiarities of their religious or civil institutions.

There is a remarkable reading in the text of Acts 17:4, which I neglected to quote in the note on that place: instead of **των σεβομενων, ελληνων πολυ πληθος**, of devout Greeks a great multitude; the Codex Alexandrinus, Codex Bezae, both in the Greek and Latin, two others, with the Vulgate, read **των σεβομενων και ελληνων**, of the devout, i.e., those who worshipped the true God; AND of the Greeks, i.e., those who were previously heathens, a great multitude; so that, 1. Some few Jews; 2. A great number of those who acknowledged the true God; and 3. A great multitude of heathens, besides many of the chief women, received the doctrine preached by the apostle, and became members of the Church at Thessalonica. See Dr. Paley's remarks on this various reading.

The First Epistle to the Thessalonians is allowed on all hands to be the first epistle that St. Paul wrote to any of the Churches of God; and from it two things may be particularly noted: 1. That the apostle was full of the Spirit of love; 2. That the Church at Thessalonica was pure, upright, and faithful, as we scarcely find any reprehension in the whole epistle: the Thessalonian converts had FAITH that worked, a LOVE that labored, and a HOPE which induced them to bear afflictions patiently and wait for the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ.

This epistle has been divided into different parts by commentators; but these are arbitrary, the apostle having made no division of this kind; for, although he treats of several subjects, yet he has not so distinguished them from each other as to show that he had any formal division in his mind. In

the divisions imposed on this epistle by commentators we do not find two of them alike; a full proof that the apostle has made no divisions, else some of these learned men would have certainly found them out. Technical distinctions of this nature are of little use to a proper understanding of the contents of this epistle.



**THE**

**FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO THE**

**THESSALONIANS**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5560.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5554.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5544.
- Year of the Julian period, 4762.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4056.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4280.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3812.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4411.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2400.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3154.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 992.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 799.
- Year of the CCVIIth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 799.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 803.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 804.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 805.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 364.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 100.

- Year of the Julian era, 97.
- Year of the Spanish era, 90.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 56.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 52.
- Year of Ventidius Cumanus, governor of the Jews, 4.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 3.
- Year of Caius Numidius Quadratus, governor of Syria, 2.
- Year of Ananias, high priest of the Jews, 8.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 53.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 15; or the first after the fifth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 12, or the first after the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 5.
- Dominical Letters, it being Bissextile, or Leap Year, BA.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the Calends of April, i.e. April 1st, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, April 2.
- Epact, or the moon's age on the 22d of March, or the Xth of the Calends of April, 4 -Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, or the moon's age on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 18, 20, 20.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March (or the XIth of the Calends of April) to the Jewish Passover, 10.
- Year of Claudius Caesar, the fifth emperor of the Romans, 12.
- Roman Consuls, Publius Cornelius Sylla Faustus, and Lucius Salvius, Otho Titianus; and for the following year, (which is by some supposed to be the date of this epistle,) Decimus Junius Silanus, and Quintus Haterius Antoninus.

## CHAPTER 1

*The inscription by Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus, to the Church of the Thessalonians, 1. St. Paul gives thanks to God for their good estate, and prays for their continuance in the faith, 2-4. Shows how the Gospel came to them, and the blessed effects it produced in their life and conversation, 5-7, How it became published from them through Macedonia and Achaia, and how their faith was everywhere celebrated, 8. He shows farther, that the Thessalonians had turned from idolatry, become worshippers of the true God, and were waiting for the revelation of Christ, 9, 10.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *Paul, and: Silvanus, and Timotheus*** Though St. Paul himself dictated this letter, yet he joins the names of Silas and Timothy, because they had been with him at Thessalonica, and were well known there. See Acts 17:4, 14.

***And Silvanus*** This was certainly the same as Silas, who was St. Paul's companion in all his journeys through Asia Minor and Greece; see Acts 15:22; 16:19; 17:4, 10. Him and Timothy, the apostle took with him into Macedonia, and they continued at Berea when the apostle went from thence to Athens; from this place St. Paul sent for them to come to him speedily, and, though it is not said that they came while he was at Athens, yet it is most probable that they did; after which, having sent them to Thessalonica, he proceeded to Corinth, where they afterwards rejoined him, and from whence he wrote this epistle. See the preface.

**Verse 2. *We give thanks*** See Philippians 1:3, 4, and Colossians 1:3; where the same forms of speech are used.

**Verse 3. *Your work of faith*** This verse contains a very high character of the believers at Thessalonica. They had FAITH, not speculative and indolent, but true, sound, and operative; their faith worked. They had LOVE, not that gazed at and became enamoured of the perfections of God,

but such a love as labored with faith to fulfill the whole will of God. Faith worked; but love, because it can do more, did more, and therefore labored — worked energetically, to promote the glory of God and the salvation of men. They had HOPE; not an idle, cold, heartless expectation of future good, from which they felt no excitement, and for which they could give no reason, but such a hope as produced a satisfying expectation of a future life and state of blessedness, the reality of which faith had described, and love anticipated; a hope, not hasty and impatient to get out of the trials of life and possess the heavenly inheritance, but one that was as willing to endure hardships as to enjoy glory itself, when God might be most honored by this patient endurance. FAITH worked, LOVE labored, and HOPE endured patiently.

It is not a mark of much grace to be longing to get to heaven because of the troubles and difficulties of the present life; they who love Christ are ever willing to suffer with him; and he may be as much glorified by patient suffering, as by the most active faith or laborious love. There are times in which, through affliction or other hinderances, we cannot do the will of God, but we can suffer it; and in such cases he seeks a heart that bears submissively, suffers patiently, and endures, as seeing him who is invisible, without repining or murmuring. This is as full a proof of Christian perfection as the most intense and ardent love. Meekness, gentleness, and long-suffering, are in our present state of more use to ourselves and others, and of more consequence in the sight of God, than all the ecstasies of the spirits of just men made perfect, and than all the raptures of an archangel. That Church or Christian society, the members of which manifest the work of faith, labor of love, and patience of hope, is most nearly allied to heaven, and is on the suburbs of glory.

**Verse 4. *Knowing your election of God.*** Being assured, from the doctrine which I have delivered to you, and which God has confirmed by various miracles, and gifts of the Holy Spirit, that he has chosen and called the Gentiles to the same privileges to which he chose and called the Jews; and that, as they have rejected the offers of the Gospel, God has now elected the Gentiles in their stead. This is the election which the Thessalonians knew; and of which the apostle treats at large in his Epistle to the Romans, and also in his Epistles to the Galatians and Ephesians. No irrespective, unconditional, eternal, and personal election to everlasting glory, is meant

by the apostle. As God had chosen the Jews, whom, because of their obstinate unbelief, he had now rejected; so he had now chosen or elected the Gentiles. And in neither case was there any thing absolute; all was most specifically conditional, as far as their final salvation was concerned; without any merit on their side, they were chosen and called to those blessings which, if rightly used, would lead them to eternal glory. That these blessings could be abused — become finally useless and forfeited, they had an ample proof in the case of the Jews, who, after having been the elect of God for more than 2000 years, were now become reprobates.

**Verse 5. *For our Gospel*** That is, the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and of your being elected to enjoy all the privileges to which the Jews were called, without being obliged to submit to circumcision, or fulfill the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law.

***Came not unto you in word only*** It was not by simple teaching or mere reasoning that the doctrines which we preached recommended themselves to you, we did not insist on your using this or the other religious institution; we insisted on a change of heart and life, and we held out the energy which was able to effect it.

***But also in power εν δυναμει*** With miraculous manifestations, to your eyes and to your hearts, which induced you to acknowledge that this Gospel was the power of God unto salvation.

***And in the Holy Ghost*** By his influence upon your hearts, in changing and renewing them; and by the testimony which ye received from him, that you were accepted through the Beloved, and become the adopted children of God.

***And in much assurance εν πληροφορια πολλη***. The Holy Spirit which was given you left no doubt on your mind, either with respect to the general truth of the doctrine, or the safety of your own state. Ye had the fullest assurance that the Gospel was true, and the fullest assurance that ye had received the remission of sins through that Gospel; the Spirit himself bearing witness with your spirit, that you are the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

***What manner of men we were*** How we preached, and how we lived; our doctrines and our practices ever corresponding. And for your sakes we sustained difficulties, endured hardships, and were incessant in our labors.

**Verse 6. *Ye became followers of us*** Ye became imitators, μιμηται, of us-ye believed the same truths, walked in the same way, and minded the same thing; knowing that our doctrine was of the Lord, and that the way in which we walked was prescribed by himself, and that he also suffered the contradictions of ungodly men.

***Having received the word in much affliction*** That they received the doctrine of the Gospel in the midst of much persecution we may learn from the history in general, and from Acts 17:5, 6.

***With joy of the Holy Ghost*** The consolations which they received, in consequence of believing in Christ, more than counterbalanced all the afflictions which they suffered from their persecutors.

**Verse 7. *Ye were ensamples*** τοπους Types, models, or patterns; according to which all the Churches in Macedonia and Achaia formed both their creed and their conduct.

**Verse 8. *From you sounded out*** As Thessalonica was very conveniently situated for traffic, many merchants from thence traded through Macedonia, Achaia, and different parts of Greece. By these, the fame of the Thessalonians having received the doctrine of the Gospel was doubtless carried far and wide. And it appears that they had walked so conscientiously before God and man, that their friends could speak of them without a blush, and their adversaries could say nothing to their disgrace.

**Verse 9. *How ye turned to God from idols*** This could not be spoken either of the Jews or of the devout persons, but of the heathen Greeks, and of such it appears that the majority of the Church was formed. See what is said on this subject in the preface to this epistle.

***To serve the living and true God*** The living God; in opposition to the idols, which were either inanimate stocks or stones, or the representations of dead men.

The true God — In opposition to the whole system of idolatry, which was false in the objects of its adoration, false in its pretensions, false in its promises, and false in all its prospects.

**Verse 10.** *And to wait for his Son from heaven* To expect a future state of glory, and resurrection of the body, according to the Gospel doctrine, after the example of Jesus Christ, who was raised from the dead, and ascended unto heaven, ever to appear in the presence of God for us.

*Delivered us from the wrath to come.* From all the punishment due to us for our sins, and from the destruction which is about to come on the unbelieving and impenitent Jews.

This was the news, the sounding out, that went abroad concerning the converted Thessalonians. Every where it was said: They have believed the Gospel; they have renounced idolatry; they worship the living and true God; they have received the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit; they are happy in their souls, unspotted in their lives, and full of joy; expecting an eternal glory through that Christ who had died for and purged their sins, and who shall fashion their degraded bodies and make them like to his glorious body, and give them an eternal residence with himself in a state of blessedness.

These were glorious news; and, wherever they were told, prepared the way of the Gospel among the heathen. The mere preaching of the Gospel has done much to convince and convert sinners, but the lives of the sincere followers of Christ, as illustrative of the truth of these doctrines, have done much more: Truth represented in action seems to assume a body, and thus renders itself palpable. In heathen countries, which are under the dominion of Christian powers, the Gospel, though established there, does little good, because of the profane and irreligious lives of those who profess it. Why has not the whole peninsula of India been long since evangelized? The Gospel has been preached there; but the lives of the Europeans professing Christianity there have been, in general, profligate, sordid, and base. From them sounded out no good report of the Gospel; and therefore the Mohammedans continue to prefer their Koran, and the Hindoos their Vedas and Shasters, to the Bible. It should now ever be acknowledged, to the glory of God, that of late years a few apostolic men in that country are turning the tide in favor of the Gospel; and several

eminent Europeans have warmly espoused the doctrine of Christ, and are labouring to circulate the word of God through the whole of British India.



## CHAPTER 2

*The apostle sets forth how the Gospel was brought and preached to the Thessalonians, in consequence of his being persecuted at Philippi, 1, 2. The manner in which the apostles preached, the matter of their doctrine, and the tenor of their lives, 3-11. He exhorts them to walk worthy of God, 12. And commends them for the manner in which they received the Gospel, 13. How they suffered from their own countrymen, as the first believers did from the Jews, who endeavored to prevent the apostles from preaching the Gospel to the Gentiles, 14-16. St. Paul's apology for his absence from them; and his earnest desire to see them, founded on his great affection for them, 17-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *Our entrance in unto you*** His first coming to preach the Gospel was particularly owned of the Lord, many of them having been converted under his ministry. This consideration gave him a right to deliver all the following exhortations.

**Verse 2. *Shamefully entreated-at Philippi*** There Paul and Silas had been beaten with many stripes, shut up in the inner prison, and their feet made fast in the stocks. See Acts 16:23, etc.; and the notes there.

***With much contention.*** The words *εν πολλω αγωνι* not only signify, with intense labor and earnestness, but may here mean, exposed to the greatest danger; at the peril of our lives. The Greek phrase quoted by Rosenmuller is to the point, *αγων προφασιν ουκ αναμενει*, in danger we must not delay — activity and despatch are then indispensably necessary.

**Verse 3. *Our exhortation*** The word *παρακλησις* has a very extensive meaning; it signifies not only exhortation and teaching in general, but also encouragement, consolation, and the like. When the apostles exhorted or admonished men, it was that they should turn from evil to good, from misery to happiness, from Satan to God, and from hell to heaven. Their

exhortations having this object, every word was consolatory; and as the truth which they delivered was unquestionable, therefore their ministry was a subject of the highest encouragement and joy.

***Not of deceit*** We did not endeavor to allure you with false pretences; we did not deceive you, nor were we deceived ourselves.

***Nor of uncleanness*** Such as the teachings of the Gentile philosophers were; their supreme gods were celebrated for their adulteries, fornications, uncleannesses, thefts, barbarities, and profligacies of the most odious kind. Our Gospel was pure; came from the pure and holy God; was accompanied with the influences of the Holy Spirit, and produced purity both in the hearts and lives of all that received it.

***Nor in guile*** We had no false pretences, and were influenced by no sinister motives.

**Verse 4. *But as we were allowed of God*** *καθως δεδοκιμασμεθα*. As we were accounted worthy to be put in trust-as God put confidence in us, and sent us on his most especial message to mankind, even so we speak, keeping the dignity of our high calling continually in view; and, acting as in the sight of God, we speak not to please or flatter men, though our doctrine is the most consolatory that can be conceived, but to please that God who searcheth the heart, and before whom all our motives are constantly without a veil.

**Verse 5. *Flattering words*** Though we proclaimed the Gospel or glad tidings, yet we showed that without holiness none should see the Lord.

***Ye know*** That while we preached the whole Gospel we never gave any countenance to sin.

***For a cloak of covetousness*** We did not seek temporal emolument; nor did we preach the Gospel for a cloak to our covetousness: God is witness that we did not; we sought you, not yours. Hear this, ye that preach the Gospel! Can ye call God to witness that in preaching it ye have no end in view by your ministry but his glory in the salvation of souls? Or do ye enter into the priesthood for a morsel of bread, or for what is ominously and impiously called a living, a benefice? In better days your place and office were called a cure of souls; what care have you for the souls of them

by whose labors you are in general more than sufficiently supported? Is it your study, your earnest labor, to bring sinners to God; to preach among your heathen parishioners the unsearchable riches of Christ?

But I should speak to the thousands who have no parishes, but who have their chapels, their congregations, pew and seat rents, etc., etc. Is it for the sake of these that ye have entered or continue in the Gospel ministry? Is God witness that, in all these things, ye have no cloak of covetousness? Happy is the man who can say so, whether he has the provision which the law of the land allows him, or whether he lives on the free-will offerings of the people.

The faithful laborer is worthy of his hire; for the ox that treads out the corn should not be muzzled; and they that preach the Gospel should live, not riot, by the Gospel. But wo to that man who enters into the labor for the sake of the hire! he knows not Christ; and how can he preach him?

**Verse 6. *Nor of men sought we glory*** As we preached not for worldly gain, so we preached not for popular applause; we had what we sought for—the approbation of God, and the testimony of a good conscience.

***When we might have been burdensome*** They had a right to their maintenance while they devoted themselves wholly to the work of the Gospel for the sake of the people's souls. Others understand the words **εὐβαρεὶ εἶναι**, to be honorable; we sought no glory of you nor of others, though we were honorable as the apostles of Christ. **כבד** cabod, in Hebrew, to which the Greek **βαρος** answers, signifies not only weight but glory; and in both these senses the apostle uses it, 2 Corinthians 4:17.

**Verse 7. *But we were gentle among you*** Far from assuming the authority which we had, we acted towards you as a tender nurse or parent does to a delicate child. We fed, counselled, cherished, and bore with you; we taught you to walk, preserved you from stumbling, and led you in a right path.

Instead of **ἡπιοι**, gentle, many MSS., and several versions and fathers, have **νηπιοι**, young children. But this never can be considered the original reading, the scope of the place being totally opposed to it. It is the Thessalonians whom the apostle considers as young children, and himself and fellow laborers as the nurse; he could with no propriety say that he was among them as a little child, while himself professed to be their nurse.

**Verse 8. *Being affectionately desirous of you*** We had such intense love for you that we were not only willing and forward to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to you, but also to give our own lives for your sake, because ye were dear, *διότι αγαπητοι ημιν*, because ye were beloved by us. The words used here by the apostle are expressive of the strongest affection and attachment.

**Verse 9. *Ye remember-our labor and travail*** From this it appears that St. Paul spent much more time at Thessalonica than is generally supposed; for the expressions in this verse denote a long continuance of a constantly exercised ministry, interrupted only by manual labor for their own support; labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable to you. Probably Paul and his companions worked with their hands by day, and spent a considerable part of the night, or evenings, in preaching Christ to the people.

**Verse 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily*** i.e., in reference to GOD; how justly in reference to men; and unblamably in reference to our spirit and conduct, as ministers of Christ, we behaved ourselves among you. What a consciousness of his own integrity must St. Paul have had to use the expressions that are here! No hypocrite, and none who did the work of the Lord carelessly, could make such an appeal both to God and man.

**Verse 11. *How we exhorted*** What pastoral care is marked here! They exhorted — were continually teaching and instructing, the objects of their charge; this was their general work.

***And comforted*** They found many under trials and temptations, and those they encouraged.

***And charged*** *μαρτυρουμενοι*. Continued witness to the people that all the threatenings and promises of God were true; that he required faith, love, and obedience; that he could not behold sin with allowance; that Jesus died to save them from their sins; and that, without holiness, none should see God. And all these things they did, not in a general way only, but they spoke to every man; none was left unnoticed, unadmonished, un comforted. The spirit in which they performed all these branches of the

pastoral care was that which was most likely to insure success; as a father treats his children, so they treated every member of the Church.

**Verse 12. *That ye would walk worthy of God*** That they should, in every respect, act up to their high calling, that it would not be a reproach to the God of holiness to acknowledge them as his sons and daughters. See the notes on Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27; and Colossians 1:10.

***His Kingdom and glory.*** His Church here, for that is the kingdom of God among men; and his glory hereafter, for that is the state to which the dispensations of grace in his Church lead. The words, how ever, may be a hendiadys, and signify his glorious kingdom.

**Verse 13. *Ye received the word of God*** Ye received the doctrine of God, not as any thing fabricated by man, but as coming immediately from God himself, we being only his messengers to declare what he had previously revealed to us. And ye have had the fullest proof that ye have not believed in vain; for that doctrine, under the power and influence of the Holy Ghost, has worked most powerfully in you, filling you with light, life, and holiness.

**Verse 14. *Ye-became followers of the Churches of God*** There is not a word here of the Church of Rome being the model after which the other Churches were to be formed; it had no such pre-eminence: this honor belonged to the Churches of Judea; it was according to them, not the Church at Rome, that the Asiatic Churches were modelled. The purest of all the apostolic Churches was that of the Thessalonians, and this was formed after the Christian Churches in Judea.

Had any pre-eminence or authority belonged to the Church of Rome, the apostle would have proposed this as a model to all those which he formed either in Judea, Asia Minor, Greece, or Italy.

***Ye also have suffered-of your own countrymen*** It is worthy of remark that, in almost every case, the Jews were the leaders of all persecutions against the apostles and the infant Church. And what they could not do themselves, they instigated others to do; and, by gathering together lewd fellows of the baser sort from among the Gentiles, they made frequent uproars, and especially at Thessalonica, where the opposition to the Gospel was very high, and the persecution of the Christians very hot.

**Verse 15. & 16. *Who hath killed the Lord Jesus, etc.*** What a finished but just character is this of the Jews! 1. They slew the Lord Jesus, through the most unprincipled and fell malice. 2. They killed their own prophets; there was no time in which the seed of the serpent did not hate and oppose spiritual things, they slew even their own prophets who declared to them the will of God. 3. They persecuted the apostles; showing the same spirit of enmity to the Gospel which they had shown to the law. 4. They did not please God, nor seek to please him; though they pretended that their opposition to the Gospel was through their zeal for God's glory, they were hypocrites of the worst kind. 5. They were contrary to all men; they hated the whole human race, and judged and wished them to perdition. 6. They forbade the apostles to preach to the Gentiles, lest they should be saved; this was an inveteracy of malice completely superhuman; they persecuted the body to death, and the soul to damnation! They were afraid that the Gentiles should get their souls saved if the Gospel was preached to them! 7. They filled up their sins always; they had no mere purposes or outlines of iniquity, all were filled up; every evil purpose was followed, as far as possible, with a wicked act! Is it any wonder, therefore, that wrath should come upon them to the uttermost? It is to be reckoned among the highest mercies of God that the whole nation was not pursued by the Divine justice to utter and final extinction.

**Verse 16.** See Clarke on "1 Thessalonians 2:15".

**Verse 17. *Being taken from you for a short time*** Through the persecution raised by the Jews, see Acts xvii., he was obliged to leave Thessalonica, and yield to a storm that it would have been useless for him to have withstood.

***Being taken from you-in presence, not in heart*** The apostle had compared himself to a parent or nurse, 1 Thessalonians 2:7, 11; and the people he considered as his most beloved children; here he represents himself as feeling what an affectionate father must feel when torn from his children; for this is the import of the word *απορφανισθεντες*, bereft of children, which we tamely translate being taken from you.

***Endeavoured the more abundantly*** His separation from them did not destroy his parental feelings, and the manner in which he was obliged to leave them increased his desire to visit them as soon as possible.

**Verse 18. *Even I Paul*** He had already sent Timothy and Silas to them; but he himself was anxious to see them, and had purposed this once and again, but Satan hindered; i.e., some adversary, as the word means, whether the devil himself, or some of his children. There was, however, such a storm of persecution raised up against him, that his friends did not think it prudent to permit him to go till the storm had been somewhat allayed.

**Verse 19. *For what is our hope*** I can have no prospects from earth; I have forsaken all for the Gospel; and esteem every thing it can afford as dross and dung, that I may gain Christ. Why then should I continually labor at the risk of my life, preaching the Gospel? Is it not to get your souls saved, that ye may be my crown of rejoicing in the day of Christ? For this I labor; and, having planted the Gospel among you, I wish to take every opportunity of watering it, that it may grow up unto eternal life.

**Verse 20. *For ye are our glory and joy***. Ye are the seal of our apostleship; your conversion and steadiness are a full proof that God hath sent us. Converts to Christ are our ornaments; persevering believers, our joy in the day of judgment.

1. IN the preceding chapter we have the character and marks of a genuine pastor laid down in such a manner as not to be misunderstood. Every man who preaches the Gospel should carefully read this chapter and examine himself by it. Most preachers, on reading it conscientiously, will either give up their place to others, or purpose to do the work of the Lord more fervently for the future. He who expects nothing but the approbation of Christ, will labor for Christ; and he, who has the glory of his Master only in view, will ever have his Master's presence and blessing. Those who enter into this work for human applause or secular emolument, may have their reward; but in that, one smile of approbation from Christ is not included.

2. God, for reasons best known to himself, often permits the most pious and benevolent purposes of his servants to be frustrated for a time. It is well that the good purpose was in the heart; but God knows the fittest time and place to bring it to effect. Satan is ever opposing all that is pure, good, and benevolent and he appears frequently to succeed; but this is not really the case: if at any time he prevents the followers of God from bringing a pious purpose into effect, that was the time in which it could

not have been done to secure its full effect. Let the purpose be retained, and the best time and place will be duly provided. As Satan constantly endeavors to oppose every good work, no wonder he is found opposing a good purpose, even at the very time that God sees it improper to bring it to the intended effect. Man proposes, but God disposes.

3. The apostle speaks of the wrath coming upon the Jews: it was about twenty years after this that their city was destroyed, their temple burnt, more than a million of them destroyed, their civil polity utterly subverted, and what remained of this wretched nation scattered to all the winds of heaven; and in this state, without a nation, without a temple, without worship, and apparently without any religion, they continue, to this day, a monument of God's displeasure, and a proof of the Divine inspiration both of the prophets and apostles, who, in the most explicit manner, had predicted all the evils which have since befallen them. Their crimes were great; to these their punishment is proportioned. For what end God has preserved them distinct from all the people of the earth among whom they sojourn, we cannot pretend to say; but it must unquestionably be for an object of the very highest importance. In the meantime, let the Christian world treat them with humanity and mercy.



## CHAPTER 3

*St Paul informs them how, being hindered himself from visiting them, he had sent Timothy to comfort them, of whom he gives a high character, 1, 2. Shows that trials and difficulties are unavoidable in the present state, 3, 4. Mentions the joy he had on hearing by Timothy of their steadiness in the faith, for which he returns thanks to God; and prays earnestly for their increase, 5-10. Prays also that God may afford him an opportunity of seeing them, 11. And that they may abound in love to God and one another, and be unblamable in holiness at the coming of Christ, 12, 13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1.** *Wherefore, when we could no longer, etc.* The apostle was anxious to hear of their state, and as he could obtain no information without sending a messenger express, he therefore sent Timothy from Athens; choosing rather to be left alone, than to continue any longer in uncertainty relative to their state.

**Verse 2.** *Timotheus, our brother* It appears that Timothy was but a youth when converted to God; he had now however been some years in the work of God; Paul therefore calls him his brother, being one of the same Christian family, a son of God by adoption: elsewhere he calls him his own son, 1 Timothy 1:2; and his dearly beloved son, 2 Timothy 1:2; because he was brought to the knowledge of the true God, and to salvation by Christ, through the apostle's instrumentality. See the preface to the First Epistle to Timothy.

**Minister of God** Employed by God to preach the Gospel; this was God's work, and he had appointed Timothy to do it, and to do it at this time in conjunction with St. Paul; and therefore he calls him his fellow laborer. There were no sinecures then; preaching the Gospel was God's work; the primitive preachers were his workmen, and labored in this calling. It is the same still, but who works?

**Verse 3. *That no man should be moved*** That is, caused to apostatize from Christianity.

***We are appointed thereunto.*** εἰς τοῦτο κειμεθα· We are exposed to this, we lie open to such, they are unavoidable in the present state of things; as the Latins say, sic est sors nostra, “this is our lot.” God appoints nothing of this kind, but he permits it: for he has made man a free agent.

**Verse 4. *That we should suffer tribulation*** I prepared you for it, because I knew that it was according to their nature for wicked men to persecute the followers of God.

**Verse 5. *For this cause*** Knowing that you would be persecuted, and knowing that your apostasy was possible, I sent to know your faith — whether you continued steadfast in the truth, lest you might have been tempted by Satan to consult your present ease, and abandon the Gospel, for which you suffered persecution.

**Verse 6. *When Timotheus came*** We have already seen that he and Silas stayed behind at Thessalonica, when Paul was obliged to leave it; for the persecution seems to have been principally directed against him. When Paul came to Athens, he sent pressing to him and Silas to come to him with all speed to that city. We are not informed that they did come, but it is most likely that they did, and that Paul sent Timothy back to Thessalonica to comfort and build up these new converts. After Paul had sent away Timothy, it is likely he went himself straight to Corinth, and there Timothy soon after met him, with the good news of the steadiness of the Thessalonian Church.

***Your faith and charity*** The good tidings which Timothy brought from Thessalonica consisted of three particulars: 1. Their faith; they continued steadfast in their belief of the Gospel. 2. Their charity; they loved one another, and lived in unity and harmony. 3. They were affectionately attached to the apostle; they had good remembrance of him, and desired earnestly to see him.

**Verse 7. *Therefore-we were comforted*** My afflictions and persecutions seemed trifles when I heard of your perseverance in the faith.

**Verse 8. *For now we live*** Your steadfastness in the faith gives me new life and comfort; I now feel that I live to some purpose, as my labor in the Lord is not in vain.

**Verse 9. *What thanks can we render to God*** The high satisfaction and uncommon joy which the apostle felt are strongly depicted in the language he uses. How near his heart did the success of his ministry lie! It was not enough for him that he preached so often, labored so hard, suffered so much; what were all these if souls were not converted? And what were all conversions, if those who embraced the Gospel did not walk steadily in the way to heaven, and persevere?

**Verse 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly*** Supplicating God at all times; mingling this with all my prayers; *υπερεκπερισσου δεομενοι*, abounding and superabounding in my entreaties to God to permit me to revisit you. How strong was his affection for this Church!

***Might perfect that which is lacking*** That I might have the opportunity of giving you the fullest instructions in the doctrine of Christ, that ye might have every thing in the most ample detail; so that the great outlines of truth which you already know may be filled up, that ye may be perfectly fitted to every good word and work.

**Verse 11. *Now God himself and our Father That is: God who is our Father, who has adopted us into the heavenly family, and called us his sons and daughters. Direct our way*** As he was employed in God's work he dared not consult his own inclinations, he looked for continual directions from God, where, when, and how to do his Master's work.

**Verse 12. *Make you to increase and abound in love*** They had already love to each other, so as to unite them in one Christian body; and he prays that they may have an increase and an abundance of it; that they might feel the same love to each other which he felt for them all.

**Verse 13. *To the end he may establish your hearts*** Without love to God and man, there can be no establishment in the religion of Christ. It is love that produces both solidity and continuance. And, as love is the fulfilling of the law, he who is filled with love is unblamable in holiness: for he who has the love of God in him is a partaker of the Divine nature, for God is love.

*At the coming of our Lord* God is coming to judge the world; every hour that passes on in the general lapse of time is advancing his approach; whatsoever he does is in reference to this great event: and whatsoever we do should be in reference to the same. But who in that great day shall give up his accounts with joy? That person only whose heart is established in holiness before God; i.e., so as to bear the eye and strict scrutiny of his Judge. Reader, lay this to heart, for thou knowest not what a moment may bring forth. When thy soul departs from thy body it will be the coming of the Lord to thee.

## CHAPTER 4

*The apostle exhorts them to attend to the directions which he had already given them, that they might know how to walk and please God, 1, 2. Gives them exhortations concerning continence, chastity, and matrimonial fidelity, 3-8. Speaks concerning their love to each other, and love to the Churches of Christ; and exhorts them to continue and increase in it, 9, 10. Counsels them to observe an inoffensive conduct, to mind their own affairs, to do their own business, and to live honestly | , 11, 12. Not to sorrow for the dead, as persons who have no hope of a resurrection; because to Christians the resurrection of Christ is a proof of the resurrection of his followers, 13, 14. Gives a short but awful description of the appearing of Christ to judge the world, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. *We beseech you, brethren, and exhort*** We give you proper instructions in heavenly things, and request you to attend to our advice. The apostle used the most pressing entreaties; for he had a strong and affectionate desire that this Church should excel in all righteousness and true holiness.

***Please God more and more.*** God sets no bounds to the communications of his grace and Spirit to them that are faithful. And as there are no bounds to the graces, so there should be none to the exercise of those graces. No man can ever feel that he loves God too much, or that he loves man too much for God's sake.

**Verse 2. *Ye know what commandments we gave you*** This refers to his instructions while he was among them; and to instructions on particular subjects, which he does not recapitulate, but only hints at.

**Verse 3. *This is the will of God, even your sanctification*** God has called you to holiness; he requires that you should be holy; for without holiness none can see the Lord. This is the general calling, but in it many particulars are included. Some of these he proceeds to mention; and it is very likely

that these had been points on which he gave them particular instructions while among them.

***That ye should abstain from fornication*** The word *πορνεία*, as we have seen in other places, includes all sorts of uncleanness; and it was probably this consideration that induced several MSS., some versions and fathers, to add here *πάσης*, all. Directions of this kind were peculiarly necessary among the Greeks, and indeed heathens in general, who were strongly addicted to such vices.

**Verse 4. *How to possess his vessel*** Let every man use his wife for the purpose alone for which God created her, and instituted marriage. The word *ακευος* answers to the Hebrew כֵּלִי *keli*, which, though it signifies vessel in general, has several other meanings. That the rabbins frequently express wife by it, Schoettgen largely proves; and to me it appears very probable that the apostle uses it in that sense here. St. Peter calls the wife the weaker VESSEL, 1 Peter 3:7. Others think that the body is meant, which is the vessel in which the soul dwells. In this sense St. Paul uses it, 2 Corinthians 4:7: We have this treasure in earthen VESSELS; and in this sense it is used by both Greek and Roman authors. There is a third sense which interpreters have put on the word, which I forbear to name. The general sense is plain; purity and continency are most obviously intended, whether the word be understood as referring to the wife or the husband, as the following verse sufficiently proves.

**Verse 5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence*** Having no rational object, aim, nor end. Some say, “not like beasts;” but this does not apply as they who use it wish, for the males and females of the brute creation are regular and consistent in their intercourse, and scarcely ever exceed such bounds as reason itself would prescribe to those most capable of observing and obeying its dictates.

***The Gentiles which know not God*** These are the beasts; their own brutes are rational creatures when compared with them. Enough has been said on this subject on Romans 1, and 2: They who wish to see more may consult Juvenal, and particularly his 6th and 9th Satires; and indeed all the writers on Greek and Roman morals.

**Verse 6. *That no man go beyond and defraud his brother*** That no man should by any means endeavor to corrupt the wife of another, or to alienate her affections or fidelity from her husband; this I believe to be the apostle's meaning, though some understand it of covetousness, overreaching, tricking, cheating, and cozenage in general.

***The Lord is the avenger of all such*** He takes up the cause of the injured husband wherever the case has not been detected by man, and all such vices he will signally punish. Every species of uncleanness was practised among the heathens, nor were they reputed as vices. Their gods, their emperors, their philosophers, and their great men in general, gave them examples of every species of impurity; and they had no system of ethics which forbade these abominations. The Christian religion not only discountenances these things, but forbids them on the most awful penalties; therefore wherever Christianity prevails, these vices, if practised at all, are obliged to seek the deepest gloom of midnight to cover them from the eyes of men. On this account they are comparatively rare, even among the mere professors of Christianity; they exist, but do not flourish.

**Verse 7. *God hath not called us unto uncleanness*** He is the creator of male and female, and the institutor of marriage, and he has called men and women to this state; but the end of this and all the other callings of God to man is holiness, not uncleanness. And they who use the marriage state as he directs, will find it conducive to their holiness and perfection.

**Verse 8. *He therefore that despiseth*** He who will not receive these teachings, and is led either to undervalue or despise them, despises not us but God, from whom we have received our commission, and by whose Spirit we give these directions. See Clarke on "1 Thessalonians 4:15".

***Hath also given unto us his Holy Spirit.*** Instead of εἰς ἡμᾶς, unto Us, εἰς ὑμᾶς, unto YOU, is the reading of BDEFG, a great many others, the Syriac, all the Arabic, Armenian, later Syriac in the margin, some οὐ the Itala, Clement, Didymus, and Ambrosiaster; this seems to be the better reading. God has taught us that we may teach you; and he has also given you his Holy Spirit that ye might understand and be enabled to practice these things. It is one thing to receive a revelation from the Spirit of God; it is another thing to receive that Spirit to enable a man to live according to that revelation. In the first sense the apostles alone received this Holy

Spirit; in the latter sense all true Christians, as well as the Thessalonians, receive it. I think *υμᾶς*, you, is the true reading, and that it is confirmed by the following verse: For ye yourselves are TAUGHT OF GOD to love one another. Griesbach has inserted it in the margin, but has not admitted it into the text, because it has not what he deemed full support from those MSS. which are of the Alexandrian recension; but he thought its genuineness very probable.

**Verse 9. *Touching brotherly love*** They were remarkable for this; and though the apostle appears to have had this as a topic on which he intended to write to them, yet, from the account which he received of their prosperous state by Timothy, he finds that it is unnecessary to spend any time in inculcating a doctrine which they fully understood and practised. See 1 Thessalonians 3:6.

**Verse 10. *Ye do it toward all the brethren*** Ye not only love one another at Thessalonica, but ye love all the brethren in Macedonia; ye consider them all as children of the same Father; and that all the Churches which are in Christ make one great and glorious body, of which he is the head.

**Verse 11. *That ye study to be quiet*** Though in general the Church at Thessalonica was pure and exemplary, yet there seem to have been some idle, tattling people among them, who disturbed the peace of others; persons who, under the pretense of religion, gadded about from house to house; did not work, but were burdensome to others; and were continually meddling with other people's business, making parties, and procuring their bread by religious gossiping. To these the apostle gives those directions which the whole Church of God should enforce wherever such troublesome and dangerous people are found; viz: That they should study to be quiet, *ησυχάζειν*, to hold their peace, as their religious cant will never promote true religion; that they should do their own business, and let that of others alone; and that they should work with their own hands, and not be a burden to the Church of God, or to those well meaning but weak and inconsiderate people who entertain them, being imposed on by their apparent sanctity and glozing conversation. An idle person, though able to discourse like an angel, or pray like an apostle, cannot be a Christian; all such are hypocrites and deceivers; the true members of the Church of Christ walk, work, and labor.



**Verse 12. *That ye may walk honestly*** ευσχημονως· Becomingly, decently, respectably; as is consistent with the purity, holiness, gravity, and usefulness of your Christian calling.

***Them that are without*** The unconverted Gentiles and Jews. See this expression explained at large on Colossians 4:5.

***That ye may have lack of nothing.*** That ye may be able to get your bread by honest labor, which God will ever bless; and be chargeable to no man. He that is dependent on another is necessarily in bondage; and he who is able to get his own bread by the sweat of his brow, should not be under obligation even to a king.

I do not recollect whether, in any other part of this work, I have given the following story from the Hatem Tai Nameh. Hatem Tai was an Arabian nobleman, who flourished some time before the Mahommedan era; he was reputed the most generous and liberal man in all the east. One day he slew one hundred camels, and made a feast, to which all the Arabian lords and all the peasantry in the district were invited. About the time of the feast he took a walk towards a neighboring wood, to see if he could find any person whom he might invite to partake of the entertainment which he had then provided. Walking along the skirt of the wood, he espied an old man coming out of it, laden with a burden of faggots; he accosted him and asked if he had not heard of the entertainment made that day by Hatem Tai. The old man answered in the affirmative. He asked him why he did not attend and partake with the rest. The old man answered: "He that is able to gain his bread even by collecting faggots in the wood, should not be beholden even to Hatem Tai." This is a noble saying, and has long been a rule of conduct to the writer of this note.

**Verse 13. *I would not have you to be ignorant*** Instead of εχομεν, have, θελομεν, wish, is the reading of ADEFG, many others, besides the Arabic, Aethiopic, Armenian, some of the Slavonian, the Vulgate, and Itala, with many of the Greek fathers. This is undoubtedly the true reading: Brethren, I would not wish you to be ignorant; or, I would not that you should be ignorant.

***Them which are asleep*** That is, those who are dead. It is supposed that the apostle had heard that the Thessalonians continued to lament over their dead, as the heathens did in general who had no hope of the resurrection of the body; and that they had been puzzled concerning the doctrine of the resurrection. To set them right on this important subject, he delivers three important truths: 1. He asserts, as he had done before, that they who died in the Lord should have, in virtue of Christ's resurrection, a resurrection unto eternal life and blessedness. 2. He makes a new discovery, that the last generation should not die at all, but be in a moment changed to immortals. 3. He adds another new discovery, that, though the living should not die, but be transformed, yet the dead should first be raised, and be made glorious and immortal; and so, in some measure, have the preference and advantage of such as shall then be found alive. See Dodd.

**Verse 14.** ***For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again*** εἰ γὰρ· Seeing that we believe; knowing that the resurrection of Christ is as fully authenticated as his death.

***Even so them*** It necessarily follows that them who sleep — die, in him — in the faith of the Gospel, will God bring with him — he will raise them up as Jesus was raised from the dead, in the same manner, i.e. by his own eternal power and energy; and he will bring them with him — with Christ, for he is the head of the Church, which is his body.

**Verse 15.** ***This we say unto you by the word of the Lord*** This I have, by express revelation, from the Lord: what he now delivers, he gives as coming immediately from the Spirit of God. Indeed, human reason could not have found out the points which he immediately subjoins; no conjectures could lead to them. Allowing even the general doctrine of the resurrection to be believed, yet what follows does not flow from the premises; they are doctrines of pure revelation, and such as never could have been found out by human ingenuity. In no place does the apostle speak more confidently and positively of his inspiration than here; and we should prepare ourselves to receive some momentous and interesting truth.

***We which are alive, and remain*** By the pronoun we the apostle does not intend himself, and the Thessalonians to whom he was then writing; he is speaking of the genuine Christians which shall be found on earth when Christ comes to judgment. From not considering the manner in which the

apostle uses this word, some have been led to suppose that he imagined that the day of judgment would take place in that generation, and while he and the then believers at Thessalonica were in life. But it is impossible that a man, under so direct an influence of the Holy Spirit, should be permitted to make such a mistake: nay, no man in the exercise of his sober reason could have formed such an opinion; there was nothing to warrant the supposition; no premises from which it could be fairly deduced; nor indeed any thing in the circumstances of the Church, nor in the constitution of the world, that could have suggested a hint of the kind. The apostle is speaking of the thing indefinitely as to the time when it shall happen, but positively as to the ORDER that shall be then observed.

*Shall not prevent them which are asleep.* Those who shall be found living in that day, though they shall not pass through death, but be suddenly changed, shall not go to glory before them that are dead, for the dead in Christ shall rise first — they shall be raised, their bodies made glorious, and be caught up to meet the Lord, before the others shall be changed. And this appears to be the meaning of the apostle's words, *μη φθασωμεν*, which we translate shall not prevent; for, although this word prevent, from prae and venio, literally signifies to go before, yet we use it now in the sense of to hinder or obstruct. *φθανειν τινα* signifies the same, according to Hesychius, as *προηκειν*, to go before, *προλαμβανειν*, to anticipate, be before. Those who shall be found alive on that day shall not anticipate glory before the dead in Christ; for they shall rise first, and begin the enjoyment of it before the others shall be changed. This appears to be the apostle's meaning.

**Verse 16. *The Lord himself*** That is: Jesus Christ shall descend from heaven; shall descend in like manner as he was seen by his disciples to ascend, i.e. in his human form, but now infinitely more glorious; for thousands of thousands shall minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand shall stand before him; for the Son of man shall come on the throne of his glory: but who may abide the day of his coming, or stand when he appeareth?

*With a shout* Or order, *εν κελευσματι*· and probably in these words. Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment; which order shall be repeated by the archangel, who shall accompany it with the sound of the trump of God,

whose great and terrible blasts, like those on mount Sinai, sounding louder and louder, shall shake both the heavens and the earth!

Observe the order of this terribly glorious day: 1. Jesus, in all the dignity and splendor of his eternal majesty, shall descend from heaven to the mid region, what the apostle calls the air, somewhere within the earth's atmosphere. 2. Then the **κελευσμα**, shout or order, shall be given for the dead to arise. 3. Next the archangel, as the herald of Christ, shall repeat the order, Arise, ye dead, and come to judgment! 4. When all the dead in Christ are raised, then the trumpet shall sound, as the signal for them all to flock together to the throne of Christ. It was by the sound of the trumpet that the solemn assemblies, under the law, were convoked; and to such convocations there appears to be here an allusion. 5. When the dead in Christ are raised, their vile bodies being made like unto his glorious body, then, 6. Those who are alive shall be changed, and made immortal. 7. These shall be caught up together with them to meet the Lord in the air. 8. We may suppose that the judgment will now be set, and the books opened, and the dead judged out of the things written in those books. 9. The eternal states of quick and dead being thus determined, then all who shall be found to have made a covenant with him by sacrifice, and to have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb, shall be taken to his eternal glory, and be for ever with the Lord. What an inexpressibly terrific glory will then be exhibited! I forbear to call in here the descriptions which men of a poetic turn have made of this terrible scene, because I cannot trust to their correctness; and it is a subject which we should speak of and contemplate as nearly as possible in the words of Scripture.

**Verse 18.** *Comfort one another with these words.* Strange saying! comfort a man with the information that he is going to appear before the judgment-seat of God! Who can feel comfort from these words? That man alone with whose spirit the Spirit of God bears witness that his sins are blotted out, and the thoughts of whose heart are purified by the inspiration of Gods Holy Spirit, so that he can perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his name. Reader, thou art not in a safe state unless it be thus with thee, or thou art hungering and thirsting after righteousness. If so, thou shalt be filled; for it is impossible that thou shouldst be taken away in thy sins, while mourning after the salvation of God. They that seek shall find.



## CHAPTER 5

*The apostle continues to speak of Christ's coming to judgment, and the uncertainty of the time in which it shall take place, and the careless state of sinners, 1-3. Shows the Thessalonians that they are children of the light; that they should watch and pray, and put on the armor of God, being called to obtain salvation by Christ, who died for them; that whether dead or alive, when the day of judgment comes, they may live for ever with him; and that they should comfort and edify each other with these considerations, 4-11. He exhorts them to remember those who labor among them, and are over them in the Lord; and to esteem such highly for their work's sake, 12, 13. He charges them to warn, comfort, and support those who stood in need of such assistance, and to be patient and beneficent towards all, 14, 15. He points out their high spiritual privileges; warns them against neglecting or misimproving the gifts of the Spirit, and the means of grace, 16-20. They are also exhorted to prove all things; to abstain from all evil; and to expect to be sanctified, through spirit, soul, and body, by him who has promised this, and who is faithful to his promises, 21-24. Recommends himself and brethren to their prayers; shows them how they are to greet each other; charges them to read this epistle to all the brethren; and concludes with the usual apostolical benediction, 25-28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1.** *But of the times and the seasons* It is natural to suppose, after what he had said in the conclusion of the preceding chapter concerning the coming of Christ, the raising of the dead, and rendering those immortal who should then be found alive, without obliging them to pass through the empire of death, that the Thessalonians would feel an innocent curiosity to know, as the disciples did concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, when those things should take place, and what should be the signs of those times, and of the coming of the Son of man. And it is remarkable that the apostle answers, here, to these anticipated questions as our Lord did, in the above case, to the direct question of his disciples; and he seems to refer

in these words, Of the times and the seasons ye have no need that I write unto you, for yourselves know that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night, to what our Lord said, Matthew 24:44; 25:13; and the apostle takes it for granted that they were acquainted with our Lord's prediction on the subject: For you yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night. It is very likely therefore, that the apostle, like our Lord, couples these two grand events-the destruction of Jerusalem and the final judgment. And it appears most probable that it is of the former event chiefly that he speaks here, as it was certainly of the latter that he treated in the conclusion of the preceding chapter. In the notes on Acts 1:6, 7, it has already been shown that the **χρονους η καιρους**, times or seasons, (the very same terms which are used here,) refer to the destruction of the Jewish commonwealth; and we may fairly presume that they have the same meaning in this place.

**Verse 3. *For when they shall say, Peace and safety*** This points out, very particularly, the state of the Jewish people when the Romans came against them; and so fully persuaded were they that God would not deliver the city and temple to their enemies, that they refused every overture that was made to them.

***Sudden destruction*** In the storming of their city and the burning of their temple, and the massacre of several hundreds of thousands of themselves; the rest being sold for slaves, and the whole of them dispersed over the face of the earth.

***As travail upon a woman*** This figure is perfectly consistent with what the apostle had said before, viz.: that the times and seasons were not known: though the thing itself was expected, our Lord having predicted it in the most positive manner. So, a woman with child knows that, if she be spared, she will have a bearing time; but the week, the day, the hour, she cannot tell. In a great majority of cases the time is accelerated or retarded much before or beyond the time that the woman expected; so, with respect to the Jews, neither the day, week, month, nor year was known. All that was specifically known was this: their destruction was coming, and it should be sudden, and they should not escape.

**Verse 4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness*** Probably St. Paul refers to a notion that was very prevalent among the Jews, viz.: that God would

judge the Gentiles in the night time, when utterly secure and careless; but he would judge the Jews in the day time, when employed in reading and performing the words of the law. The words in Midrash Tehillim, on Psalm ix. 8, are the following: When the holy blessed God shall judge the Gentiles, it shall be in the night season, in which they shall be asleep in their transgressions; but when he shall judge the Israelites, it shall be in the day time, when they are occupied in the study of the law. This maxim the apostle appears to have in view in the 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, and 8th verses. {1 Thessalonians 5:4-8}

**Verse 5. *Ye are all the children of light*** Ye are children of God, and enjoy both his light and life. Ye are Christians — ye belong to him who has brought life and immortality to light by his Gospel. This dispensation, under which ye are, has illustrated all the preceding dispensations; in its light all is become luminous; and ye, who walked formerly in heathen ignorance, or in the darkness of Jewish prejudices, are now light in the Lord, because ye have believed in him who is the light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory and splendor of his people Israel.

***We are not of the night, nor of darkness.*** Our actions are such as we are not afraid to expose to the fullest and clearest light. Sinners hate the light; they are enemies to knowledge; they love darkness; they will not receive instructions; and their deeds are such as cannot bear the light.

**Verse 6. *Let us not sleep, as do others*** Let us who are of the day — who believe the Gospel and belong to Christ, not give way to a careless, unconcerned state of mind, like to the Gentiles and sinners in general, who are stupified and blinded by sin, so that they neither think nor feel; but live in time as if it were eternity; or rather, live as if there were no eternity, no future state of existence, rewards, or punishments.

***Let us watch*** Be always on the alert; and be sober, making a moderate use of all things.

**Verse 7. *For they that sleep*** Sleepers and drunkards seek the night season; so the careless and the profligate persons indulge their evil propensities, and avoid all means of instruction; they prefer their ignorance to the word of God's grace, and to the light of life. There seems to be here an allusion to the opinion mentioned under 1 Thessalonians 5:4, to which the reader is



requested to refer. It may be remarked, also, that it was accounted doubly scandalous, even among the heathen, to be drunk in the day time. They who were drunken were drunken in the night.

**Verse 8. *Putting on the breastplate*** We are not only called to WORK, but we are called also to fight; and that we may not be surprised, we must watch; and that we may be in a condition to defend ourselves, we must be sober; and that we may be enabled to conquer, we must be armed: and what the breastplate and helmet are to a soldier's heart and head, such are faith, love, and hope to us. Faith enables us to endure, as seeing him who is invisible; love excites us to diligence and activity, and makes us bear our troubles and difficulties pleasantly; hope helps us to anticipate the great end, the glory that shall be revealed, and which we know we shall in due time obtain, if we faint not. For an explanation of the different parts of the Grecian armor, as illustrating that of the Christian, see the notes on Ephesians 6, where the subject is largely explained.

**Verse 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath*** So then it appears that some were appointed to wrath, εἰς ὀργήν, to punishment; on this subject there can be no dispute. But who are they? When did this appointment take place? And for what cause? These are supposed to be "very difficult questions, and such as cannot receive a satisfactory answer; and the whole must be referred to the sovereignty of God." If we look carefully at the apostle's words, we shall find all these difficulties vanish. It is very obvious that, in the preceding verses, the apostle refers simply to the destruction of the Jewish polity, and to the terrible judgments which were about to fall on the Jews as a nation; therefore, they are the people who were appointed to wrath; and they were thus appointed, not from eternity, nor from any indefinite or remote time, but from that time in which they utterly rejected the offers of salvation made to them by Jesus Christ and his apostles; the privileges of their election were still continued to them, even after they had crucified the Lord of glory; for, when he gave commandment to his disciples to go into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature, he bade them begin at Jerusalem. They did so, and continued to offer salvation to them, till at last, being everywhere persecuted, and the whole nation appearing with one consent to reject the Gospel, the kingdom of God was wholly taken away from them, and the apostles turned to the Gentiles. Then God appointed them to wrath; and

the cause of that appointment was their final and determined rejection of Christ and his Gospel. But even this appointment to wrath does not signify eternal damnation; nothing of the kind is intended in the word. Though we are sure that those who die in their sins can never see God, yet it is possible that many of those wretched Jews, during their calamities, and especially during the siege of their city, did turn unto the Lord who smote them, and found that salvation which he never denies to the sincere penitent.

When the Jews were rejected, and appointed to wrath, then the Gentiles were elected, and appointed to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ, whose Gospel they gladly received, and continue to prize; while the remnant of the Jews continue, in all places of their dispersion, the same irreconcilable and blasphemous opponents of the Gospel of Christ. On these accounts the election of the Gentiles and the reprobation of the Jews still continue.

**Verse 10. *Who died for us*** His death was an atoning sacrifice for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews.

***Whether we wake or sleep*** Whether we live or die, whether we are in this state or in the other world, we shall live together with him—shall enjoy his life, and the consolations of his Spirit, while here; and shall be glorified together with him in the eternal world. The words show that every where and in all circumstances genuine believers, who walk after God, have life and communion with him, and are continually happy, and constantly safe. The apostle, however, may refer to the doctrine he has delivered, 1 Thessalonians 4:15, concerning the dead in Christ rising first; and the last generation of men not dying, but undergoing such a change as shall render them immortal. On that great day, all the followers of God, both those who had long slept in the dust of the earth, and all those who shall be found living, shall be acknowledged by Christ as his own, and live together for ever with him.

**Verse 11. *Comfort one another*** Rest assured that, in all times and circumstances, it shall be well with the righteous; let every man lay this to heart; and with this consideration comfort and edify each other in all trials and difficulties.

**Verse 12. *Know them*** Act kindly towards them; acknowledge them as the messengers of Christ; and treat them with tenderness and respect. This is a frequent meaning of the word **γινωσκω**. See on John 1:10.

***Them which labor among you*** The words **τους κοπιωντας** have appeared to some as expressing those who had labored among them; but as it is the participle of the present tense, there is no need to consider it in this light. Both it and the word **προισταμενους**, the superintendents, refer to persons then actually employed in the work of God. These were all admonishers, teachers, and instructors of the people, devoting their time and talents to this important work.

**Verse 13. *Esteem them very highly in love*** Christian ministers, who preach the whole truth, and labor in the word and doctrine, are entitled to more than respect; the apostle commands them to be esteemed **υπερεκπερισσου**, abundantly, and superabundantly; and this is to be done in love; and as men delight to serve those whom they love, it necessarily follows that they should provide for them, and see that they want neither the necessaries nor conveniences of life; I do not say comforts, though these also should be furnished; but of these the genuine messengers of Christ are frequently destitute. However, they should have food, raiment, and lodging for themselves and their household. This they ought to have for their work's sake; those who do not work should not eat. As ministers of Christ, such as labor not are unworthy either of respect or support.

**Verse 14. *Warn them that are unruly*** The whole phraseology of this verse is military; I shall consider the import of each term. **ατακτους**: Those who are out of their ranks, and are neither in a disposition nor situation to perform the work and duty of a soldier; those who will not do the work prescribed, and who will meddle with what is not commanded. There are many such in every Church that is of considerable magnitude.

***Comfort the feeble-minded*** **τους ολιγοψυχους**: Those of little souls; the faint-hearted; those who, on the eve of a battle, are dispirited, because of the number of the enemy, and their own feeble and unprovided state. Let them know that the battle is not theirs, but the Lord's; and that those who trust in him shall conquer.

**Support the weak** ἀντεχεσθε των ασθενων· Shore up, prop them that are weak; strengthen those wings and companies that are likely to be most exposed, that they be not overpowered and broken in the day of battle.

**Be patient toward all** μακροθυμειτε προς παντας· The disorderly, the feeble-minded, and the weak, will exercise your patience, and try your temper. If the troops be irregular, and cannot in every respect be reduced to proper order and discipline, let not the officers lose their temper nor courage; let them do the best they can; God will be with them, and a victory will give confidence to their troops. We have often seen that the Christian life is compared to a warfare, and that the directions given to soldiers are, mutatis mutandis; allowing for the different systems, suitable to Christians. This subject has been largely treated on, Ephesians 6. The ministers of Christ, being considered as officers, should acquaint themselves with the officers' duty. He who has the direction and management of a Church of God will need all the skill and prudence he can acquire.

**Verse 15. See that none render evil for evil** Every temper contrary to love is contrary to Christianity. A peevish, fretful, vindictive man may be a child of Satan; he certainly is not a child of God.

**Follow that which is good** That by which ye may profit your brethren and your neighbors of every description, whether Jews or Gentiles.

**Verse 16. Rejoice evermore.** Be always happy; the religion of Christ was intended to remove misery. He that has God for his portion may constantly exult. Four MSS. of good note add **εν τω κυριω**, in the Lord: Rejoice in the Lord evermore.

**Verse 17. Pray without ceasing.** Ye are dependent on God for every good; without him ye can do nothing; feel that dependence at all times, and ye will always be in the spirit of prayer; and those who feel this spirit will, as frequently as possible, be found in the exercise of prayer.

**Verse 18. In every thing give thanks** For this reason, that all things work together for good to them that love God; therefore, every occurrence may be a subject of gratitude and thankfulness. While ye live to God, prosperity and adversity will be equally helpful to you.

***For this is the will of God*** That ye should be always happy; that ye should ever be in the spirit of prayer; and that ye should profit by every occurrence in life, and be continually grateful and obedient; for gratitude and obedience are inseparably connected.

**Verse 19. *Quench not the Spirit.*** The Holy Spirit is represented as a fire, because it is his province to enlighten and quicken the soul; and to purge, purify, and refine it. This Spirit is represented as being quenched when any act is done, word spoken, or temper indulged, contrary to its dictates. It is the Spirit of love, and therefore anger, malice, revenge, or any unkind or unholy temper, will quench it so that it will withdraw its influences; and then the heart is left in a state of hardness and darkness. It has been observed that fire may be quenched as well by heaping earth on it as by throwing water on it; and so the love of the world will as effectually grieve and quench the Spirit as any ordinary act of transgression.

Every genuine Christian is made a partaker of the Spirit of God; and he who has not the spirit of Christ is none of his. It cannot be the miraculous gifts of the Spirit which the apostle means, for these were given to few, and not always; for even apostles could not work miracles when they pleased; but the direction in the text is general, and refers to a gift of which they were generally partakers.

**Verse 20. *Despise not prophesyings.*** Do not suppose that ye have no need of continual instruction; without it ye cannot preserve the Christian life, nor go on to perfection. God will ever send a message of salvation by each of his ministers to every faithful, attentive hearer. Do not suppose that ye are already wise enough; you are no more wise enough than you are holy enough. They who slight or neglect the means of grace, and especially the preaching of God's holy word, are generally vain, empty, self-conceited people, and exceedingly superficial both in knowledge and piety.

**Verse 21. *Prove all things*** Whatever ye hear in these prophesyings or preachings, examine by the words of Christ, and by the doctrines which, from time to time, we have delivered unto you in our preaching and writings. Try the spirits — the different teachers, by the word of God.

***Hold fast that which is good.*** Whatever in these prophesyings has a tendency to increase your faith, love, holiness, and usefulness, that receive and hold fast. There were prophets or teachers even at that time who professed to be of God, and yet were not.

**Verse 22. *Abstain from all appearance of evil.*** Sin not, and avoid even the appearance of it. Do not drive your morality so near the bounds of evil as to lead even weak persons to believe that ye actually touch, taste, or handle it. Let not the form of it, **ειδος**, appear with or among you, much less the substance. Ye are called to holiness; be ye holy, for God is holy.

**Verse 23. *And the very God of peace*** That same God who is the author of peace, the giver of peace; and who has sent, for the redemption of the world, the Prince of peace; may that very God sanctify you wholly; leave no more evil in your hearts than his precepts tolerate evil in your conduct. The word wholly, **ολετελεζς** means precisely the same as our phrase, to all intents and purposes. May he sanctify you to the end and to the uttermost, that, as sin hath reigned unto death, even so may grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life, by Jesus Christ our Lord.

***Your whole spirit and soul and body*** Some think that the apostle alludes to the Pythagorean and Platonic doctrine, which was acknowledged among the Thessalonians. I should rather believe that he refers simply to the fact, that the creature called man is a compound being, consisting, 1. Of a body, **σωμα**, an organized system, formed by the creative energy of God out of the dust of the earth; composed of bones, muscles, and nerves; of arteries, veins, and a variety of other vessels, in which the blood and other fluids circulate. 2. Of a soul, **ψυχη**, which is the seat of the different affections and passions, such as love, hatred, anger, etc., with sensations, appetites, and propensities of different kinds. 3. Of spirit, **πνευμα**, the immortal principle, the source of life to the body and soul, without which the animal functions cannot be performed, how perfect soever the bodily organs may be; and which alone possesses the faculty of intelligence, understanding, thinking, and reasoning, and produces the faculty of speech wherever it resides, if accident have not impaired the organs of speech.

The apostle prays that this compound being, in all its parts, powers, and faculties, which he terms **ολοκληρον**, their whole, comprehending all parts, every thing that constitutes man and manhood, may be sanctified

and preserved blameless till the coming of Christ; hence we learn, 1. That body, soul, and spirit are debased and polluted by sin. 2. That each is capable of being sanctified, consecrated in all its powers to God, and made holy. 3. That the whole man is to be preserved to the coming of Christ, that body, soul, and spirit may be then glorified for ever with him. 4. That in this state the whole man may be so sanctified as to be preserved blameless till the coming of Christ. And thus we learn that the sanctification is not to take place in, at, or after death. On the pollution and sanctification of flesh and spirit, see the note on 2 Corinthians 7:1.

**Verse 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you*** In a great variety of places in his word God has promised to sanctify his followers, and his faithfulness binds him to fulfill his promises; therefore he will do it. He who can believe will find this thing also possible to him.

**Verse 25. *Pray for me.*** Even apostles, while acting under an extraordinary mission, and enjoying the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, felt the necessity of the prayers of the faithful. God requires that his people should pray for his ministers; and it is not to be wondered at, if they who pray not for their preachers should receive no benefit from their teaching. How can they expect God to send a message by him, for whom they, who are the most interested, have not prayed? If the grace and Spirit of Christ be not worth the most earnest prayers which a man can offer, they, and the heaven to which they lead, are not worth having.

**Verse 26. *Greet all the brethren*** See the note on Romans 16:16. Instead of all the brethren, the Coptic has, greet one another; a reading not noticed by either Griesbach or Wetstein.

**Verse 27. *I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be read*** There must have been some particular reason for this solemn charge; he certainly had some cause to suspect that the epistle would be suppressed in some way or other, and that the whole Church would not be permitted to hear it; or he may refer to the smaller Churches contiguous to Thessalonica, or the Churches in Macedonia in general, whom he wished to hear it, as well as those to whom it was more immediately directed. There is no doubt that the apostles designed that their epistles should be copied, and sent to all the Churches in the vicinity of that to which they were directed. Had this not been the case, a great number of Churches would have known scarcely

any thing of the New Testament. As every Jewish synagogue had a copy of the law and the prophets, so every Christian Church had a copy of the gospels and the epistles, which were daily, or at least every Sabbath, read for the instruction of the people. This the apostle deemed so necessary, that he adjured them by the Lord to read this epistle to all the brethren; i.e. to all the Christians in that district. Other Churches might get copies of it; and thus, no doubt, it soon became general. In this way other parts of the sacred writings were disseminated through all the Churches of the Gentiles; and the errors of the different scribes, employed to take copies, constituted what are now called the various readings.

**Verse 28. *The grace of our Lord Jesus*** As the epistle began so it ends; for the grace of Christ must be at the beginning and end of every work, in order to complete it, and bring it to good effect.

***Amen.*** This is wanting in BD\*FG and some others. It was probably not written by St. Paul.

The subscriptions are, as in other cases, various and contradictory. The chief MSS. conclude as follows: The first to the Thessalonians is completed; the second to the Thessalonians begins. — DFG. The first to the Thessalonians written from Athens. — AB, and others. From Laodicea. — Cod. Claromont. The first to the Thessalonians, written from Athens. — Common Greek text.

The VERSIONS conclude thus:—The First Epistle to the Thessalonians was written at Athens, and sent by the hands of Timotheus. — SYRIAC. To the Thessalonians. — AETHIOPIC. Nothing in the VULGATE. The end of the epistle: it was written from a city of the Athenians, and sent by the hand of Timotheus. And to the Lord be praise for ever and ever. Amen. — ARABIC. Written from Athens, and sent by Silvanus and Timotheus. — COPTIC.

That it was not sent by either Silvanus or Timothy is evident enough from the inscription, for St. Paul associates these two with himself, in directing it to the Thessalonian Church. Others say that it was sent by Tychicus and Onesimus, but this also is absurd; for Onesimus was not converted till a considerable time after the writing of this epistle. That it was written by



St. Paul, there is no doubt; and that it was written at Corinth, and not at Athens, has been shown in the preface.

1. THE two preceding chapters are certainly among the most important and the most sublime in the New Testament. The general judgment, the resurrection of the body, and the states of the quick and dead, the unrighteous and the just, are described, concisely indeed, but they are exhibited in the most striking and affecting points of view. I have attempted little else than verbal illustrations; the subject is too vast for my comprehension; I cannot order my speech by reason of darkness. Though there are some topics handled here which do not appear in other parts of the sacred writings, yet the main of what we learn is this. "Our God will come, and will not keep silence; a fire shall burn before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him; he shall call to the heavens above, and to the earth beneath, that he may judge his people. "The day of judgment! what an awful word is this! what a truly terrific time! when the heavens shall be shrivelled as a scroll, and the elements melt with fervent heat; when the earth and its appendages shall be burnt up, and the fury of that conflagration be such that there shall be no more sea! A time when the noble and ignoble dead, the small and the great, shall stand before God, and all be judged according to the deeds done in the body; yea, a time when the thoughts of the heart and every secret thing shall be brought to light; when the innumerable millions of transgressions, and embryo and abortive sins, shall be exhibited in all their purposes and intents; a time when Justice, eternal Justice, shall sit alone upon the throne, and pronounce a sentence as impartial as irrevocable, and as awful as eternal! There is a term of human life; and every human being is rapidly gliding to it as fast as the wings of time, in their onward motion, incomprehensibly swift, can carry him! And shall not the living lay this to heart? Should we not live in order to die? Should we not die in order to be judged? And should we not live and die so as to live again to all eternity, not with Satan and his angels, but with God and his saints? O thou man of God! thou Christian! thou immortal spirit! think of these things.

2. The subject in verse 27 {1 Thessalonians 5:27} of the last chapter I have but slightly noticed: I charge you, by the Lord, that this epistle be read unto all the holy brethren. This is exceedingly strange; the Epistles to the Romans, the Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians,

Colossians, and Thessalonians, were directed to the whole Church in each of those places; why, then, after directing this, as he did all the rest, to the whole Church, should he at the conclusion adjure them, by the Lord, that it should be read to all the holy brethren; that is, to the very persons to whom it was addressed? Is there not some mystery here? Has it not been the endeavor of Satan, from the beginning, to keep men from consulting the oracles of God; and has he not used even the authority of the Church to accomplish this his purpose! Was not the prohibiting the use of the Scriptures to the people at large the mystery of iniquity which then began to work, and against which the adjuration of the apostle is directed? see second epistle, chap. 2; this mystery, which was the grand agent in the hands of Mystery, Babylon the Great, to keep the people in darkness, that the unauthorized and wicked pretensions of this mother of the abominations of the earth might not be brought to the test; but that she might continue to wear her crown, sit on her scarlet beast, and subject the Christian world to her empire. Was it not the Christian world's total ignorance of God's book which the Romish Church took care to keep from the people at large, that induced them patiently, yet with terror, to bow down to all her usurpations, and to swallow down monstrous doctrines which she imposed upon them as Christian verities? Was it not this deplorable ignorance which induced kings and emperors to put their necks, literally, under the feet of this usurped and antichristian power? This mystery of iniquity continues still to work; and with all the pretensions of the Romish Church, the Scriptures are in general withheld from the people, or suffered to be read under such restrictions and with such notes as totally subvert the sense of those passages on which this Church endeavors to build her unscriptural pretensions. It is generally allowed that the Vulgate version is the most favorable to these pretensions, and yet even that version the rulers of the Church dare not trust in the hands of any of their people, even under their general ecclesiastical restrictions, without their counteracting notes and comments. How strange is this! and yet in this Church there have been, and still are, many enlightened and eminent men; surely truth has nothing to fear from the Bible. When the Romish Church permits the free use of this book, she may be stripped, indeed, of some of her appendages, but she will lose nothing but her dross and tin, and become what the original Church at Rome was, beloved of God, called to be saints; and have her faith, once more, spoken of

throughout all the world, Romans 1:7, 8. She has, in her own hands the means of her own regeneration; and a genuine Protestant will wish, not her destruction, but her reformation; and if she consent not to be reformed, her total destruction is inevitable.

Finished correcting for a new edition, on the shortest day of 1831. — A.  
C.

## PREFACE

TO THE

**SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO THE

**THESSALONIANS.**

FOR an account of Thessalonica, and St. Paul's labors there, the reader is requested to consult the preface to the preceding epistle. That this second epistle was written shortly after the first, and from the same place too, is very probable, from this circumstance, that the same persons, Paul, Silvanus, and Timotheus, who addressed the Church at Thessalonica in the former epistle, address the same Church in this; and as three such apostolic men were rarely long together in the same place, it is very likely that the two epistles were written not only in the same year, but also within a very short time of each other. It appears that the person who carried the first epistle returned speedily to Corinth, and gave the apostle a particular account of the state of the Thessalonian Church; and, among other things, informed him that many were in expectation of the speedy arrival of the day of judgment; and that they inferred from his epistle already sent, 1 Thessalonians 4:15, 17; 5:4, 6, that it was to take place while the apostle and themselves should be yet alive. And it appears probable, from some parts of this epistle, that he was informed also that some, expecting this sudden appearance of the Lord Jesus, had given up all their secular concerns as inconsistent with a due preparation for such an important and awful event; see 2 Thessalonians 3:6-13. To correct such a misapprehension, and redeem them from an error, which, if appearing to rest on the authority of an apostle, must in its issue be ruinous to the cause of Christianity, St. Paul would feel himself constrained to write

immediately; and this is a sufficient reason why these epistles should appear to have been written at so short a distance from each other. What rendered this speedy intervention of the apostle's authority and direction the more necessary, was, that there appear to have been some in that Church who professed to have a revelation concerning this thing, and to have endeavored to confirm it by a pretended report from the apostle himself, and from the words already referred to in the former epistle; see here on 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2: "We beseech you, brethren, be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by SPIRIT, nor by WORD, nor by LETTER as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand." As the apostle, in this epistle, 2 Thessalonians 3:2, entreats the Thessalonians to pray the Lord that he and his companions might be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men, Dr. Macknight supposes that the epistle was written soon after the insurrection of the Jews at Corinth, in which they dragged Paul before Gallio, the proconsul of Achaia, and accused him of persuading men to worship God contrary to the law; Acts 18:13. This argument places it also in the year 52, or 53, in the twelfth or thirteenth of Claudius the successor of Caius.

As there have been some eminent Christian writers who have entertained the same opinion with those at Thessalonica, that not only St. Paul, but other apostles of Christ, did believe that the day of general judgment should take place in their time, which opinion is shown by the event to be absolutely false; it appears to be a matter of the utmost consequence to the credit of Divine revelation, to rescue the character of the apostles from such an imputation. Dr. Macknight has written well on this subject, as the following extract from his preface to this epistle will prove:—

"Grotius, Locke, and others," says he, "have affirmed that the apostles believed that the end of the world was to happen in their time; and that they have declared this to be their belief in various passages of their epistles. But these learned men, and all who join them in that opinion, have fallen into a most pernicious error; for thereby they destroy the authority of the Gospel revelation, at least as far as it is contained in the discourses and writings of the apostles; because, if they have erred in a matter of such importance, and which they affirm was revealed to them by Christ, they may have been mistaken in other matters also, where their inspiration is

not more strongly asserted by them than in this instance. It is therefore necessary to clear them from so injurious an imputation.

“And first, with respect to Paul, who was an apostle of Christ, and Silvanus, who was a prophet, and a chief man among the brethren, and Timothy, who was eminent for his spiritual gifts, I observe that the epistle under our consideration affords the clearest proof that these men knew the truth concerning the coming of Christ to judge the world; for in it they expressly assured the Thessalonians that the persons who made them believe the day of judgment was at hand were deceiving them; that, before the day of judgment, there was to be a great apostasy in religion, occasioned by the man of sin, who at that time was restrained from showing himself, but who was to be revealed in his season; that, when revealed, he will sit, that is, remain a long time in the Church of God, as God, and showing himself that he is God; and that, afterwards, he is to be destroyed. Now, as these events could not be accomplished in the course of a few years, the persons who foretold they were to happen before the coming of Christ certainly did not think the day of judgment would be in their lifetime. Besides, St. Paul, Romans 11:23-26, by a long chain of reasoning, having showed that, after the general conversion of the Gentiles, the Jews, in a body, are to be brought into the Christian Church, can any person be so absurd as to persevere in maintaining that this apostle believed the end of the world would happen in his lifetime?

“Next, with respect to the Apostle Peter, I think it plain, from the manner in which we has spoken of the coming of Christ, that he knew it was at a great distance; 2 Peter 3:3, 4, 8, 9: ‘Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking after their own lusts, and saying, Where is the promise of his coming? For, from the time the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as at the beginning of the creation. But this one thing, let it not escape you, beloved, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord, who hath promised, doth not delay, in the manner some account delaying.’ Now, seeing Peter has here foretold that, in the last age, the wicked will mock at the promise of Christ’s coming, on account of its being long delayed; and, from the stability and regularity of the course of nature during so many ages, will argue that there is no probability that the world will ever come to an end; it

is evident that he also knew the coming of Christ to judgement was at a very great distance at the time he wrote that epistle.

“The same may be said of James; for, in the hearing of the apostles, elders, and brethren assembled in the council of Jerusalem, he quoted passages from the Jewish prophets, to show that all the Gentiles were, at some future period, to seek after the Lord; Acts 15:17. But, if James looked for the general conversion of the Gentiles, he certainly could not imagine the end of the world would happen in his time.

“Lastly, the Apostle John, in his book of the Revelation, having foretold a great variety of important events respecting the political and religious state of the world, which could not be accomplished in a few years, but required a series of ages to give them birth; there cannot be the least doubt that he likewise knew the truth concerning his Master’s second coming; and therefore, to suppose that he imagined the day of judgment was to happen in his own lifetime, is a palpable mistake.

“Upon the whole, seeing the apostles and other inspired teachers of our religion certainly knew that the coming of Christ to judgment was at a great distance, every impartial person must be sensible they have been much injured, not by the enemies of revelation alone, but by some of its friends; who, upon the strength of certain expressions, the meaning, of which they evidently misunderstood, have endeavored to persuade the world that the apostle ignorantly believed the day of judgment was at hand. These expressions may all be applied to other events, as shall be showed in the next section, and therefore they ought to be so applied; because candour requires that sense to be put on an author’s words which renders him most consistent with himself.”

As the term coming of Christ has several acceptations in the sacred writings, and the applying any one of these to the subject to which in a given place it does not belong, may lead to very erroneous if not dangerous conclusions, as it appears to have done at Thessalonica; it is necessary to consider the different senses in which this phrase is used, that we may know its specific meaning in the different places where it occurs. Dr. Macknight, in the fourth section of his preface, intitled, Different Comings of Christ are spoken of in the New Testament, has treated this subject also with considerable judgment, as the reader will at once perceive.

“In this article I propose to show that there are other comings of Christ spoken of in Scripture besides his coming to judgement; and that there are other things besides this mundane system whose end is there foretold; and that it is of these other matters the apostles speak, when they represent the day of their Master and the end of all things as at hand.

“First, then, in the prophetic writings of the Jews (2 Samuel 22:10, 12; Psalm 97:2-5; Isaiah 19:1) great exertions of the Divine power, whether for the salvation or destruction of nations, are called the coming, the appearance, the presence of God. Hence it was natural for the apostles, who were Jews, to call any signal and evident interposition of Christ, as Governor of the world, for the accomplishment of his purposes, his coming and his day; accordingly, those exertions of his power and providence, whereby he destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, abrogated the Mosaic institutions, and established the Gospel, are called by the apostles his coming, and day; not only in allusion to the ancient prophetic language, but because Christ himself, in his prophecy concerning these events, recorded Matthew 24:30 etc., has termed them the coming of the Son of man, in allusion to the following prophecy of Daniel, of which his own prophecy is an explication; Daniel 7:13, 14: ‘I saw in the night visions, and, behold, one like the Son of man came with the clouds of heaven, and came to the Ancient of days. And they brought him near before him. And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom; that all people, nations, and languages, should serve him. His dominion is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away; and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed.’ This prophecy the Jewish doctors, with one consent, attribute to the Messiah, and of that temporal kingdom which they expected was to be given him. Farther, they supposed he would erect that temporal kingdom by great and visible exertions of his power for the destruction of his enemies; but they little suspected that themselves were of the number of those enemies whom he was to destroy; and that his kingdom was to be established upon the ruin of their state. Yet that was the true meaning of the coming of the Son of man in the clouds of heaven. For, while the Jewish nation continued in Judea, and observed the institutions of Moses, they violently opposed the preaching of the Gospel, by which the Messiah was to reign over all people, nations, and languages. Wherefore, that the everlasting kingdom might be established



effectually, it was necessary that Jerusalem and the Jewish state should be destroyed by the Roman armies. Now, since our Lord foretold this sad catastrophe in the words of the prophet Daniel, Matthew 24:30, ‘And they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory;’ and after describing every particular of it with the greatest exactness, seeing he told his disciples, Matthew 24:34, ‘This generation shall not pass till all these things be fulfilled;’ can there be any doubt that the apostles, (who, when they wrote their epistles, certainly understood the true import of this prophecy,) by their Master’s coming and by the end of all things, which they represent as at hand, mean his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an end to the institutions of Moses? It is no objection to this, that, when the apostles heard Christ declare, ‘There shall not be left here one stone upon another that shall not be thrown down,’ they connected the end of the world or age with that event; Matthew 24:3: ‘Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of thy coming, και συντελειας του αιωνος, and of the end of the age?’ For as the Jewish doctors divided the duration of the world into three ages; the age before the law, the age under the law, and the age under the Messiah; the apostle knew that the age under the law was to end when the age under the Messiah began; and therefore by the end of the age they meant, even at that time, not the end of the world, but the end of the age under the law, in which the Jews had been greatly oppressed by the heathens. And although they did not then understand the purpose for which their Master was to come, nor the true nature of his kingdom; nor suspect that he was to make any change in the institutions of Moses; yet when they wrote their epistles, being illuminated by the Holy Ghost, they certainly knew that the institutions of Moses were to be abolished; and that their Master’s kingdom was not a temporal but a spiritual dominion, in which all people, nations, and languages were to be governed, not by external force, but by the operation of truth upon their minds through the preaching of the Gospel.

“Farther, that the apostles, by the coming of Christ, which they represented as at hand when they wrote their epistles, meant his coming to establish his spiritual kingdom over all people, nations, and languages, and not his coming to put an end to this mundane system, is evident from what Christ himself told them, Matthew 16:28: ‘There be some standing here

who shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in his kingdom.’ And, agreeably to this account of the coming of Christ and of the end of all things, I observe that every passage of their epistles, in which the apostles have spoken of these things as at hand, may with the greatest propriety be interpreted of Christ’s coming to establish his everlasting kingdom over all people, nations, and languages, by destroying Jerusalem, putting an end to the law of Moses, and spreading the Gospel through the world. Thus, 1 Corinthians 10:11: ‘These things are written for our admonition, upon whom **τα τελη των αιωνων**, the ends of the ages are come,’ means the end of the age under the law, and the beginning of the age under the Messiah. Philippians 4:5: ‘Let your moderation be known to all men: the Lord is nigh;’ namely, to destroy the Jews, your greatest adversaries. Hebrews 9:26: ‘But now once **επι συντελεια των αιωνων**, at the conclusion of the ages, (the Jewish jubilees,) hath he been manifested to abolish sin-offering by the sacrifice of himself.’ Hebrews 10:25: ‘Exhorting one another daily; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching,’ the day of Christ’s coming to destroy Jerusalem and the Jewish state. Hebrews 10:37: ‘For yet a little while, and he who is coming will come, and will not tarry.’ James 5:7: ‘Wherefore, be patient, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord.’ James 5:8: ‘Be ye also patient, strengthen your hearts, for the coming of the Lord (to destroy the Jews, your persecutors) draweth nigh.’ James 5:9: ‘Behold the Judge standeth before the door.’ 1 Peter 4:7: ‘The end of all things (the end of Jerusalem, and of the temple, and of all the Mosaic institutions) hath approached. Be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.’ 1 John 2:18: ‘Young children, it is the last hour of the Jewish state; and as ye have heard (from Christ, in his prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem) that antichrist cometh, so now there are many antichrists, whence we know that it is the last hour of the Jewish state.’

2. “There is another coming of Christ spoken of by the apostles, different likewise from his coming to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things; viz. his coming to destroy the man of sin. 2 Thessalonians 2:8: ‘Him the Lord will consume by the breath of his mouth, and will render ineffectual by the bright shining of his coming.’ This singular event, which will contribute greatly to the honor of God and the good of his Church, being accomplished by a visible and extraordinary

interposition of the power of Christ in the government of the world, is, agreeably to the Scripture style, fitly called the coming of the Lord, and the bright shining of his coming; but this coming is nowhere in the Scriptures said to be at hand.

3. “There is likewise a day or coming of Christ, spoken of by Paul, different from his coming to judgment, and from both the former comings; I mean his releasing his people from their present trial by death. 1 Corinthians 1:8: ‘He also will confirm you unto the end, without accusation, in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ Philippians 1:6: ‘He who hath begun in you a good work, will be completing it until the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.’ It is true, the release of Christ’s servants from their present trial by death is accomplished, for the most part, by no extraordinary display of his power; yet it is fitly enough called his day and coming, because by his appointment all men die, and by his power each is carried to his own place after death. Besides, his servants in particular being put on their duty, like soldiers, must remain at their several posts till released by their commander: and when he releases them, he is fitly said to come for that purpose.

4. “Besides all these, there is a day or coming of the Lord to judge the world, and to put an end to the present state of things. This coming Christ himself has promised. Matthew 16:27: ‘The Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his holy angels; and then shall he reward every man according to his work.’ Now this, being a real, personal appearing of Christ in the body, is, more properly than any other of his comings, called the day and coming of Christ. And the purposes of it being more important than those of his other comings, the exertions of his power for accomplishing them will be most signal and glorious. Hence this coming is, with great propriety, termed the revelation of Jesus Christ, and the day of his revelation, when he shall be glorified in his saints, and admired of all them who believe.

“Thus it appears that, when the apostles wrote, there were four comings of Christ to happen, three of them figurative, but the fourth a real appearance; that these different comings are frequently spoken of in Scripture; and that, although the coming of Christ to destroy Jerusalem, and to establish his everlasting kingdom, be represented by the apostles as

then at hand, no passage from their writings can be produced in which his personal appearance to judge the world is said, or even insinuated, to be at hand. The truth is, if the different comings of Christ are distinguished as they ought to be, we shall find that the apostles have spoken of each of them according to truth; and that the opinion which some Christians have unadvisedly espoused, to the great discredit of the inspiration of the apostles, has not the least foundation in Scripture.”

The epistle naturally divides itself into three parts, and each is contained in a separate chapter.

PART 1. CHAP. 1. — Contains the address, and motives of consolation in their afflicted and persecuted state.

PART 2. CHAP. 2. — Is partly prophetic, and partly didactic. It contains the doctrine concerning Christ’s coming to judgment, and a prophecy concerning some future but great apostasy from the Christian faith.

PART 3. CHAP. 3. — Is wholly hortatory; and contains a number of important advices relative to Christian virtues, and a proper behavior in those situations in life in which it had pleased God to call them.

This is the shortest of all St. Paul’s epistles to the Churches, but is of very great importance, and in many places very sublime, especially in the second part; and in this there are several very great difficulties, and some things hard to be understood. After all the pains and labor of learned men, it would be hazardous to say, the meaning of every part is now clearly made out. What increases the difficulty is, that the apostle refers to some private communication with themselves, no part of which is on record, and without which it would require St. Paul’s inspiration to be able to fix the sense and meaning of all we find here. May the Father of lights give the reader a wise understanding in all things! Amen.

**THE**

**SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO THE**

**THESSALONIANS.**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5560.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5554.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5544.
- Year of the Julian period, 4762.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4056.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4280.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3812.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4411.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2400.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3154.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 992.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 799.
- Year of the CCVIIth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 799.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 803.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 804.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 805.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 364.

- Year of the Cesarean era of Antioch, 100.
- Year of the Julian era, 97.
- Year of the Spanish era, 90.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 56.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 52.
- Year of Ventidius Cumanus, governor of the Jews, 4.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 3.
- Year of Caius Numidius Quadratus, governor of Syria, 2.
- Year of Ananias, high priest of the Jews, 8.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 53.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 15; or the second year after the fifth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 12, or the first after the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 5.
- Dominical Letters, it being Bissextile, or Leap Year, BA.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the Calends of April, i.e. April 1st, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, April 2.
- Epact, or the moon's age on the 22d of March, or the XIth of the Calends of April, 4.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, of the moon's age on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 18, 20, 20.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March (or the XIIth of the Calends of April) to the Jewish Passover, 10 -Year of Claudius Caesar, the fifth emperor of the Romans, 12.
- Roman Consuls, Publius Cornelius Sylla Faustus, and Lucius Salvius Otho Titianus; and for the following year, (which is by some supposed to be the date of this epistle,) Decimus Junius Silanus, and Quintus Haterius Antoninus.

## CHAPTER 1

*The salutation of St. Paul and his companions, 1, 2. The apostle gives thanks to God for their faith, love, and union; and for their patience under persecutions, 3, 4. Speaks of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, the punishment of the ungodly, and the glorification of the righteous, 5-10. Prays that God may count them worthy of their calling, that the name of Jesus may be glorified in them, 11, 12.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *Paul, and Silvanus, etc.*** See the notes on 1 Thessalonians 1:1. This epistle was written a short time after the former: and as Silas and Timothy were still at Corinth, the apostle joins their names with his own, as in the former case.

**Verse 3. *Your faith groweth exceedingly*** The word *υπεραυξανει* signifies to grow luxuriantly, as a good and healthy tree planted in a good soil; and if a fruit tree, bearing an abundance of fruit to compensate the labor of the husbandman. Faith is one of the seeds of the kingdom; this the apostle had sowed and watered, and God gave an abundant increase. Their faith was multiplied, and their love abounded; and this was not the case with some distinguished characters only, it was the case with every one of them.

**Verse 4. *We ourselves glory in you in the Churches of God*** We hold you up as an example of what the grace of God, can produce when communicated to honest and faithful hearts.

***For your patience and faith*** From Acts 17:5, 13, and from 1 Thessalonians 2:14, we learn, that the people of Thessalonica had suffered much persecution, both from the Jews and their own countrymen; but being thoroughly convinced of the truth of the Gospel, and feeling it to be the power of God unto salvation, no persecution could turn them aside from it. And having suffered for the truth, it was precious to them. Persecution never essentially injured the genuine Church of God.

**Verse 5. *A manifest token of the righteousness judgement of God*** The persecutions and tribulations which you endure, are a manifest proof that God has judged righteously in calling you Gentiles into his Church; and

these sufferings are also a proof that ye are called in; for they who enter into the kingdom of God go through great tribulation; your going through that tribulation is a proof that ye are entering in, and God sees it right and just that ye should be permitted to suffer before ye enjoy that endless felicity.

The words, however, may be understood in another sense, and will form this maxim: “The sufferings of the just, and the triumphs of the wicked, in this life, are a sure proof that there will be a future judgment, in which the wicked shall be punished and the righteous rewarded. “This maxim is not only true in itself, but it is most likely that this is the apostle’s meaning.

***That ye may be counted worthy*** Your patient endurance of these sufferings is a proof that ye are rendered meet for that glory on account of which ye suffer and, in a true Gospel sense of the word, worthy of that glory; for he who is a child of God, and a partaker of the Divine nature, is worthy of God’s kingdom, not because he has done any thing to merit it, but because he bears the image of God; and the image is that which gives the title.

**Verse 6. *Seeing it is a righteous thing*** Though God neither rewards nor punishes in this life in a general way, yet he often gives proofs of his displeasure, especially against those who persecute his followers. They, therefore, who have given you tribulation, shall have tribulation in recompense.

**Verse 7. *And to you who are troubled, rest with us*** And while they have tribulation, you shall have that eternal rest which remains for the people of God.

***When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed*** But this fullness of tribulation to them, and rest to you, shall not take place till the Lord Jesus come to judge the world.

***With his mighty angels*** The coming of God to judge the world is scarcely ever spoken of in the sacred writings without mentioning the holy angels, who are to accompany him, and to form his court or retinue. See Deuteronomy 33:2; Matthew 25:31; 16:27; 26:64; Mark 8:38.



**Verse 8. *In flaming fire*** εν φλογι πυρος· In thunder and lightning, taking vengeance — inflicting just punishment on them that know not God — the heathen who do not worship the true God, and will not acknowledge him, but worship idols; and on them that obey not the Gospel — the Jews, particularly who have rejected the Gospel, and persecuted Christ and his messengers; and all nominal Christians who, though they believe the Gospel as a revelation from God, yet do not obey it as a rule of life.

**Verse 9. *Who shall be punished*** What this everlasting destruction consists in we cannot tell. It is not annihilation, for their being continues; and as the destruction is everlasting, it is an eternal continuance and presence of substantial evil, and absence of all good; for a part of this punishment consists in being banished from the presence of the Lord — excluded from his approbation, for ever; so that the light of his countenance can be no more enjoyed, as there will be an eternal impossibility of ever being reconciled to him.

***The glory of his power*** Never to see the face of God throughout eternity is a heart-rending, soul-appalling thought; and to be banished from the glory of his power, that power the glory of which is peculiarly manifested in saving the lost and glorifying the faithful, is what cannot be reflected on without confusion and dismay. But this must be the lot of all who acknowledge not God, and obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Verse 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints*** As the grace of God is peculiarly glorified in saving sinners and making them into saints, this gracious power will be particularly manifested in the great day, when countless millions will appear before that throne who have come out of great tribulation, and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

***And to be admired*** οαυμασθηναι· To be wondered at among and on the account of all them that believe. Much as true believers admire the perfections of the Redeemer of mankind, and much as they wonder at his amazing condescension in becoming man, and dying for the sins of the world; all their present amazement and wonder will be as nothing when compared with what they shall feel when they come to see him in all his glory, the glory that he had with the father before the world was. In

reference to this we may apply those words of St. John: “Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.” 1 John 3:2.

Instead of **τοῖς πιστευουσιν**, them that believe, **τοῖς πιστευσασιν**, them that have believed, is the reading of ABCDEF, many others, the later Syriac, Slavonic, Vulgate, and Itala, with most of the Greek fathers. This reading is undoubtedly genuine.

***Because our testimony-was believed in that day.*** The members of this sentence seem to have been strangely transposed. I believe it should be read thus: “In that day, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired among all them that have believed; for our testimony was believed among you.” The Thessalonians had credited what the apostles had said and written, not only concerning Jesus Christ in general, but concerning the day of judgment in particular.

**Verse 11. *We pray-that our God would count you worthy*** It is our earnest prayer that God would make you worthy, **αξιωση**, afford those continual supplies of grace by his Holy Spirit, without which you cannot adorn your holy vocation; you are called into the Christian Church, and, to be proper members of this Church, you must be members of the mystical body of Christ; and this implies that you should be holy, as he who has called you is holy.

***Fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness*** 1. The goodness of God-his own innate eternal kindness, has led him to call you into this state of salvation. 2. It is the pleasure of that goodness to save you unto eternal life. 3. It is the good pleasure; nothing can please God more than your receiving and retaining his utmost salvation. 4. It is all the good pleasure of his goodness thus to save you; this he has amply proved by sending his Son to die for you, beyond which gift he has none greater. In this, all the good pleasure of his goodness is astonishingly manifested. 5. And if you be faithful to his grace, he will fulfill — completely accomplish, all the good pleasure of his goodness in you; which goodness is to be apprehended and is to work by faith, the power of which must come from him, though the act or exercise of that power must be of yourselves; but the very power to believe affords excitement to the exercise of faith.

**Verse 12. *That the name of our Lord*** This is the great end of your Christian calling, that Jesus who hath died for you may have his passion and death magnified in your life and happiness; that ye may show forth the virtues of him who called you from darkness into his marvellous light.

***And ye in him*** That his glorious excellence may be seen upon you; that ye may be adorned with the graces of his Spirit, as he is glorified by your salvation from all sin.

***According to the grace*** That your salvation may be such as God requires, and such as is worthy of his grace to communicate. God saves as becomes God to save; and thus the dignity of his nature is seen in the excellence and glory of his work.

1. It is an awful consideration to the people of the world, that persecutions and afflictions should be the lot of the true Church, and should be the proof of its being such; because this shows more than any thing else the desperate state of mankind, their total enmity to God; they persecute, not because the followers of God have done or can do them hurt, but they persecute because they have not the Spirit of Christ in them! Men may amuse themselves by arguing against the doctrine of original sin, or the total depravity of the soul of man; but while there is religious persecution in the world, there is the most absolute disproof of all their arguments. Nothing but a heart wholly alienated from God could ever devise the persecution or maltreatment of a man, for no other cause but that he has given himself up to glorify God with his body and spirit, which are his.

2. The everlasting destruction of the ungodly is a subject that should be continually placed before the eyes of men by the preachers of the Gospel. How shall a man be induced to take measures to escape a danger of the existence of which he is not convinced? Show him the hell which the justice of God has lighted up for the devil and his angels, and in which all Satan's children and followers must have their eternal portion. All the perfections of God require that he should render to every man his due. And what is the due of a sinner or a persecutor, of one who is a determinate enemy to God, goodness, and good men? Why, everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power. And

if God did not award this to such persons, he could not be the God of justice.

3. The grand object of God in giving his Gospel to mankind is to save them from their sins, make them like himself, and take them to his eternal glory. He saves according to the measure of his eternal goodness; the scanty salvation contended for and expected by the generality of Christians, it would be dishonorable to God to administer. He saves according to his grace. His own eternal goodness and holiness is the measure of his salvation to man; not the creeds and expectations of any class of Christians. To be saved at all, we must not only be saved in God's way, and upon his own terms, but also according to his own measure. He who is not filled with the fullness of God cannot expect the glory of God.

4. Another proof of the fall and degeneracy of men is, their general enmity to the doctrine of holiness; they cannot bear the thought of being sanctified through body, soul, and spirit, so as to perfect holiness in the fear of God. A spurious kind of Christianity is gaining ground in the world. Weakness, doubtfulness, littleness of faith, consciousness of inward corruptions, and sinful infirmities of different kinds, are by some considered the highest proofs of a gracious state; whereas in the primitive Church they would have been considered as evidences that the persons in question had received just light enough to show them their wretchedness and danger, but not the healing virtue of the blood of Christ.

## CHAPTER 2

He exhorts the Thessalonians to stand fast in the faith, and not to be alarmed at the rumors they heard concerning the sudden coming of Christ, 1, 2. Because, previously to this coming, there would be a great apostasy from the true faith, and a manifestation of a son of perdition, of whose unparalleled presumption he gives an awful description; as well as of his pernicious success among men, and the means which he would use to deceive and pervert the world; and particularly those who do not receive the love of the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness, 3-12. He thanks God for their steadfastness; shows the great privileges to which

they were called; and prays that they may be comforted and established in every good word and work, 13-17.

## NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *We beseech you-by the coming of our Lord*** It is evident that the Thessalonians, incited by deceived or false teachers, had taken a wrong meaning out of the words of the first epistle, 1 Thessalonians 4:15, etc., concerning the day of judgment; and were led then to conclude that that day was at hand; and this had produced great confusion in the Church: to correct this mistake, the apostle sent them this second letter, in which he shows that this day must be necessarily distant, because a great work is to be done previously to its appearing.

Of the day of general judgment he had spoken before, and said that it should come as a thief in the night, i.e. when not expected; but he did not attempt to fix the time, nor did he insinuate that it was either near at hand, or far off. Now, however, he shows that it must necessarily be far off, because of the great transactions which must take place before it can come.

**Verse 2. *Be not soon shaken in mind*** *απο του νοου*. From the mind; i.e. that they should retain the persuasion they had of the truths which he had before delivered to them; that they should still hold the same opinions, and hold fast the doctrines which they had been taught.

***Neither by spirit*** Any pretended revelation.

***Nor by word*** Any thing which any person may profess to have heard the apostle speak.

***Nor by letter*** Either the former one which he had sent, some passages of which have been misconceived and misconstrued; or by any other letter, as from us — pretending to have been written by us, the apostles, containing predictions of this kind. There is a diversity of opinion among critics concerning this last clause, some supposing that it refers simply to the first epistle; others supposing that a forged epistle is intended. I have joined the two senses. The word *σαλευθηναι*, to be shaken, signifies to be agitated as a ship at sea in a storm, and strongly marks the confusion

and distress which the Thessalonians had felt in their false apprehension of this coming of Christ.

***As that the day of Christ is at hand.*** In the preface to this epistle I have given a general view of the meaning of the phrase the coming of Christ. Now the question is: Whether does the apostle mean, the coming of Christ to execute judgment upon the Jews, and destroy their polity, or his coming at the end of time, to judge the world? There are certainly many expressions in the following verses that may be applied indifferently to either, and some seem to apply to the one, and not to the other; and yet the whole can scarcely be so interpreted as to suit any one of these comings exclusively. This is precisely the case with the predictions of our Lord relative to these great events; one is used to point out and illustrate the other. On this ground I am led to think that the apostle, in the following confessedly obscure words, has both these in view, speaking of none of them exclusively; for it is the custom of the inspired penmen, or rather of that Spirit by which they spoke, to point out as many certain events by one prediction as it was possible to do, and to choose the figures, metaphors, and similes accordingly; and thus, from the beginning, God has pointed out the things that were not by the things that then existed, making the one the types or significations of the other. As the apostle spoke by the same Spirit, he most probably followed the same plan; and thus the following prophecy is to be interpreted and understood.

**Verse 3.** ***Except there come a falling away first*** We have the original word **ἄποστασις** in our word apostasy; and by this term we understand a dereliction of the essential principles of religious truth — either a total abandonment of Christianity itself, or such a corruption of its doctrines as renders the whole system completely inefficient to salvation. But what this apostasy means is a question which has not yet, and perhaps never will be, answered to general satisfaction. At present I shall content myself with making a few literal remarks on this obscure prophecy, and afterwards give the opinions of learned men on its principal parts.

***That man of sin*** ὁ ἀνθρώπος τῆς ἀμαρτίας: The same as the Hebrew expresses by **איש און** ish aven, and **איש בליעל** ish beliyaal; the perverse, obstinate, and iniquitous man. It is worthy of remark that, among the rabbins, Samael, or the devil, is called **איש בליעל ואיש און** ish beliyaal

veish aven, the man of Belial, and the man of iniquity; and that these titles are given to Adam after his fall.

***The son of perdition*** ὁ υἱος της απωλειας· The son of destruction; the same epithet that is given to Judas Iscariot, John 17:12, where see the note. The son of perdition, and the man of sin, or, as some excellent MSS. and versions, with several of the fathers, read, ανθρωπος της ανομιας, the lawless man, see 2 Thessalonians 2:8, must mean the same person or thing. It is also remarkable that the wicked Jews are styled by Isaiah, Isaiah 1:4, כִּשְׂתֵּם הָפֶּ אֲנִי נְדֻמָּתָא 12 אֲנִי נְדֻמָּתָא 310 אֲנִי נְדֻמָּתָא אֲנִי נְדֻמָּתָא

**Verse 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth*** I told you this among other things; I informed you what it was that prevented this man of sin, this son of perdition, from revealing himself fully.

**Verse 7. *For the mystery of iniquity doth already work*** There is a system of corrupt doctrine, which will lead to the general apostasy, already in existence, but it is a mystery; it is as yet hidden; it dare not show itself, because of that which hindereth or withholdeth. But when that which now restraineth shall be taken out of the way, then shall that wicked one be revealed—it will then be manifest who he is, and what he is. See the observations at the end of this chapter. {2 Thessalonians 2:17}

**Verse 8. *Whom the Lord shall consume*** He shall blast him so, that he shall wither and die away; and this shall be done by the spirit of his mouth — the words of eternal life, the true doctrine of the Gospel of Jesus; this shall be the instrument used to destroy this man of sin: therefore it is evident his death will not be a sudden but a gradual one; because it is by the preaching of the truth that he is to be exposed, overthrown, and finally destroyed.

***The brightness of his coming*** This may refer to that full manifestation of the truth which had been obscured and kept under by the exaltation of this man of sin.

**Verse 9. *Whose coming is after the working of Satan*** The operation of God's Spirit sends his messengers; the operation of Satan's spirit sends his emissaries. The one comes **κατ' ενεργειαν του θεου**, after or according to the energy or inward powerful working of God; the other comes **καρ' ενεργειαν του σατανα**, according to the energy or inward working of Satan.

***With all power* παση δυναμει** All kinds of miracles, like the Egyptian magicians; and signs and lying wonders: the word lying may be applied to the whole of these; they were lying miracles, lying signs, and lying wonders; only appearances of what was real, and done to give credit to his presumption and imposture. Whereas God sent his messengers with real miracles, real signs, and real wonders; such Satan cannot produce.



**Verse 10. *And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness*** With every art that cunning can invent and unrighteousness suggest, in order to delude and deceive.

***In them that perish*** εν τοις απολλυμενοις· Among them that are destroyed; and they are destroyed and perish because they would not receive the love of the truth, that they might be saved. So they perish because they obstinately refuse to be saved, and receive a lie in preference to the truth. This has been true of all the Jews from the days of the apostle until now.

**Verse 11. *God shall send them strong delusion*** For this very cause, that they would not receive the love of the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness, therefore God permits strong delusion to occupy their minds; so that they believe a lie rather than the truth, prefer false apostles and their erroneous doctrines to the pure truths of the Gospel, brought to them by the well-accredited messengers of God; being ever ready to receive any false Messiah, while they systematically and virulently reject the true one.

**Verse 12. *That they all might be damned*** ἵνα κριθωσι· So that they may all be condemned who believed not the truth when it was proclaimed to them; but took pleasure in unrighteousness, preferring that to the way of holiness. Their condemnation was the effect of their refusal to believe the truth; and they refused to believe it because they loved their sins. For a farther and more pointed illustration of the preceding verses, see the conclusion of this chapter. {2 Thessalonians 2:17}

**Verse 13. & 14. *God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, etc.*** In your calling, God has shown the purpose that he had formed from the beginning, to call the Gentiles to the same privileges with the Jews, not through circumcision, and the observance of the Mosaic law, but by faith in Christ Jesus; but this simple way of salvation referred to the same end — holiness, without which no man, whether Jew or Gentile, can see the Lord.

Let us observe the order of Divine grace in this business: 1. They were to hear the truth — the doctrines of the Gospel. 2. They were to believe this truth when they heard it preached. 3. They were to receive the Spirit of

God in believing the truth. 4. That Spirit was to sanctify their souls-produce an inward holiness, which was to lead to all outward conformity to God. 5. All this constituted their salvation — their being fitted for the inheritance among the saints in light. 6. They were to obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ — that state of felicity for which they were fitted, by being saved here from their sins, and by being sanctified by the Spirit of God.

**Verse 14.** {See Clarke on “2 Thessalonians 2:13”}

**Verse 15.** *Therefore, brethren, stand fast* Their obtaining eternal glory depended on their faithfulness to the grace of God; for this calling did not necessarily and irresistibly lead to faith; nor their faith to the sanctification of the spirit; nor their sanctification of the spirit to the glory of our Lord Jesus. Had they not attended to the calling, they could not have believed; had they not believed, they could not have been sanctified; had they not

***Everlasting consolation*** παρακλησιν αιωνιαν· The glad tidings of the Gospel, and the comfort which ye have received through believing; a gift which God had in his original purpose, in reference to the Gentiles; a purpose which has respected all times and places, and which shall continue to the conclusion of time; for the Gospel is everlasting, and shall not be superseded by any other dispensation. It is the last and best which God has provided for man; and it is good tidings, everlasting consolation — a complete system of complete peace and happiness. The words may also refer to the happiness which the believing Thessalonians then possessed.

***And good hope through grace*** The hope of the Gospel was the resurrection of the body, and the final glorification of it and the soul throughout eternity. This was the good hope which the Thessalonians had; not a hope that they should be pardoned or sanctified, etc. Pardon and holiness they enjoyed, therefore they were no objects of hope; but the resurrection of the body and eternal glory were necessarily future; these they had in expectation; these they hoped for; and, through the grace which they had already received they had a good hope — a well-grounded expectation, of this glorious state.

**Verse 17. *Comfort your hearts*** Keep your souls ever under the influence of his Holy Spirit: and stablish you — confirm and strengthen you in your belief of every good word or doctrine, which we have delivered unto you; and in the practice of every good work, recommended and enjoined by the doctrines of the Gospel.

It is not enough that we believe the truth; we must love the truth. Antinomianism says: “Believe the doctrines, and ye are safe.” The testimony borne by the Gospel is: Believe, love, obey: none of these can subsist without the other. The faith of a devil may exist without loving obedience; but the faith of a true believer worketh by love; and this faith and love have not respect to some one commandment, but to all; for God writes his whole law on the heart of every genuine Christian, and gives him that love which is the fulfilling of the law.

THE reader will have observed that, in going through this chapter, while examining the import of every leading word, I have avoided fixing any specific meaning to terms: the apostasy or falling away; the man of sin; son of perdition; him who letteth or withholdeth, etc. The reason is, I have

found it extremely difficult to fix any sense to my own satisfaction; and it was natural for me to think that, if I could not satisfy myself, it was not likely I could satisfy my readers. But, as something should be said relative to the persons and things intended by the apostle, I choose to give rather what others have said, than attempt any new mode of interpretation. The great variety of explanations given by wise and learned men only prove the difficulty of the place.

1. The general run of Protestant writers understand the whole as referring to the popes and Church of Rome, or the whole system of the papacy. 2. Others think that the defection of the Jewish nation, from their allegiance to the Roman emperor, is what is to be understood by the apostasy or falling off; and that all the other terms refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. 3. The fathers understood the Antichrist to be intended, but of this person they seem to have formed no specific idea. 4. Dr. Hammond refers the apostasy to the defection of the primitive Christians to the Gnostic heresy; and supposes that, by the man of sin and son of perdition, Simon Magus is meant. 5. Grotius applies the whole to Caius Caesar. 6. Wetstein applies the apostasy to the rebellion and slaughter of the three princes that were proclaimed by the Roman armies, previously to the reign of Vespasian; and supposes Titus and the Flavian family to be intended by the man of sin and son of perdition. 7. Schoettgen contends strongly that the whole refers to the case of the Jews, incited to rebellion by the scribes and Pharisees, and to the utter and final destruction of the rabbinic and Pharisaic system; and thinks he finds something in their spirit and conduct, and in what has happened to them, to illustrate every word in this prophecy. Dr. Whitby is nearly of the same sentiments. 8. Calmet follows, in the main, the interpretation given by the ancient fathers; and wonders at the want of candour in the Protestant writers, who have gleaned up every abusive tale against the bishops and Church of Rome; and asks them, would they be willing that the Catholics should credit all the aspersions cast on Protestantism by its enemies? 9. Bishop Newton has examined the whole prophecy with his usual skill and judgment. The sum of what he says, as abridged by Dr. Dodd, I think it right to subjoin. The principal part of modern commentators follow his steps. He applies the whole to the Romish Church: the apostasy, its defection from the pure doctrines of Christianity; and the man of sin, etc. the general succession of the popes of

Rome. But we must hear him for himself, as he takes up the subject in the order of the verses.

**Verses 3, 4.** For that day shall not come, except, etc. — “The day of Christ shall not come except there come the apostasy first.” The apostasy here described is plainly not of a civil but of a religious nature; not a revolt from the government, but a defection from the true religion and worship. In the original, it is the apostasy, with an article to give it an emphasis; the article being added signifies, “that famous and before-mentioned prophecy.” So likewise is the man of sin with the like article, and the like emphasis. If, then, the notion of the man of sin be derived from any ancient prophet, it must be derived from Daniel 7:25; 11:36. Any man may be satisfied that St. Paul alluded to Daniel’s description, because he has not only borrowed the same ideas, but has even adopted some of the phrases and expressions. The man of sin may signify either a single man, or a succession of men; a succession of men being meant in Daniel, it is probable that the same was intended here also. It is the more probable, because a single man appears hardly sufficient for the work here assigned; and it is agreeable to the phraseology of Scripture, and especially to that of the prophets, to speak of a body or number of men, under the character of one: thus, a king, Daniel 7:8; Revelation 17:1-18, is used for a succession of kings. The man of sin being to be expressed from Daniel 7:24, according to the Greek translation, He shall exceed in evil all that went before him; and he may fulfill the character either by promoting wickedness in general, or by advancing idolatry in particular, as the word sin signifies frequently in Scripture. The son of perdition is also the denomination of the traitor Judas, John 17:12, which implies that the man of sin should be, like Judas, a false apostle; like him, betray Christ; and, like him, be devoted to destruction. Who opposeth, etc., is manifestly copied from Daniel, He shall exalt himself, etc. The features exactly resemble each other: He opposeth and exalteth himself above all; or, according to the Greek, above every one that is called God, or that is worshipped. The Greek word for worshipped is **σεβασμα**, alluding to the Greek title of the Roman emperors, **σεβαστος**, which signifies august or venerable. He shall oppose; for the prophets speak of things future as present; he shall oppose and exalt himself, not only above inferior magistrates, (who are sometimes called gods in holy writ,) but even above the greatest emperors; and shall

arrogate to himself Divine honors. So that he, as God, sitteth in the temple, etc. By the temple of God the apostle could not well mean the temple of Jerusalem; because that, he knew, would be destroyed within a few years. After the death of Christ the temple of Jerusalem is never called by the apostles the temple of God; and if at any time they make mention of the house or temple of God, they mean the Church in general, or every particular believer. Who ever will consult 1 Corinthians 3:16, 17; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Timothy 3:15; Revelation 3:12; will want no examples to prove that, under the Gospel dispensation, the temple of God is the Church of Christ; and the man of sin sitting implies this ruling and presiding there; and sitting there as God implies his claiming Divine authority in things spiritual as well as temporal; and showing himself that he is God, implies his doing it with ostentation.

**Verses 5, 6, 7.** Remember ye not, etc. — The apostle thought it part of his duty, as he made it a part of his preaching and doctrine, to forewarn his new converts of the grand apostasy that would infect the Church, even while he was at Thessalonica. From these verses it appears that the man of sin was not then revealed; his time was not yet come, or the season of his manifestation. The mystery of iniquity was indeed already working; the seeds of corruption were sown, but they were not grown up to maturity; the man of sin was yet hardly conceived in the womb; it must be some time before he could be brought forth; there was some obstacle that hindered his appearing. What this was we cannot determine with absolute certainty at so great a distance of time; but if we may rely upon the concurrent testimony of the fathers, it was the Roman empire. Most probably it was somewhat relating to the higher powers, because the apostle observes such caution; he mentioned it in discourse, but would not commit it to writing.

**Verse 8.** Then shall that Wicked be revealed. — When the obstacle, mentioned in the preceding verse, should be removed, then shall that wicked, etc. Nothing can be plainer than that the lawless, (*ο ανομοος*;) as the Greek signifies, the wicked one, here mentioned, and the man of sin, must be one and the same person. The apostle was speaking before of what hindered that he should be revealed, and would continue to hinder it till it was taken away; and then the wicked one, etc. Not that he should be consumed immediately after he was revealed. But the apostle, to comfort

the Thessalonians, no sooner mentions his revelation than he foretells also his destruction, even before he describes his other qualifications. His other qualifications should have been described first, in order of time; but the apostle hastens to what was first and warmest in his thoughts and wishes: Whom the Lord shall consume, etc. If these two clauses refer to two distinct and different events, the meaning manifestly is, that the Lord Jesus shall gradually consume him with the free preaching and publication of his word; and shall utterly destroy him at his second coming, in the glory of his Father, with all the holy angels. If these two clauses relate to one and the same event, it is a pleonasm very usual in the sacred, as well as other oriental writings; and the purport plainly is, that the Lord Jesus shall destroy him with the greatest facility, when he shall be revealed from heaven, as the apostle has expressed it in the preceding chapter.

**Verses 9-12.** Whose coming is after, etc. — The apostle was eager to foretell the destruction of the man of sin; and for this purpose having broken in upon his subject, he now returns to it again, and describes the other qualifications by which this wicked one should advance and establish himself in the world. He should rise to credit and authority by the most diabolical methods; should pretend to supernatural powers; and boast of revelations, visions, and miracles, false in themselves, and applied to promote false doctrines.

**Verse 9.** He should likewise practice all other wicked acts of deceit; should be guilty of the most impious frauds and impositions upon mankind; but should prevail only among those who are destitute of a sincere affection for the truth; whereby they might attain eternal salvation.

**Verse 10.** And indeed it is a just and righteous judgment of God, to give them over to vanities and lies in this world, and to condemnation in the next, who have no regard to truth and virtue, but delight in falsehood and wickedness; 2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12.

Upon this survey there appears little room to doubt of the genuine sense and meaning of the passage. The Thessalonians, as we have seen from some expressions in the former epistle, were alarmed as if the end of the world was at hand. The apostle, to correct their mistake and dissipate their fears, assures them that a great apostasy, or defection of the Christians from the true faith and worship, must happen before the coming of Christ.

This apostasy all the concurrent marks and characters will justify us in charging upon the Church of Rome. The true Christian worship is the worship of the one only God, through the one only Mediator, the man Christ Jesus; and from this worship the Church of Rome has most notoriously departed, by substituting other mediators, and invoking and adoring saints and angels, nothing is apostasy, if idolatry be not. And are not the members of the Church of Rome guilty of idolatry in the worship of images, in the adoration of the host, in the invocation of angels and saints, and in the oblation of prayers and praises to the Virgin Mary, as much or more than to God blessed for ever? This is the grand corruption of the Christian Church: this is the apostasy as it is emphatically called, and deserves to be called; which was not only predicted by St. Paul, but by the Prophet Daniel likewise. If the apostasy be rightly charged upon the Church of Rome, it follows of consequence that the man of sin is the pope; not meaning any pope in particular, but the pope in general, as the chief head and supporter of this apostasy. He is properly the man of sin, not only on account of the scandalous lives of many popes, but by reason of their most scandalous doctrines and principles; dispensing with the most necessary duties; and granting, or rather selling, pardons and indulgences to the most abominable crimes. Or, if by sin be meant idolatry in particular, as in the Old Testament, it is evident how he has perverted the worship of God to superstition and idolatry of the grossest kind. He also, like the false apostle, Judas, is the son of perdition; whether actively, as being the cause of destruction to others; or passively, as being devoted to destruction himself. He opposeth — he is the great adversary of God and man; persecuting and destroying, by croisades, inquisitions, and massacres, those Christians who prefer the word of God to the authority of men. The heathen emperor of Rome may have slain his thousands of innocent Christians; but the Christian bishop of Rome has slain his ten thousands. He exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped — not only above inferior magistrates, but likewise above bishops and primates; not only above bishops and primates, but likewise above kings and emperors; deposing some, obliging them to kiss his toe, to hold his stirrup, treading even upon the neck of a king, and kicking off the imperial crown with his foot; nay, not only kings and emperors, but likewise above Christ and God himself; making even the word of God of none effect by his traditions — forbidding what God has commanded; as marriage, the use of



the Scriptures, etc.; and also commanding or allowing what God has forbidden, as idolatry, persecution, etc. So that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, etc.; he is therefore in profession a Christian, and a Christian bishop. His sitting in the temple of God implies plainly his having a seat or cathedra in the Christian Church; and he sitteth there as God, especially at his inauguration, when he sits upon the high altar in St. Peter's church, and makes the table of the Lord his footstool, and in that position receives adoration. At all times he exercises Divine authority in the Church, showing himself that he is God — affecting Divine titles, and asserting that his decrees are of the same or greater authority than the word of God. So that the pope is evidently, according to the titles given him in the public decretals, The God upon earth; at least there is no one, like him, who exalteth himself above every god; no one, like him, who sitteth as God in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God. The foundations of popery were laid in the apostle's days, but of which the superstructure was raised by degrees; and several ages passed before the building was completed, and the man of sin revealed in full perfection. The tradition that generally prevailed was that that which hindered was the Roman empire: this tradition might have been derived even from the apostle himself; and therefore the primitive Christians, in the public offices of the Church, prayed for its peace and welfare, as knowing that, when the Roman empire should be dissolved and broken in pieces, the empire of the man of sin would be raised upon its ruins. In the same proportion as the power of the empire decreased, the authority of the Church increased, and the latter at the expense and ruin of the former; till at length the pope grew up above all, and the wicked, or lawless one, was fully manifested and revealed. His coming is after the energy of Satan, etc; and does it require any particular proof that the pretensions of the pope, and the corruption of the Church of Rome, are all supported and authorized by feigned visions and miracles, by pious frauds and impositions of every kind? But how much soever the man of sin may be exalted, and how long soever he may reign, yet at last the Lord shall consume him, etc. This is partly taken from Isaiah 11:4, And with the breath of his lips shall he slay the wicked one; where the Jews put an emphasis upon the words the wicked one; as appears from the Chaldee, which renders it, "He shall destroy the wicked Roman." If the two clauses, as said in the note on 2 Thessalonians 2:8, relate to two different events, the meaning is, "that the Lord Jesus shall

gradually consume him with the free preaching of the Gospel; and shall utterly destroy him at his second coming in the glory of the Father.” The former began to take effect at the Reformation; and the latter will be accomplished in God’s appointed time. The man of sin is now upon the decline, and he will be totally abolished when Christ shall come in judgment. Justin Martyr, Tertullian, Origen, Lactantius, Cyril of Jerusalem, Ambrose, Hilary, Jerome, Augustine, and Chrysostom, give much the same interpretation that has here been given of the whole passage. And it must be owned that this is the genuine meaning of the apostle; that this only is consistent with the context; that every other interpretation is forced and unnatural; that this is liable to no material objection; that it coincides perfectly with Daniel; that it is agreeable to the tradition of the primitive Church; and that it has been exactly fulfilled in all its particulars; which cannot be said of any other interpretation whatever. Such a prophecy as this is an illustrious proof of Divine revelation, and an excellent antidote to the poison of popery.

See the Dissertations on the Prophecies; and Dodd, as above.

10. Dr. Macknight proceeds, in general, on the plan of Bishop Newton; but, as he thinks that the apostle had the prophecy of Daniel, in Dan. 7, and 8, particularly in view, he collates his words with those of the prophet in the following way:—

**Verse 3.** That man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition. — ὁ ἄνθρωπος τῆς αμαρτίας, οὐσιος τῆς ἀπωλείας; “The article,” says he, “joined to these appellations, is emphatical, as in the former clause, importing that the ancient prophets had spoken of these persons, though under different names; particularly the Prophet Daniel, whose description of the little horn and blasphemous king agrees so exactly in meaning with Paul’s descriptions of the man of sin, and son of perdition, and lawless one, that there can be little doubt of their being the same persons; but this will best appear by a comparison of the passages:—

2 Thessalonians 2:3. And that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.

2 Thessalonians 2:4. Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped so that he, as God, sitteth in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God.

2 Thessalonians 2:7. Only he who now letteth will let, until he be taken out of the way.

2 Thessalonians 2:8. And there shall that wicked one be revealed.

1 Timothy 4:1. Giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of devils.

1 Timothy 4:3. Forbidding to marry.

2 Thessalonians 2:8. Whom the Lord shall consume with the Spirit mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.

Daniel 7:21. And the same horn made war with the saints, and prevailed against them.

Daniel 7:25. And he shall speak great words against the Most High; and shall wear out the saints of the Most High.

Daniel 11:36. And the king shall do according to his will; and he; shall exalt himself above every god, and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods.

Daniel 8:25. He shall also stand up against the Prince of princes.

Daniel 7:8. I considered the horns, and, behold, there came up among them another little horn, before whom there were three of the first horns plucked up by the roots.

Daniel 7:25. And he shall think to change times and laws, and they shall be given into his hand. See Daniel 8:24.

Daniel 11:38. In his estate he shall honor the god of forces (Mahuzzim, gods who are protectors, that is, tutelary angels and saints.)

Daniel 11:37. Neither shall he regard the God of his fathers, nor the desire of women.

Daniel 7:11. I beheld then, because of his of the voice of the great words which the horn spake; I beheld, even till the beast was slain, and his body destroyed, and given to the burning flame.

Daniel 7:26. And they shall take away his dominion, to consume and destroy it unto the end.

Daniel 8:25. He shall be broken without hand.

After entering into great detail in his notes, he sums up in the following manner:—

“Now as, in the prophecies of Daniel, empires governed by a succession of kings are denoted by a single emblem; such as, by a part of an image, a single beast, a horn, etc., of a beast; so in Paul’s prophecy, the man of sin, and son of perdition, and the lawless one, may denote an impious tyranny, exercised by a succession of men who cause great misery and ruin to others; and who, at length, shall be destroyed themselves. It is true, the papists contend that one person only is meant by these appellations, because they are in the singular number, and have the Greek article prefixed to them. But in Scripture we find other words in the singular number, with the article, used to denote a multitude of persons; for example, Romans 1:17; **ο δικαιοσ**, the just one, by faith, shall live; that is, all just persons whatever: Titus 1:7; **ο επισκοπος**, the bishop must be blameless; that is, all bishops must be so: 2 John 1:7; **οπλανος**, the deceiver, signifies many deceivers, as is plain from the preceding clause, where many deceivers are said to have gone out. In like manner the false teachers, who deceived Christ’s servants to commit fornication and idolatry, are called that woman Jezebel, Revelation 2:20, and the whore of Babylon, Revelation 17:5; and in this prophecy, Revelation 17:7, the Roman emperors, and magistrates under them, are called **ο κατεχων**, he who restraineth. Farther, a succession of persons, arising one after another, is denoted by appellations in the singular number with the article; for example: the succession of the Jewish high priests is thus denoted in the laws concerning them, Leviticus 21:10, 15; Numbers 35:25-28. As also the succession of the Jewish kings, Deuteronomy 17:14; 1 Samuel 8:11. From these examples, therefore, it is plain that the names, man of sin, son of perdition, lawless one, although in the singular number, and with the article prefixed, may, according to the Scripture idiom, denote a multitude, and even a succession of persons arising one after another.

“The facts and circumstances mentioned in these prophecies are, for the most part, so peculiarly marked, that they will not easily apply, except to the persons and events intended by the Spirit of God. And therefore, in every case where different interpretations have been given of any

prophecy, the proper method of ascertaining its meaning is to compare the various events to which it is thought to relate with the words of the prophecy, and to adopt that as the event intended which most exactly agrees in all its parts to the prophetic description.

“According to this rule, though many different interpretations have been given of the prophecy under consideration, that, in my opinion, will appear the best founded which makes it a prediction of the corruptions of Christianity, which began to be introduced into the Church in the apostle’s days, and wrought secretly all the time the heathen magistrates persecuted the Christians, but which showed themselves more openly after the empire received the faith of Christ, A. D. 312, and, by a gradual progress, ended in the monstrous errors and usurpations of the bishops of Rome, when the restraining power of the emperors was taken out of the way by the incursions of the barbarous nations, and the breaking of the empire into the ten kingdoms prefigured by the ten horns of Daniel’s fourth beast. Now, to be convinced of this, we need only compare the rise and progress of the papal tyranny with the descriptions of the man of sin, and of the mystery of iniquity, given in the writings of Daniel and Paul.

“And first, we have shown in note 1, on 2 Thessalonians 2:7, that the mystery of iniquity, or the corrupt doctrines which ended in the errors and usurpations of the see of Rome, was working secretly in the apostle’s days, as he affirms, 2 Thessalonians 2:7; and that the power of the Roman emperors, and of the magistrates under them, was that which then, and during the succeeding ages, restrained the mystery of iniquity in its working, and the man of sin from revealing himself. For, while the power of the state continued in the hands of the heathen rulers, and while they employed that power in persecuting the Christians, the corrupt doctrines and practices introduced by the false teachers did not spread so fast as otherwise they would have done. At least they were not produced to public view as the decisions of Heaven, to which all men were bound to pay implicit obedience. But, after the heathen magistrates were taken out of the way by the conversion of Constantine, and after he and his successors called the Christian bishops to meet in general councils, and enforced their assumption of Divine authority by the civil power; then did they in these councils arrogate to themselves the right of establishing what articles of faith and discipline they thought proper, and of anathematizing

all who rejected their decrees; a claim which, in after times, the bishops of Rome transferred from general councils to themselves. It was in this period that the worship of saints and angels was introduced; celibacy was praised as the highest piety; meats of certain kinds were prohibited; and a variety of superstitious mortifications of the body were enjoined by the decrees of councils, in opposition to the express laws of God. In this period, likewise, idolatry and superstition were recommended to the people by false miracles, and every deceit which wickedness could suggest; such as the miraculous cures pretended to be performed by the bones and other relics of the martyrs, in order to induce the ignorant vulgar to worship them as mediators; the feigned visions of angels, who they said had appeared to this or that hermit, to recommend celibacy, fastings, mortifications of the body, and living in solitude; the apparitions of souls from purgatory, who begged that certain superstitions might be practised, for delivering them from that confinement: by all which, those assemblies of ecclesiastics, who by their decrees enjoined these practices, showed themselves to be the man of sin, and lawless one, in his first form, whose coming was to be with all power, and signs, and miracles of falsehood; and who opposed every one that is called god, or that is worshipped. For these general councils, by introducing the worship of saints and angels, robbed God of the worship due to him; and, by substituting saints and angels as mediators, in the place of Christ, they degraded him from his office as mediator, or rendered it altogether useless. However, though they thus opposed God and Christ by their unrighteous decrees, they did not yet exalt themselves above every one who is called God, or an object of worship; neither did they sit yet in the temple of God, as God, and openly show themselves to be God. These blasphemous extravagances were to be acted in after times by a number of particular persons in succession, I mean by the bishops of Rome, after the power of the Christian Roman emperors and of the magistrates under them, was taken out of the way. For the bishops of that see, having very early obtained from the Christian emperors decrees in their own favor, soon raised themselves above all other bishops; and, by a variety of artifices, made the authority and influence of the whole body of the clergy center in themselves; and claimed that infallible authority which was formerly exercised by general councils, of making articles of faith; and of establishing rules of discipline for the whole Christian community; and of determining, in the last resort, all

differences among the clergy; and of anathematizing every one who did not submit to their unrighteous decisions. In this manner did the bishops of Rome establish in their own persons a spiritual dominion over the whole Christian world. But not content with this height of power, by dexterously employing the credit and influence which the ecclesiastics, now devoted to their will, had over the laity in all the countries where they lived, they interfered in many civil matters also; till at length they reared that intolerable fabric of spiritual and civil tyranny conjoined, whereby the understandings, the persons, and the properties, not of the laity only, but also of the clergy themselves, have for along time been most grievously enthralled, in all the countries where Christianity was professed.

“This height, however, of spiritual and civil tyranny united, the bishops of Rome did not attain till, as the apostle foretold, that which restrained was taken out of the way; or, till an end was put to the authority of the Roman emperors in the west, by the inroads of the barbarous nations; and, more especially, till the western empire was broken into the ten kingdoms, prefigured in Daniel’s vision by the ten horns of the fourth beast; for then it was that the bishops of Rome made themselves the sovereigns of Rome and of its territory, and so became the little horn which Daniel beheld coming up among the ten horns, and which had the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things; to show that its dominion was founded on the deepest policy, and that its strength consisted in the bulls, excommunications, and anathemas, which, with intolerable audacity, it uttered against all who opposed its usurpations. And in process of time, the bishops of Rome having got possession of three of the kingdoms into which the western empire was broken, signified by three of the horns of Daniel’s fourth beast being plucked up by the roots before the little horn, they call themselves the vicars of Christ, on pretense that Christ had transferred his whole authority to them. They also thought to change times and laws, as Daniel foretold; for, as the vicars of Christ, they assumed the power of saving and damning men at their own pleasure; and altered the terms of salvation, making it depend, not on faith and holiness, but on the superstitious practices which they had established; and sold the pardon of sins past, and even the liberty of sinning for the future, for money. Moreover, they openly made war with the saints who resisted their corrupt doctrines and practices, and prevailed against them, and wore out

the saints of the Most High; for, by the cruel and bloody persecutions which they obliged the princes who acknowledged their authority to carry on against those who adhered to the pure doctrines and worship of Christ, they destroyed incredible numbers of them. Nay, by the terror of their excommunications and interdicts, they forced even the most p 0.D



and the usurpations of the clergy were carried to the greatest height. In short, the annals of the world cannot produce persons and events to which the things written in this passage can be applied with so much fitness as to the bishops of Rome. Why then should we be in any doubt concerning the interpretation and application of this famous prophecy?

“At the conclusion of our explication of the prophecy concerning the man of sin, it may be proper to observe, that the events foretold in it being such as never took place in the world before, and, in all probability, never will take place in it again; the foreknowledge of them was certainly a matter out of the reach of human conjecture or foresight. It is evident, therefore, that this prophecy, which from the beginning has stood on record, taken in conjunction with the accomplishment of it verified by the concurrent testimony of history, affords an illustrious proof of the Divine original of that revelation of which it makes a part, and of the inspiration of the person from whose mouth it proceeded.” See Dr. Macknight’s Commentary and Notes, vol. iii., p. 100, etc.

With all this evidence before him, the intelligent reader will now be enabled to judge for himself, and to adopt for his own that opinion which appears to be the best supported by circumstances and facts. The labors of the above learned men have certainly narrowed the principal subjects of inquiry; and we may now safely state that, in this very obscure prophecy, the Spirit of God had in view either the Jewish or an apostate Christian Church, possessing great spiritual and secular influence and jurisdiction. That the words appear to apply best to the conduct of many of the popes, and the corruptions of the Romish Church, needs no proof; but to which of these Churches, or to what other Church or system, we should apply them, some men, as eminent for their piety as for their learning, hesitate to declare: yet I must acknowledge, that the most pointed part of the evidence here adduced tends to fix the whole on the Romish Church, and on none other.

Whatever may be intended here by the words mystery of iniquity, we may safely assert that it is a mystery of iniquity to deny the use of the sacred Scriptures to the common people; and that the Church that does so is afraid to come to the light. Nothing can be more preposterous and monstrous than to call people to embrace the doctrines of Christianity, and

refuse them the opportunity of consulting the book in which they are contained. Persons who are denied the use of the sacred writings may be manufactured into different forms and modes; and be mechanically led to believe certain dogmas, and perform certain religious acts; but without the use of the Scriptures, they never can be intelligent Christians; they do not search the Scriptures, and therefore they cannot know Him of whom these Scriptures testify. The mystery of iniquity contained in this prohibition works now, and has worked long; but did it work in the apostles' times? Did it work in the Church at Thessalonica? Is it possible that the present crop should have been produced from so remote a seed? What does that most solemn adjuration of the apostle, 1 Thessalonians 5:27, mean? I charge you by the Lord, that this epistle be READ unto ALL the holy

## CHAPTER 3

*The apostle recommends himself and his brethren to the prayers of the Church, that their preaching might be successful, and that they might be delivered from wicked men, 1, 2. Expresses his confidence in God and them, and prays that they may patiently wait for the coming of Christ, 3-5. Gives them directions concerning strict discipline in the Church; and shows how he and his fellow laborers had behaved among them, not availing themselves of their own power and authority, 6-9. Shows them how to treat disorderly and idle people, and not to get weary in well doing, 10-13. Directs them not to associate with those who obey not the orders contained in this epistle, 14, 15, Prays that they may have increasing peace, 16, And concludes with his salutation and benediction, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *Finally, brethren*** The words **το λοιπον** do not mean finally, but, furthermore-to come to a conclusion-what remains is this-I shall only add — any of these phrases expresses the sense of the original.

***Pray for us*** God, in the order of his grace and providence, has made even the success of his Gospel dependent, in a certain measure, on the prayers of his followers. Why he should do so we cannot tell, but that he has done so we know; and they are not a little criminal who neglect to make fervent supplications for the prosperity of the cause of God.

***May have free course*** They were to pray that the doctrine of the Lord, **ο λογος του κυριου**, might run, **τρεχη**, an allusion to the races in the Olympic games: that, as it had already got into the stadium or race course, and had started fairly, so it might run on, get to the goal, and be glorified; i.e., gain the crown, appointed for him that should get first to the end of the course.

**Verse 2. *Unreasonable and wicked men*** The word **ατοπων**, which we translate unreasonable, signifies rather disorderly, unmanageable; persons out of their place — under no discipline, regardless of law and restraint, and ever acting agreeably to the disorderly and unreasonable impulse of their own minds.

***For all men have not faith.*** The word **πιστις** is without doubt, to be taken here for fidelity or trustworthiness, and not for faith; and this is agreeable to the meaning given to it in the very next verse: But the Lord is faithful, **πιστος δε εστιν ο κυριος**.

There are many, even of those who have received a measure of the Divine light, in whom we cannot confide; they are irregular, disorderly, and cannot be brought under regular discipline: to these we cannot trust either ourselves or any thing that concerns the cause of God. But the Lord is worthy of your whole confidence; doubt him not; he will establish you, and keep you from any evil to which you may be exposed by these or such like persons.

**Verse 3. *From evil.*** **απο του πονηρου** may be translated, from the devil or from the evil one. They had disorderly men, wicked men, and the evil one or the devil, to contend with; God alone could support and give them the victory; he had promised to do it, and he might ever be confided in as being invariably faithful.

**Verse 4. *And we have confidence*** We have no doubt of God's kindness towards you; he loves you, and will support you: and we can confide in you, that ye are now acting as we have desired you, and will continue so to do.

**Verse 5. *The Lord direct your hearts into the love of God*** The love of God is the grand motive and principle of obedience; this must occupy your hearts: the heart is irregular in all its workings; God alone, by his Spirit, can direct it into his love, and keep it right; **κατευθυνα**, give a proper direction to all its passions, and keep them in order, regularity and purity.

***The patience of Christ.*** Such patience, under all your sufferings and persecutions, as Christ manifested under his. He bore meekly the contradiction of sinners against himself; and when he was reviled, he reviled not again.

**Verse 6. *That ye withdraw yourselves*** Have no fellowship with those who will not submit to proper discipline; who do not keep their place; **ατακτως**, such as are out of their rank, and act according to their own wills and caprices; and particularly such as are idle and busybodies. These he had ordered, 1 Thessalonians 4:11, 12, that they should study to be quiet, mind their own business, and work with their hands; but it appears that they had paid no attention to this order, and now he desires the Church to exclude such from their communion.

***And not after the tradition*** This evidently refers to the orders contained in the first epistle; and that first epistle was the tradition which they had received from him. It was, therefore, no unwritten word, no uncertain saying, handed about from one to another; but a part of the revelation which God had given, and which they found in the body of his epistle. These are the only traditions which the Church of God is called to regard.

**Verse 7. *We behaved not ourselves disorderly*** **ουκ ητακτησαμεν** We did not go out of our rank — we kept our place, and discharged all its duties.

**Verse 8. *Neither did we eat any man's bread for naught*** We paid for what we bought, and worked with our hands that we might have money to buy what was necessary.

***Labour and travail night and day*** We were incessantly employed, either in preaching the Gospel, visiting from house to house, or working at our calling. As it is very evident that the Church at Thessalonica was very pious, and most affectionately attached to the apostle, they must have been very poor, seeing he was obliged to work hard to gain himself the necessaries of life. Had they been able to support him he would not have worked with labor and travail night and day, that he might not be burdensome to them; and, as we may presume that they were very poor, he could not have got his support among them without adding to their burdens. To this his generous mind could not submit; it is no wonder, therefore, that he is so severe against those who would not labor, but were a burden to the poor followers of God.

**Verse 9. *Not because we have not power*** We have the power, **εξουσιαν**, the right, to be maintained by those in whose behalf we labor. The laborer is worthy of his hire, is a maxim universally acknowledged and respected;

and they who preach the Gospel should live by the Gospel: the apostle did not claim his privilege, but labored for his own support, that he might be an example to those whom he found otherwise disposed, and that he might spare the poor. See 1 Corinthians 9:1, etc.

**Verse 10.** *If any would not work, neither should he eat.* This is a just maxim, and universal nature inculcates it to man. If man will work, he may eat; if he do not work, he neither can eat, nor should he eat. The maxim is founded on these words of the Lord: In the sweat of thy brow thou shall eat bread. Industry is crowned with God's blessing; idleness is loaded with his curse. This maxim was a proverb among the Jews. Men who can work, and will rather support themselves by begging, should not get one morsel of bread. It is a sin to minister to necessities that are merely artificial.

**Verse 11.** *For we hear that there are some* It is very likely that St. Paul kept up some sort of correspondence with the Thessalonian Church; for he had heard every thing that concerned their state, and it was from this information that he wrote his second epistle.

**Disorderly** ἀτακτως· Out of their rank — not keeping their own place.

**Working not at all** Either lounging at home, or becoming religious gossips; μηδεν εργαζομενους, doing nothing.

**Busybodies.** περιεργαζομενους· Doing every thing they should not do — impertinent meddlers with other people's business; prying into other people's circumstances and domestic affairs; magnifying or minifying, mistaking or underrating, every thing; newsmongers and telltales; an abominable race, the curse of every neighborhood where they live, and a pest to religious society. There is a fine paronomasia in the above words, and evidently intended by the apostle.

**Verse 12.** *With quietness they work* μετα ησυχιας· With silence; leaving their tale-bearing and officious intermeddling. Less noise and more work!

**That-they work, and eat their own bread.** Their own bread, because earned by their own honest industry. What a degrading thing to live on the bounty or mercy of another, while a man is able to acquire his own livelihood! He who can submit to this has lost the spirit of independence; and has in him a beggar's heart, and is capable of nothing but base and

beggarly actions. Witness the great mass of the people of England, who by their dependence on the poor rates are, from being laborious, independent, and respect able, become idle, profligate, and knavish; the propagators and perpetrators of crime; a discredit to the nation, and a curse to society. The apostle's command is a cure for such; and the Church of God should discountenance such, and disown them.

**Verse 13. *Be not weary in well-doing.*** While ye stretch out no hand of relief to the indolent and lazy, do not forget the real poor — the genuine representatives of an impoverished Christ; and rather relieve a hundred undeserving objects, than pass by one who is a real object of charity.

**Verse 14. *If any man obey not*** They had disobeyed his word in the first epistle, and the Church still continued to bear with them; now he tells the Church, if they still continue to disregard what is said to them, and particularly his word by this second epistle, they are to mark them as being totally incorrigible, and have no fellowship with them.

Some construe the words *δια της επιστολης* with *τουτον σημειουσθε*. Give me information of that man by a letter — let me hear of his continued obstinacy, and send me his name. This was probably in order to excommunicate him, and deliver him over to Satan for the destruction of the body, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. The words of the original will bear either construction, that in the text, or that given above.

**Verse 15. *Count him not as an enemy*** Consider him still more an enemy to himself than to you; and admonish him as a brother, though you have ceased to hold religious communion with him. His soul is still of infinite value; labor to get it saved.

**Verse 16. *The Lord of peace*** Jesus Christ, who is called our peace, Ephesians 2:14; and The Prince of peace, Isaiah 9:6. May he give you peace, for he is the Fountain and Dispenser of it.

***Always*** Both in your own consciences, and among yourselves.

***By all means.*** *παντι τροπω*. By all means, methods, occasions, instruments, and occurrences; peace or prosperity in every form and shape.

Instead of *εν παντι τροπω*, in every way, etc., *εν παντι τοπω*, in every place, is the reading of A\*D\*FG, some others; with the Vulgate and Itala. Chrysostom, Ambrosiaster, Augustine, and others, have the same reading: May God grant you prosperity always, and everywhere.

***The Lord be with you all.*** This is agreeable to the promise of our Lord: Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world; Matthew 28:20. May the Lord, who has promised to be always with his true disciples, be with you! Christians are the temple of God, and the temple of God has the Divine presence in it. May you ever continue to be his Church, that the Lord God may dwell among you!

**Verse 17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand*** It is very likely that Paul employed an amanuensis generally, either to write what he dictated, or to make a fair copy of what he wrote. In either case the apostle always subscribed it, and wrote the salutation and benediction with his own hand; and this was what authenticated all his epistles. A measure of this kind would be very necessary if forged epistles were carried about in those times. See the note on 1 Corinthians 16:21, and see Colossians 4:18.

**Verse 18. *The grace*** The favor, blessing, and influence of our Lord Jesus Christ, be with you all — be your constant companion. May you ever feel his presence, and enjoy his benediction!

***Amen.*** So let be! God grant it! This word in this place, has more evidence in favor of its genuineness than it has in most other places; and was probably added here by the apostle himself, or by the Church of the Thessalonians.

The subscriptions to this epistle are various in the MSS. and VERSIONS. The latter are as follows:—

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians was written from Athens. — Common Greek text.

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, which was written at Laodicea in Pisidia, was sent by the hands of Tychicus. — SYRIAC.

The end of the Epistle; and it was written at Athens. — ARABIC.

To the Thessalonians. — AETHIOPIC.



Written from Athens, and sent by Silvanus and Timotheus. — COPTIC.

No subscription in the VULGATE.

Written at Corinth. — Author of the SYNOPSIS.

— sent by Titus and Onesimus. — Latin Prologue.

The Second Epistle to the Thessalonians, written from Rome. — No. 71, a MS. of the Vatican library, written about the eleventh century.

The chief of the MSS. either have no subscription, or agree with some of the above versions.

That the epistle was neither written at Athens, Laodicea, nor Rome, has been sufficiently proved; and that it was written, as well as the first, at Corinth, is extremely probable. See the preface, and what has been said on the preceding epistle.

I have often had occasion to observe that the subscriptions at the end of the sacred books are not of Divine origin; they are generally false; and yet some have quoted them as making a part of the sacred test, and have adduced them in support of some favourite opinions.

Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, the shortest day in 1831.  
— A. C.

**PREFACE**

**TO THE**

**FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO**

**TIMOTHY.**

IN order to find out who this person was, it will be necessary to consult the Acts of the Apostles, where the first mention is made of him; and by collating what is there said with certain passages in the epistle, we shall find who he was, and the probable time in which the epistle was addressed to him.

Paul and Barnabas, in the course of their first apostolic journey among the Gentiles, came to Lystra, a city of Lycaonia, where they preached the Gospel for some time, and, though persecuted, with considerable success. See Acts 14:5, 6. It is very likely that here they converted to the Christian faith a Jewess named Lois, with her daughter Eunice, who had married a Gentile, by whom she had Timothy, and whose father was probably at this time dead; the grandmother, daughter, and son living together. Compare Acts 16:1-3 with 2 Timothy 1:5. It is likely that Timothy was the only child; and it appears that he had been brought up in the fear of God, and carefully instructed in the Jewish religion by means of the Holy Scriptures. Compare 2 Timothy 1:5 with 2 Timothy 3:15. It appears, also, that this young man drank into the apostle's spirit, became a thorough convert to the Christian faith, and that a very tender intimacy subsisted between St. Paul and him.

When the apostle came from Antioch, in Syria, the second time to Lystra, he found Timothy a member of the Church, and so highly reputed and

warmly recommended by the Church in that place, that St. Paul took him to be his companion in his travels. Acts 16:1-3. From this place we learn that, although Timothy had been educated in the Jewish faith, he had not been circumcised, because his father, who was a Gentile, would not permit it. When the apostle had determined to take him with him, he found it necessary to have him circumcised, not from any supposition that circumcision was necessary to salvation, but because of the Jews, who would neither have heard him nor the apostle had not this been done: the Gospel testimony they would not have received from Timothy, because a heathen; and they would have considered the apostle in the same light, because he associated with such. See the notes on Acts 16:3.

It is pretty evident that Timothy had a special call of God to the work of an evangelist, which the elders of the Church at Lystra knowing, set him solemnly apart to the work by the imposition of hands; 1 Timothy 4:14. And they were particularly led to this by several prophetic declarations relative to him, by which his Divine call was most clearly ascertained. See 1 Timothy 1:18, and 3:14. Some think that, after this appointment by the elders, the apostle himself laid his hands on him, not for the purpose of his evangelical designation, but that he might receive those extraordinary gifts of the Holy Spirit so necessary in those primitive times to demonstrate the truth of the Gospel. See 2 Timothy 1:6, 7. Yet, it is likely that Timothy had not two ordinations; one by the elders of Lystra, and another by the apostle; as it is most probable that St. Paul acted with that *πρεσβυτεριον* or eldership mentioned 1 Timothy 4:14, among whom, in the imposition of hands, he would undoubtedly act as chief.

Timothy, thus prepared to be the apostle's fellow laborer in the Gospel, accompanied him and Silas when they visited the Churches of Phrygia, and delivered to them the decrees of the apostles and elders at Jerusalem, freeing the Gentiles from the law of Moses, as a term of salvation. Having gone through these countries, they at length came to Troas, where Luke joined them; as appears from the phraseology of his history, Acts 16:10, 11, etc. In Troas a vision appeared to Paul, directing them to go into Macedonia. Loosing therefore from Troas, they all passed over to Neapolis; and from thence went to Philippi, where they converted many, and planted a Christian Church. From Philippi they went to Thessalonica, leaving Luke at Philippi; as appears from his changing the phraseology of

his history at Acts 16:40. We may therefore suppose, that at their departing they committed the converted at Philippi to Luke's care. In Thessalonica they were opposed by the unbelieving Jews, and obliged to flee to Berea, whither the Jews from Thessalonica followed them. To elude their rage, Paul, who was most obnoxious to them, departed from Berea by night to go to Athens, leaving Silas and Timothy at Berea. At Athens, Timothy came to the apostle and gave him such an account of the afflicted state of the Thessalonian brethren, as induced him to send Timothy back to comfort them. After that Paul preached at Athens, but with so little success that he judged it proper to leave Athens and go forward to Corinth, where Silas and Timothy came to him, and assisted in converting the Corinthians. And when he left Corinth they accompanied him, first to Ephesus, then to Jerusalem, and after that to Antioch, in Syria. Having spent some time in Antioch, Paul set out with Timothy on his third apostolical journey; in which, after visiting all the Churches of

thou mayest charge some not to teach differently.” From this it is plain, 1. That Timothy was in Ephesus when the apostle wrote his first letter to him; 2. That he had been left there by the apostle, who at parting with him entreated him to abide at Ephesus; 3. That this happened when Paul was going from Ephesus to Macedonia; and, 4. That he had entreated Timothy to abide in Ephesus, for the purpose of charging some teachers in that Church not to teach differently from the apostles. In the history of the Acts of the Apostles there is no mention of Paul’s going from Ephesus to Macedonia but once; viz. after the riot of Demetrius, Acts 20:1, for which reason Theodoret, among the ancients, and among the moderns, Estius, Baronius, Capellus, Grotius, Lightfoot, Salmasius, Hammond, Witsius, Lardner, Pearson, and others, have given it as their opinion, that the apostle speaks of that journey in his First Epistle to Timothy. Yet, if I am not mistaken, the following circumstance will show their opinion to be ill founded:—

1. When the apostle went from Ephesus to Macedonia, as related Acts 20:1, Timothy was not in Ephesus, having gone from that city into Macedonia with Erastus by the apostle’s direction; Acts 19:22. And in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which was written after Timothy’s departure from Ephesus, we are informed that he was to go from Macedonia to Corinth. 1 Corinthians 4:17: “I have sent to you Timothy.” 1 Corinthians 16:10, 11: “If Timothy be come, take care that he be among you without fear. Send him forward in peace, that he may come to me, for I expect him with the brethren.” But before Timothy returned from Corinth, the apostle left Ephesus and went into Macedonia, where the brethren above mentioned met him, 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13, having Timothy in their company; as is plain from his joining the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, which all agree was written from Macedonia, immediately after the brethren from Corinth gave the apostle an account of the success of his first letter. Wherefore, since Timothy was not in Ephesus when the apostle left the city after the riot, it could not be the occasion on which the apostle said to him: “As I entreated thee to abide in Ephesus, when going into Macedonia, so do.” But the journey into Macedonia, of which he speaks, must have been some other journey not mentioned in the Acts. To remove this difficulty we are told that Timothy returned from Corinth to the apostle before his departure from Ephesus,

and that he was left there after the riot; but that something happened, which occasioned him to follow the apostle into Macedonia; that there he joined him in writing his Second Epistle to the Corinthians; and, having finished his business in Macedonia, he returned to Ephesus and abode there, agreeably to the apostle's request. But as these suppositions are not warranted by the history of the Acts, Timothy's joining the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians may still be urged as a proof that he came with the brethren directly from Corinth to Macedonia. Farther, that Timothy did not go from Macedonia to Ephesus after joining the apostle in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, but returned with him to Corinth to receive the collections, is, I think, plain from Acts 20:4, where he is mentioned as one of those who accompanied Paul from Corinth to Jerusalem with the collections.

2. When the apostle wrote his First Epistle to Timothy, "he hoped to come to him soon," chap. 3:14; but from the history of the Acts it is certain that in no letter written to Timothy after the riot, till his first confinement in Rome, could the apostle say that he hoped to come to him soon. He could not say so in any letter written from Troas, the first place he stopped at after leaving Ephesus; for at that time he was going into Macedonia and Achaia to receive the collections for the poor from the Churches in these provinces. Neither could he say so after writing his Second Epistle to the Corinthians from Macedonia; for in that epistle he told the Corinthians he was coming to them with the Macedonian brethren, who were commissioned to attend him in his voyage to Jerusalem, with the collections, 2 Corinthians 9:4, and that he meant to sail directly from Corinth to Judea, 2 Corinthians 1:16. As little could he write to Timothy that he hoped to come to him soon, when he altered his resolution on the occasion of the lying in wait of the Jews, and returned into Macedonia, Acts 20:3. For he was then in such haste to be in Jerusalem on the day of pentecost, that when he came to Miletus, instead of going to Ephesus, he sent for the elders of that Church to come to him, Acts 20:16, 17. When he arrived in Judea, he could not write that he hoped to come to Ephesus soon, for he was imprisoned a few days after he went up to Jerusalem; and having continued two years in prison at Caesarea, he was sent bound to Rome, where likewise being confined, he could not, till towards the conclusion of that confinement, write to Timothy that he hoped to come

to him soon. And even then he did not write his First Epistle to Timothy, for Timothy was with him at the conclusion of his confinement, Philippians 2:19, 23.

3. From the first epistle we learn that the following were the errors Timothy was left in Ephesus to oppose: 1. Fables invented by the Jewish doctors to recommend the observance of the law of Moses as necessary to salvation. 2. Uncertain genealogies, by which individuals endeavored to trace their descent from Abraham, in the persuasion that they would be saved, merely because they had Abraham for their father. 3. Intricate questions and strifes about some words in the law; perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, who reckoned that which produced most gain to be the best kind of godliness. 4. Oppositions of knowledge, falsely so named. But these errors had not taken place in the Ephesian Church before the apostle's departure; for in his charge to the Ephesian elders at Miletus, he foretold that the false teachers were to enter in among them after his departing. Acts 20:29, 30: "I know that after my departing, shall grievous wolves enter in among you, not sparing the flock. Also of your own selves shall men arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them." The same thing appears from the two epistles which the apostle wrote to the Corinthians; the one from Ephesus before the riot of Demetrius, the other from Macedonia after that event; and from the epistle which he wrote to the Ephesians themselves from Rome, during his confinement there. For in none of these letters is there any notice taken of the above mentioned errors, as subsisting among the Ephesians at the time they were written; which cannot be accounted for on supposition that they were prevalent in Ephesus when the apostle went into Macedonia after the riot. I am therefore of opinion that the first to Timothy, in which the apostle desired him to abide in Ephesus for the purpose of opposing the Judaizers and their errors, could not be written either from Troas or from Macedonia after the riot, as those who contend for the early date of the epistle suppose; but it must have been written some time after the apostle's release from confinement in Rome, when no doubt he visited the Church at Ephesus, and found the Judaizing teachers there busily employed in spreading their pernicious errors.

4. In the first Epistle to Timothy the same sort of persons, doctrines, and practices, are reprobated, which are condemned in the second. Compare 1

Timothy 4:1-6 with 2 Timothy 3:1-5; and 1 Timothy 6:20 with 2 Timothy 2:14; and 1 Timothy 6:4 with 2 Timothy 2:16. The same commands, instructions, and encouragements are given to Timothy in the first epistle as in the second. Compare 1 Timothy 6:13, 14, with 2 Timothy 4:1-5. The same remedies for the corruptions which had taken place among the Ephesians are prescribed in the first epistle as in the second. Compare 1 Timothy 4:14 with 2 Timothy 1:6, 7; and as in the second epistle, so in the first, every thing is addressed to Timothy as superintendent both of the teachers and of the laity in the Church at Ephesus; all which, I think, imply that the state of things among the Ephesians was the same when the two epistles were written; consequently that the first epistle was written only a few months before the second, and not long before the apostle's death.

These arguments appeared so convincing to Pearson, Leviticus Clere, L'Enfant, Cave, Fabricius, Mill, Whitby, and others, that they were unanimously of opinion Timothy was left by the apostle in Ephesus as he went into Macedonia, not after the riot of Demetrius, but after he was released from his first confinement at Rome. And from that circumstance they infer that he did not write his first epistle till some time in the end of the year 64, or in the beginning of 65. I think it was written from Nicopolis.

To the late date of this first epistle, there are three plausible objections which must not be overlooked:—

1. It is thought that, if the First Epistle to Timothy was written after the apostle's release, he could not with any propriety have said to Timothy, chap. 4:12: "Let no man despise thy youth;" but it is replied: That Servius Tullius, in classing the Roman people, as Aulus Gellius relates, lib. x. c. 28, divided their age into three periods: Childhood he limited to the age of seventeen; youth, from that to forty-six; and old age, from that to the end of life. Now, supposing Timothy to have been eighteen years old, A. D. 50, when he became Paul's assistant, he would be no more than 32, A. D. 64, two years after the apostle's release, when it is supposed this epistle was written. Wherefore, being then in the period of life which, by the Greeks as well as the Roman, was considered as youth, the apostle with propriety might say to him, Let no man despise thy youth.



2. When the apostle touched at Miletus, in his voyage to Jerusalem with the collections, the Church at Ephesus had a number of elders, that is, of bishops and deacons, who came to him at Miletus, Acts 20:17. It is therefore asked: What occasion was there in an epistle written after the apostle's release, to give Timothy directions concerning the ordination of bishops and deacons, in a Church where there were so many elders already? The answer is: The elders who came to the apostle at Miletus in the year 58 may have been too few for the Church at Ephesus, in her increased state, in the year 65. Besides, false teachers had then entered, to oppose whom more bishops and deacons might be needed than were necessary in the year 58; not to mention that some of the first elders having died, others were wanted to supply their places.

3. Because the apostle wrote to Timothy that "he hoped to come to him soon," 1 Timothy 3:14, it is argued that the letter in which this is said must have been written before the apostle said to the Ephesian elders, Acts 20:25: "I know that ye all, among whom I have gone preaching the kingdom of God, shall see my face no more." But if, by this, the First Epistle to Timothy is proved to have been written before the apostle's interview with the elders at Miletus, his Epistles to the Philippians, to the Hebrews, and to Philemon, in which he promised to visit them, must likewise have been written before the interview; in regard, his declaration respected the Philippians, the Hebrews, and Philemon, as well as the Ephesians; for they certainly were persons among whom the apostle had gone preaching the kingdom of God. Yet no commentator ever thought the epistles above mentioned were written to them before the apostle's interview with the Ephesian elders; on the contrary, it is universally acknowledged that these epistles were written four years after the interview; namely, during the apostle's first imprisonment at Rome. Wherefore, when he told the Ephesian elders that they, and his other converts, among whom he had gone preaching the kingdom of God, should see his face no more, as it was no point either of faith or practice which he spake, he may well be supposed to have declared nothing but his own opinion, resulting from his fears. He had lately escaped the rage of the Jews, who laid wait for him in Cenchrea to kill him, Acts 20:3. This, with their fury on former occasions, filled him with such anxiety that, in writing to the Romans from Corinth; he requested them "to strive together with

him in their prayers that he might be delivered from the unbelieving in Judea;" Romans 15:30, 31. Farther, that in his own speech to the Ephesian elders the apostle only declared his own persuasion, dictated by his fears, and not any suggestion of the Spirit, I think plain from what he had said immediately before, Acts 20:22, 23: "Behold, I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that shall befall me there: save that the Holy Ghost witnesseth in every city, saying that bonds and afflictions abide me." Wherefore, although his fears were happily disappointed, and he actually visited the Ephesians after his release; his character as an inspired apostle is not hurt in the least, if, in saying he knew they should see his face no more, he declared, as I have said, his own persuasion only, and no dictate of the Holy Ghost.

Dr. Paley's arguments are the same in substance; but he does not mention Dr. Macknight, who wrote before him, and whose work he must have seen.

The principal difficulty in this opinion is, that it necessarily implies that St. Paul visited Ephesus after his liberation at Rome; which appears so contrary to what he said to the Ephesian Church, that they should see his face no more. Dr. Paley, however, finds some farther presumptive evidences that the apostle must have visited Ephesus. The Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon were written while the apostle was a prisoner at Rome; to the former he says: "I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly;" and to the latter, who was a Colossian, he gives this direction: "But withal, prepare me also a lodging, for I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you." An inspection of the map will show us that Colosse was a city of Asia Minor, lying eastward, and at no great distance from Ephesus; Philippi was on the other, i.e. the western, side of the AEgean Sea. Now if the apostle executed his purpose, and came to Philemon at Colosse soon after his liberation, it cannot be supposed that he would omit to visit Ephesus, which lay so near it, and where he had spent three years of his ministry. As he was also under a promise to visit the Church at Philippi shortly, if he passed from Colosse to Philippi he could hardly avoid taking Ephesus in his way. See Paley's *Horae Paulinae*, page 293. This, taken in connection with the preceding arguments, can leave little doubt that the date of this epistle must be

referred to a time subsequent to St. Paul's liberation from Rome, and consequently to the end of the year 64, or the beginning of the year 65.

**THE**

**FIRST EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO**

**TIMOTHY**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5573.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5567.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5557.
- Year of the Julian period, 4775.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4069.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4293.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3825.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4424.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2413.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3167.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1005.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 812.
- Year of the CCXIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 817.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 818.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 377.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 113.

- Year of the Julian era, 110.
  - Year of the Spanish era, 103.
  - Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 69.
  - Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 65.
  - Year of Gessius Florus, governor of the Jews, 1.
  - Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 16.
  - Year of L. C. Gallus, governor of Syria, 1.
  - Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 3.
  - Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 66.
  - Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 9; or the first year after the third embolismic.
  - Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 6, or the second embolismic.
  - Year of the Solar Cycle, 18.
  - Dominical Letter, it being the first after Bissextile, or Leap Year, F.
  - Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the VIIth of the ides of April, or in our common mode of reckoning, the seventh of April, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
  - Easter Sunday, the day after the ides of April, or the XVIIIth of the Calends of May, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 14th of April.
  - Epact, or the age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 28.
  - Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 5.
  - Monthly Epacts, or the moon's age on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 5, 7,6, 7,8, 9,10, 11, 12, 12, 14, 14.
  - Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 17.
  - Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman emperor computing from Augustus Caesar, 12.
  - Roman Consuls, A. Licinius Nerva Silanus, and M. Vestinius Atticus; the latter of whom was succeeded by Anicius Cerealis, on July 1st.
- Dr. Lardoer and others suppose this epistle to have been written in A. D. 56, i.e. nine years earlier than is stated above. See the preceding

preface, where this point is largely considered, and also the general observations prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles.

## CHAPTER 1

*Paul's salutation to Timothy, 1, 2. For what purpose he had left him at Ephesus, 3. What the false apostles taught in opposition to the truth, 4-7. The true use of the law, 8-11. He thanks God for his own conversion, and describes his former state, 12-17. Exhorts Timothy to hold fast faith and a good conscience, and speaks of Hymeneus and Alexander who had made shipwreck of their faith, 18-20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *Paul an apostle-by the commandment of God*** We have already seen that the term *αποστολος*, apostle, literally signifies a person sent from one to another, without implying any particular dignity in the person, or importance in the message. But it is differently used in the New Testament, being applied to those who were sent expressly from God Almighty, with the message of salvation to mankind. It is, therefore, the highest character any human being can have; and the message is the most important which even God himself can send to his intelligent creatures. It was by the express command of God that St. Paul went to the Gentiles preaching the doctrine of salvation by faith in Christ Jesus.

***Jesus Christ-our hope*** Without Jesus, the world was hopeless; the expectation of being saved can only come to mankind by his Gospel. He is called our hope, as he is called our life, our peace, our righteousness, etc., because from him hope, life, peace, righteousness, and all other blessings proceed.

**Verse 2. *My own son in the faith*** Brought to salvation through Christ by my ministry alone. Probably the apostle speaks here according to this Jewish maxim: *כל המלמד כאלו ילדו כזו תכירה מעלה עליו הכתוב* He who teaches the law to his neighbour's son is considered by the Scripture as if he had begotten him; Sanhedrin, fol. xix. 2. And they quote

Numbers 3:1, as proving it: These are the generations of Aaron and Moses-and these are the names of the sons of Aaron. “Aaron,” say they, “begot them, but Moses instructed them; therefore they are called by his name.” See Schoettgen.

But **γνησιω τεκνω** may mean my beloved son; for in this sense **το γνησιον** is not unfrequently used.

**In the faith** The word **πιστις**, faith, is taken here for the whole of the Christian religion, faith in Christ being its essential characteristic.

**Grace, mercy, and peace** GRACE, the favor and approbation of God. MERCY, springing from that grace, pardoning, purifying, and supporting. PEACE, the consequence of this manifested mercy, peace of conscience, and peace with God; producing internal happiness, quietness, and assurance.

**Verse 3. I besought thee** The apostle had seen that a bad seed had been

them; and the English reader may find them in abundance in Stehlin's Jewish Traditions, 2 vols. 8vo.

***Endless genealogies*** I suppose the apostle to mean those genealogies which were uncertain — that never could be made out, either in the ascending or descending line; and, principally, such as referred to the great promise of the Messiah, and to the priesthood. The Jews had scrupulously preserved their genealogical tables till the advent of Christ and the evangelists had recourse to them, and appealed to them in reference to our Lord's descent from the house of David; Matthew taking this genealogy in the descending, Luke in the ascending, line. And whatever difficulties we may now find in these genealogies, they were certainly clear to the Jews; nor did the most determined enemies of the Gospel attempt to raise one objection to it from the appeal which the evangelists had made to their own public and accredited tables. All was then certain; but we are told that Herod destroyed the public registers; he, being an Idumean, was jealous of the noble origin of the Jews; and, that none might be able to reproach him with his descent, he ordered the genealogical tables, which were kept among the archives in the temple, to be burnt. See Euseb. H. E., lib. i. cap. 8. From this time the Jews could refer to their genealogies only from memory, or from those imperfect tables which had been preserved in private hands; and to make out any regular line from these must have been endless and uncertain. It is probably to this that the apostle refers; I mean the endless and useless labor which the attempts to make out these genealogies must produce, the authentic tables being destroyed. This, were all other proofs wanting, would be an irresistible argument against the Jews that the Messiah is come; for their own prophets had distinctly marked out the line by which he was to come; the genealogies are now all lost; nor is there a Jew in the universe that can show from what tribe he is descended. There can, therefore, be no Messiah to come, as none could show, let him have what other pretensions he might, that he sprang from the house of David. The Jews do not, at present, pretend to have any such tables; and, far from being able to prove the Messiah from his descent, they are now obliged to say that, when, the Messiah comes, he will restore the genealogies by the Holy Spirit that shall rest upon him. "For," says Maimonides, "in the days of the Messiah, when his kingdom shall be established, all the Israelites shall be gathered together unto him; and all



shall be classed in their genealogies by his mouth, through the Holy Spirit that shall rest upon him; as it is written, Malachi 3:3: He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver, and he shall purify the sons of Levi. First he will purify the Levites, and shall say: ‘This man is a descendant from the priests; and this, of the stock of the Levites;’ and he shall cast out those who are not of the stock of Israel; for behold it is said, Ezra 2:63: And the Tirshatha said-they should not eat of the most holy things, till there stood up a priest with Urim and Thummim. Thus, by the Holy Spirit, the genealogies are to be revised.” See Schoettgen.

Some learned men suppose that the apostle alludes here to the AEons, among the Gnostics and Valentinians, or whom there were endless numbers to make up what was called their pleroma; or to the sephiroth, or splendours of the Cabalists. But it is certain that these heresies had not arrived to any formidable head in the apostle’s time; and it has long been a doubt with me whether they even existed at that time: and I think it the most simple way, and most likely to be the intention of the apostle, to refer all to the Jewish genealogies, which he calls Jewish fables, Titus 1:14, to which we know they were strongly and even conscientiously attached and which, at this time, it must have been extremely difficult to make out.

Instead of **γενεαλογιας**, genealogies, some learned men have conjectured that the original word was **κερολογιας**, empty words, vain speeches; but this conjecture is not supported by any MS. or version.

**Which minister questions** They are the foundation of endless altercations and disputes; for, being uncertain and not consecutive, every person had a right to call them in question; as we may naturally suppose, from the state in which the genealogical tables of the Jews then were, that many chasms must be supplied in different lines, and consequently much must be done by conjecture.

**Rather than godly edifying** Such discussions as these had no tendency to promote piety. Many, no doubt, employed much of that time in inquiring who were their ancestors, which they should have spent in obtaining that grace by which, being born from above, they might have become the sons and daughters of God Almighty.

Instead of **οικοδομιαν θεου**, godly edifying, or the edification of God, **οικονομιαν θεου**, the economy or dispensation of God, is the reading of almost every MS. in which this part of the epistle is extant, (for some MSS. are here mutilated,) and of almost all the versions, and the chief of the Greek fathers. Of the genuineness of this reading scarcely a doubt can be formed; and though the old reading, which is supported by the Latin fathers and the Vulgate, gives a good sense, yet the connection and spirit of the place show that the latter must be the true reading. Griesbach has received this reading into the text.

What had Jewish genealogies to do with the Gospel? Men were not to be saved by virtue of the privileges or piety of their ancestors. The Jews depended much on this. We have Abraham to our father imposed silence on every check of conscience, and every godly reproof which they received for their profligacy and unbelief. In the dispensation of God, FAITH in Christ Jesus was the only means and way of salvation. These endless and uncertain genealogies produced no faith; indeed they were intended as a substitute for it; for those who were intent on making out their genealogical descent paid little attention to faith in Christ. They ministered questions rather than that economy of God which is by faith. This dispensation, says the apostle, is by faith, **οικονομιαν θεου την εν πιστει**. It was not by natural descent, nor by works, but by faith in Christ; therefore it was necessary that the people who were seeking salvation in any other way should be strictly informed that all their toil and labor would be vain.

**Verse 5. *Now the end of the commandment is charity*** These genealogical questions lead to strife and debate; and the dispensation of God leads to love both to God and man, through faith in Christ. These genealogical questions leave the heart under the influence of all its vile tempers and evil propensities; FAITH in Jesus purifies the heart. No inquiry of this kind can add to any thing by which the guilt of sin can be taken away; but the Gospel proclaims pardon, through the blood of the Lamb, to every believing penitent. The end, aim, and design of God in giving this dispensation to the world is, that men may have an unfeigned faith, such as lays hold on Christ crucified, and produces a good conscience from a sense of the pardon received, and leads on to purity of heart; LOVE to God and man being the grand issue of the grace of Christ here below, and this fully preparing the soul for eternal glory. He whose soul is filled with love to

God and man has a pure heart, a good conscience, and unfeigned faith. But these blessings no soul can ever acquire, but according to God's dispensation of faith.

The paraphrase and note of Dr. Macknight on this verse are very proper: "Now the scope of the charge to be given by thee to these teachers is, that, instead of inculcating fables and genealogies, they inculcate love to God and man, proceeding from a pure heart, and directed by a good conscience, and nourished by unfeigned faith in the Gospel doctrine. The word **παραγγελια** denotes a message or order, brought to one from another, and delivered by word of mouth. The charge here meant is that which the apostle ordered Timothy to deliver to the teachers in Ephesus; for he had said, ver. 3: I had besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, **ινα παραγγειλνς**, that thou mightest charge some: here he tells him what the scope of this charge was to be."

**Of faith unfeigned** **πιστεως ανυποκριτου**. A faith not hypocritical. The apostle appears to allude to the Judaizing teachers, who pretended faith in the Gospel, merely that they might have the greater opportunity to bring back to the Mosaic system those who had embraced the doctrine of Christ crucified. This IS evident from the following verse.

**Verse 6. From which some having swerved** From which some, though they have pretended to aim at the **τελος**, scope, or mark, have missed that mark. This is the import of the original word **αστοχησαντες**.

**Turned aside unto vain jangling** The original term, **ματαιολογιαν**, signifies empty or vain talking; discourses that turn to no profit; a great many words and little sense; and that sense not worth the pains of hearing. Such, indeed, is all preaching where Jesus Christ is not held forth.

**Verse 7. Teachers of the law** To be esteemed or celebrated as rabbins; to be reputed cunning in solving knotty questions and enigmas, which answered no end to true religion. Of such the rabbinical teaching was full.

**Understanding neither what they say** This is evident from almost all the Jewish comments which yet remain. Things are asserted which are either false or dubious; words, the import of which they did not understand, were brought to illustrate them: so that it may be said, They understand not what they say, nor whereof they affirm. I will give one instance from

the Jerusalem Targum, on Genesis 1:15: And God made two great lights, and they were equal in splendor twenty-one years, the six hundred and seventy-second part of an hour excepted: and afterwards the moon brought a false accusation against the sun, and therefore she was lessened; and God made the sun the greater light to superintend the day, etc. I could produce a thousand of a similar complexion.

**Verse 8. *But we know that the law is good*** The law as given by God, is both good in itself and has a good tendency. This is similar to what the apostle had asserted, Romans 7:12-16: The law is holy; and the commandment is holy, just, and good; where see the note.

***If a man use it lawfully*** That is, interpret it according to its own spirit and design, and use it for the purpose for which God has given it; for the ceremonial law was a schoolmaster to lead us unto Christ, and Christ is the end of that law for justification to every one that believes. Now those who did not use the law in reference to these ends, did not use it lawfully — they did not construe it according to its original design and meaning.

**Verse 9. *The law is not made for a righteous man*** There is a moral law as well as a ceremonial law: as the object of the latter is to lead us to Christ; the object of the former is to restrain crimes, and inflict punishment on those that commit them. It was, therefore, not made for the righteous as a restrainer of crimes, and an inflicter of punishments; for the righteous avoid sin, and by living to the glory of God expose not themselves to its censures. This seems to be the mind of the apostle; he does not say that the law was not MADE for a righteous man, but **οὐ κείται**, it does not LIE against a righteous man; because he does not transgress it: but it lies against the wicked; for such as the apostle mentions have broken it, and grievously too, and are condemned by it. The word **κείται**, lies, refers to the custom of writing laws on boards, and hanging them up in public places within reach of every man, that they might be read by all; thus all would see against whom the law lay.

***The lawless*** **ἀνομοις** Those who will not be bound by a law, and acknowledge none, therefore have no rule of moral conduct.

***Disobedient*** **ἀνυποτακτοῖς** Those who acknowledge no authority; from **α**, negative, and **οποτασσω**, to subject; they neither acknowledge law, nor

executive authority, and consequently endeavor to live as they list; and from such dispositions all the crimes in the following catalogue may naturally spring.

*For the ungodly* ἀσεβεσι· The irreligious — those who do not worship

may mean simply beating or striking a father or mother: this is horrible enough; but to murder a parent out-herods Herod.

***Manslayers*** **ανδροφονοις**· Murderers simply; all who take away the life of a human being contrary to law. For no crime, unless it be murder, should any man lose his life. If the law did not speak differently, I should not scruple to say that he whose life is taken away, except for murder, is murdered.

**Verse 10. *For whoremongers*** **πορνοις**· Adulterers, fornicators, and prostitutes of all sorts.

***Them that defile themselves with mankind*** **αρσενοκοιταις**· From **αρσην**, a male, and **κοιτη**, a bed; a word too bad to be explained. A sodomite.

***Men-stealers*** **ανδραποδισταις**· Slave-dealers; whether those who carry on the traffic in human flesh and blood; or those who steal a person in order to sell him into bondage; or those who buy such stolen men or women, no matter of what color or what country; or those who sow dissensions among barbarous tribes in order that they who are taken in war may be sold into slavery; or the nations who legalize or connive at such traffic: all these are men-stealers, and God classes them with the most flagitious of mortals.

***For liars*** **ψευσταις**· They who speak for truth what they know to be false; and even they who tell the truth in such a way as to lead others to draw a contrary meaning from it.

***For perjured persons*** **επιορκοις**· From **επι**, against, and **ορκος**, an oath; such as do or leave undone any thing contrary to an oath or moral engagement, whether that engagement be made by what is called swearing, or by an affirmation or promise of any kind.

***And if there be any other thing*** Every species of vice and immorality, all must be necessarily included, that is contrary to sound doctrine — to the immutable moral law of God, as well as to the pure precepts of Christianity where that law is incorporated, explained, and rendered, if possible, more and more binding.

**Verse 11. *According to the glorious Gospel*** The sound doctrine mentioned above, which is here called *ευαγγελιον της δοξης του μακαριου θεου*, the Gospel of the glory of the blessed or happy God — a dispensation which exhibits the glory of all his attributes; and, by saving man in such a way as is consistent with the glory of all the Divine perfections, while it brings peace and good will among men, brings glory to God in the highest. Sin has dishonored God, and robbed him of his glory; the Gospel provides for the total destruction of sin, even in this world, and thus brings back to God his glory.

**Verse 12. *I thank Christ*** I feel myself under infinite obligation to Christ who hath strengthened me, *ενδυναμωσαντι*, who hath endued me with various miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, and put me into the ministry, *διακονιαν*, the deaconship, the service of mankind, by preaching the Gospel, for that he counted me — he knew that I would be, faithful to the charge that was delivered to me.

**Verse 13. *A blasphemer*** Speaking impiously and unjustly of Jesus, his doctrine, his ways, and his followers.

***And-persecutor*** Endeavouring, to the uttermost of his power, to exterminate all who called on the name of the Lord Jesus.

***And injurious και υβριστην*** As full of insolence as I was of malevolence; and yet, all the while, thinking I did God service, while sacrificing men and women to my own prejudices and intolerance.

***I did it ignorantly in unbelief*** Not having considered the nature and evidences of Christianity, and not having believed that Jesus was the promised Messiah, I acted wholly under the prejudices that influenced my countrymen in general. God therefore showed me mercy, because I acted under this influence, not knowing better. This extension of mercy, does not, however, excuse the infuriated conduct of Saul of Tarsus, for he says himself that he was exceedingly mad against them. Let us beware, lest we lose the man's former crimes in his after character.

**Verse 14. *The grace of our Lord was exceeding abundant*** The original is very emphatic, that grace of our Lord, *υπερεπλεονασε*, hath superabounded — it manifested itself in a way of extraordinary mercy.

*With faith and love* Not only pardoning such offenses, but leading me to the full experimental knowledge of Christianity; of that faith and love which are essential to it; and giving me authority to proclaim it to mankind.

**Verse 15. *Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners*** This is one of the most glorious truths in the book of God; the most important that ever reached the human ear, or can be entertained by the heart of man. All men are sinners; and as such condemned, justly condemned, to eternal death. Christ Jesus became incarnate, suffered, and died to redeem them; and, by his grace and Spirit, saves them from their sins. This saying or doctrine he calls, first, a faithful or true saying; *πιστος ο λογος*, it is a doctrine that may be credited, without the slightest doubt or hesitation; God himself has spoken it; and the death of Christ and the mission of the Holy Ghost, sealing pardon on the souls of all who believe, have confirmed and established the truth.

Secondly, it is worthy of all acceptance; as all need it, it is worthy of being received by all. It is designed for the whole human race, for all that are sinners is applicable to all, because all are sinners; and may be received by all, being put within every man's reach, and brought to every man's ear and bosom, either by the letter of the word, or, where that revelation is not yet come, by the power of the Divine Spirit, the true light from Christ that lightens every man that cometh into the world. From this also it is evident that the death of Christ, and all its eternally saving effects, were designed for every man.

*Of whom I am chief* *ων πρωτος ειμι εγω*. Confounding Paul the apostle, in the fullness of his faith and love, with Saul of Tarsus, in his ignorance, unbelief, and persecuting rage, we are in the habit of saying: "This is a hyperbolical expression, arguing the height of the apostle's modesty and humility and must not be taken according to the letter." I see it not in this light; I take it not with abatement; it is strictly and literally true: take the whole of the apostle's conduct, previously to his conversion, into consideration, and was there a greater sinner converted to God from the incarnation to his own time? Not one; he was the chief; and, keeping his blasphemy, persecution, and contumely in view, he asserts: Of all that the Lord Jesus came into the world to save, and of all that he had saved to that time, I am chief. And who, however humble now, and however



flagitious before, could have contested the points with him? He was what he has said, and as he has said it. And it is very probable that the apostle refers to those in whom the grace and mercy of God were, at the first promulgation of the Gospel, manifested: and comparing himself with all these he could with propriety say, **ων πρωτος ειμι**, of whom I am the first; the first who, from a blasphemer, persecutor (and might we not add murderer? see the part he took in the martyrdom of Stephen,) became a preacher of that Gospel which I had persecuted. And hence, keeping this idea strictly in view, he immediately adds: Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy; that in me FIRST, **πρωτω**, Jesus Christ might show forth all longsuffering, for a pattern TO THEM which should HEREAFTER, **των μελλοντων** believe on him to life everlasting. And this great display of the pardoning mercy of God, granted in so singular a manner, at the very first promulgation of the Gospel, was most proper to be produced as a pattern for the encouragement of all penitent sinners to the end of time. If Jesus Christ, with whom there can be no respect of persons, saved Saul of Tarsus, no sinner need despair.

**Verse 17. *Now unto the King eternal*** This burst of thanksgiving and gratitude to God, naturally arose from the subject then under his pen and eye. God has most wondrously manifested his mercy, in this beginning of the Gospel, by saving me, and making me a pattern to all them that shall hereafter believe on Christ. He is **βασιλευς των αιωνων**, the king of eternities; the eternity a parte ante, and the eternity a parte post; the eternity that was before time was, and the eternity that shall be when time is no more. Therefore, ever living to justify and save sinners, to the end of the world.

***Immortal*** **αφθαρτω**· Incorruptible — not liable to decay or corruption; a simple uncompounded essence, incapable, therefore, of decomposition, and consequently permanent and eternal. One MS., the later Syriac in the margin, the Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, and some of the Latin fathers, read **αθανατω**, immortal, which our translation follows; but it is not the original reading.

***Invisible*** **αορατω**· One who fills all things, works everywhere, and yet is invisible to angels and men; the perfect reverse of false gods and idols, who

are confined to one spot, work nowhere, and, being stocks and stones, are seen by every body.

***The only wise God*** The word σοφω wise, is omitted by AD\*FG, Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, and Itala. Some of the Greek fathers quote it sometimes, and omit it at others; which shows that it was an unsettled reading, probably borrowed from Romans 16:27. See the note there. Griesbach leaves it out of the text. Without it the reading is very strong and appropriate: To the only God; nothing visible or invisible being worthy of adoration but himself.

***Be honor*** All the respect and reverence that can be paid by intelligent beings, ascribing to him at the same time all the glory — excellences, and perfections, which can be possessed by an intelligent, unoriginated, independent, and eternal Being; and this for ever and ever-through eternity.

**Verse 18. *This charge*** See the note on ver. 5. It was a charge that the Judaizing teachers should not teach differently from that doctrine which the apostle had delivered to him. See ver. 3.

***According to the prophecies*** This may refer to some predictions by inspired men, relative to what Timothy should be: and he wishes him to act in all things conformably to those predictions. It was predicted that he should have this high and noble calling; but his behavior in that calling was a matter of contingency, as it respected the use he might make of the grace of his calling. The apostle therefore exhorts him to war a good warfare, etc. He was now called to that estate to which the prophecies referred; and now he is to act worthily or unworthily of that calling, according as he fought or did not fight the good warfare, and according as he held or did not hold faith and a good conscience.

Some think that the προαγουσας προφητειας, the foregoing prophecies, refer to revelations which the apostle himself had received concerning Timothy; while others think that the word is to be understood of advices, directions, and exhortations, which the apostle had previously delivered to him; we know that προφητευω signifies to speak to men to edification, to exhortation, and to comfort. See 1 Corinthians 14:3. This is a very sober and good sense of the passage.

**War a good warfare** The trials and afflictions of the followers of God are often represented as a warfare or campaign. See Isaiah 40:2; 1 Corinthians 9:7; 2 Corinthians 10:4; and see the reasons of this metaphorical form of speech, in the notes on Ephesians 6:13.

**Verse 19. Holding faith** All the truths of the Christian religion, firmly believing them, and fervently proclaiming them to others.

**And a good conscience** So holding the truth as to live according to its dictates, that a good conscience may be ever preserved. As the apostle had just spoken of the Christian's warfare, so he here refers to the Christian armor, especially to the shield and breastplate; the shield of faith, and the breastplate of righteousness. See on Ephesians 6:13, etc., and 1 Thessalonians 5:8.

**Which some having put away** ἀποσάμενοι· Having thrust away; as a fool-hardy soldier might his shield and his breastplate, or a mad sailor his pilot, helm, and compass.

**Concerning faith** The great truths of the Christian religion.

**Have made shipwreck** Being without the faith, that only infallible system of truth; and a good conscience, that skillful pilot, that steady and commanding helm, that faithful and invariable loadstone; have been driven to and fro by every wind of doctrine, and, getting among shoals, quicksands, and rocks, have been shipwrecked and engulfed.

**Verse 20. Of whom is Hymeneus and Alexander** Who had the faith but thrust it away; who had a good conscience through believing, but made shipwreck of it. Hence we find that all this was not only possible, but did actually take place, though some have endeavored to maintain the contrary; who, confounding eternity with a state of probation, have supposed that if a man once enter into the grace of God in this life, he must necessarily continue in it to all eternity. Thousands of texts and thousands of facts refute this doctrine.

**Delivered unto Satan** For the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit might be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus. See what is noted on 1 Corinthians 5:5; what this sort of punishment was no man now living knows. There is nothing of the kind referred to in the Jewish writings. It

seems to have been something done by mere apostolical authority, under the direction of the Spirit of God.

Hymeneus, it appears, denied the resurrection, see 2 Timothy 2:17, 18; but whether this Alexander be the same with Alexander the coppersmith, 2 Timothy 4:14, or the Alexander, Acts 19:33, cannot be determined. Probably, he was the same with the coppersmith. Whether they were brought back to the acknowledgment of the truth does not appear. From what is said in the second epistle the case seems extremely doubtful. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.

He that is self-confident is already half fallen. He who professes to believe that God will absolutely keep him from falling finally, and neglects watching unto prayer, is not in a safer state. He who lives by the moment, walks in the light, and maintains his communion with God, is in no danger of apostasy.

## CHAPTER 2

*Prayer, supplication, and thanksgiving, must be made for all men; because God will that all should be saved, 1-4. There is but one God and one Mediator, 5-7. How men should pray, 8. How women should adorn themselves, 9, 10. They are not suffered to teach, nor to usurp authority over men, 11-14. How they may expect to be saved in child-bearing, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1.** *I exhort-that, first of all* Prayer for the pardon of sin, and for obtaining necessary supplies of grace, and continual protection from God, with gratitude and thanksgiving for mercies already received, are duties which our sinful and dependent state renders absolutely necessary; and which should be chief in our view, and first of all performed. It is difficult to know the precise difference between the four words used here by the apostle. They are sometimes distinguished thus:—

*Supplications*

St. Cyprian defended himself before the Roman proconsul, he said: Hunc (Deum) deprecamur-pro nobis et pro omnibus hominibus; et pro incolumitate ipsorum Imperatorum. “We pray to God, not only for ourselves, but for all mankind, and particularly for the emperors.”

Tertullian, in his Apology, is more particular: Oramus pro omnibus Imperatoribus, vitam illis prolixam, imperium securum, domum tutam, exercitus fortes, senatum fidelem, populum probum, orbem quietum, et quaecunque hominis et Caesaris vota sunt. Apol., cap. 30. “We pray for all the emperors, that God may grant them long life, a secure government, a prosperous family, vigorous troops, a faithful senate, an obedient people; that the whole world may be in peace; and that God may grant, both to Caesar and to every man, the accomplishment of their just desires.”

So Origen: ευχομεθα τους βασιλεις και απχοντας μετα της βασιλικης δυναμεως και σωφρονα τον λογισμον εχοντας ευρεθηναι. Cont. Cels., lib. viii. “We pray for kings and rulers, that with their royal authority they may be found possessing a wise and prudent mind.” Indeed they prayed even for those by whom they were persecuted. If the state be not in safety, the individual cannot be secure; self-preservation, therefore, should lead men to pray for the government under which they live. Rebellions and insurrections seldom terminate even in political good; and even where the government is radically bad, revolutions themselves are most precarious and hazardous. They who wish such commotions would not be quiet under the most mild and benevolent government.

***That we may lead a quiet and peaceable life*** We thus pray for the government that the public peace may be preserved. Good rulers have power to do much good; we pray that their authority may be ever preserved and well directed. Bad rulers have power to do much evil; we

large, and it is acceptable in the sight of God our Savior; and this is its highest sanction and its highest character: it is good; it is well pleasing to God.

**Verse 4. *Who will have all men to be saved*** Because he wills the salvation of all men; therefore, he wills that all men should be prayed for. In the face of such a declaration, how can any Christian soul suppose that God ever unconditionally and eternally reprobated any man? Those who can believe so, one would suppose, can have little acquaintance either with the nature of GOD, or the bowels of Christ.

***And to come unto the knowledge of the truth*** The truth — the Gospel of Christ, should be proclaimed to them; and it is the duty of all who know it, to diffuse it far and wide, and when it is made known, then it is the duty of those who hear it to acknowledge and receive it. This is the proper import of the original word, that they may come, *εις επιγνωσιν αληθειας*, to the acknowledgment of the truth — that they may receive it as the truth, and make it the rule of their faith, the model and director of their life and actions.

**Verse 5. *There is one God*** Who is the maker, governor, and preserver of all men, of every condition, and of every nation, and equally wills the salvation of all.

***And one mediator*** The word *μεσιτης*, mediator, signifies, literally, a middle person, one whose office it is to reconcile two parties at enmity; and hence Suidas explains it by *ειρηνοποιος*, a peace-maker. God was offended with the crimes of men; to restore them to his peace, Jesus Christ was incarnated; and being God and man, both God and men met in and were reconciled by him. But this reconciliation required a sacrifice on the part of the peace-maker or mediator; hence what follows.

**Verse 6. *Who gave himself a ransom*** The word *λυτρον* signifies a ransom paid for the redemption of a captive; and *αντιλυτρον*, the word used here, and applied to the death of Christ, signifies that ransom which consists in the exchange of one person for another, or the redemption of life by life; or, as Schleusner has expressed it in his translation of these words, *Qui morte sua omnes liberavit a vitiositatis vi et poenis, a servitute quassi et miseria peccatorum*. “He who by his death has redeemed all from

the power and punishment of vice, from the slavery and misery of sinners.” As God is the God and father of all, (for there is but one God, ver. 5,) and Jesus Christ the mediator of all, so he gave himself a ransom for all; i.e., for all that God made, consequently for every human soul; unless we could suppose that there are human souls of which God is not the Creator; for the argument of the apostle is plainly this: 1. There is one God; 2. This God is the Creator of all; 3. He has made a revelation of his kindness to all; 4. He will have all men to be saved, and come unto the knowledge of the truth; and 5. He has provided a mediator for all, who has given himself a ransom for all. As surely as God has created all men, so surely has Jesus Christ died for all men. This is a truth which the nature and revelation of God unequivocally proclaim.

*To be testified in due time.* The original words, **το μαρτυριον καιροις ιδιοις**, are not very clear, and have been understood variously. The most authentic copies of the printed Vulgate have simply, Testimonium temporibus suis; which CALMET translates: Rendant ainsi temoignage au tems marquē; “Thus rendering testimony at the appointed time.” Dr. MACKNIGHT thus: Of which the testimony is in its proper season. WAKEFIELD thus: “That testimony reserved to its proper time” ROSENMULLEN: Haec est doctrina, temporibus suis reservata. “This is the doctrine which is reserved for its own times;” that is, adds he, quoe suo tempore in omni terrarum orbe tradetur, “the doctrine which in its own time shall be delivered to all the inhabitants of the earth.” Here he translates **μαρτυριον**, doctrine; and contends that this, not testimony, is its meaning, not only in this passage, but in 1 Corinthians 1:6; 2:1, etc. Instead of **μαρτυριον**, testimony, one MS., Cod. Kk., vi. 4, in the public library, Cambridge, has, **μυστηριον**, mystery; but this is not acknowledged by any other MS., nor by any version. In D\*FG the whole clause is read thus: **ου το μαρτυριον καιροις ιδιοις εδοθη**. The testimony of which was given in its own times. This is nearly the reading which was adopted in the first printed copies of the Vulgate. One of them now before me reads the passage thus: Cujus testimonium temporibus suis confirmatum est. “The testimony of which is confirmed in its own times.” This reading was adopted by Pope Sixtus V., in the famous edition published by him; but was corrected to the reading above, by Pope Clement VIII. And this was rendered literally by our first translator: Whos



witnessing is conformy in his times. This appears to be the apostle's meaning: Christ gave himself a ransom for all. This, in the times which seemed best to the Divine wisdom, was to be testified to every nation, and people, and tongue. The apostles had begun this testimony; and, in the course of the Divine economy, it has ever since been gradually promulgated; and at present runs with a more rapid course than ever.

**Verse 7. *I am ordained a preacher*** I am set apart, *ετεθην*, appointed. The word does not imply any imposition of hands by either bishop or presbytery, as is vulgarly supposed.

***I speak the truth in Christ*** As I have received my commission from him, so I testify his truth. I did not run before I was sent; and I speak nothing but what I have received.

***A teacher of the Gentiles*** Being specially commissioned to preach the Gospel, not to the Jews, but to the nations of the world.

***In faith and verity.*** Faithfully and truly; preaching the TRUTH, the whole TRUTH, and nothing but the TRUTH; and this fervently, affectionately, and perseveringly.

Instead of *εν πιστει*, in faith, the Cod. Alexand. has *εν πνευματι*, in spirit. "A teacher of the Gentiles in spirit and truth."

**Verse 8. *I will therefore*** Seeing the apostle had his authority from Christ, and spoke nothing but what he received from him, his *βουλομαι*, I will, is equal to I command.

***That men pray*** That is, for the blessings promised in this testimony of God. For, although God has provided them, yet he will not give them to such as will not pray. See the note on verse 1, the subject of which is here resumed.

***Everywhere*** *ες παντι τοπω*. In every place. That they should always have a praying heart, and this will ever find a praying place. This may refer to a Jewish superstition. They thought, at first, that no prayer could be acceptable that was not offered at the temple at Jerusalem; afterward this was extended to the Holy Land; but, when they became dispersed among the nations, they built oratories or places of prayer, principally by rivers and by the seaside; and in these they were obliged to allow that public

prayer might be legally offered, but nowhere else. In opposition to this, the apostle, by the authority of Christ, commands men to pray everywhere; that all places belong to God's dominions; and, as he fills every place, in every place he may be worshipped and glorified. As to ejaculatory prayer, they allowed that this might be performed standing, sitting, leaning, lying, walking by the way, and during their labor. Beracoth, fol. xi. 1. And yet in some other places they teach differently. See Schoettgen.

***Lifting up holy hands*** It was a common custom, not only among the Jews, but also among the heathens, to lift up or spread out their arms and hands in prayer. It is properly the action of entreaty and request; and seems to be an effort to embrace the assistance requested. But the apostle probably alludes to the Jewish custom of laying their hands on the head of the animal which they brought for a sin-offering, confessing their sins, and then giving up the life of the animal as an expiation for the sins thus confessed. And this very notion is conveyed in the original term **επαίροντας**, from **αιρω** to lift up, and **επι**, upon or over. This shows us how Christians should pray. They should come to the altar; set God before their eyes; humble themselves for their sins; bring as a sacrifice the Lamb of God; lay their hands on this sacrifice; and by faith offer it to God in their souls' behalf, expecting salvation through his meritorious death alone.

***Without wrath*** Having no vindictive feeling against any person; harbouring no unforgiving spirit, while they are imploring pardon for their own offenses.

The holy hands refer to the Jewish custom of washing their hands before prayer; this was done to signify that they had put away all sin, and purposed to live a holy life.

***And doubting***. **διαλογισμου** or **διαλογισμων**, as in many MSS., reasonings, dialogues. Such as are often felt by distressed penitents and timid believers; faith, hope, and unbelief appearing to hold a disputation and controversy in their own bosoms, in the issue of which unbelief ordinarily triumphs. The apostle therefore wills them to come, implicitly relying on the promises of God, and the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ.

**Verse 9. *In like manner also*** That is, he wills or commands what follows, as he had commanded what went before.

***That women adorn themselves*** και τας γοναικας ες καταστολη κοαμιο. The apostle seems to refer here to different parts of the Grecian and Roman dress. The **στολη**, stola, seems to have been originally very simple. It was a long piece of cloth, doubled in the middle, and sewed up on both sides, leaving room only for the arms; at the top, a piece was cut out, or a slit made, through which the head passed. It hung down to the feet, both before and behind, and was girded with the zona round the body, just under the breasts. It was sometimes made with, sometimes without, sleeves; and, that it might sit the better, it was gathered on each shoulder with a band or buckle. Some of the Greek women wore them open on each side, from the bottom up above the knee, so as to discover a part of the thigh. These were termed **φαινομηριδες**, showers (discoverers) of the thigh; but it was, in general, only young girls or immodest women who wore them thus.

The **καταστολη** seems to have been the same as the pallium or mantle, which, being made nearly in the form of the stola, hung down to the waist, both in back and front, was gathered on the shoulder with a band or buckle, had a hole or slit at top for the head to pass through, and hung loosely over the stola, without being confined by the zona or girdle. Representations of these dresses may be seen in LENS' Costume des Peuples de l'Antiquit , fig. 11, 12, 13, and 16. A more modest and becoming dress than the Grecian was never invented; it was, in a great measure, revived in England about the year 1805, and in it, simplicity, decency, and elegance were united; but it soon gave place to another mode, in which frippery and nonsense once more prevailed. It was too rational to last long; and too much like religious simplicity to be suffered in a land of shadows, and a world of painted outsides.

***With shamefacedness and sobriety*** The stola, catastola, girdle, etc., though simple in themselves, were often highly ornamented both with gold and precious stones; and, both among the Grecian and Roman women, the hair was often crisped and curled in the most variegated and complex manner. To this the apostle alludes when he says: **μη εν πλεγμασιν, η χρυσω, η μαργαριταις, η ιματισμω πολυτελει**. Not with plaited hair,

or gold, or pearls, or costly raiment. The costly raiment might refer to the materials out of which the raiment was made, and to the workmanship; the gold and pearls, to the ornaments on the raiment.

With shame-facedness or modesty, **μετα αιδους**. This would lead them to avoid every thing unbecoming or meretricious in the mode or fashion of their dress.

With sobriety, **μετα σωφροσυνης**. Moderation would lead them to avoid all unnecessary expense. They might follow the custom or costume of the country as to the dress itself, for nothing was ever more becoming than the Grecian stola, catastola, and zona; but they must not imitate the extravagance of those who, through impurity or littleness of mind, decked themselves merely to attract the eye of admiration, or set in lying action the tongue of flattery. Woman has been invidiously defined: An animal fond of dress. How long will they permit themselves to be thus degraded?

Those beautiful lines of Homer, in which he speaks of the death of Euphorbus, who was slain by Menelaus, show how anciently the Grecians plaited and adorned their hair:-

αντικρυ δ' απαλοιο δι' αυχενος ηλυθ' ακωκη  
 δουπησεν δε πεσων, αραβησε δε τευχε' επ' αυτω.  
 αιματι οι δευοντο κομαι, χαριτεσσιν ομοιαι,  
 πλοχμοι θ' οι χρυσω τε και αργορω εσφηκωντο.

II. xvii., ver. 49.

*Wide through the neck appears the ghastly wound;  
 Prone sinks the warrior, and his arms rebound.  
 The shining circlets of his golden hair,  
 Which e'en the Graces might be proud to wear,  
 Instarr'd with gems and gold bestrew the shore,  
 With dust dishonor'd, and deform'd with gore.*

POPE.

Or thus, more literally:—

*Sounding he fell; loud rang his batter'd arms.  
 His locks, which e'en the Graces might have own'd,  
 Blood sullied, and his ringlets wound about  
 With twine of gold and silver, swept the dust.*

COWPER.

The extravagance to which the Grecian and Asiatic women went in their ornaments might well be a reason for the apostle's command.

Kypke, however, denies that any particular article of dress is intended here, and says that *καταστολη* is to be understood as coming from *καταστελλω*, to restrain, repress; and he refers it to that government of the mind, or moderation which women should exercise over their dress and demeanour in general, and every thing that may fall under the observation of the senses. All this, undoubtedly, the apostle had in view.

When either women or men spend much time, cost, and attention on decorating their persons, it affords a painful proof that within there is little excellence, and that they are endeavoring to supply the want of mind and moral good by the feeble and silly aids of dress and ornament. Were religion out of the question, common sense would say in all these things: Be decent; but be moderate and modest.

**Verse 10.** *But (which becometh, etc.* That is: Good works are the only ornaments with which women professing Christianity should seek to be adorned. The Jewish matrons were accustomed to cry to the bride: "There is no need of paint, no need of antimony, no need of braided hair; she herself is most beautiful." The eastern women use a preparation of antimony, which they apply both to the eyes and eyelids, and by which the eye itself acquires a wonderful lustre.

**Verse 11.** *Let the woman learn in silence* This is generally supposed to be a prohibition of women's preaching. I have already said what I judge necessary on this subject in the notes on 1 Corinthians 11:5, etc., and 14:34, 35; to which places I beg leave to refer the reader.

**Verse 12.** *Nor to usurp authority* A woman should attempt nothing, either in public or private, that belongs to man as his peculiar function. This was prohibited by the Roman laws: In multis juris nostri articulis deterior est conditio foeminarum quam masculorum; l. 9, PAP. LIB. 31, QUAEST. Foeminoe ab omnibus officiis civilibus vel publicis remotae sunt; et ideo nec judicis esse possunt, nec magistratum gerere, nec postulare, nec pro alio invenire, nec procuratores existere; l. 2, de Reg. Juris. ULP. LIB. i. AD SAB. — Vid. POTH. Pand. Justin., vol. i. p. 13.

“In our laws the condition of women is, in many respects, worse than that of men. Women are precluded from all public offices; therefore they cannot be judges, nor execute the function of magistrates; they cannot sue, plead, nor act in any case, as proxies. They were under many other disabilities, which may be seen in different places of the Pandects.

***But to be in silence.*** It was lawful for men in public assemblies to ask questions, or even interrupt the speaker when there was any matter in his speech which they did not understand; but this liberty was not granted to women. See the note on 1 Corinthians 14:34, 35.

**Verse 13. *For Adam was first formed, then Eve.*** And by this very act God designed that he should have the pre-eminence. God fitted man, by the robust construction of his body, to live a public life, to contend with difficulties, and to be capable of great exertions. The structure of woman’s body plainly proves that she was never designed for those exertions required in public life. In this the chief part of the natural inferiority of woman is to be sought.

**Verse 14. *Adam was not deceived*** It does not appear that Satan attempted the man; the woman said: The serpent beguiled me, and I did eat. Adam received the fruit from the hand of his wife; he knew he was transgressing, he was not deceived; however, she led the way, and in consequence of this she was subjected to the domination of her husband: Thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee; Genesis 3:16. There is a Greek verse, but it is not English law, that speaks a language nearly similar to that above:-

γυναικι δ’ αρχειν ου διδωσιν η φυσικς.

*For nature suffers not a woman’s rule.*

God has not only rendered her unfit for it, but he has subjected her, expressly, to the government of the man.

**Verse 15. *She shalt be saved in child-bearing*** σωθησεται δε δια της τεκνογονιας; She shall be saved through child-bearing-she shall be saved by means, or through the instrumentality, of child-bearing or of bringing forth a child. Amidst the different opinions given of the meaning of this

very singular text, that of Dr. Macknight appears to me the most probable, which I shall give in his paraphrase and note.

“However, though Eve was first in the transgression, and brought death on herself, her husband, and all her posterity, the female sex shall be saved (equally with the male) through child-bearing — through bringing forth the Savior, if they live in faith, and love, and chastity, with that sobriety which I have been recommending.

“The word σωθησεται, saved, in this verse refers to η γυνη, the woman, in the foregoing verse, which is certainly EVE. But the apostle did not mean to say that she alone was to be saved through child-bearing, but that all her posterity, whether male or female, are to be saved through the child-bearing of a woman; as is evident from his adding, If they live in faith and love and holiness, with sobriety. For safety in child-bearing does not depend on that condition at all; since many pious women die in child-bearing, while others of a contrary character are preserved. The salvation of the human race, through child-bearing, was intimated in the sentence passed on the serpent, Genesis 3:15: I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head. Accordingly, the Savior being conceived in the womb of his mother by the power of the Holy Ghost, he is truly the seed of the woman who was to bruise the head of the serpent; and a woman, by bringing him forth, has been the occasion of our salvation.” This is the most consistent sense, for in the way in which it is commonly understood it does not apply. There are innumerable instances of women dying in child-bed who have lived in faith and charity and holiness, with sobriety; and equally numerous instances of worthless women, slaves to different kinds of vices, who have not only been saved in child-bearing, but have passed through their travail with comparatively little pain; hence that is not the sense in which we should understand the apostle. Yet it must be a matter of great consolation and support, to all pious women labouring of child, to consider that, by the holy virgin’s child-bearing, salvation is provided for them and the whole human race; and that, whether they die or live, though their own child-bearing can contribute nothing to their salvation, yet he who was born of a woman has purchased them and the whole human race by his blood.

*If they continue* εαν μεινωσιν is rightly translated, if they live; for so it signifies in other passages, particularly Philippians 1:25. The change in the number of the verb from the singular to the plural, which is introduced here, was designed by the apostle to show that he does not speak of Eve; nor of any particular woman, but of the whole sex. See Macknight.

Without faith it is impossible to please God, or to be saved; and without love it will be impossible to obey. FAITH and LOVE are essentially necessary to holiness and sobriety; and unless both men and women live in these, they cannot, scripturally, expect to dwell with God for ever. Some foolish women have supposed, from this verse, that the very act of bringing forth children shall entitle them to salvation; and that all who die in childbed infallibly go to glory! Nothing can be more unfounded than this; faith, love, holiness, and sobriety, are as absolutely requisite for the salvation of every daughter of Eve, as they are for the salvation of every son of Adam. Pain and suffering neither purify nor make atonement. On the mercy of God, in Christ, dispensing remission of sins and holiness, both men and women may confidently rely for salvation; but on nothing else. Let her that readeth understand.

On the subject of dress I will conclude in the words of a late writer: “What harm does it do to adorn ourselves with gold, or pearls, or costly array, suppose we can afford it? The first harm it does is, it engenders pride; and, where it is already, increases it. Nothing is more natural than to think ourselves better because we are dressed in better clothes. One of the old heathens was so well apprised of this, that when he had a spite to a poor man, and had a mind to turn his head; he made him a present of a suit of fine clothes.

*Eutrapelus cuicumque nocere volebat,  
Vestimenta dabat pretiosa.*

He could not then but imagine himself to be as much better, as he was finer, than his neighbor; inferring the superior value of his person from the value of his clothes.” — Rev. J. Wesley’s Sermons.



## CHAPTER 3

*Concerning bishops, their qualifications and work, 1-7. Of deacons, and how they should be proved, 8-10. Of their wives and children, and how they should be governed, 11-13. How Timothy should behave himself in the Church, 14, 15. The great mystery of godliness, 16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1.** *This is a true saying* πιστος ο λογος. This is a true doctrine. These words are joined to the last verse of the preceding chapter by several of the Greek fathers, and by them referred to the doctrine there stated.

*The office of a bishop* επισκοπης. The episcopacy, overseership or superintendency. The word ορεγεται, which we translate desire, signifies earnest, eager, passionate desire; and επιθυμει, which we translate desire, also signifies earnestly to desire or covet. It is strange that the episcopacy, in those times, should have been an object of intense desire to any man; when it was a place of danger, and exposure to severe labor, want, persecution, and death, without any secular emolument whatsoever. On this ground I am led to think that the Spirit of God designed these words more for the ages that were to come, than for those which were then; and in reference to after ages the whole of what follows is chiefly to be understood.

*A good work.* A work it then was; heavy, incessant, and painful. There were no unpreaching prelates in those days, and should be none now. Episcopacy in the Church of God is of Divine appointment, and should be maintained and respected. Under God, there should be supreme governors in the Church as well as in the state. The state has its monarch, the Church has its bishop; one should govern according to the laws of the land, the other according to the word of God.

What a constitutional king should be, the principles of the constitution declare; what a bishop should be, the following verses particularly show.

**Verse 2. *A bishop then must be blameless*** Our term bishop comes from the Anglo-Saxon (A.Σ.), which is a mere corruption of the Greek **επισκοπος**, and the Latin *episcopus*; the former being compounded of **επι**, over, and **σκεπτομαι**, to look or inspect, signifies one who has the inspection or oversight of a place, persons, or business; what we commonly term a superintendent. The New Testament writers have borrowed the term from the Septuagint, it being the word by which they translate the **פָּקִיד** *pakid* of the Hebrew text, which signifies a visiter, one that personally inspects the people or business over which he presides. It is given by St. Paul to the elders at Ephesus, who had the oversight of Christ's flock, Acts 20:28; and to such like persons in other places, Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:2, the place in question; and Titus 1:7.

Let us consider the qualifications of a Christian bishop, and then we shall soon discover who is fit for the office.

First. — This Christian bishop must be blameless; **ανεπιληπτον**, a person against whom no evil can be proved; one who is everywhere invulnerable; for the word is a metaphor, taken from the case of an expert and skillful pugilist, who so defends every part of his body that it is impossible for his antagonist to give one hit. So this Christian bishop is one that has so conducted himself, as to put it out of the reach of any person to prove that he is either unsound in a single article of the Christian faith, or deficient in the fulfillment of any duty incumbent on a Christian. He must be irreprehensible; for how can he reprove that in others which they can reprove in him?

Second. — He must be the husband of one wife. He should be a married man, but he should be no polygamist; and have only one wife, i.e. one at a time. It does not mean that, if he has been married, and his wife die, he should never marry another. Some have most foolishly spiritualized this, and say, that by one wife the Church is intended! This silly quibbling needs no refutation. The apostle's meaning appears to be this: that he should not be a man who has divorced his wife and married another; nor one that has two wives at a time. It does not appear to have been any part of the apostle's design to prohibit second marriages, of which some have made such a serious business. But it is natural for some men to tithe mint and cummin in religion, while they neglect the weightier matters of the law.

Third. — He must be vigilant; **νηφθαλεον**, from **νη**, not and **πιω**, to drink. Watchful; for as one who drinks is apt to sleep, so he who abstains from it is more likely to keep awake, and attend to his work and charge. A bishop has to watch over the Church, and watch for it; and this will require all his care and circumspection. Instead of **νηφθαλεον**, many MSS. read **νηφθαλιον**; this may be the better orthography, but makes no alteration in the sense.

Fourth. — He must be sober; **σωφρονα**, prudent or, according to the etymology of the word, from **σως**, sound, and **φρην**, mind, a man of a sound mind; having a good understanding, and the complete government of all his passions.

A bishop should be a man of learning, of an extensive and well cultivated mind, dispassionate, prudent, and sedate.

Fifth. — He must be of good behavior; **κοσμιον**, orderly, decent, grave, and correct in the whole of his appearance, carriage, and conduct. The preceding term, **σωφρονα**, refers to the mind; this latter, **κοσμιον**, to the external manners. A clownish, rude, or boorish man should never have the rule of the Church of God; the sour, the sullen, and the boisterous should never be invested with a dignity which they would most infallibly disgrace.

Sixth. — He must be given to hospitality; **φιλοξενον**, literally, a lover of strangers; one who is ready to receive into his house and relieve every necessitous stranger. Hospitality, in those primitive times, was a great and necessary virtue; then there were few inns, or places of public entertainment; to those who were noted for benevolence the necessitous stranger had recourse. A Christian bishop, professing love to God and all mankind, preaching a religion, one half of the morality of which was included in, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, would naturally be sought to by those who were in distress and destitute of friends. To enable them to entertain such, the Church over which they presided must have furnished them with the means. Such a bishop as St. Paul, who was often obliged to labor with his hands for his own support, could have little to give away. But there is a considerable difference between an apostolical bishop and an ecclesiastical bishop: the one was generally itinerant, the other comparatively local; the former had neither house nor home, the latter had both; the apostolical bishop had charge of the Church of Christ

universally, the ecclesiastical bishop of the Churches in a particular district. Such should be addicted to hospitality, or works of charity; especially in these modern times, in which, besides the spiritualities, they possess the temporalities, of the Church.

Seventh. — He should be apt to teach; **διδακτικον**, one capable of teaching; not only wise himself, but ready to communicate his wisdom to others. One whose delight is, to instruct the ignorant and those who are out of the way. He must be a preacher; an able, zealous, fervent, and assiduous preacher.

Ninth. — He must be no striker; **μη πληκτην**, not quarrelsome; not ready to strike a person who may displease him; no persecutor of those who may differ from him; not prone, as one wittily said,

*“To prove his doctrine orthodox  
By apostolic blows and knocks.”*

It is said of Bishop Bonner, of infamous memory, that, when examining the poor Protestants whom he termed heretics, when worsted by them in argument he was used to smite them with his fists, and sometimes scourge and whip them. But though he was a most ignorant and consummate savage, yet from such a scripture as this he might have seen the necessity of surrendering his mitre.

Tenth. — He must not be greedy of filthy lucre; **μη αισχροκερδη**, not desirous of base gain; not using base and unjustifiable methods to raise and increase his revenues; not trading or trafficking; for what would be honorable in a secular character, would be base and dishonorable in a bishop. Though such a trait should never appear in the character of a Christian prelate, yet there is much reason to suspect that the words above are not authentic; they are omitted by ADFG, many others, the Syriac, all the Arabic, Coptic, (and Sahidic,) Aethiopic, Armenian, later Syriac, (but it appears in the margin,) the Vulgate and Itala, and by most of the Greek fathers. Griesbach has left it out of the text, in which it does not appear that it ever had a legitimate place. The word covetous, which we have below, expresses all the meaning of this; and it is not likely that the apostle would insert in the same sentence two words of the same meaning, because they were different in sound. It appears to have been borrowed from verse 8.

Eleventh. — He must be patient; **επειικη**, meek, gentle; the opposite to **πληκτην**, a quarrelsome person, which it immediately follows when the spurious word **αισχροκερδη** is removed. Where meekness and patience do not reign, gravity cannot exist, and the love of God cannot dwell.

Twelfth. — He must not be a brawler; **αμαχον**, not contentious or litigious, but quiet and peaceable.

Thirteenth. — He must not be covetous; **αφιλαργυρον**, not a lover of money; not desiring the office for the sake of its emoluments. He who

loves money will stick at nothing in order to get it. Fair and foul methods are to him alike, provided they may be equally productive. For the sake of reputation he may wish to get all honourably; but if that cannot be, he will not scruple to adopt other methods. A brother heathen gives him this counsel: "Get money if thou canst by fair means; if not, get it by hook and by crook."

**Verse 4.** The fourteenth qualification of a Christian bishop is, that he ruleth well his own house; *του ιδιου οικου καλες προϊσταμενον*, one who properly presides over and governs his own family. One who has the command, of his own house, not by sternness, severity, and tyranny, but with all gravity; governing his household by rule, every one knowing his own place, and each doing his own work, and each work having the proper time assigned for its beginning and end. This is a maxim of common sense; no family can be prosperous that is not under subjection, and no person can govern a family but the head of it, the husband, who is, both by nature and the appointment of God, the head or governor of his own house. See the note on Ephesians 5:22.

**Verse 5. *For if a man know not*** Method is a matter of great importance in all the affairs of life. It is a true saying, He that does little with his head must do much with his hands; and even then the business is not half done for want of method. Now, he who has a proper method of doing business will show it in every affair of life, even the least. He who has a disorderly family has no government of that family; he probably has none because he has no method, no plan, of presiding. It was natural for the apostle to say, If a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the Church of God? Look at a man's domestic arrangements; if they be not good, he should not be trusted with any branch of government, whether ecclesiastical or civil.

**Verse 6. *Fifteenth.* — *It is required that he be not a novice*** *νεοφυτον*. Not a young plant, not recently ingrafted, that is, one not newly converted to the faith; (old MS. Bible;) one who has been of considerable standing in the Christian Church, if he have the preceding qualifications, may be safely trusted with the government of that Church. It is impossible that one who is not long and deeply experienced in the ways of God can guide others in the way of life. Hence presbyters or elders were generally appointed to

have the oversight of the rest, and hence presbyter and bishop seem to have been two names for the same office; yet all presbyters or elders certainly were not bishops, because all presbyters had not the qualifications marked above. But the apostle gives another reason: Lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil. It is natural for man to think himself of more importance than his fellows when they are intrusted to his government. The apostle's term **τυφωθεις**, puffed up, inflated, is a metaphor taken from a bladder when filled with air or wind. It is a substance, has a certain size, is light, can be the sport of the wind, but has nothing in it but air. Such is the classical coxcomb; a mere puffball, a disgrace to his function, and despised by every intelligent man. Should we not say to those whom it may concern,

*“From such apostles, O ye mitred heads,  
Preserve the Church; and lay not careless hands  
On skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn.”*

From these words of the apostle we are led to infer that pride or self-conceit was the cause of the devil's downfall. In Ecclus. x. there are some excellent sayings concerning pride: “Pride is hurtful before God and man.” “Why is earth and ashes proud?” “The beginning of pride is when one departeth from God.” “For pride is the beginning of sin; and he that hath it shall pour out abomination.” “PRIDE was not made for MEN.” See verses 7, 9, 12, 13, and 18, of the above chapter.

**Verse 7. *The sixteenth requisite is, that he should have a good report of them which are without*** That he should be one who had not been previously a profligate, or scandalous in his life. Such a person, when converted, may be a worthy private member of religious society; but I believe God rarely calls such to the work of the ministry, and never to the episcopate. Them that are without are the Jews, Gentiles, and the unconverted of all kinds. For the meaning of this term see the note on Colossians 4:5.

***Lest he fall into reproach*** For his former scandalous life.

***And the snare of the devil.*** Snares and temptations, such as he fell in and fell by before. This is called the snare of the devil; for, as he well knows the constitution of such persons, and what is most likely to prevail, he infers that what was effectual before to their transgressing may be so still;

therefore on all suitable occasions he tempts them to their old sins. Backsliders in general fall by those sins to which they were addicted previously to their conversion. Former inveterate habits will revive in him who does not continue to deny himself, and watch unto prayer.

The snare of the devil. — Some would translate *παγίδα του διαβολου*, the snare of the accuser; and they give the same meaning to the word in verse 6, because it is evident that *διαβολους* has that meaning, verse 11, and our translators render it slanderers. Now, though *διαβολος* signifies an accuser, yet I do not see that it can, with any propriety, be restrained to this meaning in the texts in question, and especially as the word is emphatically applied to Satan himself; for he who, in Revelation 12:10, is called the accuser of the brethren, is, in Revelation 12:9, called the great dragon, the old serpent, the DEVIL, *διαβολος*, and Satan.

**Verse 8. *Likewise must the deacons*** The term deacon, *διακονος*, simply signifies a regular or stated servant: from *δια*, through or emphatic, and *κονεω*, to minister or serve. See it explained in the note on Matthew 20:26. As nearly the same qualifications were required in the deacons as in the bishops, the reader may consult what is said on the preceding verses.

***Grave*** Of a sedate and dignified carriage and conduct.

***Not double-tongued*** Speaking one thing to one person, and another thing to another, on the same subject. This is hypocrisy and deceit. This word might also be translated liars.

***Not given to much wine*** Neither a drunkard, tippler, nor what is called a jovial companion. All this would be inconsistent with gravity.

***Not greedy of filthy lucre*** See on verse 3.

**Verse 9. *Holding the mystery of the faith*** Instead of *της πιστεως*, the faith, one MS. (the readings of which are found in the margin of a copy of Mill's Greek text in the Bodleian library, and which is marked 61 in Griesbach) reads *αναστασεως*, of the resurrection. This reading, like many others in this MS., is found nowhere else; and is worthy of little regard, but as expressing what appeared to the writer to be the apostle's meaning. One of the greatest mysteries of the faith was undoubtedly the resurrection of the dead; and this was held in a pure conscience when the



person so exercised himself as to have a conscience void of offense towards God and towards men. See Acts 24:16. What has been since called Antinomianism, that is, making void the moral law, by a pretended faith in the righteousness of Christ, is that which the apostle has here particularly in view.

**Verse 10. *Let these-be proved*** Let them not be young converts, or persons lately brought to the knowledge of the truth. This is the same in spirit with what is required of the bishops, verse 6.

Let no man be put into an office in the Church till he has given full proof of his sincerity and steadiness, by having been for a considerable time a consistent private member of the Church.

***Being found blameless.*** *ανεγκλητοι οντες*· Being irreproachable; persons against whom no evil can be proved. The same as in verse 2, though a different word is used. See the note there.

**Verse 11. *Even so must their wives be grave*** I believe the apostle does not mean here the wives either of the bishops or deacons in particular, but the Christian women in general. The original is simply: *γυναικας ωσαυτως σεμνας*· Let the women likewise be grave. Whatever is spoken here becomes women in general; but if the apostle had those termed deaconesses in his eye, which is quite possible, the words are peculiarly suitable to them. That there was such an order in the apostolic and primitive Church, and that they were appointed to their office by the imposition of hands, has already been noticed on Romans 16:1. Possibly, therefore, the apostle may have had this order of deaconesses in view, to whom it was as necessary to give counsels and cautions as to the deacons themselves; and to prescribe their qualifications, lest improper persons should insinuate themselves into that office.

***Not slanderers*** *μη διαβολους*· Literally, not devils. See on verse 7. This may be properly enough translated slanderers, backbiters, tale-bearers, etc., for all these are of their father, the devil, and his lusts they will do. Let all such, with the vast tribe of calumniators and dealers in scandal, remember that the apostle ranks them all with malicious, fallen spirits; a consideration which one would suppose might be sufficient to deter them from their injurious and abominable conduct.

**Sober** See on verse 2.

**Faithful in all things.** The deaconesses had much to do among the poor, and especially among poor women, in dispensing the bounty of the Church. They were not only faithfully to expend all they had got, and for the purpose for which they got it; but they must do this with impartiality, showing no respect of persons, the degree of distress being the only rule by which the distribution was to be regulated.

**Verse 12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife*** This is the same that is required of the bishops. See on verses 2, 4, and 5.

**Verse 13. *That have used the office of a deacon well*** They who, having been tried or proved, ver. 10, have shown by their steadiness, activity, and zeal, that they might be raised to a higher office, are here said to have purchased to themselves a good degree, *βαθμον καλον*· for, instead of having to administer to the bodies and bodily wants of the poor, the faithful deacons were raised to minister in holy things; and, instead of ministering the bread that perisheth, they were raised to the presbyterate or episcopate, to minister the bread of life to immortal souls. And hence the apostle adds; And great boldness in the faith; *πολλην παρρησιαν*, great liberty of speech; i.e. in teaching the doctrines of Christianity, and in expounding the Scriptures, and preaching. It seems to have been a practice dictated by common sense, that the most grave and steady of the believers should be employed as deacons; the most experienced and zealous of the deacons should be raised to the rank of elders; and the most able and pious of the elders be consecrated bishops. As to a bishop of bishops, that age did not know such. The pope of Rome was the first who took this title. The same office, but not with the same powers nor abuse, is found in the patriarch of the Greek Church, and the archbishop of the Protestant Church. As the deacon had many private members under his care, so the presbyter or elder had several deacons under his care; the bishop, several presbyters; and the archbishop, several bishops. But I speak now more of the modern than of the ancient Church. The distinction in some of these offices is not so apparent in ancient times; and some of the offices themselves are modern, or comparatively so. But deacon, presbyter, and bishop, existed in the apostolic Church, and may therefore be considered of Divine origin.

**Verse 14. *These things write I*** That is: I write only these things; because I hope to come unto thee shortly.

**Verse 15. *But if I tarry long*** That is: Not withstanding I hope to come to thee shortly, and therefore do not feel the necessity of writing at large; yet, lest I should be delayed, I write what I judge necessary to direct thy conduct in the Church of God.

***The house of God*** This is spoken in allusion to the ancient tabernacle; which was God's house, and in which the symbol of the Divine Majesty dwelt. So the Christian Church is God's house, and every believer is a habitation of God through the Spirit.

***The Church of the living God*** The assembly in which God lives and works; each member of which is a living stone, all of whom, properly united among themselves, grow up unto a holy temple in the Lord.

***The pillar and ground of the truth.*** Never was there a greater variety of opinions on any portion of the sacred Scripture than has been on this and the following verse. Commentators and critics have given senses and meanings till there is no meaning to be seen. It would be almost impossible, after reading all that has been said on this passage, for any man to make up his own mind. To what, or to whom, does the pillar and ground of the truth refer?

1. Some say to Timothy, who is called the pillar, etc., because left there to support and defend the truth of God against false doctrines and false teachers; and is so called for the same reason that Peter, James, and John, are said to be pillars, i.e. supporters of the truth of God. Galatians 2:9.
2. Others suppose that the pillar and ground of the truth is spoken of GOD; and that **ὅς ἐστι**, who is, should be supplied as referring immediately to **θεός**, God, just before. By this mode of interpretation the passage will read thus: That thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God, WHO IS (**ὅς ἐστι**) the pillar and ground of the truth. How God may be fitly termed the pillar and ground of truth, requires no explanation.
3. Others think that the words should be understood of the CHURCH of the living God; and in this case the feminine relative **ἥτις ἐστι**, which is, must

be repeated immediately after **ἐκκλησία**, the Church. The house of God is the Church of the living God; WHICH (Church) IS the pillar and ground of the truth. That is: The full revelation of God's truth is in the Christian Church. The great doctrines of that Church are the truth without error, metaphor, or figure. Formerly the truth was but partially revealed, much of it being shadowed with types, ceremonies, and comparatively dark prophecies; but now all is plain, and the full revelation given; and the foundation on which this truth rests are the grand facts detailed in the Gospel, especially those which concern the incarnation, miracles, passion, death, and resurrection of Christ, and the mission of the Holy Spirit.

4. Lastly, others refer the whole to **το της ευσεβειας μυστηριον**, the mystery of godliness; and translate the clause thus: The mystery of godliness is the pillar and ground of the truth; and, without controversy, a great thing. This gives a very good sense, but it is not much favored by the arrangement of the words in the original.

**Verse 16.** *And, without controversy* **και ομολογουμενες**. And confessedly, by general consent, it is a thing which no man can or ought to dispute; any phrase of this kind expresses the meaning of the original.

***God was manifest in the flesh*** If we take in the whole of the 14th, 15th, and 16th verses, we may make a consistent translation in the following manner, and the whole paragraph will stand thus: Hoping to see thee shortly; but should I tarry long, these things I now write unto thee, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the Church of the living God. The mystery of godliness, which is the pillar and ground of the truth, is, without controversy, a great thing. And then he proceeds to show what this mystery of godliness is, which he sums up in the six following particulars: 1. God was manifest in the flesh; 2. Justified in the Spirit; 3. Seen of angels; 4. Preached unto the Gentiles; 5. Believed on in the world; 6. Received up into glory.

Though all this makes a very plain and consistent sense, yet we are perplexed by various readings on the first clause, **θεος εφανερωθη εν σαρκι**, God was manifest in the flesh; for instead of **θεος**, God, several MSS., versions, and fathers, have **ος** or **ο**, who or which. And this is generally referred to the word mystery; Great is the mystery of godliness, WHICH was manifest in the flesh.

The insertion of, **θεος** for **ος**, or **ος** for **θεος**, may be easily accounted for. In ancient times the Greek was all written in capitals, for the common Greek character is comparatively of modern date. In these early times words of frequent recurrence were written contractedly, thus: for **πατηρ**, **πρ**; **θεος**, **θς**; **κυριος**, **κς**; **ιησους**, **ιης**, etc. This is very frequent in the oldest MSS., and is continually recurring in the Codex Bexae, and Codex Alexandrinus. If, therefore, the middle stroke of the **θ**, in **θς**, happened to be faint, or obliterated, and the dash above not very apparent, both of which I have observed in ancient MSS., then **θς**, the contraction for **θεος**, God, might be mistaken for **ος**, which or who; and vice versa. This appears to have been the case in the Codex Alexandrinus, in this passage. To me

miracles, being wrought by the power of God, were a full proof of his innocence; for, had he not been what he professed to be, God would not have borne such a decisive testimony to his Messiahship.

***Seen of angels*** By **αγγελοι** here, some understand not those celestial or infernal beings commonly called angels, but apostles and other persons who became messengers, to carry far and wide and attest the truth of his resurrection from the dead. If, however, we take the word seen, in its Jewish acceptation, for made known, we may here retain the term angels in its common acceptation; for it is certain that previously to our Lord's ascension to heaven, these holy beings could have little knowledge of the necessity, reasons, and economy of human salvation; nor of the nature of Christ as God and man. St. Peter informs us that the angels desire to look into these things, 1 Peter 1:12. And St. Paul says the same thing, Ephesians 3:9, 10, when speaking of the revelation of the Gospel plan of salvation, which he calls the mystery, which FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE WORLD had been HID in God; and which was now published, that unto the PRINCIPALITIES and POWERS in heavenly places might be MADE KNOWN, by the Church, the manifold wisdom of God. Even those angelic beings have got an accession to their blessedness, by an increase of knowledge in the things which concern Jesus Christ, and the whole scheme of human salvation, through his incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and glorification.

***Preached unto the Gentiles*** This was one grand part of the mystery which had been hidden in God, that the Gentiles should be made fellow heirs with the Jews, and be admitted into the kingdom of God. To the Gentiles, therefore, he was proclaimed as having pulled down the middle wall of partition between them and the Jews; that, through him, God had granted unto them repentance unto life; and that they also might have redemption in his blood, the forgiveness of sins.

***Believed on in the world*** Was received by mankind as the promised Messiah, the Anointed of God, and the only Savior of fallen man. This is a most striking part of the mystery of godliness, that one who was crucified as a malefactor, and whose kingdom is not of this world, and whose doctrines are opposed to all the sinful propensities of the human heart, should, wherever his Gospel is preached, be acknowledged as the only

Savior of sinners, and the Judge of quick and dead! But some would restrict the meaning to the Jews, whose economy is often denominated **עולם הזה** *olam hazzeh*, this world, and which words both our Lord and the apostles often use in the same sense. Notwithstanding their prejudices, many even of the Jews believed on him; and a great company of the priests themselves, who were his crucifiers, became obedient to the faith. Acts 6:7. This was an additional proof of Christ's innocence.

***Received up into glory.*** Even that human nature which he took of the Virgin Mary was raised, not only from the grave, but taken up into glory, and this in the most visible and palpable manner. This is a part of the mystery of godliness which, while we have every reasonable evidence to believe, we have not powers to comprehend. His reception into glory is of the utmost consequence to the Christian faith; as, in consequence, Jesus Christ in his human nature ever appears before the throne as our sacrifice and as our Mediator.

1. THE directions given in this chapter concerning bishops and deacons should be carefully weighed by every branch of the Christian Church. Not only the offices which are of Divine appointment, such as bishop, presbyter, and deacon, should be most religiously preserved in the Church; but, that they may have their full effect, the persons exercising them should be such as the apostle prescribes. Religion will surely suffer, when religious order is either contemned or neglected; and even the words of God will be treated with contempt, if ministered by unholy persons. Let order, therefore, be duly observed; and let those who fill these orders be not only wholly irreprehensible in their conduct, but also able ministers of the new covenant. A wicked man can neither have, nor communicate, authority to dispense heavenly mysteries; and a fool, or a blockhead, can never teach others the way of salvation. The highest abilities are not too great for a preacher of the Gospel; nor is it possible that he can have too much human learning. But all is nothing unless he can bring the grace and Spirit of God into all his ministrations; and these will never accompany him unless he live in the spirit of prayer and humility, fearing and loving God, and hating covetousness.

2. It is well known that almost every Church supposes itself to be THE true Church; and some consider themselves the only Church, and deny

salvation to all who are not of their communion. To such a Church the two last verses in this chapter have been confidently self-applied, as being the pillar and ground of the truth — the possessor and dispenser of all the mysteries of God. But, supposing that the words in verse 15 are spoken of the Church, it is the Christian Church, as defined under article the third above, that must be meant; and we may see from this the vanity of applying the words to any particular Church, as if it had all the truth without error, and none else could pretend either to truth or ecclesiastical authority. The Christian Church is a widely different thing; it is the whole system of Christianity as laid down in the New Testament; it is built on the great foundation of prophets and apostles, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone. It is composed of all who hold the doctrines of Christianity; who acknowledge Jesus as their Teacher, Redeemer, and only Advocate; of all who love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves; or who are labouring after this conformity to the mind and command of their Creator. It is not known by any particular name; it is not distinguished by any particular form in its mode of worship; it is not exclusively here or there. It is the house of God — it is where God's Spirit dwells, where his precepts are obeyed, and where pure, unadulterated love to God and man prevails. It is not in the creed or religious confessions of any denomination of Christians; for, as all who hold the truth and live a holy life, acknowledging Jesus alone as the head of the Church and Savior of the world, are members of his mystical body; (and such may be found in all sects and parties;) so the Church of Christ may be said to be everywhere, and to be confined nowhere; i.e. in whatever place Christianity is credited and acknowledged. The wicked of all sorts, no matter what their profession may be, and all persecutors of religious people, who differ from them, are without the pale of this Church. Essentially must their spirit and conduct be changed, before the living Head of this spiritual building can acknowledge them as members of the heavenly family.

This text, therefore, will never apply to the Romish Church, till that Church be, both in doctrine and discipline, what the Christian Church should be. When it is the established religion of any country it gives no toleration to those who differ from it; and in Protestant countries its cry for toleration and secular authority is loud and long. I wish its partisans



the full and free exercise of their religion, even to its superstitions and nonsense; but how can they expect toleration who give none? The Protestant Church tolerates it fully; it persecutes the Protestants to bonds and death when it has power; which then is the true Church of Christ?

## CHAPTER 4

*Apostasy from the true faith predicted, and in what that apostasy should consist, 1-5. Exhortations to Timothy to teach the truth, 6. To avoid old wives' fables; to exercise himself to godliness, 7, 8. To labor, command, and teach, 9, 10, 11. To act so that none might despise his youth, 12. To give attendance to reading and preaching, 13, 14. To give up himself wholly to the Divine work, 15. And so doing he should both save himself and them that heard him, 16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1.** *Now the Spirit speaketh expressly* ῥητως· Manifestly, openly. It is very likely that the apostle refers here to a prophecy then furnished by the Holy Ghost, and probably immediately after he had written the words in the preceding verses; and as this prophecy contains things nowhere else spoken of in the sacred writings, and of the utmost moment to the Christian Church, we cannot hear or read them with too much reverence or respect.

*In the latter times* This does not necessarily imply the last ages of the world, but any times consequent to those in which the Church then lived.

*Depart from the faith* αποστησονται-της πιστεως· They will apostatize from the faith, i.e. from Christianity; renouncing the whole system in effect, by bringing in doctrines which render its essential truths null and void, or denying and renouncing such doctrines as are essential to Christianity as a system of salvation. A man may hold all the truths of Christianity, and yet render them of none effect by holding other doctrines which counteract their influence; or he may apostatize by denying some essential doctrine, though he bring in nothing heterodox.

*Giving heed to seducing spirits* πνευμασι πλανις· Many MSS. and the chief of the fathers have πνευμασι πλανης· spirits of deceit; which is much more emphatic than the common reading. Deception has her spirits, emissaries of every kind, which she employs to darken the hearts and

destroy the souls of men. Pretenders to inspiration, and false teachers of every kind, belong to this class.

***And doctrines of devils*** δαιμονίων· Demons; either meaning fallen spirits, or dead men, spectres, etc., or doctrines inspired by Satan relative to these, by which he secures his own interest, and provides for his own worship.

**Verse 2. *Speaking lies in hypocrisy*** Persons pretending, not only to Divine inspiration, but also to extraordinary degrees of holiness, self-denial, mortification, etc., in order to accredit the lies and false doctrines which they taught. Multitudes of lies were framed concerning miracles wrought by the relics of departed saints, as they were termed. For, even in this country, Thomas a Becket was, deemed a saint, his relics wrought numerous miracles; and his tomb was frequented by multitudes of pilgrims! However, as he works none now, we may rest assured that he never did work any. In 1305, King Edward I. was prevailed on by his clergy to write to Pope Clement V. to canonize Thomas de Cantelupo, bishop of Hereford, because a multitude of miracles had been wrought by his influence; In tantum, says the king, quod ipsius meritis et intercessionibus gloriosis, lumen caecis, surdis auditus, verbum mutis, et gressus claudis, et alia pleraque beneficia ipsius patrocinium implorantibus, caelesti dextra conferuntur. “Insomuch that, by his glorious merits and intercessions, the blind receive their sight, the deaf hear, the dumb speak, and the lame walk; and many other benefits are conferred by the right hand of the Divine Being on those who implore his patronage.” And therefore he prays that this dead bishop may be added to the calendar, “that he and his kingdom may enjoy his suffrages and merit his patronage in heaven, who had the benefit of his conversation on earth.” Nos attendentes, per Dei gratiam, fideles in Christo, nosque praecipue, et populum regni nostri, ejus posse suffragiis adjuvari, ut, quem familiarem habuimus in terris, mereamur habere patronum in caelis. Foedera, vol. i., p. 976. Edit. 1816.

***Having their conscience seared with a hot iron*** They bear the marks of their hypocrisy as evidently and as indelibly in their conscience in the sight of God, as those who have been cauterized for their crimes do in their bodies in the sight of men. It was customary in ancient times to mark those with a hot iron who had been guilty of great crimes, such as sacrilege, etc.

And the heathens supposed that even in the other world they bear such marks; and by these the infernal judges knew the quantum of their vices, and appointed the degrees of their punishment. There is a saying much like that of the apostle in the invective of Claudian against Rufinus, whom he supposes to be thus addressed by Rhadamanthus, one of the infernal judges:—

Quid demens manifesta negas? En pectus Inustae Deformant MACULAE!  
vitiisque inolevit imago, Nec sese commissa tegunt.

“Thou fool, why dost thou deny what is so manifest? Behold the deep-burnt marks deform thy conscience; the appearance of them has grown up with thy vices; neither can the crimes which thou hast committed hide themselves.”

**Verse 3. *Forbidding to marry*** These hypocritical priests pretending that a single life was much more favorable to devotion, and to the perfection of the Christian life. This sentiment was held by the Essenes, a religious sect among the Jews; and we know that it is a favourite opinion among the Romanists, who oblige all their clergy to live a single life by a vow of continency.

***To abstain from meats*** Both among the heathens, Jews, and Romanists, certain meats were prohibited; Some always, others at particular times. This the apostle informs us was directly contrary to the original design of God; and says that those who know the truth, know this.

**Verse 4. *For every creature of God is good*** That is: Every creature which God has made for man’s nourishment is good for that purpose, and to be thankfully received whenever necessary for the support of human life; and nothing of that sort is at any time to be refused, *ουδεν αποβλητον*, rejected or despised. We find a saying very similar to this in Lucian’s Timon: *ουτοι αποβλητα εισι δωρα τα παρα διος*. The gifts which are from Jove ought not to be DESPISED. This appears to have been a proverbial saying among the heathens.

**Verse 5. *For it is sanctified by the word of God*** *δια λογου θεου*. By the command of God; probably referring to Genesis 1:29: And God said, I have given you every herb-and every tree-to you it shall be for meat; and to chap. 9:3: Every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you; even as

the green herb have I given you all things; i.e. I have given you every animal that is proper for food, as I have given you every herb and fruit proper for nourishment. Therefore, all this was sanctified, set apart, and appropriated to this use by this command. And when man is about to use it, he is to sanctify or set it apart to that use by prayer to God, 1. That it may “answer the end to us for which it was designed; 2. That we may use it with gratitude and moderation; 3. That all the strength derived from it may be devoted to God, in filling up the duties of those situations in which his providence has placed us. Those who thank not God for their food, and pray not for his blessing in the use of it, are unworthy even of a morsel of bread, and of the breath they breathe. Bishop Newton’s opinion of this prophecy I have reserved to the end of this chapter.

**Verse 6. *If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things*** Show the Church that, even now, there is danger of this apostasy; put them on their guard against it; for the forewarned are half armed. Schoettgen supposes from this verse that what is spoken above refers to the Jews alone; and that there is no reference here to a Church which in after ages might apostatize from, or corrupt, the true doctrine of our Lord and Savior. Bishop Newton and others are of a different opinion. See at the end of this chapter.

***Nourished up in the words of faith*** By acting as I command thee, thou wilt show that thou art a good minister of Jesus Christ, and that thou hast been nourished from thy youth upon the doctrines of faith. The apostle seems to allude here to Timothy’s Christian education. See the preface to this epistle.

***Whereunto thou hast attained.*** ἡ παρηκολουθηκας’ Which thou hast thoroughly understood. For the meaning of this word, see the note on Luke 1:3.

**Verse 7. *But refuse profane and old wives’ fables*** This seems to refer particularly to the Jews, whose Talmudical writings are stuffed with the most ridiculous and profane fables that ever disgraced the human intellect. It may with equal propriety be applied to the legends of the Romish Church. Let any man read the Aurea Legenda, and he will find of profane and old wives’ fables what may stand, with considerable propriety, column for column with the Talmud. See Joseline’s Life of St. Patrick for

miracles, without rhyme or reason, abundantly more numerous and more stupendous than all the necessary ones wrought by Jesus Christ and his apostles. This is enough to persuade a man that the Spirit of God had these very corruptions and this corrupt Church particularly in view.

***Exercise thyself rather unto godliness.*** To understand this expression it is necessary to know that the apostle alludes here to the gymnastic exercises among the Greeks, which were intended as a preparation for, their contests at the public games. They did this in order to obtain a corruptible or fading crown, i. e, a chaplet of leaves, which was the reward of those who conquered in those games; Timothy was to exercise himself unto godliness, that he might be prepared for the kingdom of heaven, and there receive a

here below for an eternal life of glory above. Thus godliness has the promise of, and secures the blessings of, both worlds.

**Verse 9. *This is a faithful saying*** The truth of this doctrine none need doubt; and every man has it in his power to put this to the proof. See on chap. 1:15.

**Verse 10. *For therefore we both labor*** This verse was necessary to explain what he had before said; and here he shows that his meaning was not that the followers of God should enjoy worldly prosperity and exemption from natural evils; for, said he, it is because we exercise ourselves to godliness that we have both labor and reproach, and we have these because we trust In the living God: but still we have mental happiness, and all that is necessary for our passage through life; for in the midst of persecutions and afflictions we have the peace of God that passeth knowledge, and have all our crosses and sufferings so sanctified to us that we consider them in the number of our blessings.

***Who is the Savior of all men*** Who has provided salvation for the whole human race, and has freely offered it to them in his word and by his Spirit.

***Specially of those that believe.*** What God intends for ALL, he actually gives to them that believe in Christ, who died for the sins of the world, and tasted death for every man. As all have been purchased by his blood so all may believe; and consequently all may be saved. Those that perish, perish through their own fault.

**Verse 11. *These things command and teach.*** Let it be the sum and substance of thy preaching, that true religion is profitable for both worlds; that vice destroys both body and soul; that Christ tasted death for every man; and that he saves to the uttermost all them that believe in his name.

**Verse 12. *Let no man despise thy youth*** Act with all the gravity and decorum which become thy situation in the Church. As thou art in the place of an elder, act as an elder. Boyish playfulness ill becomes a minister of the Gospel, whatever his age may be. Concerning Timothy's age see the conclusion of the preface to this epistle.

***Be thou an example of the believers*** It is natural for the flock to follow the shepherd; if he go wrong, they will go wrong also.

“Himself a wanderer from the narrow way, His silly sheep, no wonder if they stray.”

Though, according to the just judgement of God, they who die in their sins have their blood on their own head; yet, if they have either gone into sin or continued in it through the watchman’s fault, their blood will God require at his hand. How many have endeavored to excuse their transgressions by alleging, in vindication of their conduct, “Our minister does so, and he is more wise and learned than we.” What an awful account must such have to give to the Head of the Church when he appears!

**In word** *εν λογω*. In doctrine; teach nothing but the truth of God, because nothing but that will save souls.

**In conversation** *εν αναστροφη*. In the whole of thy conduct in every department which thou fillest in all thy domestic as well as public relations, behave thyself well.

**In charity** *εν αγαπη*. In love to God and man; show that this is the principle and motive of all thy conduct.

**In spirit** *εν πνευματι*. In the manner and disposition in which thou dost all things. How often is a holy or charitable work done in an unholy, uncharitable, and peevish spirit! To the doer, such work is unfruitful.

These words are wanting in ACDFG, and several others; both the Syriac, Erpen’s Arabic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, and Itala, and many of the fathers. Griesbach leaves them out of the text. They have in all probability been added by a later hand.

**In faith** *εν πιστει*. This word *πιστις* is probably taken here for fidelity, a sense which it often bears in the New Testament. It cannot mean doctrine, for that has been referred to before. Be faithful to thy trust, to thy flock, to thy domestics, to the public, to thy GOD. Fidelity consists in honestly keeping, preserving, and delivering up when required, whatever is intrusted to our care; as also in improving whatever is delivered in trust for that purpose. Lose nothing that God gives, and improve every gift that he bestows.

**In purity.** *εν αγνεια*. Chastity of body and mind; a direction peculiarly necessary for a young minister, who has more temptations to break its



rules than perhaps any other person. “Converse sparingly with women, and especially with young women,” was the advice of a very holy and experienced minister of Christ.

**Verse 13. *Give attendance to reading*** Timothy could easily comprehend the apostle’s meaning; but at present this is not so easy. What books does the apostle mean? The books of the Old Testament were probably what he intended; these testified of Jesus, and by these he could either convince or confound the Jews. But, whether was the reading of these to be public or private? Probably both. It was customary to read the law and the prophets in the synagogue, and doubtless in the assemblies of the Christians; after which there was generally an exhortation founded upon the subject of the prophecy. Hence the apostle says: Give attendance to reading, to EXHORTATION, to DOCTRINE. Timothy was therefore to be diligent in reading the sacred writings at home, that he might be the better qualified to read and expound them in the public assemblies to the Christians, and to others who came to these public meetings.

As to other books, there were not many at that time that could be of much use to a Christian minister. In those days the great business of the preacher was to bring forward the grand facts of Christianity, to prove these, and to show that all had happened according to the prediction of the prophets; and from these to show the work of God in the heart, and the evidence of that work in a holy life.

At present the truth of God is not only to be proclaimed, but defended; and many customs or manners, and forms of speech, which are to us obsolete, must be explained from the writings of the ancients, and particularly from the works of those who lived about the same times, or nearest to them, and in the same or contiguous countries. This will require the knowledge of those languages in which those works have been composed, the chief of which are Hebrew and Greek, the languages in which the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments have been originally written.

Latin is certainly of the next consequence; a language in which some of the most early comments have been written; and it is worth the trouble of being learned, were it only for the sake of the works of St. Jerome, who

translated and wrote a commentary on the whole of the Scriptures; though in many respects it is both erroneous and superficial.

Arabic and Syriac may be added with great advantage: the latter being in effect the language in which Christ and his apostles spoke and preached in Judea; and the former being radically the same with the Hebrew, and preserving many of the roots of that language, the derivatives of which often occur in the Hebrew Bible, but the roots never.

The works of various scholars prove of how much consequence even the writings of heathen authors, chiefly those of Greece and Italy, are to the illustration of the sacred writings. And he who is best acquainted with the sacred records will avail himself of such helps, with gratitude both to God and man. Though so many languages and so much reading are not absolutely necessary to form a minister of the Gospel, (for there are many eminent ministers who have not such advantages,) yet they are helps of the first magnitude to those who have them and know how to use them.

**Verse 14.** *Neglect not the gift that is in thee* The word *χαρισμα* here must refer to the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit, which Timothy received when set apart to the work of an evangelist by the imposition of St. Paul's hands, 2 Timothy 1:6, and by that of the presbytery or eldership; for it most evidently appears, from this verse and that above quoted, that he received this double imposition, not probably at different times, but on one and the same occasion. These very gifts and graces might be improved; and we have reason to believe, if not improved, would be withdrawn by the great Head of the Church.

*Given thee by prophecy* It has already been conjectured (see the preface, and the note on chap. 1:18) that there had been some remarkable prediction relative to the future destiny and usefulness of Timothy. And probably it was in consequence of this that he was set apart to the office of evangelist and bishop in the Church at Ephesus. When apostles laid their hands on men, they ordinarily received the Holy Spirit with this imposition. This may be what the apostle calls to the remembrance of Timothy, and tells him not to neglect what he had received, nor the purpose for which he had received it.

**Verse 15. *Meditate upon these things* ταυτα μελετα·** Revolve them frequently in thy mind; consider deeply their nature and importance; get them deeply fastened in thy heart, and let all thy conduct flow from this inward feeling and conviction. Let the nature, reasons, and motives of thy ministry, be ever in the view of thy heart and conscience.

***Give thyself wholly to them* εν τουτοις ισθι·** Be thou in these things. Horace has a similar expression: Omnis in hoc sum. "I am absorbed in this." Occupy thyself wholly with them; make them not only thy chief but thy sole concern. Thou art called to save thy own soul, and the souls of them that hear thee; and God has given thee the Divine gifts for this and no other purpose. To this let all thy reading and study be directed; this is thy great business, and thou must perform it as the servant and steward of the Lord. Bengel has a good saying on this verse, which I will quote: In his qui est, minus erit in sodalitatibus mundanis, in studiis alienis, in colligendis libris, conchis, nummis, quibus multi pastores notabilem aetatis partem insistentes conterunt; "He who is wholly in these things will be little in worldly company, in foreign studies, in collecting books, shells, and coins, in which many ministers consume a principal part of their life." Such persons are worthy of the deepest reprehension, unless all these studies, collections, etc., be formed with the express view, of illustrating the sacred records; and to such awful drudgery few Christian ministers are called. Many, when they have made such collections, seem to know nothing of their use; they only see them and show them, but can never bring them to their assistance in the work of the ministry. These should be prayed for and pitied.

***That thy profiting may appear to all.*** By being made a universal blessing; convincing and converting sinners; and building up the Church of God on its most holy faith.

**Verse 16. *Take heed unto thyself*** See that the life of God remains and the work of God prospers in thine own soul. Take heed to thy doctrine, that the matter be pure and orthodox; that thou teach nothing for truth but what God has revealed.

***Continue in them*** i.e., In taking heed to thyself and to thy doctrine; for this must be thy continual study. Without this, the Divine influence shall recede from thy heart, and the Divine gift from thy intellect; and, like

Samson shorn of his strength, thou wilt soon become as another man, as any common man; thy power will depart from thee, and thou shalt be no longer able to persuade; the UNCTION shall depart from thee, and, destitute of spiritual feeling thyself, thou shalt not be able to cause others to feel. Take the apostle's advice, and thou shalt save thy own soul, and the souls of them that hear thee.

In the course of the preceding notes I have referred to Bishop Newton's opinion and application of the prophecy contained in the first five verses. Not being fully persuaded in my own mind to what Church this, and the prophecy in the Epistle to the Thessalonians, should be applied, I produce an accredited author, who, for his Dissertations on the Prophecies, has a high and, honored name in the Church.

“I. The first thing to be considered is, the apostasy here predicted. ‘Some shall depart, or rather apostatize, from the faith.’ An apostasy from the faith may be either total or partial; either when we renounce the whole, or when we deny some principal and essential article of it. It is not every error, or every heresy, that is apostasy from the faith. It is a revolt in a principal and essential article, when we worship God by any image or representation, or when we worship other beings besides God, and pray unto other mediators besides the one Mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus. This is the very essence of Christian worship, to worship the one true God, through the one true Christ; and to worship any other god, or any other mediator, is apostasy and rebellion against God and against Christ. Such is the nature of apostasy from the faith; and it is implied that this apostasy shall be general, and affect great numbers. For, though it be said only some shall apostatize, yet by some, here, many are understood. The original word frequently signifies a multitude and there are abundant instances in Scripture where it is used in that sense, as the reader may perceive from John 6:64-66; Romans 11:17; 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6. This apostasy may be general and extensive, and include many but not all.

“II. It is more particularly shown wherein the apostasy should consist, in the following words: Giving heed to seducing spirits and doctrines of devils; or rather: ‘Giving heed to erroneous spirits and doctrines concerning demons.’ Spirits seem to be much the same in sense as doctrines, the latter

word may be considered as explanatory of the former; and error sometimes signifying idolatry, erroneous doctrines may comprehend idolatrous as well as false doctrines. But it is still farther added, for explanation, that these doctrines should be doctrines of devils or of demons, where the genitive case is not to be taken actively, as if demons were the authors of these doctrines, but passively, as if demons were the subject of these doctrines. In Jeremiah 10:8; Acts 13:12; Hebrews 6:2, the genitive case is used in this manner; and, by the same construction, doctrines of demons are doctrines about or concerning demons. This is, therefore, a prophecy that the idolatrous theology of demons, professed by the Gentiles, should be revived among Christians. Demons, according to the theology of the Gentiles, were middle powers between the gods and mortal men; and were regarded as mediators and agents between the gods and men. Of these demons there were accounted two kinds: one kind were the souls of men deified or canonized after death; the other kind were such as had never been the souls of men, nor ever dwelt in mortal bodies. These latter demons may be paralleled with angels, as the former may with canonized saints; and as we Christians believe there are good and evil angels, so did the Gentiles that there were good and evil demons. It appears then as if the doctrine of demons, which prevailed so long in the heathen world, was to be revived and established in the Christian Church. And is not the worship of saints and angels now, in all respects, the same that the worship of demons was in former times? The name only is different, the thing is essentially the same. The heathens looked upon their demons as mediators and intercessors between God and men; and are not the saints and angels regarded in the same light by many professed Christians? The promoters of this worship were sensible that it was the same, and that the one succeeded the other; and as the worship is the same, so likewise it is performed with the same ceremonies. Nay, the very same temples, the very same images, the very same altars, which once were consecrated to Jupiter and the other demons, are now reconsecrated to the Virgin Mary and other saints. The very same titles and inscriptions are ascribed to both; the very same prodigies and miracles are related of these as of those. In short, the whole almost of paganism is converted and applied to popery, the one is manifestly formed upon the same plan and principles as the other.

“III. Such an apostasy as this-of reviving the doctrines of demons, and worshipping the dead-was not likely to take place immediately, it should prevail and prosper in the latter days. The phrase of the latter times or days, or the last times or days, signifies any time yet to come; but denotes more particularly the times of Christianity. The times of Christianity may properly be called the latter times or days, or the last times or days, because it is the last of all God’s revelations to mankind. Hebrews 1:1, 2; 1 Peter 1:20.

“IV. Another remarkable peculiarity of this prophecy is, the solemn and emphatic manner in which it is delivered: The Spirit speaketh expressly. By the Spirit is meant the Holy Spirit of God, which inspired the prophets and apostles. The Spirit speaking expressly, may signify his speaking precisely and certainly, not obscurely and involvedly, as he is wont to speak in the prophets; or it may be said, The Spirit speaketh expressly, when he speaks in express words in some place or other of Divine writ; and the Spirit hath spoken the same thing in express words before in the prophecy of Daniel. Daniel has foretold, in express words, the worship of new demons or demi-gods; Daniel 11:38. The mauzzim of Daniel are the same as the demons of St. Paul; gods protectors, or saints protectors, defenders and guardians of mankind. This, therefore, is a prophecy, not merely dictated by private suggestion and inspiration, but taken out of the written word. It is a prophecy not only of St. Paul’s, but of Daniel’s too; or rather of Daniel, confirmed and approved by St. Paul.

“V. The apostle proceeds, ver. 2, to describe by what means and by what persons this apostasy should be propagated and established in the world. Speaking lies in hypocrisy, etc.; or rather, through the hypocrisy of liars, having their conscience, etc.; for the preposition rendered in, frequently signifies through or by. Liars too, or speaking lies, cannot, possibly be joined with the original word rendered some, and that rendered giving heed, because they are in the nominative case, and this is in the genitive. Neither can it well be joined in the construction with the word rendered devils, or demons; for how can demons, or devils, be said to speak lies in hypocrisy, and to have their conscience seared, etc.? It is plain, then, that the great apostasy of the latter times was to prevail, through the hypocrisy of liars, etc. And has not the great idolatry of Christians, and the worship of the dead particularly, been diffused and advanced in the world by such

instruments and agents? by fabulous books, forged under the names of the apostles and saints; by fabulous legends of their lives; by fabulous miracles, ascribed to their relics; by fabulous dreams and revelations; and even by fabulous saints, who never existed but in imagination.

“VI. **Verse 3. *Forbidding to marry, etc.*** This is a farther character of the promoters of this apostasy. The same hypocritical liars who should promote the worship of demons should also prohibit lawful marriage. The monks were the first who brought a single life into repute; they were the first also who revived and promoted the worship of demons. One of the primary and most essential laws and constitutions of all monks was the profession of a single life, and it is equally clear that the monks had the principal share in promoting the worship of the dead. The monks then were the principal promoters of the worship of the dead in former times. And who are the great patrons and advocates of the same worship now? Are not their legitimate successors and descendants, the monks and priests and bishops of the Church of Rome? And do not they also profess and recommend a single life, as well as the worship of saints and angels? Thus have the worship of demons, and the prohibition of marriage, constantly gone hand in hand together; and as they who maintain one maintain the other, so it is no less remarkable that they who disclaim the one, disclaim the other.

“VII. The last mark and character of these men is: Commanding to abstain from meats, etc. The same lying hypocrites who should promote the worship of demons, should not only prohibit lawful marriage, but likewise impose unnecessary abstinence from meats; and these too, as indeed it is fit they should, usually go together as constituent parts of the same hypocrisy. It is as much the law of monks to abstain from meats, as from marriage. Some never eat any flesh; others only certain kinds, on certain days. Frequent fasts are the rule and boast of their orders. So lived the monks of the ancient Church; so live, with less strictness perhaps, but with greater ostentation, the monks and friars of the Church of Rome; and these have been the principal propagators and defenders of the worship of the dead, both in former and in latter times. The worship of the dead is indeed so monstrously absurd as well as impious, that there was hardly any probability of its ever prevailing in the world but by hypocrisy and lies. But that these particular sorts of hypocrisy-celibacy, under pretense

of chastity; and abstinence, under pretense of devotion-should be employed for this purpose, the Spirit of God alone could foresee and foretell. There is no necessary connection between the worship of the dead, and forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats; and yet it is certain that the great advocates for this worship have, by their pretended purity and mortification, procured the greater reverence to their persons, and the readier reception to their doctrines. But this idle, popish, monkish abstinence is as unworthy of a Christian as it is unnatural to a man; it is preventing the purpose of nature, and commanding to abstain from meats, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving by believers, and them who know the truth.” See Bishop Newton’s *Dissertations on the Prophecies*; and Dr. Dodd’s notes.

Which mode of interpretation is best, I shall not attempt to say: to determine the meaning of prophecies is a difficult task; and, in a case of this kind, I rather choose to trust to the judgment of others than to my own. It is to be deplored that all the preceding particulars apply but too well to the corruptions in the Romish Church, therefore to it they appear peculiarly applicable. But whether God had this Church alone in view, I dare not affirm.



## CHAPTER 5.

*Rules to be observed in giving reproofs to the old and to the young, 1, 2. Directions concerning widows, 3-16. Of elders that rule well, 17, 18. How to proceed against elders when accused, and against notorious offenders, 10-21. Directions concerning imposition of hands, 22. Concerning Timothy's health, 23. Reasons why no person should be hastily appointed to sacred offices, 24, 25.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1. *Rebuke not an elder*** That is, an elderly person; for the word *πρεσβυτερος* is here taken in its natural sense, and signifies one advanced in years. At ver. 17, it is taken in what may be termed its ecclesiastical meaning, and signifies, an officer in the Church, what we commonly call a presbyter or bishop; for sometimes these terms were confounded. There are but few cases in which it at all becomes a young man to reprove an old man, and especially one who is a father in the Church. If such a one does wrong, or gets out of the way, he should be entreated as a father, with great caution and respect. To this at least his age entitles him. The word *επιπληξης* signifies, do not smite; i.e. do not treat them harshly, nor with magisterial austerity.

***The younger men as brethren*** Showing humility, and arrogating nothing to thyself on account of thy office. Feel for them as thou oughtest to feel for thy own brethren.

**Verse 2. *The elder women as mothers*** Treating them with the respect due to their age.

***The younger as sisters*** Feel for every member of the Church, old and young, male and female; consider them as fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters; treat them all with gentleness; and labor to keep them in, not to expel them from, the Church.

***With all purity.*** *εν παση αγνεια*. With all chastity. See the note on chap. 4:12.

There are some who seem to take a barbarous pleasure in expelling members from, the Church. They should be continued in as long as possible; while they are in the Church — under its ordinances and discipline, there is some hope that their errors may be corrected; but when once driven out again into the world, that hope must necessarily become extinct. As judgment is God's strange work, so excommunication should be the strange, the last, and the most reluctantly performed work of every Christian minister.

**Verse 3. *Honor widows that are widows indeed.*** One meaning of the word τιμαω, to honor, is to support, sustain, etc., Matthew 15:4, 5; and here it is most obviously to be taken in this sense. Provide for those widows especially which are widows indeed — persons truly destitute, being aged and helpless, and having neither children nor friends to take care of them, and who behave as becometh their destitute state. But see the note on verse 10.

**Verse 4. *But if any widow have children or nephews*** This shows that widows indeed are those that have neither children nor nephews, i.e. no relatives that either will or can help them, or no near relatives alive.

***Let them learn first to show piety at home*** Let these children and nephews provide for their aged or helpless parents or relatives, and not burden the Church with them while they are able to support them.

***And to requite their parents* και αμοιβας αποδιδοναι τοις πραγονοις** Let them learn to give benefit for benefit. Your parents supported and nourished you when you were young and helpless; you ought therefore to support them when they are old and destitute. This is called showing piety; and there is doubtless an allusion to the fifth commandment: Honour thy father and thy mother — provide for them in their old age and afflictions; God commands this.

**Verse 5. *And desolate* και μεμονωμενη** Left entirely alone — having neither children nor relatives to take care of her.

***Trusteth in God*** Finding she has no other helper, she continues in prayer and supplication, that she may derive that from God which, in the course of his providence, he has deprived her of among men.

**Verse 6. *But she that liveth in pleasure*** ἡ δε σπαταλωσα. She that liveth delicately-voluptuously indulging herself with dainties; it does not indicate grossly criminal pleasures; but simply means one who indulges herself in good eating and drinking, pampering her body at the expense of her mind. The word is used in reference to what we term petted and spoiled children; and a remarkable passage, is produced by Kypke, from an epistle of Theanus to Eubulus, found in Opusc. Myth. Galaei, page 741, where he says: “What can be done with that boy, who, if he have not food when and as he pleases, bursts out into weeping; and, if he eats, must have dainties and sweetmeats? If the weather be hot he complains of fatigue; if it be cold, he trembles; if he be reproved, he scolds; if every thing be not provided for him according to his wish, he is enraged. If he eats not, he breaks out into fits of anger. He basely indulges himself in pleasure; and in every respect acts voluptuously and effeminately. Knowing then, O friend, **οτι τα σπαταλωντα των παιδιων, οταν ακμαση προς ανδρας, ανδραποδα γινεται, τας τοιαυτας ηδονας αφαιρει** that boys living thus voluptuously, when they grow up are wont to become slaves; take away, therefore, such pleasures from them.” I have introduced this long quotation, the better to fix the meaning of the apostle, and to show that the life of pleasure mentioned here does not mean prostitution or uncleanness of any kind, though such a life may naturally lead to dissolute manners.

***Is dead while she liveth.*** No purpose of life is answered by the existence of such a person. Seneca, in Epist. 60, says of pleasure-takers, and those who live a voluptuous life: Hos itaque animalium loco numeremus, non hominum: quosdam vero ne animalium quidem, sed mortuorum-mortem antecesserunt. “We rank such persons with brutes, not with men; and some of them not even with brutes, but with dead carcasses. They anticipate their own death.” Such persons are, as the apostle says elsewhere, dead in trespasses, and dead in sins.

**Verse 7. *That they may be blameless.*** Charge the whole Church to attend to these things, that they may be blameless. The words are not spoken of the widows only, but of the Church or its officers; it cannot be restricted to the widows, for the adjective **ανεπιληπτοι** is both of the masculine and feminine gender.

**Verse 8. *But if any provide not for his own*** His own people or relatives.

***Those of his own house*** That is, his own family, or a poor widow or relative that lives under his roof.

***Hath denied the faith*** The Christian religion, which strongly inculcates love and benevolence to all mankind.

***Is worse than an infidel.*** For what are called the dictates of nature lead men to feel for and provide for their own families. Heathen writers are full of maxims of this kind; TACITUS says: *Liberos cuique ac propinquos NATURA carissimos esse voluit.* “Nature dictates that to every one his own children and relatives should be most dear.” And Cicero, in *Epist. ad Caption: Suos quisque debet tueri.* “Every man should take care of his own family.”

**Verse 9. *Taken into the number*** Let her not be taken into the list of those for which the Church must provide. But some think that the apostle means the list of those who were deaconesses in the Church; and that no widow was to be admitted into that rank who did not answer to the following character. See on ver. 10.

***Under threescore years*** As it might be supposed that, previously to this age, they might be able to do something towards their own support. See on ver. 10.

***Having been the wife of one man*** Having lived in conjugal fidelity with her husband; or having had but one husband at a time; or, according to others, having never been but once married. But the former is the opinion of some of the most eminent of the Greek fathers, and appears to be that most consistent with the scope of the place, and with truth.

**Verse 10. *Well reported of for good works*** Numbers being able to bear testimony, as the word implies, that she has not only avoided all sin, but that she has walked according to the testimony of God.

***Brought up children*** It was customary among the Gentiles to expose their children, when so poor that they were not able to provide for them. Pious and humane people took these up; and fed, clothed, and educated them. The words brought up may refer to the children of others, who were educated in the Christian faith by pious Christian women.

***Lodged strangers*** If she have been given to hospitality, freely contributing to the necessitous, when she had it in her power.

***Washed the saints' feet*** This was an office of humanity shown to all strangers and travelers in the eastern countries, who, either walking barefoot, or having only a sort of sole to defend the foot, needed washing when they came to their journey's end. Pious women generally did this act of kindness.

***Relieved the afflicted*** Visited and ministered to the sick.

***Diligently followed every good work*** In a word, if she have been altogether a Christian, living according to the precepts of the Gospel, and doing the Lord's work with all her heart, soul, and strength.

From the character given here of the widow indeed, it may be doubted whether *χήρα*, widow, was not in some cases the name of an office, which name it might have from being ordinarily filled by widows. It can hardly be supposed that any widow, unless she had considerable property, could have done the things enumerated in this verse, some of which would occasion no small expense. The widow indeed may mean a person who was to be employed in some office in the Church; and Timothy is enjoined not to take any into that office unless she had been before remarkable for piety and humanity. Some think that the widows of whom the apostle speaks had been deaconesses, and wished now to be taken on what might be termed the superannuated list; and the apostle lays down rules for the admission of such, the sum of which is: Let none come on this superannuated list unless she be at least sixty years of age, and can bring proof of her having conscientiously discharged the office and duty of a deaconess.

**Verse 11. *But the younger widows refuse*** Do not admit those into this office who are under sixty years of age. Probably those who were received into such a list promised to abide in their widowhood. But as young or comparatively young women might have both occasion and temptations to remarry, and so break their engagement to Christ, they should not be admitted. Not that the apostle condemns their remarrying as a crime in itself, but because it was contrary to their engagement. See on verse 14.

**Wax wanton** καταστρηνιασῶσι· From **κατα**, intensive, and **στρηνιαω**, to act in a luxurious or wanton manner. The word is supposed to be derived from **στερειν**, to remove, and **ηνια**, the rein; and is a metaphor taken from a pampered horse, from whose mouth the rein has been removed, so that there is nothing to check or confine him. The metaphor is plain enough, and the application easy.

**Verse 12. *Having damnation*** In the sense in which we use this word I am satisfied the apostle never intended it. It is likely that he refers here to some promise or engagement which they made when taken on the list already mentioned, and now they have the guilt of having violated that promise; this is the **κριμα**, or condemnation, of which the apostle speaks.

***They have cast off their first faith.*** By pledging their fidelity to a husband they have cast off their fidelity to Christ, as a married life and their previous engagement are incompatible. Dr. Macknight translates these two verses thus: But the younger widows reject, for when they cannot endure Christ's rein, they will marry; incurring condemnation, because they have put away their first fidelity.

**Verse 13. *And withal they learn to be idle*** They do not love work, and they will not work.

***Wandering about from house to house*** Gadding, gossiping; never contented with home; always visiting.

***And not only idle*** If it went no farther, this would be intolerable; but they are tattlers — tale-bearers; whisperers; light, trifling persons; all noise and no work.

***Busybodies*** Persons who meddle with the concerns of others; who mind every one's business but their own.

***Speaking things which they ought not.*** Lies, slanders, calumnies; backbiting their neighbors, and everywhere sowing the seed of dissension.

**Verse 14. *I will therefore that the younger women marry*** As the preceding discourse has been about the younger widows, and this is an inference from it; it is most evident that by the younger women the apostle means the young widows. These he considers unfit for the office of the female diaconate, and therefore wills them to marry, educate children, and

give themselves wholly up to domestic affairs. Here the apostle, so far from forbidding second marriages, positively enjoins or at least recommends them. And what man of sense could have done otherwise in the cases he mentions? It is no sin in any case to marry, bear children, and take care of a family; but it is a sin in every case to be idle persons, gadders about, tattlers, busybodies, sifting out and detailing family secrets, etc., etc. The good sentiment, put by an able poet and pious divine into the mouths of little children, cannot be ill applied to multitudes of women, mothers, and grandmothers:-

“See how the little busy bee  
Improves each shining hour,  
And gathers honey all the day  
From every opening flower!  
In works of labor or of skill,  
We should be busy too;  
For Satan finds some mischief, still,  
For idle hands to do.” DR. WATTS.

***The adversary*** Any person, whether Jew or Gentile, who might be watching for an occasion to reproach, through the misconduct of its professors, the cause of Christianity.

**Verse 15. *For some are already turned aside*** Some of these young widows, for he appears to be still treating of them, are turned aside to idolatry, to follow Satan instead of Christ. Slight deviations, in the first instance, from a right line, may lead at last to an infinite distance from Christ.

**Verse 16. *If any man or woman that believeth*** If any Christian man or woman have poor widows, which are their relatives, let them relieve them — provide them with the necessaries of life, and not burden the Church with their maintenance, that the funds may be spared for the support of those widows who were employed in its service, teaching children, visiting the sick, etc., etc. For the performing of such offices it is very likely that none but widows were employed; and these were chosen, other things being equal, out of the most indigent of the widows, and therefore called by the apostle, here and in ver. 3, *αις οντως χηραι*, widows indeed — widows desolate, without support, and without relatives. See the note on ver. 10.

**Verse 17. *Let the elders that rule well*** Elder is probably here the name of an ecclesiastical officer, similar to what we now term presbyter. See on

ver. 1. Dr. Macknight has remarked that, “in the first age, the name **πρεσβυτερος**, elder, was given to all who exercised any sacred office in the Church, as is plain from Acts 20:28, where the persons are called **επισκοποι**, bishops, who, ver. 17, were called **πρεσβυτεροι**, elders. The same thing appears from Titus 1:5, where those are called elders who, ver. 7, are named bishops; and from 1 Timothy 4:14, where, collectively, all who held sacred offices in Lystra are called **πρεσβυτεριον**, the presbytery or eldership, and are said to have concurred with St. Paul in setting Timothy apart to the ministry.”

**Double honor διπλης τιμης.** Almost every critic of note allows that **τιμη** here signifies reward, stipend, wages. Let him have a double or a larger salary who rules well; and why? Because in the discharge of his office he must be at expense, in proportion to his diligence, in visiting and relieving the sick, in lodging and providing for strangers; in a word, in his being given to hospitality, which was required of every bishop or presbyter.

**Especially they who labor in the word and doctrine.** Those who not only preach publicly, but instruct privately, catechize, etc. Some think this refers to distinct ecclesiastical orders; but these technical distinctions were, in my opinion, a work of later times.

**Verse 18. The Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox** This is a manifest proof that by **τιμη**, honor, in the preceding verse, the apostle means salary or wages: “Let the elders that rule well be accounted worthy of double honor,” a larger salary than any of the official widows mentioned before, for “the laborer is worthy of his hire.” The maintenance of every man in the Church should be in proportion to his own labor, and the necessities of his family. He that does no work should have no wages. In the Church of Christ there never can be a sinecure. They who minister at the altar should live by the altar; the ox that treadeth out the corn should not be muzzled; the laborer is worthy of his hire: but the altar should not support him who does not minister at it; if the ox won’t tread out the corn, let him go to the common or be muzzled; if the man will not labor, let him have no hire.

**Verse 19. Against an elder** Be very cautious of receiving evil reports against those whose business it is to preach to others, and correct their



vices. Do not consider an elder as guilty of any alleged crime, unless it be proved by two or three witnesses. This the law of Moses required in respect to all. Among the Romans, a plebeian might be condemned on the deposition of one credible witness; but it required two to convict a senator. The reason of this difference is evident: those whose business it is to correct others will usually have many enemies; great caution, therefore, should be used in admitting accusations against such persons.

**Verse 20. *Them that sin rebuke before all*** That is, before the members of the Church; which was the custom of the Jews in their synagogues. But, if the words refer to the elders alone, then the transgressing elder is to be reproved before his fellows, and be tried by them.

***That others also may fear.*** This is the grand object of Church censures, to reclaim the transgressors, and to give warning to others.

**Verse 21. *I charge thee before God*** The apostle would have Timothy to consider that all he did should be done as in the sight of God, the Father of the spirits of all flesh; in the sight of Christ, the Savior of sinners, who purchased the Church with his own blood; and in the sight of the most holy, approved, and eminent angels, whose office it was to minister to the heirs of salvation. The word **εκλεκτοι**, elect, applied to the angels here, is supposed to distinguish those who stood, when others fell from their first estate. The former were elect, or approved; the latter reprobate, or disapproved. This is not an unfrequent sense of the word **εκλεκτος**, elect. Perhaps there is nothing else meant than the angels that are chosen out from among others, by the Lord himself, to be ministering servants to the Church.

***Without preferring one before another*** **χωρις προκριματος**: Without prejudice. Promote no man's cause; make not up thy mind on any case, till thou hast weighed both sides, and heard both parties, with their respective witnesses; and then act impartially, as the matter may appear to be proved. Do not treat any man, in religious matters, according to the rank he holds in life, or according to any personal attachment thou mayest have for him. Every man should be dealt with in the Church as he will be dealt with at the judgment-seat of Christ. A minister of the Gospel, who, in the exercise of discipline in the Church, is swayed and warped by secular considerations, will be a curse rather than a blessing to the people of God.

Accepting the persons of the rich, in ecclesiastical matters, has been a source of corruption in Christianity. With some ministers the show of piety in a rich man goes farther than the soundest Christian experience in the poor. What account can such persons give of their stewardship?

**Verse 22. *Lay hands suddenly on no man*** Do not hastily appoint any person to the sacred ministry: let the person be well proved before he receives the imposition of hands. Some understand this of laying hands on the sick.

***Neither be partaker of other men's sins*** It is a sin for any improper person to thrust himself into the sacred office; and he partakes of that sin who introduces, helps him forward, or sanctions him in it. O, what an account will rash, undiscerning, and prejudiced bishops, presbyters, and others, have to render to God for their ordinations! Their laying rash or careless hands "on skulls that cannot teach, and will not learn;" while probably they refuse inducting others well qualified for the Christian ministry.

***Keep thyself pure.*** From this and every other evil.

**Verse 23. *Drink no longer water, but use a little wine*** The whole of this verse seems, to several learned critics and divines, strangely inserted in this place; it might have been, according to them, a note which the apostle inserted in the margin of his letter, on recollecting the precarious state of Timothy's health, and his great abstemiousness and self-denial. I believe the verse to be in its proper place; and, for reasons which I shall adduce, not less necessary than the directions which precede and follow it. But it may be necessary to inquire a little into the reasons of the advice itself. The priests under the Mosaic law, while performing sacred rites, were forbidden to drink wine: Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever through your generations; Leviticus 10:9; Ezekiel 44:21. It was the same with the Egyptian priests. It was forbidden also among the Romans, and particularly to women and young persons. PLATO, Deuteronomy Legibus, lib. ii., edit. Bip., vol. viii., page 86, speaks thus: *αρ' ου νομοθετησομεν, πρωτον μεν, τους παιδας μεχρις ετων οκτωκαιδεκα τοπαραπαν οινου μη γευεσται; μετα δε τουτο, οινου μεν δη γευεσθαι του μετριου, μεχρι τριακοντα ετων*

-τετταρακοντα δε επιβαινοντα ετων, εν τοις ξυσσιτιοις ευωχηθεντα, κ. τ. λ. “Shall we not ordain by law, in the first place, that boys shall not, on any account, taste wine till they are eighteen years old? In the next place, we should inform them that wine is to be used moderately till they are thirty years old. But when they have attained the fortieth year, then they may attend feasts; for Bacchus has bestowed wine upon men as a remedy against the austerity of old age, της του γηρωσ αυστηροτητος εδωρησατο τον οινον φαρμακον, ωστ’ ανηβαν ημας, και δυσθυμιας ληθην γιγνεσθαι, μαλακωτερον εκ σκληροτερου το της ψυχης ηθος, καθαπερ εις πυρ σιδηρον εντεθεντα, γιγνομενον· that through this we might acquire a second youth, forget sorrow, and the manners of the mind be rendered softer, as iron is softened by the action of the fire.” But wine, according to the assertions of some, was given to men as a punishment, that they might be rendered insane: ὁ δε νυν λεγομενος υφ’ ημων, φαρμακον επι τουναντιον φησιν αιδους μεν ψυχης κτησεωσ ενεκα δεδοσθαι, σωματος δε υγειας τε και ισχυος· page 100. “But we have now said that it is, on the contrary, medicine; and was given that the soul might acquire modesty, and the body health and vigor.”

From Athenaeus we learn that the Greeks often mingled their wine with water; sometimes one part of wine to two of water; three parts of water to one of wine; and at other times three parts of water to two of wine. See his Deipnosophistae, lib. ix. “Among the Locrians, if any one was found to have drunk unmixed wine, unless prescribed by a physician, he was punished with death; the laws of Zaleucus so requiring. And among the Romans, no servant, nor free woman, ουτε των ελευθερων οι εφηβοι μεχρι τριακοντα ετων, nor youths of quality, drank any wine till they were thirty years of age.” Deipnosoph., lib. x. c. 7, p. 429. And it was a maxim among all, that continued water-drinking injured the stomach. Thus Libanius, Epist. 1578. πεπτωκε και ημιν ο στομαχος ταις συνεχεσιν υδροποσιαις; “Our stomach is weakened by continual water-drinking.”

From chap. 4:12, we learn that Timothy was a young man; but as among the Greeks and Roman the state of youth or adolescence was extended to thirty years, and no respectable young men were permitted to drink wine before that time; allowing that Timothy was about twenty when Paul had him circumcised, which was, according to Calmet, in the year of our Lord 51, and that this epistle was written about A. D. 64 or 65, then Timothy

must have been about thirty-five when he received this epistle; and as that was on the borders of adolescence, and as the Scripture generally calls that youth that is not old age, Timothy might be treated as a young man by St. Paul, as in the above text, and might still feel himself under the custom of his country relative to drinking wine, (for his father was a Greek, Acts 16:1,) and, through the influence of his Christian profession, still continue to abstain from wine, drinking water only; which must have been very prejudicial to him, his weak state of health considered, the delicacy of his stomach, and the excess of his ecclesiastical labors.

As Timothy's life was of great consequence to the Church of God at Ephesus, it was not unworthy of the Spirit of God to give the direction in the text, and to mingle it immediately with what some have called more solemn and important advice. 1. It was necessary that the work should be done in the Church at Ephesus which the apostle appointed to Timothy. 2. There was no person at Ephesus fit to do this work but Timothy. 3.

these accounts the exhortation is necessary: Lay hands suddenly on no man.

**Verse 25. *Likewise also the good works of some*** Though those who are very holy and very useful in the Church cannot be unknown, yet there are others not less holy who need to be brought forward; who do much good in private; and their character and good works are not fully known till after diligent inquiry. These are they who do not let their left hand know what their right doeth.

1. AFTER so long and minute an examination of the subjects in this chapter, little remains to be said in the way of farther and more satisfactory explanation. The whole account concerning the widows, who they were, and what their provision, and what their occupation, and how supported, are to me questions of considerable difficulty. In the notes I have given the best account of the different subjects in my power. If the reader be satisfied and edified, I have gained my end.

2. On the subject of the imposition of hands, or what is vulgarly but improperly called ordination, I have not said much here, having given my views of the subject elsewhere in these notes. See on chap. 3:1, etc. I must again state my conviction that what is said on this subject in this chapter, and indeed in the epistle, is rather to be understood prophetically; and to have been intended for a much lower age of the Christian Church. That any person should, from impure or secular motives, desire to be appointed to the ministerial office at such a time, when poverty and persecution were the least they would reasonably expect, to me seems altogether inexplicable. But that many, after the Church got accredited and established, and an ample revenue appointed for its ministers by emperors and kings, should wish to get into the priesthood for its emoluments, is a melancholy truth, which every year's experience testifies. To those who have the authority from the state to appoint ministers for the Church, this chapter reads a solemn and awful lesson. And not to them only, but to all who have the appointment of ministers or preachers in every sect and party. How few are there who would kindle a fire on God's altar were there not secular emoluments attending it! I am afraid the Scottish poet spoke the truth who said:-

*“‘Tis gow'd maks sogers feight the fiercer,*

*Without it, preaching wad be scarcer.”*

Gold or money is the primum mobile through every department of life.  
Proh dolor!

## CHAPTER 6

*Of the duty of servants, 1, 2. Of false teachers, who suppose gain to be godliness, 3-5. Of true godliness, and contentment, 6-8. Of those, and their dangerous state, who determine to be rich; and of the love of money, 9, 10. Timothy is exhorted to fight the good fight of faith, and to keep the charge delivered to him, 11-14. A sublime description of the majesty of God, 15, 16. How the rich should behave themselves; and the use they should make of their property, 17-19. Timothy is once more exhorted to keep what was committed to his trust; and to avoid profane babblings, through which some have erred from the faith, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1. *Let as many servants as are under the yoke*** The word **δουλοι** here means slaves converted to the Christian faith; and the **ζυγον**, or yoke, is the state of slavery; and by **δεσποται**, masters, despots, we are to understand the heathen masters of those Christianized slaves. Even these, in such circumstances, and under such domination, are commanded to treat their masters with all honor and respect, that the name of God, by which they were called, and the doctrine of God, Christianity, which they had professed, might not be blasphemed—might not be evilly spoken of in consequence of their improper conduct. Civil rights are never abolished by any communications from God's Spirit. The civil state in which a man was before his conversion is not altered by that conversion; nor does the grace of God absolve him from any claims, which either the state or his neighbor may have on him. All these outward things continue unaltered. See the notes on Ephesians 6:5, etc.; and 1 Corinthians 7:21, etc., and especially the observations at the end of that chapter.

**Verse 2. *And they that have believing masters*** Who have been lately converted as well as themselves.

***Let them not despise them*** Supposing themselves to be their equals, because they are their brethren in Christ; and grounding their opinion on this, that in him there is neither male nor female, bond nor free; for,

although all are equal as to their spiritual privileges and state, yet there still continues in the order of God's providence a great disparity of their station: the master must ever be in this sense superior to the servant.

***But rather do them service*** Obey them the more cheerfully, because they are faithful and beloved; faithful to God's grace, beloved by him and his true followers.

***Partakers of the benefit.*** της ευεπγεςιας αντιλαμβανομενοι· Joint partakers of the benefit. This is generally understood as referring to the master's participation in the services of his slaves. Because those who are partakers of the benefit of your services are faithful and beloved; or it may apply to the servants who are partakers of many benefits from their Christian masters. Others think that benefit here refers to the grace of the Gospel, the common salvation of believing masters and slaves; but Dr. Macknight well observes that ευεργεςια is nowhere used to denote the Gospel. One of Uffenbach's MSS. has εργασιαισ, of the service; this reading is plainly a gloss; it is not acknowledged by any other MS., nor by any version. FG, and the Codex Augustanus 6, have ευσεβειας, of godliness; a term by which the whole Gospel doctrine is expressed, chap. 4:7, 8, as also in the 6th verse of this chapter.

**Verse 3. *If any man teach otherwise*** It appears that there were teachers of a different kind in the Church, a sort of religious levellers, who preached that the converted servant had as much right to the master's service as the master had to his. Teachers of this kind have been in vogue long since the days of Paul and Timothy.

***And consent not to wholesome words*** υγιαινουσι λογοις Healing doctrines — doctrines which give nourishment and health to the soul, which is the true character of all the doctrines taught by our Lord Jesus Christ; doctrines which are according to godliness — securing as amply the honor and glory of God, as they do the peace, happiness, and final salvation of man.

All this may refer to the general tenor of the Gospel; and not to any thing said, or supposed to have been said, by our Lord, relative to the condition of slaves. With political questions, or questions relative to private rights, our Lord scarcely ever meddled; he taught all men to love one another; to



respect each other's rights; to submit to each other; to show all fidelity; to be obedient, humble, and meek; and to know that his kingdom was not of this world.

**Verse 4. *He is proud* τετυφωται.** He is blown up, or inflated with a vain opinion of his own knowledge; whereas his knowledge is foolishness, for he knows nothing.

***Doting about questions*** He is sick, distempered, about these questions relative to the Mosaic law and the traditions of the elders; for it is most evident that the apostle has the Judaizing teachers in view, who were ever, in questions of theology, straining out a gnat, and swallowing a camel.

***Strifes of words* λογομαχιας.** Logomachies; verbal contentions; splitting hairs; producing Hillel against Shammai, and Shammai against Hillel, relative to the particular mode in which the punctilios of some rites should be performed. In this sort of sublime nonsense the works of the Jewish rabbins abound.

***Whereof cometh envy, strife, etc.*** How little good have religious disputes ever done to mankind, or to the cause of truth! Most controversialists have succeeded in getting their own tempers soured, and in irritating their opponents. Indeed, truth seems rarely to be the object of their pursuit; they labor to accredit their own party by abusing and defaming others; from generals they often descend to particulars; and then personal abuse is the order of the day. Is it not strange that Christians either cannot or will not see this? Cannot any man support his own opinions, and give his own views of the religion of Christ, without abusing and calumniating his neighbor? I know not whether such controversialists should not be deemed disturbers of the public peace, and come under the notice of the civil magistrate. Should not all Christians know that the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of the Lord?

**Verse 5. *Perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds*** Disputations that cannot be settled, because their partisans will not listen to the truth; and they will not listen to the truth because their minds are corrupt. Both under the law and under the Gospel the true religion was: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, mind, and strength; and thy neighbor as thyself. Where, therefore, the love of God and man does not

prevail, there there is no religion. Such corrupt disputers are as destitute of the truth as they are of love to God and man.

***Supposing that gain is godliness*** Professing religion only for the sake of secular profit; defending their own cause for the emoluments it produced; and having no respect to another world.

***From such withdraw thyself*** Have no religions fellowship with such people. But this clause is wanting in AD\*FG, some others, the Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Vulgate, and Itala, one copy excepted. It is probably spurious.

**Verse 6. *But godliness with contentment is great gain.*** The word godliness, **ευσεβεια**, here, and in several other places of this epistle, signifies the true religion, Christianity; and the word contentment, **αυταρκεια**, signifies a competency, a sufficiency; that measure or portion of secular things which is necessary for the support of life, while the great work of regeneration is carrying on in the soul. Not what this or the other person may deem a competency, but what is necessary for the mere purposes of life in reference to another world; food, raiment, and lodging. See ver. 7. So, if a man have the life of God in his soul, and just a sufficiency of food and raiment to preserve and not burden life, he has what God calls great gain, an abundant portion.

It requires but little of this world's goods to satisfy a man who feels himself to be a citizen of another country, and knows that this is not his rest.

**Verse 7. *We brought nothing into this world*** There are some sayings in Seneca which are almost verbatim with this of St. Paul: Nemo nascitur dives; quisquis exit in lucem jussus est lacte et panno esse contentus; Epist. xx, "No man is born rich; every one that comes into the world is commanded to be content with food and raiment." Excudit natura redeuntem, sicut intrantem; non licet plus auferre, quam intuleris; Epist., cap. ii. "Nature, in returning, shakes off all incumbrances as in entering; thou canst not carry back more than thou broughtest in." Seneca and St. Paul were contemporary; but all the Greek and Latin poets, and especially the stoic philosophers, are full of such sentiments. It is a self-evident truth; relative to it there can be no controversy.

**Verse 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.***

**αρκεσθησομεθα**. Let us consider this a competency. And it is evident that the apostle considers this a competency, and by these words explains what he said verse 6.

The word **ακεπασματα**, which we translate raiment, signifies covering in general; and here means house or lodging, as well as clothing.

**Verse 9. *But they that will be rich*** **οι δε βουλομενοι πλουτειν**. The words are emphatic, and refer to persons who are determined to get riches; who make this their object and aim in life; who live to get money; who get all they can, save all they can, and keep all they get; and yet are apprehensive of no danger, because they seek to be rich by honest means; for it is likely that the apostle does not refer to those who wish to get riches by robbery, plunder, extortion, etc.

By the term rich it is very likely that the apostle refers to what he had said above: Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content. He that has more than these is rich in the sense in which the apostle uses the term.

***Fall into temptation and a snare*** **του διαβολου**, Of the devil, is added by D\*FG, Vulgate, Itala, and many of the fathers. It is in consequence of the temptation of the devil that they have determined to be rich; this temptation once received, others quickly succeed: and when they have swallowed down the temptation to the thing, then they drink in a thousand temptations to the means; and all these lead them **εις παγιδα**, into an unforeseen and concealed trap. **παγις** signifies a net, trap, gin, snare, springe, or pit dug in the ground filled with sharp stakes, and sligos/g0.502 Onk0

mental degradation, absorbs the soul; for these foolish and hurtful lusts drown men in destruction and perdition — the soul is destroyed by them here, and brought through them into a state of perdition hereafter. The apostle considers these persons like mariners in a storm; by the concurrence of winds, waves, and tide, they are violently driven among the rocks, the vessel is dashed to pieces, and in a moment they are all engulfed in the great deep! Such is the lot and unavoidable catastrophe of them that will be rich, even though they should strive to accomplish their desires by means the most rigidly honest.

In this place I beg leave to refer the reader to a sermon on this text by the late Rev. JOHN WESLEY, in which the whole of this subject is treated by the hand of a master; and, for usefulness, the sermon is superior to every thing of the kind ever published. It is entitled, *The Danger of Riches*; and is found in his *WORKS*, Vol. 2, page 248, American edit.

**Verse 10.** *The love of money is the root of all evil* Perhaps it would be better to translate **παντων των κακων**, of all these evils; i.e. the evils enumerated above; for it cannot be true that the love of money is the root of all evil, it certainly was not the root whence the transgression of Adam sprang, but it is the root whence all the evils mentioned in the preceding verse spring. This text has been often very incautiously quoted; for how often do we hear, "The Scripture says, Money is the root of all evil!" No, the Scripture says no such thing. Money is the root of no evil, nor is it an evil of any kind; but the love of it is the root of all the evils mentioned here.

*While some coveted after* **ορεγομενοι**· Insatiably desiring.

*Have erred from the faith* **απεπλανηθησαν**· Have totally erred — have made a most fatal and ruinous departure from the religion of Christ.

*And pierced themselves through with many sorrows.* The word **περιπειραν** signifies to be transfixed in every part; and is an allusion to one of those snares, **παγιδα**, mentioned ver. 9, where a hole is dug in the earth, and filled full of sharp stakes, and, being slightly covered over with turf, is not perceived; and whatever steps on it falls in, and is pierced

**Verse 11. *But thou, O man of God*** Thou, who hast taken God for thy portion, and art seeking a city that hath foundations, whose builder is the living God, flee these things. Escape for thy life. Even thou art not out of the reach of the love of money. How many of the ministers of religion have been ruined by this! And how much has religion itself suffered by their love of money!

***Follow after righteousness*** Justice and uprightness in all thy dealings with men. Godliness — a thorough conformity to the image of God and mind of Christ. Faith in Jesus, and in all that he has spoken; and fidelity to the talents thou hast received, and the office with which thou art intrusted.

***Love*** To God and all mankind. Patience in all trials and afflictions.

***Meekness.*** Bearing up with an even mind under all adversities and contradictions.

**Verse 12. *Fight the good fight of faith*** “Agonize the good agony.” Thou hast a contest to sustain in which thy honor, thy life, thy soul, are at stake. Live the Gospel, and defend the cause of God. Unmask hypocrites, expel the profligate, purge and build up the Church, live in the spirit of thy religion, and give thyself wholly to this work.

***Lay hold on eternal life*** All this is in allusion to the exercises in the public Grecian games: Fight, conquer, and seize upon the prize; carry off the crown of eternal life!

***Whereunto thou art also called*** The allusion to the public games is still carried on: Thou hast been called into this palaestra; thou hast been accepted as one proper to enter the lists with any antagonists that may offer; in the presence of many witnesses thou hast taken the necessary engagements upon thee, and submitted to be governed by the laws of the stadium; many eyes are upon thee, to see whether thou wilt fight manfully, and be faithful. Timothy’s faith was undoubtedly tried by severe persecution. In Hebrews 13:23, it is said: Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty. Hence it appears that he was imprisoned for the testimony of Christ, and perhaps it was then, more than at his ordination, that he made the good confession here mentioned. He risked his life and conquered. If not a martyr, he was a confessor.

**Verse 13. *I give thee charge*** This is similar to that in verse 5:21 of the preceding chapter, where see the note.

***Who quickeneth all things*** God, who is the fountain of life, and who is the resurrection; and who will raise thee up at the last day to a life of ineffable glory, if thou be faithful unto death. And should thy life fall a sacrifice to the performance of thy duty, all will be safe; for thy life is hid with Christ in God, and when he who is thy life shall appear, then shalt thou also appear with him in glory! Thy kingdom is not of this world; remember that this good confession was made by thy Master before Pilate. Keep disentangled from all earthly things, live to and for God, and all will be well.

***A good confession*** The confession made by Christ before Pontius Pilate is, that he was Messiah the King; but that his kingdom was not of this world; and that hereafter he should be seen coming in the clouds of heaven to judge the quick and dead. See John 18:36, 37; and Mark 14:61, 62.

**Verse 14. *That thou keep this commandment without spot*** Two things are mentioned here: 1. That the commandment itself—the whole doctrine of Christ, should be kept entire. 2. That his life should be agreeable to that doctrine. Keep it without spot — let there be no blot on the sacred book; add nothing to it; take nothing from it; change nothing in it. Deliver down to thy successors the truth as thou hast had it from God himself.

***Unrebukable*** Let there be nothing in thy conduct or spirit contrary to this truth. Keep the truth, and the truth will keep thee.

***Until the appearing of our Lord*** Hand it down pure, and let thy conduct be a comment on it, that it may continue in the world and in the Church till the coming of Christ.

**Verse 15. *Which in his times he shall show*** Jesus will appear in the most proper time; the time which the infinite God in his wisdom has appointed for the second coming of his Son.

***The blessed and only Potentate*** δυναστης, Potentate, is applied to secular governors; but none of these can be styled ο μακαριος και μονος, the happy and only One; ο βασιλευς των βασιλευοντων, the King of kings, or the King over all kings; and κυριος των κυριευοντων,

the Lord over all lords or rulers. These are titles which could not be given to any mortals. This is made more specific by the verse following.

**Verse 15.** ο μακαριος και μονος δυναστης, ο βασιλευς των βασιλευοντων, και κυριος των κυριευοντων.

The supreme Being is also styled the King of kings, and the Blessed, by AESCHYLUS in his tragedy of the Supplicants:-

αναξ ανακτων, μακαρων  
μακαρτατε, και τελων  
τελειοτατον κρατος.  
Ver 520. Ed. Porson.

“O King of kings! most Blessed of the blessed! most Perfect of the perfect!”

**Verse 16.** *Who only hath immortality* All beings that are not eternal must be mutable; but there can be only one eternal Being, that is God; and

Æschylus and Sophocles too? Scarcely any person suspects this; and yet there is such a complete similarity between the following quotations from the above poets and the apostle's words, that we are almost persuaded he had them in his eye. But if so, he extends the thought infinitely higher, by language incomparably more exalted. I shall introduce and compare with the text the passages I refer to.

**Verse 16.** ὁ μόνος ἐχὼν ἀθανάσιαν, φῶς οἰκῶν ἀπροσίτων.

In the *Antigone* of SOPHOCLES there is a sublime address to Jove, of which the following is an extract:

ἀγῆρας χρόνῳ δυνάστας,  
κατεχεῖς οὐλύμπου  
μαρμαροεσσαν αἴγλαν.

Ver. 608. Edit. Brunk.

“But thou, an ever-during Potentate, dost inhabit the refulgent splendor of Olympus!”

This passage is grand and noble; but how insignificant does it appear when contrasted with the superior sublimity of the inspired writer! The deity of Sophocles dwells in the dazzling splendor of heaven; but the God of Paul inhabits light so dazzling and so resplendent that it is perfectly unapproachable!

Synesius, in his third hymn, has a fine idea on the mode of God's existence, which very probably he borrowed from St. Paul:-

κεκαλυμμένην νοῦ  
ἰδίας αὐγαῖς.

“O intellectual Being! veiled in thine own effulgence!”

And a few lines after, he says,—

σὺ τὸ κρυπτομένον  
ἰδίας αὐγαῖς.

“Thou art He who art concealed by thy splendors.”



All these are excellent, but they are stars of the twelfth magnitude before the apostolic SUN.

See a quotation from Euripides, 2 Timothy 4:8.

**Verse 17. *Charge them that are rich*** He had before, in verses 9, 10, given them a very awful lesson concerning their obtaining riches; and now he gives them one equally so concerning their use of them.

***That they be not high-minded*** That they do not value themselves on account of their wealth, for this adds nothing to mind or moral worth.

***Nor trust in uncertain riches*** πλουτου αδηλοτητι· The uncertainty of riches; things which are never at a stay, are ever changing, and seldom continue long with one proprietor; therefore, as well as on many other accounts, they are not to be trusted in: they cannot give happiness, because they are not fixed and permanent; neither can they meet the wishes of an immortal spirit; but in the living God, who is the unchangeable fountain of perfection.

***Who giveth us richly all things to enjoy*** Who not only has all good, but dispenses it liberally for the supply of the wants of all his creatures; and he does not give merely what is necessary, but he gives what tends to render life comfortable. The comforts of life come from God, as well as the necessaries. He not only gives us a bare subsistence, but he gives us enjoyments. Were it not for the oppression and rapine of wicked men, every situation and state in life would be comparatively comfortable. God gives liberally; man divides it badly.

**Verse 18. *That they do good*** That they relieve the wants of their fellow creatures, according to the abundance which God has given them. The highest luxury a human being can enjoy on this side of the grave.

***Rich in good works*** That their good works may be as abundant as their riches.

***Ready to distribute*** ευμεταδοτους ειναι· That they give nothing through partiality or favor, but be guided in their distribution by the necessities of the objects presented to them; and that they confine not their charity at home, but scatter it abroad.

***Willing to communicate*** **κοινωνικούς**· Bringing every poor person into a state of fellowship with themselves.

**Verse 19. *Laying up in store for themselves a good foundation*** St. Paul seems to have borrowed this form of speech from Tobit. See chap. iv. 8, 9: If thou hast abundance, give alms accordingly: if thou hast but a little, be not afraid to give according to that little: for thou treasurest up a good reward for thyself against the day of necessity. **θεμα ραρ αγαθον θησαυριζεις σεαυτω εις ημεραν αναγκης**. The apostle says: **αποθησαυριζοντας εαυτοις θεμελιον καλον εις το μελλον, ινα επιλαβωνται της αιωνιου ζωης** “Treasuring up a good foundation to them for the future, that they may lay hold on eternal life.” The sentiment is the same in both writers; the words nearly so; and the meaning is simply this, as it is judiciously paraphrased by Mr. J. Wesley in his note on this passage: “Treasuring up for themselves a good foundation, of an abundant reward by the free mercy of God, that they may lay hold on eternal life. This cannot be done by almsdeeds; yet, they come up for a memorial before God; Acts 10:4. And the lack even of this may be the cause why God will withhold grace and salvation from us.” Christ has said: Blessed are the merciful for they shall obtain mercy. They who have not been merciful according to their power, shall not obtain mercy; they that have, shall obtain mercy: and yet the eternal life which they obtain they look for from the mercy of God through Jesus Christ.

**Verse 20. *O Timothy, keep that which is committed to thy trust*** This is another repetition of the apostolic charge. (See chap. 1:5, 18, 19; 4:6, 7, 14, 15, 16; 5:21; 6:13.) Carefully preserve that doctrine which I have delivered to thee. Nothing can be more solemn and affectionate than this charge.

***Avoiding profane and vain babblings*** See on chap. 1:4, and 4:7.

***And oppositions of science falsely so called*** **και αντιθεσεις της ψευδωνυμου γνωσεως**· And oppositions of knowledge falsely so named. Dr. Macknight’s note here is worthy of much attention: “In the enumeration of the different kinds of inspiration bestowed on the first preachers of the Gospel, 1 Corinthians 12:8, we find the word of knowledge mentioned; by which is meant that kind of inspiration which gave to the apostles and superior Christian prophets the knowledge of the true meaning of the Jewish Scriptures. This inspiration the false teachers

pretending to possess, dignified their misinterpretations of the ancient Scriptures with the name of knowledge, that is, inspired knowledge; for so the word signifies, 1 Corinthians 14:6. And as by these interpretations they endeavored to establish the efficacy of the Levitical atonements, the apostle very properly termed these interpretations oppositions of knowledge, because they were framed to establish doctrines opposite to, and subversive of, the Gospel. To destroy the credit of these teachers, he affirmed that the knowledge from which they proceeded was falsely called inspired knowledge; for they were not inspired with the knowledge of the meaning of the Scriptures, but only pretended to it." Others think that the apostle has the Gnostics in view. But it is not clear that these heretics, or whatever they were, had any proper existence at this time. On the whole, Dr. Macknight's interpretation seems to be the best.

**Verse 21. *Which some professing*** Which inspired knowledge some pretending to, have set up Levitical rites in opposition to the great Christian sacrifice, and consequently have erred concerning the faith — have completely mistaken the whole design of the Gospel. See chap. 1:6, 7.

***Grace be with thee.*** May the favor and influence of God be with thee, and preserve thee from these and all other errors!

***Amen.*** This word, as in former cases, is wanting in the most ancient MSS. In a majority of cases it appears to have been added by different transcribers nearly in the same way in which we add the word FINIS, simply to indicate the end of the work.

The subscriptions as usual are various. The following are the most remarkable afforded by the MSS.:—

The first to Timothy is completed; the second to Timothy begins. — DE. The First Epistle to Timothy is completed; the second to him begins. — G. The first to Timothy, written from Laodicea. — A. The first to Timothy, written from Ladikia. — CLAROMONT. Written from Laodicea, which is the metropolis of Phrygia. — The first to Timothy, written from Laodicea, which is the metropolis of Phrygia of Pacatiana. — Common GREEK TEXT, and several MSS. Instead of Pacatiana, some have Pancatiana, Capatiana, and Paracatiana.

The VERSIONS are not less discordant:—

The First Epistle to Timothy, which, was written from Laodicea. — SYR.

The VULGATE has no subscription.

The end of the epistle. It was written from Laodicea, which is the metropolis of the cities of Phrygia. — ARAB.

To the man Timothy. — AETHIOPIC.

The First Epistle to Timothy, written from Athens. — ARABIC of Erpenius.

Written from Athens, and sent by Titus, his disciple. — COPTIC.

Written from Macedonia. — AUCTOR SYNOPS.

The First Epistle to Timothy is ended. It was written from Laodicea, the metropolis of Phrygia of Pacatiana. — PHILOXENIAN SYRIAC.

There is one authority in Griesbach, Mt. c., for its being written from NICOPOLIS. This is the opinion also of Dr. Macknight.

That the epistle was not written from Laodicea nor Athens, but from Macedonia, has been rendered probable by the arguments produced in the preface, to which the reader is referred for this and the date of the epistle itself.

IN reviewing the whole of this epistle, I cannot help considering it of the first consequence to the Church of God. In it we see more clearly than elsewhere what the ministers of the Gospel should be, and what is the character of the true Church. Bishops, presbyters, and deacons are particularly described; and their qualifications so circumstantially detailed, that it is impossible to be ignorant on this head. What the Church should be is also particularly stated; it is the house of the living God; the place where he lives, works, and manifests himself. The doctrines and discipline of the Church are not less specifically noted. All these subjects are considered at large in the notes, and here nothing need be added.

Should it be said, the apostle, in giving the qualifications of a bishop, “nowhere insists on human learning,” it may be answered in general, that

no ignorant person in those times could have possibly got admittance into the Church as a teacher of Christianity. Every person, acknowledged as a teacher, was himself well taught in the word of God, and well taught by the Spirit of God; and much teaching of the Divine Spirit was then necessary, as the New Testament Scriptures were not then completed; and, if we were to allow the earlier date of this epistle, scarcely any part of the New Testament had then been written. The gospels had not come as yet into general circulation; and only a few of St. Paul's epistles, viz. those to the Thessalonians, and that to the Galatians, and the first to the Corinthians, had been written before the year 56. At such times much must have been done by immediate revelations, and a frequent communication of miraculous powers.

It is natural for men to run into extremes; and there is no subject on which they have run into wider extremes than that of the necessity of human learning; for in order to a proper understanding of the sacred Scriptures, on one hand, all learning has been cried down, and the necessity of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as the sole interpreter, strongly and vehemently argued. On the other, all inspiration has been set aside, the possibility of it questioned, and all pretensions to it ridiculed in a way savouring little of Christian charity or reverence for God. That there is a middle way from which these extremes are equally distant, every candid man who believes the Bible must allow. That there is an inspiration of the Spirit which every conscientious Christian may claim, and without which no man can be a Christian, is sufficiently established by innumerable scriptures, and by the uninterrupted and universal testimony of the Church of God; this has been frequently proved in the preceding notes. If any one, professing to be a preacher of the Gospel of Jesus, denies, speaks, or writes against this, he only gives awful proof to the Christian Church how utterly unqualified he is for his sacred function. He is not sent by God, and therefore he shall not profit the people at all. With such, human learning is all in all; it is to be a substitute for the unction of Christ, and the grace and influences of the Holy Spirit.

But while we flee from such sentiments, as from the influence of a pestilential vapour, shall we join with those who decry learning and science, absolutely denying them to be of any service in the work of the ministry, and often going so far as to assert that they are dangerous and

subversive of the truly Christian temper and spirit, engendering little besides pride, self-sufficiency, and intolerance?

That there have been pretenders to learning, proud and intolerant, we have too many proofs of the fact to doubt it; and that there have been pretenders to Divine inspiration, not less so, we have also many facts to prove. But such are only pretenders; for a truly learned man is ever humble and complacent, and one who is under the influence of the Divine Spirit is ever meek, gentle, and easy to be entreated. The proud and the insolent are neither Christians nor scholars. Both religion and learning disclaim them, as being a disgrace to both.

But what is that learning which may be a useful handmaid to religion in the ministry of the Gospel? Perhaps we may find an answer to this important question in one of the qualifications which the apostle requires in a Christian minister, 1 Timothy 3:2: He should be apt to teach — capable of teaching others. See the note. Now, if he be capable of teaching others, he must be well instructed himself; and in order to this he will need all the learning that, in the course of the Divine providence, he is able to acquire. But it is not the ability merely to interpret a few Greek and Latin authors that can constitute a man a scholar, or qualify him to teach the Gospel. Thousands have this knowledge who are neither wise unto salvation themselves, nor capable of leading those who are astray into the path of life. Learning is a word of extensive import; it signifies knowledge and experience; the knowledge of God and of nature in general, and of man in particular; of man in all his relations and connections; his history in all the periods of his being, and in all the places of his existence; the means used by Divine providence for his support; the manner in which he has been led to employ the powers and faculties assigned to him by his Maker; and the various dispensations of grace and mercy by which he has been favored. To acquire this knowledge, an acquaintance with some languages, which have long ceased to be vernacular, is often not only highly expedient, but in some cases indispensably necessary. But how few of those who pretend most to learning, and who have spent both much time and much money in seats of literature in order to obtain it, have got this knowledge! All that many of them have gained is merely the means of acquiring it; with this they become satisfied, and most ignorantly call it learning. These resemble persons who carry large unlighted tapers in their hand, and boast how well

qualified they are to give light to them who sit in darkness, while they neither emit light nor heat, and are incapable of kindling the taper they hold. Learning, in one proper sense of the word, is the means of acquiring knowledge; but multitudes who have the means seem utterly unacquainted with their use, and live and die in a learned ignorance. Human learning, properly applied and sanctified by the Divine Spirit, is of inconceivable benefit to a Christian minister in teaching and defending the truth of God. No man possessed more of it in his day than St. Paul, and no man better knew its use. In this, as well as in many other excellences, he is a most worthy pattern to all the preachers of the Gospel. By learning a man may acquire knowledge; by knowledge reduced to practice, experience; and from knowledge and experience wisdom is derived. The learning that is got from books or the study of languages is of little use to any man, and is of no estimation, unless practically applied to the purposes of life. He whose learning and knowledge have enabled him to do good among men, and who lives to promote the glory of God and the welfare of his fellow creatures, can alone, of all the literati, expect to hear in the great day: Well done, good and faithful servant! Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

How necessary learning is at present to interpret the sacred writings, any man may see who reads with attention; but none can be so fully convinced of this as he who undertakes to write a comment on the Bible. Those who despise helps of this kind are to be pitied. Without them they may, it is true, understand enough for the mere salvation of their souls; and yet even much of this they owe, under God, to the teaching of experienced men. After all, it is not a knowledge of Latin and Greek merely that can enable any man to understand the Scriptures, or interpret them to others; if the Spirit of God take not away the veil of ignorance from the heart, and enlighten and quicken the soul with his all-pervading energy, all the learning under heaven will not make a man wise unto salvation.

Finished correcting for a new edition, Dec. 22d, 1831. — A.C.

**PREFACE**

**TO THE**

**SECOND EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO**

**TIMOTHY.**

IN the preface to the first of these epistles, particular mention has been made of the parentage, country, and education of Timothy; his call to the evangelic office; and of his appointment to the presidency of the Church at Ephesus. And for every particular of this kind the reader is referred to that preface. What remains to be done in reference to the present epistle is to inquire into the time in which it was most probably written. The disagreement on this question among learned men is very great; some arguing that it was written about the year 61, others referring it to the year 66. Some asserting that it is the first, in order of time, of these two epistles; and that it was written on Paul's first imprisonment at Rome. Several of the most eminent critics are of this opinion; and they have supported their sentiments with arguments of no small weight. Hammond, Lightfoot, and Lardner, as well as several critics on the continent, contend for this earlier date. Macknight and Paley take the opposite side. Were I convinced that the weight of the argument lay with the former, I should have fixed its chronology accordingly; but the latter appearing to me to have the more direct and the most weighty evidence in their favor, I am led, from the reasons which they give, to adopt their opinion.

Dr. Paley observes, that it was the uniform tradition of the primitive Church that St. Paul visited Rome twice, and twice there suffered imprisonment; and that at the conclusion of his second imprisonment he



was put to death; and he thinks that the opinion concerning these two journeys of St. Paul is confirmed by many hints and allusions in this epistle, compared with what St. Paul has said in other epistles, which are allowed to have been written from Rome. I shall give his principal reasons:—

“That this epistle was written while Paul was a prisoner is distinctly marked by the 8th verse of the first chapter: {2 Timothy 1:8} ‘Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me his prisoner.’ And that it was written whilst he was prisoner at Rome is proved by the 16th and 17th verses of the same chapter: {2 Timothy 1:16, 17} ‘The Lord give mercy to the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me, and was not ashamed of my chain; but when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently, and found me.’ Since it appears from the former quotation that St. Paul wrote this epistle in confinement, it will hardly admit of doubt that the word chain in the latter quotation refers to that confinement—the chain by which he was then bound, the custody in which he was then kept. And if the word chain designate the author’s confinement at the time of writing this epistle, the next words determine it to have been written from Rome: ‘He was not ashamed of my chain, but when he was in Rome, he sought me out very diligently.’” Dr. Macknight thinks that Paul was now a close prisoner, very different in his circumstances from his first imprisonment, in which he was permitted to dwell alone in his own hired house, and receive all that came to him, and publicly to preach the Gospel, being guarded only by a single soldier. That he was in close confinement he argues from the circumstance that when Onesiphorus came to Rome he found that Paul was no longer that well-known public character which he had been while in his first imprisonment, but being closely confined he had some difficulty to find him out; and this appears to be fully implied in the apostle’s words: **σπουδαιοτερον εζητησε με, και ευρε.** “He very diligently sought me out, and found me;” 2 Timothy 1:17 And, that crimes were now laid to his charge widely different from those formerly alleged against him, appears from 2 Timothy 2:9: **κακοπαθω μεχρι δεσμων, ως κακουργος.** “I suffer evil even to bonds as a malefactor;” plainly implying that he was not only abridged of all liberty, but was bound hands and feet in a close dungeon. And this was probably on the pretense that he was one of those

Christians whom Nero accused with having set Rome on fire. Hence the word malefactor, *κακουργος*, which may mean here that the apostle was treated as the worst of criminals.

That this epistle was not written during St. Paul's first imprisonment at Rome, or during the time in which the Epistles to the Ephesians, Colossians, Philippians, and Philemon were written, may be gathered, says Dr. Paley, with considerable evidence from a comparison of these several epistles with the present.

I. "In the former epistles the author confidently looked forward to his liberation from confinement, and his speedy departure from Rome. He tells the Philippians, Philippians 2:24: 'I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly.' Philemon he bids to prepare for him a lodging; 'for I trust (says he) that through your prayers I shall be given unto you;' Philemon 1:22. In the epistle before us he holds a language extremely different. 'I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day;' 2 Timothy 4:6-8."

Those who espouse the contrary opinion suppose that these words only express the strong apprehensions and despair of life which the apostle had when he was first imprisoned; but that afterwards, finding he was treated with kindness, he altered his language, and so strongly anticipated that he predicted his enlargement. This reflects little honor upon the apostle's character; it shows him to be a person subject to alarms, and presaging the worst from every gloomy appearance. The whole of St. Paul's conduct shows him to have been the reverse of what this opinion represents him.

II. "When the former epistles were written from Rome, Timothy was with St. Paul, and is joined with him in writing to the Colossians, the Philippians, and Philemon; the present epistle implies that he was absent.

III. "In the former epistles Demas was with St. Paul at Rome: 'Luke the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.' In the epistle now before us: 'Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is gone to Thessalonica.'

IV. “So the former epistles Mark was with St. Paul, and joins in saluting the Colossians. In the present epistle Timothy is ordered to bring him with him, ‘for he is profitable to me for the ministry;’ 2 Timothy 4:11.”

The circumstance of Demas being with St. Paul while he wrote the former epistles, which was certainly during his first imprisonment, and of his having forsaken him when he wrote this, is a strong proof of the posterior date of this epistle; nor can the feelings of the apostle, so contradictorily expressed in this and the preceding epistles, be ever cleared (on the supposition of their relating to the same time and circumstances) from weakness and contradiction.

Lewis Capellus has suggested the following considerations, which are still more conclusive:—

1. “In 2 Timothy 4:20, St. Paul informs Timothy that Erastus abode at Corinth, *εραστος εμεινεν εν κορινθω*: the form of expression (the verb being in the first aorist) implies that Erastus had stayed behind at Corinth when St. Paul left it: but this could not be meant of any journey from Corinth which St. Paul took prior to his first imprisonment at Rome; for when Paul departed from Corinth, as related in the 20th chapter of the Acts, Timothy was with him; and this was the last time the apostle left Corinth before his coming to Rome, because he left it on his way to proceed to Jerusalem soon after his arrival, at which place he was taken into custody, and continued in that custody till he was brought to Caesar’s tribunal.

There could be no need, therefore, to inform Timothy that Erastus stayed behind at Corinth, upon this occasion; because, if the fact were so, it must have been known to Timothy, who was present as well as St. Paul.

2. “In the same verse our epistle also states the following article: ‘Trophimus have I left at Miletus sick.’ When St. Paul passed through Miletus, on his way to Jerusalem, as related Acts 20, Trophimus was not left behind, but accompanied him to that city. He was indeed the occasion of the uproar at Jerusalem, in consequence of which St. Paul was apprehended: ‘For they had seen,’ says the historian, ‘before with him in the city, Trophimus an Ephesian, whom they supposed that Paul had brought into the temple.’ This was evidently the last time of Paul’s being

at Miletus before his first imprisonment; for, as has been said, after his apprehension at Jerusalem he remained in custody till he was sent to Rome.

“In these two articles we have a journey referred to, which must have taken place subsequent to the conclusion of St. Luke’s history; and, of course, after St. Paul’s liberation from his first imprisonment. The epistle, therefore, which contains this reference, since it appears from other parts of it to have been written while St. Paul was a prisoner at Rome, proves that he had returned to that city again, and undergone there a second imprisonment.

“These particulars,” adds Dr. Paley, “I have produced, not merely for the support they lend to the testimony of the fathers concerning St. Paul’s second imprisonment, but to remark their consistency and agreement with one another. They are all resolvable into one supposition, viz., that this epistle was not written during St. Paul’s first residence at Rome, but in some future imprisonment in that city. The epistle touches upon names and circumstances connected with the date and with the history of the first imprisonment, and mentioned in letters during that imprisonment; and so touches upon them as to leave what is said of one consistent with what is said of others, and consistent also with what is said of them in different epistles.”

From the whole, there seems the fullest evidence, 1. That this epistle was not written during St. Paul’s first imprisonment at Rome. 2. That he was at Rome when he wrote this epistle. 3. That he was there a prisoner, and in such confinement as we know, from the Acts of the Apostles, he was not in during the time of his first imprisonment there. 4. That this must have been some subsequent imprisonment. 5. That as the general consent of all Christian antiquity states that St. Paul was twice imprisoned at Rome, and that from his second imprisonment he was never liberated, but was at its conclusion martyred; therefore this epistle must have been written while St. Paul was in his second imprisonment at Rome, and but a short time before his martyrdom. And as the Christian Church has generally agreed that this apostle’s martyrdom took place on the 29th of June, A. D. 66, the Second Epistle to Timothy might have been written sometime towards the end of the spring or beginning of summer of that year. It is supposed

that St. Paul went from Crete to Rome, about the end of the year 65, on hearing of the persecution which Nero was then carrying on against the Christians, on pretense that they had set Rome on fire: for, as he knew that the Church must be then in great tribulation, he judged that his presence would be necessary to comfort, support, and build it up. Like a true soldier of Jesus Christ, he was ever at the post of danger; and in this case he led on the forlorn hope.

Other matters relative to the state and circumstances of the apostle, and those of Timothy; and the Church at Ephesus, will be carefully brought before the reader in the course of the notes on this epistle.

# THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

PAUL THE APOSTLE

TO

## TIMOTHY

### Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5573.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5567.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5557.
- Year of the Julian period, 4775.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4069 -Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4293.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3825.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4424.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2413.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3167.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1005.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 812.
- Year of the CCXIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 817.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 818.

- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 377.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 113.
- Year of the Julian era, 110.
- Year of the Spanish era, 103.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 69
  - Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 65 or 66.
- Year of Gessius Florus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 16.
- Year of L. C. Gallus, governor of Syria, 1.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 3.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 66.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 9; or the first after the third embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 6, or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 18.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, F.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the VIIth of the ides of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the seventh of April, which happened on this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the day after the ides of April, or the XVIIIth of the Calends of May, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib, and by Europeans in general, the 14th of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 28.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 5.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 5, 7, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12, 14, 14.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 17.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman emperor computing from Augustus Caesar, 12.
- Roman Consuls, A. Licinius Nerva Silanus, and M. Vestinius Atticus; the latter of whom was succeeded by Anicius Cerealis, on July 1st.

Dr. Lardner and others suppose this epistle to have been written in A. D. 56, i.e. nine years earlier than is stated above. See the preface to the First Epistle to Timothy, where this point is largely considered, and also the general observations prefixed to the Acts of the Apostles.



## CHAPTER 1

*Paul's address to Timothy, and declaration of his affection for him, 1-4. His account of the piety of Timothy's mother and grandmother, and the religious education they had given their son, 5. He exhorts him to stir up the gift of God that is in him, and not to be ashamed of the testimony of the Lord, 6-8. How God has saved them that believe; and how Christ has brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, 9, 10*

**Verse 3. *Whom I serve from my forefathers*** Being born a Jew, I was carefully educated in the knowledge of the true God, and the proper manner of worshipping him.

***With pure conscience*** Ever aiming to please him, even in the time when through ignorance I persecuted the Church.

***Without ceasing I have remembrance of thee*** The apostle thanks God that he has constant remembrance of Timothy in his prayers. It is a very rare thing now in the Christian Church, that a man particularly thanks God that he is enabled to pray for OTHERS. And yet he that can do this most must have an increase of that brotherly love which the second greatest commandment of God requires: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. It is also a great blessing to be able to maintain the spirit of a pure friendship, especially through a considerable lapse of time and absence. He that can do so may well thank God that he is saved from that fickleness and unsteadiness of mind which are the bane of friendships, and the reproach of many once warm-hearted friends.

**Verse 4. *Being mindful of thy tears*** Whether the apostle refers to the affecting parting with the Ephesian Church, mentioned Acts 20:37, or to the deep impressions made on Timothy's heart when he instructed him in the doctrine of Christ crucified, or to some interview between themselves, it is not certainly known. The mention of this by the apostle is no small proof of his most affectionate regards for Timothy, whom he appears to have loved as a father loves his only son.

**Verse 5. *The unfeigned faith that is in thee*** Timothy had given the fullest proof of the sincerity of his conversion, and of the purity of his faith.

***Which dwelt first in thy grandmother Lois*** In Acts 16:1, we are informed that Paul came to Derbe and Lystra; and behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timotheus, the son of a certain woman, who was a Jewess, and believed; but his father was a Greek. Luke, the historian, it appears, was not particularly acquainted with the family; Paul evidently was. Luke mentions the same circumstance which the apostle mentions here; but in the apostle's account there are particulars which argue an intimate acquaintance with the family and its history. Luke says Timothy's father

was a Greek, consequently we may believe him to have been then in his heathen state; Paul, in mentioning the grandmother, mother, and son, passes by the father in silence; which intimates that either the father remained in his unconverted state, or was now dead. Lois and Eunice are both Grecian, and indeed heathen names; hence we are led to conclude that, although Timothy's mother was a Jewess according to St. Luke, yet she was a Grecian or Hellenist by birth. Lois, the grandmother, appears to have been the first convert to Christianity: she instructed her daughter Eunice, and both brought up Timothy in the Christian faith; so that he had a general knowledge of it before he met with St. Paul at Lystra. There, it appears the apostle was the instrument of the conversion of his heart to God; for a man may be well instructed in Divine things, have a very orthodox creed, and yet his heart not be changed. Instruction precedes conversion; conversion should follow it. To be brought up in the fear of God is a great blessing; and a truly religious education is an advantage of infinite worth.

**Verse 6. *Stir up the gift of God, which is in thee*** The gift which Timothy had received was the Holy Spirit; and through him, a particular power to preach and defend the truth. This gift is represented here, under the notion of a fire, which, if it be not frequently stirred up, and fresh fuel added to it, will go out. This is the precise idea which the apostle had in his mind; hence the term *αναζωπυρειν*, which signifies to stir up the fire; to add fresh fuel to it. From this it plainly appears, that if Timothy had not continued to be a daily worker with God, he would have received the grace of God in vain. The Latins have a similar metaphor, *excitare igniculos ingenii*, to stir up the sparks of genius.

***By the putting on of my hands.*** See on 1 Timothy 4:14.

**Verse 7. *God hath not given us the spirit of fear*** Here is an allusion to the giving of the law on mount Sinai. This was communicated with such terrible majesty as to engender fear in all the Israelites: even Moses, on the occasion, did exceedingly fear and tremble. The Gospel was ushered in, in a much milder manner; every thing was placed on a level with the human intellect; and within reach of every human spirit. Nothing was terrific, nothing forbidding; but all was inviting. The very spirit and genius of it was a spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind.

Instead of **δειλιας**, fear, some MSS. and versions have **δουλειας**, servitude or bondage; God hath not given unto us the spirit of BONDAGE-but of power, **δυναμεως**, to work miracles, to confound enemies, to support us in trials, and enable us to do that which is lawful and right in his sight. And of love, which enables us to hear, believe, hope, and endure all things; and is the incentive to all obedience. Of a sound mind, **σωφρονισμου**, of self-possession and government, according to some. But a sound mind implies much more; it means a clear understanding, a sound judgment, a rectified will, holy passions, heavenly tempers; in a word, the whole soul harmonized in all its powers and faculties; and completely regulated and influenced so as to think, speak, and act aright in all things. The apostle says, God hath given the spirit of these things; they are not factitious; they are not assumed for times and circumstances; they are radical powers and tempers; each produced by its proper principle.

**Verse 8. *Be not-ashamed of the testimony*** The testimony of Christ is the Gospel in general, which proclaims Christ crucified, and redemption through his blood. In the sight of the world, there appeared to be reason why a man should be ashamed of this; ashamed of him who was crucified as a malefactor; but, when this Gospel became the power of God to the salvation of every one that believed, it was a subject to exult in. Hence the apostle, Romans 1:16, said, I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ; where see the note.

***Nor of me his prisoner*** When our friends are in power and credit, we can readily acknowledge them, and take opportunities to show that we have such and such connections; but when the person falls into disgrace or discredit, though we cannot pretend not to know him, yet we take care not to acknowledge him. This induced Cicero, in relation to friendships, to give for a maxim-Amicus certus in re incerta cernitur: “A true friend is known in adverse circumstances;” and from this we have borrowed our proverb, A friend in need, is a friend indeed.

***Be thou partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel*** No parent could love a child better than Paul loved Timothy; and, behold! he who could wish him nothing but what was great, honorable, and good, wishes him to be a partaker of the afflictions of the Gospel! Because, to suffer for Christ, and

suffer with Christ, was the highest glory to which any human being in this state could arrive. The royal way to the crown of glory, is by the cross of Christ.

**According to the power of God.** While thou hast no more affliction than thou hast grace to sustain thee under, thou canst have no cause to complain. And God will take care that if a faithful discharge of thy duty shall expose thee to afflictions, his power manifested in thee shall be in proportion to thy necessities. His load cannot be oppressive, who is strengthened to bear it by the power of God.

**Verse 9. Who hath saved us** From sin; the spirit of bondage, and all tormenting fear. This is the design of the Gospel.

**And called us with a holy calling** Invited us to holiness and comfort here; and to eternal glory hereafter.

**Not according to our works** We have not deserved any part of the good we have received; and can never merit one moment of the exceeding great and eternal weight of glory which is promised. See the notes on the parallel passages.

**Before the world began** *πρὸ χρόνων αἰώνων*. Before the Mosaic dispensation took place, God purposed the salvation of the Gentiles by Christ Jesus; and the Mosaic dispensation was intended only as the introducer of the Gospel. The law was our schoolmaster unto Christ, Galatians 3:24. See the parallel places, and the notes there.

**Verse 10. But is now made manifest.** This purpose of God to save the Gentiles as well as the Jews, and call them to the same state of salvation by Jesus Christ, was, previously to the manifestation of Christ, generally hidden; and what was revealed of it, was only through the means of types and ceremonies.

**Who hath abolished death** *καταργησαντος μὲν τὸν θάνατον*. Who has counterworked death; operated against his operations, destroyed his batteries, undersunk and destroyed his mines, and rendered all his instruments and principles of attack useless. By death here, we are not to understand merely natural death, but that corruption and decomposition which take place in consequence of it; and which would be naturally

endless, but for the work and energy of Christ. By him alone, comes the resurrection of the body; and through him eternal life and glory are given to the souls of believers.

***Brought life and immortality to light*** The literal translation of the original is, He hath illustrated life and incorruption by the Gospel. Life eternal, or the doctrine of life eternal, even implying the resurrection of the body, was not unknown among the Jews. They expected this, for they found it in their prophets. It abounded among them long before the incarnation: and they certainly never borrowed any notion in it from the Christians; therefore the Gospel could not be stated as bringing to light what certainly was in the light before that time. But this doctrine was never illustrated and demonstrated before; it existed in promise, but had never been practically exhibited. Jesus Christ died, and lay under the empire of death; he arose again from the dead, and thus illustrated the doctrine of the resurrection: he took the same human body up into heaven, in the sight of his disciples; and ever appears in the presence of God for us; and thus, has illustrated the doctrine of incorruption. In his death, resurrection, and ascension, the doctrine of eternal life, and the resurrection of the human body, and its final incorruptibility, are fully illustrated by example, and established by fact.

**Verse 11. *Whereunto I am appointed a preacher*** κηρυξ, a herald. See the notes at Matthew 3:17.

***And an apostle*** Sent immediately from God to man.

***A teacher*** One whose business it is to instruct men, and particularly the Gentiles, to whom he was especially sent; to proclaim the doctrines of eternal life, the resurrection and final incorruptibility of the human body; and, in a word, the salvation both of the body and soul of man by Christ Jesus.

**Verse 12. *I am not ashamed.*** Though I suffer for the Gospel, I am not ashamed of the Gospel; nor am I confounded in my expectation; his grace being at all times sufficient for me.

***For I know whom I have believed*** I am well acquainted with the goodness, mercy, and power of Christ; and know that I cannot confide in him in vain.

***That which I have committed unto him*** This is variously understood. Some think he means his life, which he had put, as it were, into the hands of Christ, in order that he might receive it again, in the resurrection, at the great day. Others think he means his soul. This he had also given into the hands of his faithful Creator, knowing that although wicked men might be permitted to take away his life, yet they could not destroy his soul, nor disturb its peace. Others think that he is speaking of the Gospel, which he knows will be carefully preserved by the great Head of the Church; for, though he shall be soon called to seal the truth with his blood, yet he knows that God will take care that the same truth shall be proclaimed to the world by others, whom God shall raise up for that very purpose.

**Verse 13. *Hold fast the form of sound words*** The word **υποτυπωσις** signifies the sketch, plan, or outline of a building, picture, etc.; and here refers to the plan of salvation which the apostle had taught Timothy. No man was left to invent a religion for his own use, and after his own mind. God alone knows that with which God can be pleased. If God did not give a revelation of himself, the inventions of man, in religious things, would be endless error, involving itself in contortions of unlimited confusion. God gives, in his mercy to man, a form of sound words or doctrines; a perfect plan and sketch of the original building; fair and well defined outlines of every thing which concerns the present and eternal welfare of man, and his own glory.

***In faith and love*** Faith credits the Divine doctrines. Love reduces them all to practice. Faith lays hold on Jesus Christ, and obtains that love by which every precept is cheerfully and effectually obeyed.

**Verse 14. *That good thing*** The everlasting Gospel, keep by the Holy Ghost; for without a continual spiritual energy man can do nothing. This indwelling Spirit will make them effectual to thy own salvation, and enable thee to preach them to the salvation of the souls of others.

**Verse 15. *All they which are in Asia*** It seems as if the apostle must refer to the Asiatic Christians which were then at Rome, or had been lately there. Finding the apostle in disgrace, and thinking it dangerous to own him or his cause, they neither visited him, or confessed Christianity. He cannot be speaking of any general defection of the Asiatic Churches, but of those Asiatics who had professed a particular friendship for him.

***Phygellus and Hermogenes.*** These were two of the persons of whom he complains; but who they were, or what office they held, or whether they were any thing but private Christians who had for a time ministered to St. Paul in prison, and, when they found the state determined to destroy him, ceased to acknowledge him, we cannot tell.

**Verse 16. *The Lord give mercy*** Onesiphorus had acknowledged him, and continued to do so; he, and his house, or family, ministered to him in prison, and were not ashamed of their imprisoned pastor, nor of the cause for which he was in disgrace and suffering. As he showed mercy to the apostle, the apostle prays the Lord to show mercy to him.

**Verse 17. *When he was in Rome*** Onesiphorus was no doubt an Asiatic, (probably an Ephesian, see below,) who had frequent business at Rome; and when he came sought out the apostle, who, it is supposed, had been confined in some close and private prison, (see the preface,) so that it was with great difficulty he could find him out. This man had entertained the apostle when he was at Ephesus, and now he sought him out at Rome. Pure love feels no loads. Here was a true friend, one that sticketh closer than a brother.

**Verse 18. *The Lord grant that he may find mercy of the Lord*** Some think that this is a prayer to God the Father to communicate grace to him, that he might find mercy in the great day at the hand of Jesus Christ the Judge. It is probably only a Hebraism for, God grant that he may here be so saved by Divine grace, that in the great day he may receive the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. See a similar form of expression, Genesis 9:16; 19:24; Exodus 24:1, 2.

IT is impossible to read this chapter over without feeling deeply interested for this most noble and amiable of men. To what trials did God expose him! His life was a life of perils and tribulations, his labors were superabundant, and his success all but incredible. Wherever he went, he left a track of light and life behind him. To him, as the grand instrument of God, the Gentiles, the whole habitable world, owe their salvation. Yet see him, in his old age, neglected by his friends, apparently forsaken of God, and abandoned to the hands of ruthless men; in prison and in chains; triumphing over sufferings and death; perfectly unshaken, unshaken, with the evils with which he is obliged to contend, having the fullest



persuasion of the truth of the doctrines which he had preached, and the strongest and most encouraging anticipation of the glory that was about to be revealed. He felt no evil, and he feared none. Sin had lost its power, and death its sting; the grave its victory, and hell its horrors. He had the happiness which heathenism spoke of, but could not attain, because it knew not the great Source whence it must proceed. This God he knew, feared, loved, obeyed, and was happy. Who but the righteous man can sing:-

*Felix, qui potuit rerum cognoscere causas;  
Atque metus omnes et inexorabile fatum  
Subjecit pedibus, strepitumque Acherontis avari! —  
Illum non populi fasces, non purpura regum  
Flexit, et infidos agitans discordia fratres;—  
Non res Romanae, perituraque regna.*

*VIRG. GEORG. ii. v. 490.*

No murmur is heard from his heart; he is persuaded that all things work together for good to them that love God; the miserable uncertainty of friendship, the defection of cowardly brethren, and the apostasy of once zealous professors, did not move him. As far as it is lawful, he courts death, knowing that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. Glorious system of truth by which such an apostle was formed! and glorious apostle by whom this system was illustrated and confirmed! The character and conduct of St. Paul must make Christianity doubly amiable to believers and highly respectable even to its enemies.

## CHAPTER 2

*He exhorts Timothy to constancy, fidelity, and courage; and to acquit himself as a true soldier of Jesus Christ; and patiently expect the fruit of his labors, 1-7. What the apostle's doctrine was relative to Christ, 8. He mentions his own sufferings and consolations, 9-13. What Timothy is to preach, how he is to acquit himself, and what he is to shun, 14-16. Of Hymeneus and Philetus, and their errors, 17, 18. Of the foundation of God, and its security, 19. The simile of a great house and its utensils, 20, 21. Timothy is to avoid youthful lusts, and foolish and unlearned questions, 22, 23. How he is to act in reference to false teachers, 24-26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *Be strong in the grace*** Though the genuine import of the word grace is favor, yet it often implies an active principle communicated from God; light directing how to act, and power enabling to act according to the light.

**Verse 2. *The things that thou hast heard of me*** Those doctrines which I have preached the most publicly, and which many persons can attest. But he seems to refer here to the doctrines delivered to him when, in the presence of many witnesses, he laid his hands upon him; see 1 Timothy 6:12. Then the apostle gave him the proper form of sound words which he was to teach; and now he tells him to commit those truths to faithful men in the same way that they were committed to him, that the truth might be preserved in the Church, and holy men appointed successively to preach it. These truths are still continued in the Church, and still there are faithful men who proclaim them. But where is the uninterrupted apostolical succession! Who can tell? Probably it does not exist on the face of the world. All the pretensions to it by certain Churches are as stupid as they are idle and futile. He who appeals to this for his authority as a Christian minister, had best sit down till he has made it out; and this will be by the next Greek kalends.

**Verse 3. *Endure hardness*** He considers a Christian minister under the notion of a soldier, not so much for his continual conflicts with the world, the devil, and the flesh, for these are in a certain sense common to all Christians, but for the hardships and difficulties to which he must be exposed who faithfully preaches the Gospel of Christ.

**Verse 4. *No man that warreth entangleth***, etc. It is well remarked by Grotius, on this passage, that the legionary soldiers among the Romans were not permitted to engage in husbandry, merchandise, mechanical employments, or any thing that might be inconsistent with their calling. Many canons, at different times, have been made to prevent ecclesiastics from intermeddling with secular employments. The who will preach the Gospel thoroughly, and wishes to give full proof of his ministry, had need to have no other work. He should be wholly in this thing, that his profiting may appear unto all. There are many who sin against this direction. They love the world, and labor for it, and are regardless of the souls committed to their charge. But what are they, either in number or guilt, compared to the immense herd of men professing to be Christian ministers, who neither read nor study, and consequently never improve? These are too conscientious to meddle with secular affairs, and yet have no scruple of conscience to while away time, be among the chief in needless self-indulgence, and, by their burdensome and monotonous ministry, become an incumbrance to the Church! Do you inquire: In what sect or party are these to be found? I answer: In ALL. Idle drones:-

*Fruges consumere nati,*

*“Born to consume the produce of the soil,”*

disgrace every department in the Christian Church. They cannot teach because they will not learn.

**Verse 5. *If a man also strive for masteries*** *εαν δε και αθλη τις*: If a man contend in the public games — the Olympic or Isthmian games among the Greeks, so often alluded to and particularly explained in the notes on 1 Corinthians 9:24-26, to which the reader is referred for a full illustration of this verse.

***Is he not crowned*** Though he may have conquered, except he strive lawfully — unless he enter according to the rules of the *athletae*, and act as

these direct. No man, however zealous he may have been, is to expect the Well done, good and faithful servant, from Jesus Christ, unless he have labored in the word and doctrine, preached the truth as it is in Jesus, and built up the Church upon Him who is its only FOUNDATION.

**Verse 6. *The husbandman that laboureth*** That is: The husbandman must first till his ground before he can expect a crop; and he must till it according to the proper rules of agriculture, else he cannot have a crop. The combatant must fight and conquer, and fight according to the laws of the agones, before he can be crowned; so the Christian minister must labor in the spiritual vineyard, and labor too under the eye and according to the direction of his Master, before he can expect that crown of righteousness that fadeth not away.

**Verse 7. *Consider what I say*** Apply my metaphors and similitudes in a proper manner.

***And the Lord give thee understanding*** But instead of  $\delta\omega\eta$ , may he give, ACDEFG, several others, besides versions and fathers, have  $\delta\omega\sigma\epsilon\iota$  he will give. Consider thou properly, and God will give thee a proper understanding of all things that concern thy own peace, and the peace and prosperity of his Church. Think as well as read.

**Verse 8. *Remember that Jesus Christ*** The apostle seems to say: Whatever tribulations or deaths may befall us, let us remember that Jesus Christ, who was slain by the Jews, rose again from the dead, and his resurrection is the proof and pledge of ours. We also shall rise again to a life of glory and blessedness.

***According to my Gospel*** The false teaching of Hymeneus and Philetus stated that the resurrection was past already. Paul preached the resurrection from the dead; and founded his doctrine on the resurrection and promise of Christ. This was his Gospel; the other was of a different nature.

**Verse 9. *Wherein I suffer trouble, as an evil doer*** This verse contains one of the proofs that this epistle was written while St. Paul was a prisoner the second time at Rome. See the preface, where this is particularly considered.

**Verse 10. *For the elect's sake*** For the sake of the Gentiles, elected by God's goodness to enjoy every privilege formerly possessed by the Jews, and, in addition to these, all the blessings of the Gospel; the salvation of Christ here, and eternal glory hereafter.

**Verse 11. *If we be dead with him*** That is: As surely as Christ rose again from the dead, so surely shall we rise again; and if we die for him, we shall surely live again with him. This, says the apostle, is *πιστος ο λογος*, a true doctrine. This is properly the import of the word; and we need not seek, as Bp. Tillotson and many others have done, for some saying of Christ which the apostle is supposed to be here quoting, and which he learned from tradition.

**Verse 12. *If we suffer-with him*** These are other parts of the true doctrine, which the apostle mentions above.

**Verse 13. *If we believe not*** Should we deny the faith and apostatize, he is the same, as true to his threatenings as to his promises; he cannot deny — act contrary to, himself.

**Verse 14. *That they strive not about words*** WORDS, not things, have been a most fruitful source of contention in the Christian world; and among religious people, the principal cause of animosity has arisen from the different manner of apprehending the same term, while, in essence, both meant the same thing. All preachers and divines should be very careful, both in speaking and writing, to explain the terms they use, and never employ them in any sense but that in which they have explained them.

***The subverting of the hearers.*** This is the general tendency of all polemical divinity and controversial preaching, when angry passions are called in to support the doctrines of the Gospel.

**Verse 15. *Study to show thyself approved unto God*** Endeavour so to cultivate and improve thy heart and mind, that thou mayest not be a reproach to him from whom thou professest to receive thy commission.

***Rightly dividing the word of truth.*** It is generally supposed that the apostle alludes here to the care taken to divide the sacrifices under the law; the priests studied, in dividing the victim down the spine, to do it so scrupulously that one half of the spinal marrow should be found on each

side the backbone. Probably nothing was much farther from the apostle's thoughts than this view, which is now commonly taken of the subject. Indeed this scrupulously dividing does not appear to have been any original ordinance among the Jews; much stress was laid upon it in later times, but from the beginning it was not so. The word **ορθοτομειν** signifies, 1. Simply to cut straight, or to rectify. 2. To walk in the right way; it is thus used by Gregory Nazianzen, who, in Orat. Apol. fugae, opposes **ορθοτομειν** to **κακως οδευειν**, walking in a right way to walking in a bad way. Thus, **καινοτομειν** signifies to walk in a new way, and **κατευθυνειν** to walk in a straight way. See Kypke. Therefore, by rightly dividing the word of truth, we are to understand his continuing in the true doctrine, and teaching that to every person; and, according to our Lord's simile, giving each his portion of meat in due season—milk to babes, strong meat to the full grown, comfort to the disconsolate, reproof to the irregular and careless; in a word, finding out the necessities of his hearers, and preaching so as to meet those necessities.

**Verse 16. *Shun profane and vain babblings*** This is the character he gives of the preaching of the false teachers. Whatever was not agreeable to the doctrine of truth was, in the sight of God, empty and profane babbling; engendering nothing but ungodliness, and daily increasing in that.

**Verse 17. *Their word will eat as doth a canker*** ὡς γαγγραινα· As a gangrene; i.e. as a mortification in the flesh, where the circulation is entirely stopped, and putrefaction takes place, which continues to corrupt all the circumjacent flesh, spreading more and more till death takes place, unless stopped by a timely and judicious application of medicine. Such is the influence of false doctrine; it fixes its mortal seed in the soul, which continues to corrupt and assimilate every thing to itself, till, if not prevented by a timely application of the word of life, under the direction of the heavenly Physician, it terminates in the bitter pains of an eternal death. To such a gangrene the apostle compares the corrupt doctrines of Hymeneus and Philetus.

**Verse 18. *Who concerning the truth have erred*** They had the truth, but erred or wandered from it, saying the resurrection was already past, and thus denying the resurrection of the body, and, by consequence, future rewards and punishments; and this necessarily sapped the foundation of

all religion: and thus the gangrene had, in reference to their unhappy votaries, a rapid and unchecked operation.

**Verse 19. *The foundation of God standeth sure*** The word **θεμελιος** signifies literally a foundation, and especially the foundation of a building; and metaphorically, the building itself, and often a noble mansion or palace. In this place the apostle compares the religion of Christ to a great or noble mansion. See 2 Timothy 2:20. And as this religion is founded on the authority and power of the Almighty, it necessarily must stand sure and be permanent. This house has an inscription on it, for so **σφραγις**, seal, is frequently understood; and this is evidently an allusion to the ancient temples. Above the door of the temple of Delphi there was the Greek word **ει** thou art, on which Plutarch has written an express treatise. In many of the Mohammedan mosques the walls are covered with inscriptions, which are ordinarily sentences taken from the Koran, relative to the majesty of God, or the nature of his worship. And we know that there was an inscription on the mitre of the high priest among the Jews, viz: **קדש ליהוה** *kodesh laihovah*, “Holiness to the Lord;” Exodus 28:36; 39:30. See also Zechariah 14:20. And this inscription may here be represented as being made with the seal of God, for he stamps this on all things belonging to himself and his worship.

But some suppose **θεμελιος** here to signify a contract or covenant by which two parties are bound to fulfill certain conditions and duties, the obligation to which, each takes on him by sealing the instrument with his seal. Among the Asiatics, these seals have scarcely ever any image or figure on them, but always some very expressive inscription. I have seen many of these, and several of them are now before me. The twofold inscription, i.e. one on the seal of each party, may be here alluded to; that on God’s seal is, **εγνω κυριος τους οντας αυτου**. The Lord approveth of them that are his. That on the seal of his followers is, **αποστητω απο αδικιας πας ο ονομαζων το ονομα κυριου**. Let every one who nameth the name of the Lord (every Christian) depart from iniquity. Thus each has his peculiar inscription.

**κυριου**, Lord, instead of **χριστου**, Christ, is the reading of almost all the MSS. of importance, and the principal versions.

***The Lord knoweth*** i.e. Approves, watches over, and provides for, them that are his true followers. To this his followers most cheerfully subscribe, and say: Let every one that nameth this Lord avoid every appearance of evil.

**Verse 20. *But in a great house*** Here the apostle carries on the allusion introduced in the preceding verse. As the foundation of God refers to God's building, i.e. the whole system of Christianity, so here the great house is to be understood of the same; and the different kinds of vessels mean the different teachers, as well as the different kinds of members. In this sacred house at Ephesus there were vessels of gold and silver — eminent, holy, sincere, and useful teachers and members, and also vessels of wood and of earth — false and heretical teachers, such as Hymeneus and Philetus, and their followers. There are also in such houses vessels employed, some in a more honorable, others in a less honorable, office. To these he seems also to compare the same persons.

**Verse 21. *If a man therefore purge himself from these*** He that takes heed to his ways and to his doctrines, and walks with God, will separate himself, not only from all false doctrine, but from all wicked men, and thus be sanctified and proper to be employed by the Master in every good word and work. The apostle has not made the application of these different similes, and it is very difficult to tell what he means.

**Verse 22. *Flee also youthful lusts*** Not only all irregular and sensual desires, but pride, ambition, and, above all, the lust of power, to which most men will sacrifice all other propensities, their ease, pleasure, health, etc. This is the most bewitching passion in the human heart. Both in Church and state it is ruinous; but particularly so in the former. Timothy was now between thirty and forty years of age, the very age in which ambition and the love of power most generally prevail. Carnal pleasures are the sins of youth; ambition and the love of power the sins of middle age; covetousness and carking cares the crimes of old age.

***Follow righteousness*** Flee from sin, pursue goodness. Righteousness — whatever is just, holy, and innocent. Faith — fidelity both to God and man, improving that grace by which thy soul may be saved, and faithfully discharging the duties of thy office, that thou mayest save the souls of others. Charity — love to God and man. Peace among all the members of



the Church, and as far as possible with all men; but especially among those who invoke the Lord out of a pure desire to glorify his name.

**Verse 23. *Foolish and unlearned questions*** See the notes on 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7, and Titus 3:9.

**Verse 24. *The servant of the Lord must not strive*** See on 1 Timothy 3:2, 3.

**Verse 25. *Those that oppose* ἀντιδιατιθεμενους.** This seems to refer to those who opposed the apostle's authority; and hence the propriety of the allusion to the rebellion of Korah and his company. See observations at the end of the chapter.

***If God peradventure*** He was to use every means which he had reason to believe God might bless; and the apostle intimates that, bad as they were, they were not out of the reach of God's mercy.

**Verse 26. *And that they may recover themselves*** The construction of this verse is extremely difficult, though the sense given by our translation is plain enough. I shall set down the original, and the principal English translations:—

και ανανηψωσιν εκ της του διαβολου παγιδος,  
εξωγρημενοι υπ' αυτου εις εκεινου θελημα.

And thei rise agein fro snaaris of the debyl, of whome thei ben holde captyffis at his wille. — WICLIF. First translation into English, 1378.

And to turne agayne from the snare of devell, which are holden in prison of him at his will. — COVERDALE. First printed English Bible, 1535

That they may come to themselves agayne out of the snare of the devyll, which are now taken of him at hys will. — EDWARD VIth's Bible, by Becke, 1549.

And they may recover their senses to perform his will, after being rescued alive by the servant of the Lord out of the snare of the devil. — WAKEFIELD; who refers *αυτου*, him, to the servant of the Lord, 2 Timothy 2:24.

And being caught alive by him out of the snare of the devil, they may awake to do his will. — MACKNIGHT; who remarks that *αυτου*, the relative, means the servant of the Lord; and *εκεινου*, the demonstrative, refers to God, mentioned 2 Timothy 2:15.

I leave these different translations with the reader.

I HAVE referred, in the preceding notes, to inscriptions which appear on the buildings and coins of the Asiatics; such inscriptions are, in general, very curious, and carry with them a considerable show of piety to God, in the acknowledgment of his providence and mercy. I shall quote one merely as a curiosity, without supposing it to be immediately applicable to the illustration of the text.

There is extant a gold circular coin of the Great Mogul Shah Jehan, struck at Delhi, A. H. 1062, A. D. 1651, five inches and a half in diameter; on each side of this coin is a square, the angles of which touch the periphery; within this square, and in the segments, there are the following inscriptions:—

1. Within the square, on one side, The bright star of religion, Mohammed (a second Sahib Kiran) Shah Jehan, the victorious emperor.

2. In the segment on the upper side of the square, The impression upon this coin of 200 mohurs, was struck through the favor of God.

3. On the lateral segment to the left, By the second Sahib Kiran, Shah Jehan, the defender of the faith.

4. On the bottom segment, May the golden countenance from the sculpture of this coin enlighten the world.

5. On the lateral segment to the right, As long as the splendid face of the moon is illuminated by the rays of the sun!

1. On the reverse, within the square, There is no god but God; and Mohammed is the prophet of God. Struck in the capital of Shah Jehanabad, A. H. 1062.

2. On the top of the square, Religion was illuminated by the truth of Abu Beker.

3. On the left hand compartment, The faith was strengthened by the justice of Omar.

4. On the bottom compartment, Piety was refreshed by the modesty and mildness of Othman.

5. On the right hand compartment, The world was enlightened by the learning of Aly.

On these inscriptions it may be just necessary to observe that Abu Beker, Omar, Othman, and Aly, were the four khalifs who succeeded Mohammed. Abu Beker was the father of Ayesha, one of Mohammed's wives. Othman was son-in-law of Mohammed, having married his two daughters, Rakiah, and Omal-Calthoom. And Aly, son of Abi Taleb, Mohammed's uncle, was also one of the sons-in-law of Mohammed, having married Fatima, the daughter of his favourite wife, Ayesha. The Ottoman empire was not so called from Othman, the third khalif, but from Ottoman, the successful chief, who conquered a small part of the Grecian empire in Asia, and thus laid the foundation for the Turkish.

Grotius and others have supposed that the apostle alludes to the custom of putting an inscription on the foundation stone of a city or other building, giving an account of the time in which it was founded, built, etc. Sometimes engraved stones were placed over the principal gates of cities and fortresses, particularly in the east, specifying the date of erection, repairs, etc., and containing some religious sentiment or verse from the Koran. But I do not think it likely that the apostle refers to any thing of this kind. There appears to be an allusion here to the rebellion of Korah and his company against the authority of Moses, Numbers 16:5, where, it is said: The Lord will show who are his: here the words of the Septuagint are nearly the same that the apostle uses in this verse, **εγνω ο θεος τους οντας αυτου**. God knoweth or approveth of them that are his. And the words in Numbers 16:26, Depart from the tents of these wicked men, are similar to those of the apostle, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from iniquity. We may therefore take it for granted that those false teachers, the chief of whom were Hymeneus and Philetus, had risen up against the authority of St. Paul; and he, in effect, informs Timothy here that God will deal with them as he did with Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company. And as the true Israelites were to separate

themselves from the tents of those wicked men, so he and the believers at Ephesus were to hold no sort of communion with those workers of iniquity. This subject he farther illustrates by a contract between two parties, each of which sets his seal to the instrument, the seal bearing the motto peculiar to the party. This I conceive to be the meaning; but the common mode of interpretation will, it is probable, be most commonly followed.

## CHAPTER 3

*Dangerous times in the latter days, from the apostasy and wickedness of men, of whom an affecting description is given, 1-7. It shall happen to them as to Jannes and Jambres, who withstood Moses, 8, 9. The apostle speaks of his persecutions and sufferings, and shows that all those who will live a godly life must suffer persecution, 10-12, because evil men and seducers will wax worse and worse, 13. Timothy is exhorted to continue in the truths he had received, having known the Scriptures from a child, 14, 15. All Scripture is given by Divine inspiration, 16, 17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *In the last days*** This often means the days of the Messiah, and is sometimes extended in its signification to the destruction of Jerusalem, as this was properly the last days of the Jewish state. But the phrase may mean any future time, whether near or distant.

**Verse 2. *For men shall be*** The description in this and the following verses the Papists apply to the Protestants; the Protestants in their turn apply it to the Papists; Schoettgen to the Jews; and others to heretics in general. There have been both teachers and people in every age of the Church, and in every age of the world, to whom these words may be most legitimately applied. Both Catholics and Protestants have been lovers of their own selves, etc.; but it is probable that the apostle had some particular age in view, in which there should appear some very essential corruption of Christianity.

***Lovers of their own selves*** φιλαυτοι· Selfish, studious of their own interest, and regardless of the welfare of all mankind.

***Covetous*** φιλαργυροι· Lovers of money, because of the influence which riches can procure.

***Boasters*** αλαζονες· Vain glorious: self-assuming; valuing themselves beyond all others.

**Proud** ὑπερηφανοι· Airy, light, trifling persons; those who love to make a show—who are all outside; from υπερ, above, and φαινω, to show.

**Blasphemers** βλασφημοι· Those who speak impiously of God and sacred things, and injuriously of men.

**Disobedient to parents** γονευσιν απειθεις· Headstrong children, whom their parents cannot persuade.

**Unthankful** αχαριστοι· Persons without grace, or gracefulness; who think they have a right to the services of all men, yet feel no obligation, and consequently no gratitude.

**Unholy** ανοσοιοι· Without piety; having no heart reverence for God.

**Verse 3. Without natural affection** αστοργοι· Without that affection which parents bear to their young, and which the young bear to their parents. An affection which is common to every class of animals; consequently, men without it are worse than brutes.

**Truce-breakers** ασπονδοι· From α, negative, and σπονδη, a libation, because in making treaties libations both of blood and wine were poured out. The word means those who are bound by no promise, held by no engagement, obliged by no oath; persons who readily promise any thing, because they never intend to perform.

**False accusers** διαβολοι· Devils; but properly enough rendered false accusers, for this is a principal work of the devil. Slanderers; striving ever to ruin the characters of others.

**Incontinent** ακρατεις· From α, negative, and κρατος, power. Those who, having sinned away their power of self-government, want strength to govern their appetites; especially those who are slaves to uncleanness.

**Fierce** ανημεροι· From α, negative, and ημερος, mild or gentle. Wild, impetuous, whatever is contrary to pliability and gentleness.

**Despisers of those that are good** αφιλαγαθοι· Not lovers of good men. Here is a remarkable advantage of the Greek over the English tongue, one word of the former expressing five or six of the latter. Those who do not love the good must be radically bad themselves.

**Verse 4. *Traitors*** προδοται· From προ, before, and δίδωμι, to deliver up. Those who deliver up to an enemy the person who has put his life in their hands; such as the Scots of 1648, who delivered up into the hands of his enemies their unfortunate countryman and king, Charles the First; a stain which no lapse of ages can wipe out.

**Heady** προπετεις· From προ, forwards, and πιπτω, to fall; headstrong, precipitate, rash, inconsiderate.

**High-minded** τετυφωμενοι· From τοφος, smoke; the frivolously aspiring; those who are full of themselves, and empty of all good.

**Lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God** This is nervously and beautifully expressed in the Greek, φιληδονοι μαλλον η φιλοθεοι lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God; i.e. pleasure, sensual gratification, is their god; and this they love and serve; God they do not.

**Verse 5. *Having a form of godliness*** The original word μορφωσις signifies a draught, sketch, or summary, and will apply well to those who have all their religion in their creed, confession of faith, catechism, bodies of divinity, etc., while destitute of the life of God in their souls; and are not only destitute of this life, but deny that such life or power is here to be experienced or known. They have religion in their creed, but none in their hearts. And perhaps to their summary they add a decent round of religious observances. From such turn away — not only do not imitate them, but have no kind of fellowship with them; they are a dangerous people, and but seldom suspected, because their outside is fair.

**Verse 6. *For of this sort are they*** He here refers to false teachers and their insinuating manners, practising upon weak women, who, seeing in them such a semblance of piety, entertain them with great eagerness, and at last become partakers with them in their impurities. Among the Jews there are remarkable cases of this kind on record, and not a few of them among the full fed monks of the Romish Church. But in what sect or party have not such teachers been occasionally found? yet neither Judaism, Protestantism, nor Roman Catholicism makes any provision for such men.

**Verse 7. *Ever learning*** From their false teachers, and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth, because that teaching never leads to the truth; for, although there was a form of godliness, which gave them a sort

of authority to teach, yet, as they denied the power of godliness, they never could bring their votaries to the knowledge of the saving power of Christianity.

There are many professors of Christianity still who answer the above description. They hear, repeatedly hear, it may be, good sermons; but, as they seldom meditate on what they hear, they derive little profit from the ordinances of God. They have no more grace now than they had several years ago, though hearing all the while, and perhaps not wickedly departing from the Lord. They do not meditate, they do not think, they do not reduce what they hear to practice; therefore, even under the preaching of an apostle, they could not become wise to salvation.

**Verse 8. *Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses*** This refers to the history of the Egyptian magicians, given in Exodus 7, where see the notes, and particularly the concluding observations at the end of that chapter, {Exodus 7:25} where several things are said concerning these two men.

***Men of corrupt minds*** It appears as if the apostle were referring still to some Judaizing teachers who were perverting the Church with their doctrines, and loudly calling in question the authority and doctrine of the apostle.

***Reprobate concerning the faith.*** ἀδοκιμοί· Undiscerning or untried; they are base metal, unstamped; and should not pass current, because not standard. This metaphor is frequent in the sacred writings.

**Verse 9. *But they shall proceed no farther*** Such teaching and teachers shall never be able ultimately to prevail against the truth; for the foundation of God standeth sure.

***Their folly shall be manifest*** As the Scriptures, which are the only rule of morals and doctrine, shall ever be preserved; so, sooner or later, all false doctrines shall be tried by them: and the folly of men, setting up their wisdom against the wisdom of God, must become manifest to all. False doctrine cannot prevail long where the sacred Scriptures are read and studied. Error prevails only where the book of God is withheld from the people. The religion that fears the Bible is not the religion of God. Is Popery or Protestantism this religion?



**Verse 10. *Thou hast fully known my doctrine*** And having long had the opportunity of knowing me, the doctrine I preached, my conduct founded on these doctrines, the object I have in view by my preaching, my fidelity to God and to my trust, my long-suffering with those who walked disorderly, and opposed themselves to the truth, and did what they could to lessen my authority and render it suspected, my love to them and to the world in general, and my patience in all my adversities; thou art capable of judging between me and the false teachers, and canst easily discern the difference between their doctrines, conduct, motives, temper, spirit, etc., and mine.

**Verse 11. *Persecutions-which came unto me at Antioch*** The Antioch mentioned here was Antioch in Pisidia, to which place Paul and Barnabas came in their first apostolic progress, and where Paul delivered that memorable discourse which is preserved in the 13th chapter of Acts, Acts 13:16-43. In this city, it is said, the Jews stirred up the devout and honorable women, and the chief men of the city, and raised persecution against Paul and Barnabas, and expelled them out of their coasts; but they shook of the dust of their feet against them, and came to Iconium, Acts 13:50, 51. Here there was an assault made both of the Gentiles and also of the Jews with their rulers, to treat them despitefully, and to stone them, and they fled unto Lystra and Derbe; and there came thither certain Jews, who persuaded the people, and having stoned Paul, drew him out of the city, supposing he had been dead. The historian informs us that his life was miraculously restored, and that he departed thence, and came to Derbe, and afterwards returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, where they had lately been so grievously persecuted. See Acts 14:5, 6, 19-21. These are the persecutions, etc., to which the apostle alludes; and we find that he mentions them here precisely in the same order in which, according to the relation of St. Luke, they occurred. Now it is said here that Timothy fully knew all these things; and we may naturally suppose they could not be unknown to him, when it is evident he was either a native of, or resided in, those parts; for when the apostle, sometime after the above, visited Derbe and Lystra, behold, a certain disciple was there named Timotheus, well reported of by the brethren that were at Lystra and Iconium; Acts 16:1, 2. As these things happened in his own neighborhood, Timothy must have known them; for a person who had such a religious education as he

had could not be unacquainted with these persecutions, especially as we may believe that his mother and grandmother had been converts to Christianity at that time. See several useful remarks in Dr. Paley's *Horae Paulinae*, on these circumstances, page 312.

**Verse 12. *All that will live godly*** So opposite to the spirit and practice of the world is the whole of Christianity, that he who gives himself entirely up to God, making the Holy Scriptures the rule of his words and actions, will be less or more reviled and persecuted. "If religion gives no quarter to vice, the vicious will give no quarter to religion and its professors."

**Verse 13. *Evil men and seducers shall wax worse*** They will yet get on for a season, deceiving themselves and deceiving others; but, by and by, their folly will become manifest to all, 2 Timothy 3:9. The word *γοητες*, which we render seducers, signifies jugglers, pretenders to magical arts; probably persons dealing in false miracles, with whom the Church in all ages has been not a little disgraced.

**Verse 14. *But continue thou*** No man, however well instructed in the things of God, or grounded in Divine grace, is out of the reach of temptation, apostasy, and final ruin; hence the necessity of watching unto prayer, depending upon God, continuing in the faith, and persevering unto the end.

**Verse 15. *From a child thou hast known the Holy Scriptures*** The early religious education of Timothy has been already sufficiently noticed; see 2 Timothy 1:5, and the preface to the first epistle. St. Paul introduces this circumstance again here for the confirmation of Timothy's faith. He had learned the doctrines of Christianity from a genuine apostle; and, as Christianity is founded on the law and the prophets, Timothy was able to compare its doctrines with all that had been typified and predicted, and consequently was assured that the Christian religion was true.

***Able to make thee wise unto salvation*** The apostle is here evidently speaking of the Jewish Scriptures; and he tells us that they are able to make us wise unto salvation provided we have faith in Jesus Christ. This is the simple use of the Old Testament. No soul of man can be made wise unto salvation by it, but as he refers all to Christ Jesus. The Jews are

unsaved though they know these Scriptures, because they believe not in Christ; for Christ is the end of the law for the justification of all that believe.

**Verse 16.** *All Scripture is given by inspiration of God* This sentence is not well translated; the original *πασα γραφη θεοκνευστος ωφιλιμος προς διδασκαλιαν, κ. τ. λ.* should be rendered: Every writing Divinely inspired is profitable for doctrine, etc. The particle *και*, and, is omitted by almost all the versions and many of the fathers, and certainly does not agree well with the text. The apostle is here, beyond all controversy, speaking of the writings of the Old Testament, which, because they came by Divine inspiration, he terms the Holy Scriptures, 2 Timothy 3:15; and it is of them alone that this passage is to be understood; and although all the New Testament came by as direct an inspiration as the Old, yet, as it was not collected at that time, not indeed complete, the apostle could have no reference to it.

The doctrine of the inspiration of the sacred writings has been a subject of much discussion, and even controversy, among Christians. There are two principal opinions on the subject: 1. That every thought and word were inspired by God, and that the writer did nothing but merely write as the Spirit dictated. 2. That God gave the whole matter, leaving the inspired writers to their own language; and hence the great variety of style and different modes of expression. But as I have treated this subject at large in my Introduction to the Four Gospels and Acts of the Apostles, I must refer the reader to that work.

*Is profitable for doctrine* To teach the will of God, and to point out Jesus Christ till he should come.

*For reproof* To convince men of the truth; and to confound those who should deny it, particularly the Jews.

*For correction* *προς επανορθωσιν*· For restoring things to their proper uses and places, correcting false notions and mistaken views.

*Instruction in righteousness* *προς παιδειαν την εν δικαιοσυνη*. For communicating all initiatory religious knowledge; for schooling mankind. All this is perfectly true of the Jewish Scriptures; and let faith in Christ

Jesus be added, see 2 Timothy 3:15, and then all that is spoken in the following verse will be literally accomplished.

**Verse 17. *That the man of God*** The preacher of righteousness, the minister of the Gospel, the person who derives his commission from God, and always appears as his herald and servant.

***May be perfect*** ἀρτιος· From ἀρω, to fit or adapt. It properly signifies an integer or whole number in arithmetic, to which nothing needs to be added to make it complete.

***Thoroughly furnished*** ἐξηρτισμενος· From ἐξ, intensive, and ἀρτιος, complete; see above. Not only complete in himself as to his integrity, religious knowledge, faith in Jesus, and love to God and man, but that he should have all those qualifications which are necessary to complete the character, and insure the success of a preacher, of the Gospel. Timothy was to teach, reprove, correct, and instruct others; and was to be to them a pattern of good works.

From what the apostle says here concerning the qualifications of a Christian minister, we may well exclaim: Who is capable of these things? Is it such a person as has not intellect sufficient for a common trade or calling? No. A preacher of the Gospel should be a man of the soundest sense, the most cultivated mind, the most extensive experience, one who is deeply taught of God, and who has deeply studied man; one who has prayed much, read much, and studied much; one who takes up his work as from God, does it as before God, and refers all to the glory of God; one who abides under the inspiration of the Almighty, and who has hidden the word of God in his heart, that he might not sin against him. No minister formed by man can ever be such as is required here. The school of Christ, and that alone, can ever form such a preacher.

## CHAPTER 4

*The apostle charges Timothy to be diligent, incessant, and faithful in his preaching; to watch, suffer patiently, and give full proof of his ministry, 1-5. He predicts his own approaching death, and expresses the strongest confidence of being eternally happy, 6-8. Desires Timothy to come and see him; shows that several had forsaken him, that others were gone to different districts, and that he had only Luke with him, 9-12. Desires him to bring the cloak, book, and parchments, which he had left at Troas, 13. Of Alexander the coppersmith's opposition, 14, 15. Tells Timothy how he was deserted by all when obliged to make his first defense before Nero; how God supported him, and the confidence with which he was inspired, 16-18. Salutations to different persons at Ephesus, and from different persons at Rome, 19-21. The apostolical benediction, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1.** *I charge thee therefore before God* Whose herald thou art; and before the Lord Jesus Christ, whose salvation thou art to proclaim, and who is coming to judge the world — all that shall be found then alive, and all that have died from the foundation of the world.

**Verse 2.** *Preach the word* κηρυξον λογον. Proclaim the doctrine, the doctrine of Christ crucified, for the sins of the whole world; the doctrine, that the Gentiles are invited to be fellow heirs with the Jews, and that for Jews and Gentiles there is no salvation but by faith in Christ.

*Be instant in season, out of season* επιστηθι ευκαιρωσ, ακαιρωσ. Be urgent whether the times be prosperous or adverse, whenever there is an opportunity; and when there is none, strive to make one. The Judge is at the door, and to every man eternity is at hand! Wherever thou meetest a sinner, speak to him the word of reconciliation. Do not be contented with stated times and accustomed places merely; all time and place belong to God, and are proper for his work. Wherever it can be done, there it should be done. Satan will omit neither time nor place where he can destroy. Omit thou none where thou mayest be the instrument of salvation to any.

**Reprove** ελεγξον· Confute, the false teacher.

**Rebuke** επιτιμησον· Reprove cuttingly and severely those who will not abandon their sins.

**Exhort** παρακαλεσον· Comfort the feeble-minded, the diffident and the tempted.

**With all long-suffering** In reference to each and all of these cases.

**And doctrine.** The different modes of teaching suited to each.

**Verse 3. For the time will come** There is a time coming to the Church when men will not hear the practical truths of the Gospel, when they will prefer speculative opinions, which either do no good to the soul, or corrupt and destroy it, to that wholesome doctrine of “deny thyself, take up thy cross and follow me,” which Jesus Christ has left in his Church.

**But after their own lusts** For these they will follow, and hate those preachers and that doctrine by which they are opposed.

**Shall they heap to themselves teachers** They will add one teacher to another, run and gad about after all, to find out those who insist not on the necessity of bearing the cross, of being crucified to the world, and of having the mind that was in Jesus. In this disposition interested men often find their account; they set up for teachers, “and widen and strew with flowers the way, down to eternal ruin,” taking care to soothe the passions and flatter the vices of a trifling, superficial people.

**Having itching ears** Endless curiosity, an insatiable desire of variety; and they get their ears tickled with the language and accent of the person, abandoning the good and faithful preacher for the fine speaker.

**Verse 4. And they shall turn away their ears from the truth** The truth strips them of their vices, sacrifices their idols, darts its lightnings against their easily besetting sins, and absolutely requires a conformity to a crucified Christ; therefore they turn their ears away from it.

**And shall be turned unto fables.** Believe any kind of stuff and nonsense; for, as one has justly observed, “Those who reject the truth are abandoned by the just judgment of God to credit the most degrading nonsense.” This

is remarkably the case with most deists; their creed often exhibits what is grossly absurd.

**Verse 5. *But watch thou in all things*** It is possible to be overtaken in a fault, to neglect one's duty, and to lose one's soul. Watching unto prayer prevents all these evils.

***Endure afflictions*** Let no sufferings affright thee; nor let the dread of them either cause thee to abandon the truth, or relax in thy zeal for the salvation of men.

***Do the work of an evangelist*** That is: Preach Christ crucified for the sins of the whole world; for this, and this alone, is doing the work of an evangelist, or preacher of the glad tidings of peace and salvation by Christ. An angel from God was first sent to do the work of an evangelist, and how did he do it? Behold, said he, I bring you good tidings of great joy; **ιδου γαρ, ευαγγελιζομαι υμιν χαραν μεγαλην, ητις εσται παντι τω λαω.** Behold, I evangelize unto you great joy, which shall be to all people; to you is born a Savior. Those who do not proclaim Christ as having tasted death for every man, and who do not implicitly show that every human soul may be saved, do not perform the work of evangelists; they, God help them! limit the Holy One of Israel. Yet, as far as they preach the truth in sincerity, so far God acknowledges and blesses them and their labors; they do a part of the work, but not the whole.

***Make full proof of thy ministry.*** Push all thy principles to their utmost power of activity; carry them on to all their consequences; and try what God will do for thee, and by thee. Neglect no part of thy sacred function; perform faithfully all the duties of which it is composed; and do God's work in his own way and in his own spirit.

**Verse 6. *For I am now ready to be offered*** **νη απενδομαι.** I am already poured out as a libation. See the note on Philippians 2:17. He considers himself as on the eve of being sacrificed, and looks upon his blood as the libation which was poured on the sacrificial offering. He could not have spoken thus positively had not the sentence of death been already passed upon him.

**Verse 7. *I have fought a good fight*** Every reader will perceive that the apostle, as was his very frequent custom, alludes to the contests at the

Grecian games: *τον αγωνα τον καλον ηγωνισμαι*. I have wrestled that good wrestling — I have struggled hard, and have over come, in a most honorable cause.

*I have finished my course* I have started for the prize, and have come up to the goal, outstripping all my competitors, and have gained this prize also.

*I have kept the faith* As the laws of these games must be most diligently observed and kept, (for though a man overcome, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully,) so I have kept the rules of the spiritual combat and race; and thus, having contended lawfully, and conquered in each exercise, I have a right to expect the prize.

**Verse 8. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown** This I can claim as my due; but the crown I expect is not one of fading leaves, but a crown of righteousness; the reward which God, in his kindness, has promised to them who are faithful to the grace he has bestowed upon them.

*The Lord, the righteous Judge* He alludes here to the brabeus, or umpire in the Grecian games, whose office it was to declare the victor, and to give the crown.

*At that day* The day of judgment; the morning of the resurrection from the dead.

*Unto all them also that love his appearing.* All who live in expectation of the coming of Christ, who anticipate it with joyfulness, having buried the world and laid up all their hopes above. Here is a reward, but it is a reward not of debt but of grace; for it is by the grace of God that even an apostle is fitted for glory. And this reward is common to the faithful; it is given, not only to apostles, but to all them that love his appearing. This crown is laid up — it is in view, but not in possession. We must die first.

I have several times noted the allusions of St. Paul to the Greek poets, and such as seemed to argue that he quoted immediately from them. There is a passage in the *Alcestis* of Euripides, in which the very expressions used here by the apostle are found, and spoken on the occasion of a wife laying down her life for her husband, when both his parents had refused to do it.



του σου προ παιδος· αλλα την δ' ειασατε  
 γυναικ' οθνειαν, ην εγω και μητερα  
 πατερα τε γ' ενδικως αν ηγοιμην μονην·  
 και τοι καλον γ' αν τανδ' αγων' ηγωνισω,  
 θου σου προ παιδος κατθανων.

Alcest. v. 644.

“Thou wouldst not, neither darest thou to die for thy son; but hast suffered this strange woman to do it, whom I justly esteem to be alone my father and mother: thou wouldst have fought a good fight hadst thou died for thy son.”

See Sophocles and AEschylus, quoted 1 Timothy 6:15.

The **καλος αγων**, good fight, was used among the Greeks to express a contest of the most honorable kind, and in this sense the apostle uses it.

**Verse 9. *Do thy diligence to come shortly unto me*** He appears to have wished Timothy to be present at his death, that he might have his faith confirmed by seeing how a Christian could die; and, as he had but a short time to live, he begs Timothy to hasten his visit, and particularly so as he had scarcely now any companions.

**Verse 10. *Demas hath forsaken me*** This is another proof of the posteriority of this epistle: for Demas was with the apostle in his first imprisonment, and joins in the salutations, see Colossians 4:14, which were written when Paul was a prisoner at Rome for the first time.

***Having loved this present world*** **αγαπησας τον νυν αιωνα** Having preferred Judaism to Christianity; or having loved the Jews, and having sought their welfare in preference to that of the Gentiles.

The **עולם הזה** words *olam hazzeh*, which answer to the Greek **τον νυν αιωνα**, are generally to be understood as signifying, either the Jewish people, or the system of Judaism. It was now become doubly dangerous to be a Christian; and those who had not religion enough to enable them to burn, or in any other way to expose life for it, took refuge in that religion which was exposed to no persecution. This is a light in which the conduct of Demas may be viewed. It could not have been the love of secular gain

which had induced Demas to abandon St. Paul; he must have counted this cost before he became a Christian. See below.

***Crescens to Galatia*** Whether the departure of Crescens was similar to that of Demas, as intimated above, or whether he went on an evangelical embassy, we know not. Charity would hope the latter; for we can hardly suppose that Titus, who is here said to have departed to Dalmatia, had abandoned his Cretan Churches, his apostolical office, and especially his aged father and friend, now about to seal the truth with his blood! It is probable that both these persons had gone on sacred missions, and perhaps had been gone some time before the apostle was brought into such imminent danger. Even for Demas, as standing in this connection, something might be said. It is not intimated that he had denied the faith, but simply that he had left the apostle and gone into Thessalonica; for which this reason is given, that he loved the present world. Now, if **αγαπησας**, having loved, can be applied to a desire to save the souls of the Jews, and that he went into Thessalonica, where they abounded, for this very purpose, then we shall find all three—Demas, Crescens, and Titus, one at Thessalonica, another at Galatia, and the third at Dalmatia, doing the work of evangelists, visiting the Churches, and converting both Jews and Gentiles. This interpretation I leave to the charitable reader, and must own that, with all the presumptive evidences against it, it has some fair show of probability. Demas has received little justice from interpreters and preachers in general. It is even fashionable to hunt him down.

**Verse 11. *Only Luke is with me.*** This was Luke the evangelist, and writer of the Acts of the Apostles, who was always much attached to St. Paul, and it is supposed continued with him even to his martyrdom.

***Take Mark, and bring him with thee*** This was John Mark, the sister's son of Barnabas, who, after having wavered a little at first, became a steady, zealous, and useful man; his name and conduct have been often before the reader. See the parallel passages.

***For he is profitable to me for the ministry.*** **εις διακονιαν**· For service; that is, he would be very useful to the apostle, to minister to him in his present close confinement. Some think that the apostle means his preaching the Gospel; but at this time, I should suppose, there was very little, if any, public preaching at Rome.

**Verse 12. *Tychicus have I sent to Ephesus.*** For this person, see Acts 20:4; Ephesians 6:21; Colossians 4:7. It is rather strange that the apostle should say, I have sent Tychicus to Ephesus, if Timothy was at Ephesus at this time; but it is probable that Tychicus had been sent to Ephesus some time before this, and therefore the apostle might say, though writing now to Ephesus, Tychicus have I sent, etc.

**Verse 13. *The cloak that I left at Troas* τον φελονην** is by several translated bag or portmanteau; and it is most likely that it was something of this kind, in which he might carry his clothes, books, and travelling necessaries. What the books were we cannot tell, it is most likely they were his own writings; and as to the parchments, they were probably the Jewish Scriptures and a copy of the Septuagint. These he must have had at hand at all times. The books and parchments now sent for could not be for the apostle's own use, as he was now on the eve of his martyrdom. He had probably intended to bequeath them to the faithful, that they might be preserved for the use of the Church.

**Verse 14. *Alexander the coppersmith*** We are not to understand this of any tradesman, but of some rabbin; for it was not unusual for the Jews to apply the name of some trade as an epithet to their rabbins and literary men. He is, in all probability, the very same mentioned Acts 19:33, where see the note; and it is not unlikely that he may have been the same whom the apostle was obliged to excommunicate, 1 Timothy 1:20.

***The Lord reward him* αποδωη αυτω ο κυριος**· But instead of αποδωη, which has here the power of a solemn imprecation, αποδωσει, he will reward, is the reading of the very best MSS., several of the versions, and some of the chief Greek fathers. This makes the sentence declaratory: The Lord WILL reward him according to his works. This reading is most like the spirit and temper of this heavenly man. See 2 Timothy 4:16.

**Verse 15. *Of whom be thou ware also*** It seems that this rabbin traveled about from place to place for the purpose of opposing the Gospel, the Jews putting him forward, as it is said, Acts 19:33.

***He hath greatly withstood our words.*** Has been a constant opposer of the Christian doctrines.

**Verse 16. *At my first answer*** εν τη πρωτη μου απολογια· At my first apology; this word properly signifies a defense or vindication. To his is the meaning of what we call the apologies of the primitive fathers; they were vindications or defences of Christianity. It is generally allowed that, when St. Paul had been taken this second time by the Romans, he was examined immediately, and required to account for his conduct; and that, so odious was Christianity through the tyranny of Nero, he could procure no person to plead for him. Nero, who had himself set fire to Rome, charged it on the Christians, and they were in consequence persecuted in the most cruel manner; he caused them to be wrapped up in pitched clothes, and then, chaining them to a stake, he ordered them to be set on fire to give light in the streets after night! Tormenti genus! To this Juvenal appears to allude. Sat. i. v. 155.

*Pone Tigellinum, taeda lucebis in illa,  
Qua stantes ardent, qui fixo gulture fumant.*

*“If into rogues omnipotent you rake,  
Death is your doom, impaled upon a stake;  
Smear’d o’er with wax, and set on blaze to light  
The streets, and make a dreadful fire by night.”*

DRYDEN.

***I pray God that it may not be laid to their charge.*** How much more simple, elegant, and expressive are the apostle’s own words: μη αυτοις λογισθειη· let it not be placed to their account! Let them not have to reckon for it with the supreme Judge at the great day!

**Verse 17. *The Lord stood with me*** When all human help failed, God, in a more remarkable manner, interposed; and thus the excellency plainly appeared to be of God, and not of man.

***That by me the preaching might be fully known*** When called on to make his defense he took occasion to preach the Gospel, and to show that the great God of heaven and earth had designed to illuminate the Gentile world with the rays of his light and glory. This must have endeared him to some, while others might consider him an opposer of their gods, and be the more incensed against him.

***I was delivered out of the mouth of the lion.*** I escaped the imminent danger at that time. Probably he was seized in a tumultuous manner, and expected to be torn to pieces. The words **εκ στοματος** or **εκ θρυγγου λεοντος ρυεσθαι**, to be rescued from the mouth or jaws of the lion, are a proverbial form of speech for deliverance from the most imminent danger. Several writers think Nero to be intended by the lion, because of his rage and oppressive cruelty. But Helius Caesarinus was at this time prefect of the city; Nero being in Greece. He was a bloody tyrant, and Nero had given him the power of life and death in his absence. The apostle may mean him, if the words be not proverbial.

**Verse 18. *And the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work*** None of the evil designs formed against me to make me unfaithful or unsteady, to cause me to save my life at the expense of faith and a good conscience, shall succeed; my life may go, but he will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom. A continuance on earth the apostle expects not; but he has glory full in view, and therefore he gives God glory for what he had done, and for what he had promised to do.

**Verse 19. *Salute Prisca and Aquila*** Several MSS., versions, and fathers have Priscilla instead of Prisca: they are probably the same as those mentioned Acts 18:18, 26.

***The household of Onesiphorus.***

Carpus: from Troas he went to Ephesus, where he visited Timothy; from Ephesus he went to Miletus, where he left Trophimus sick; and having embarked at Miletus, he went by sea to Rome. See Calmet. It is most likely, therefore, that the Miletus of Ionia is the place intended.

**Verse 21. *Come before winter.*** 1. Because the apostle's time was short and uncertain. 2. Because sailing in those seas was very dangerous in winter. Whether Timothy saw the apostle before he was martyred is not known.

***Eubulus*** This person is nowhere else mentioned in the New Testament.

***Pudens*** Of this person we have traditions and legends, but nothing certain. The Catholics make him bishop of Rome.

***Linus*** He also is made, by the same persons, bishop of Rome; but there is no sufficient ground for these pretensions.

***Claudia*** Supposed to be the wife of Pudens. Some think she was a British lady, converted by St. Paul; and that she was the first that brought the Gospel to Britain.

***All the brethren.*** All the Christians, of whom there were many at Rome; though of Paul's companions in travel, only Luke remained there.

**Verse 22. *The Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.*** This is a prayer addressed to Christ by one of the most eminent of his apostles; another proof of the untruth of the assertion, that prayer is never offered to Christ in the New Testament. He prays that Christ may be with his spirit, enlightening, strengthening, and confirming it to the end.

***Grace be with you.*** These words show that the epistle was addressed to the whole Church, and that it is not to be considered of a private nature.

***Amen.*** Omitted by ACFG and some others. See the note on this word at the end of the preceding epistle. The principal subscriptions, both in the versions and MSS., are the following:—

The Second Epistle to Timothy was written from Rome. — SYRIAC.

To the man Timothy. — AETHIOPIC,

Nothing in the VULGATE.

End of the epistle; it was written from the city of Rome when Timothy had been constituted bishop over Ephesus; and when Paul had stood the second time in the presence of Nero Caesar, the Roman emperor. Praise to the Lord of glory, perpetual, perennial, and eternal! Amen, Amen, Amen.  
— ARABIC.

The Second Epistle to Timothy is ended, who was the first bishop of the Church of Ephesus. It was written from Rome when Paul had stood the second time before Nero, the Roman emperor.— PHILOXENIAN SYRIAC.

Written from Rome, and sent by Onesimus. — COPTIC.

The MSS. are also various:—

The Second Epistle to Timothy is finished; that to Titus begins.

The second to Timothy, written from Laodicea. — CODEX ALEXANDRINUS.

The Second Epistle of Paul the Apostle to Timothy, ordained the first bishop of the Church of the Ephesians, was written from Rome when Paul was brought the second time before Nero Caesar. — COMMON GREEK TEXT.

There are other slighter differences in the MSS., but they are unworthy of note.

That the epistle was written from Rome, about the year 65 or 66, and a little before St. Paul's martyrdom, is the general opinion of learned men. See the preface.

The reader has already been apprized that this is most probably the last epistle the apostle ever wrote; and it is impossible to see him in a more advantageous point of view than he now appears, standing on the verge of eternity, full of God, and strongly anticipating an eternity of glory. For farther observations, see the conclusion of the first epistle.

ON verse 16 {2 Timothy 4:16} I have mentioned the apologies of the primitive fathers, or their vindications of Christianity against the

aspersions and calumnies of the Gentiles. Several of these writings are still extant; of the whole I shall here give a short account in chronological order.

1. **QUADRATUS**. St. Jerome relates that this man was contemporary with the apostles, and one also of their disciples. There is only a fragment of his apology extant; it is preserved by Eusebius, in *Hist. Eccles.*, lib. iv. c. 3, and was addressed to the Emperor Adrian about A. D. 126, on whom it is said to have had a good effect.

2. **ARISTIDES**, according to Eusebius, was an Athenian philosopher, and contemporary with Quadratus; he wrote his apology for the Christians about the same time, (A. D. 126,) and addressed it to the same emperor. St. Jerome gives some remarkable particulars of him in his book *Of Illustrious Men*. "He was," says he, "a most eloquent philosopher, and after his conversion he continued to wear his former habit." His apology was extant in the days of St. Jerome, but is now utterly lost.

3. **JUSTIN MARTYR** flourished about A. D. 140, and presented his first apology for Christianity to the Emperor Antoninus Pius and the Roman senate, about A. D. 150; and his second apology was presented to Marcus Antoninus about A. D. 162 or 166. These two very important apologies are come down to us nearly entire, and are exceedingly useful and important.

4. **ATHENAGORAS** wrote his apology for the Christians about the year 178. He is said to have sat down to write *AGAINST* the Christians; and that he might the better confute them he read over the Scriptures, and was so thoroughly converted by what he read, that he immediately wrote an apology *FOR* them, instead of an invective against them. This piece is still extant.

5. **TERTULLIAN**, who flourished about A. D. 200, was the earliest, and one of the chief of the Latin fathers: he was born in Carthage, and was a presbyter of the Church in that city. His apology was written about A. D. 198, or, according to some, 200. It appears to have been addressed to the governors of provinces, and is allowed to be a work of extraordinary eminence, and a master piece of its kind. It is still extant.

6. **MARCUS MINUCIUS FELIX** flourished towards the end of the reign of Septimius Severus, about A. D. 210. His apology for the Christian religion



is written in the form of a dialogue between Caecilius Natalis, a heathen, and Octavius Januarius, a Christian, in which Minucius sits as judge. "This work," says Dr. Lardner, "is a monument of the author's ingenuity, learning, and eloquence; and the conversion of a man of his great natural and acquired abilities to the Christian religion, and his public and courageous defense of it, notwithstanding the many worldly temptations to the contrary, which he must have met with at that time, as they give an advantageous idea of his virtue, so they likewise afford a very agreeable argument in favor of the truth of our religion." WORKS, vol. ii., p. 367.

To the above, who are properly the Christian apologists for the first 200 years, several add Tatian's book against the Gentiles; Clemens Alexandrinus' Exhortation to the Gentiles; Origen's eight books against Celsus; Cyprian Of the Vanity of Idols; Arnobius' seven books against the Gentiles; the Institutions of Lactantius, and Julius Firmicus Maturnus Of the Errors of Profane Religion. All these works contain much important information, and are well worthy the attention of the studious reader. The principal part of these writings I have analyzed in my Succession of Sacred Literature, and to this they who cannot conveniently consult the originals may refer.

As the word apology generally signifies now an excuse for a fault, or "something spoken rather in extenuation of guilt than to prove innocence," it is seldom used in its primitive sense; and for some hundreds of years no defense of Christianity has borne this title till that by the late bishop of Llandaff, entitled, An Apology for the BIBLE, in a Series of Letters addressed to THOMAS PAINE. This is a very masterly work, and a complete refutation of Paine's "Age of Reason," and of any thing that has yet appeared, or can appear, under the same form. Ever since the days of St. Paul, God has raised up able apologists for the truth of Christianity, when it has been attacked by the most powerful partisans of the kingdom of darkness; and each attack and apology has been a new triumph for the religion of Christ.

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## PREFACE

TO

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO

## TITUS

It is strange, that of a person who must have attained considerable eminence in the Christian Church, and one to whom a canonical epistle has been written by the great apostle of the Gentiles, we should know so very little. That Titus was a frequent companion of St. Paul in his journeys we have evidence from his epistles; and although this was the case, he is not once mentioned in the book of the Acts of the Apostles!

That he was a Greek, and brought up in heathenism, we learn from Galatians 2:3: “But neither Titus, who was with me, being a GREEK, was compelled to be CIRCUMCISED.” As he was uncircumcised, he was neither a Jew nor a proselyte of justice, and probably was a mere heathen till he heard the Gospel preached by St. Paul, by whose ministry he was converted to the Christian faith; Titus 1:4: “To Titus, my own son, (γνησιῶ τέκνῳ, my genuine son,) after the common faith;” which words sufficiently indicate that St. Paul alone had the honor of his conversion. That he was very highly, and consequently deservedly, esteemed by St. Paul, is evident from the manner in which he mentions him in different places: “I had no rest in my spirit till I found Titus, my brother;” 2 Corinthians 2:13. “Nevertheless, God, that comforteth those who are cast down, comforted us by the coming of Titus; and not by his coming only, but by the consolation wherewith he was comforted in you: therefore, we were comforted in your comfort: yea, and exceedingly the more joyed we

for the joy of Titus, because his spirit was refreshed by you all; and his inward affection is more abundant toward you whilst he remembereth how with fear and trembling ye received him;” 2 Corinthians 7:6, 7, 13, 15.

“But thanks be to God, who put the same earnest care into the heart of Titus for you. Whether any do inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper concerning you;” 2 Corinthians 8:16, 23. “Did Titus make a gain of you? Walked we not in the same spirit? walked we not in the same steps? 2 Corinthians 12:18.

Though St. Paul’s preaching the Gospel in Crete is not expressly mentioned anywhere, yet it may be plainly inferred from Titus 1:5: “For this cause left I thee in Crete, that thou shouldest set in order the things that are wanting, and ordain elders in every city.” It is supposed that this was some time in the year 62, after the apostle was released from his first imprisonment in Rome. But not being able to spend much time in that island, he left the care of the Churches to Titus, and sailed into Judea in the beginning of 63, taking Timothy with him. Having spent some time in Jerusalem, he proceeded to Antioch, comforting and establishing the Churches whithersoever they went. From Antioch he set out on his fifth and last apostolical journey, in which he and Timothy traveled through Syria and Cilicia, and came to Colosse in Phrygia, early in the year 64. On this occasion it is supposed he wrote his Epistle to Titus, in which he desires him to meet him in Nicopolis, as he had intended to spend the winter there; Titus 3:12. From Colosse he went with Timothy to Ephesus, where he left him to regulate and govern the Church; from thence he passed into Macedonia, and probably visited Philippi, and different Churches in that province, according to his intention, Philippians 2:24; and thence to Nicopolis, where he intended to spend the winter, and where he had desired Titus to meet him. See above.

Whether Titus ever left Crete we know not; nor how, nor where, he died. Some traditions, on which little dependence can be placed, say he lived till he was 94 years of age, and died and was buried in Crete. He appears to have been a young man when intrusted with the care of the Churches in this island. In such an extensive district, an aged or infirm man would have been of little service.

Crete, where Titus was resident, to whom this epistle was sent, is the largest island in the Mediterranean Sea; it lies between 22° and 27° long. E., and between 35° and 36° lat. N. According to Strabo, it is 287 miles in length; Pliny makes it 270, and Scylax 312. Pliny also states that its greatest breadth is 55 miles; and, as its length was so disproportionate to its breadth, it is called, by Stephanus Byzantinus, the long island. It has the Archipelago to the north, the African sea to the south, the Carpathian to the east, and the Ionian to the west. It is now generally computed to be about 250 miles long, about 50 broad, and 600 in circumference. It was anciently called Aeria, Cthonia, Curete, Idaea, and Macaris; but its most common name was Crete. Of it Homer gives us the following description. Odys., lib. xix. v. 172-179:-

κρητη τις γαι' εστι, μεσω ενι οινοπι ποντω,  
καλη και πιειρα, περιρρυτος· εν δ' ανθρωποι  
πολλοι, απειρεσιοι, και εννηκοντα ποληες.  
αλλη δ' αλλων γλωσσα μεμιγμενη· εν μεν αχαιοι,  
εν δ' ετεοκρητες μεγαλητορες, εν δε κυδωνες,  
δωριεες τε τριχαικες, διοι τε πελασγοι.  
τοισι δ' ενι κνωσσος μεγαλη πολις· ενθα τε μινως  
εννεωρος βασιλευς διος μεγαλου οαριστης.

*Crete awes the circling waves, a fruitful soil;  
And ninety cities crown the sea-born isle.  
Mix'd with her genuine sons, adopted names  
In various tongues avow their various claims.  
Cidonians, dreadful with the bended yew,  
And bold Pelasgi, boast a native's due:  
The Dorians plumed amidst the files of war,  
Her foodful glebe, with fierce Achaians, share.  
Cnossus, her capital of high command,  
Where sceptred Minos, with impartial hand,  
Divided right; each ninth revolving year  
By Jove received in council to confer.*

POPE.

Though in the above quotation Homer attributes to this island only ninety cities, εννηκοντα ποληες, yet In other places he gives it the epithet of εκατομπολις, hundred cities. And this number it is generally allowed to have had originally; but we must not let the term city deceive us, as in ancient times places were thus named which would rate with villages or hamlets only in these modern times. Few places in antiquity have been

more celebrated than Crete: it was not only famous for its hundred cities, but for the arrival of Europa on a bull, or in the ship Taurus, from Phoenicia; for the Labyrinth, the work of Daedalus; for the destruction of the Minotaur, by Theseus; for Mount Ida, where Jupiter was preserved from the jealousy of his father Saturn; for Jupiter's sepulchre; and above all, for its king, Minos, and the laws which he gave to his people; the most pure, wholesome, and equal, of which antiquity can boast.

Their lawgiver, Minos, is said by Homer to have held a conference every ninth year with Jupiter, from whom he is reported to have received directions for the farther improvement of his code of laws; though this be fable, it probably states a fact in disguise. Minos probably revised his laws every ninth year, and, to procure due respect and obedience to them, told the people that he received these improvements from Jupiter himself. This was customary with ancient legislators who had to deal with an ignorant and gross people, and has been practised from the days of Minos to those of Mohammed.

According to ancient authors, Crete was originally peopled from Palestine. Bochart has shown, Canaan, lib. i. c. 15, col. 420, that that part of Palestine which lies on the Mediterranean was by the Arabs called Keritha, and by the Syrians, Creth; and the Hebrews called its inhabitants Kerethi כרתִי or Kerethim כרתִים which the Septuagint have translated κρητας. Thus Ezekiel 25:16, we find וְהִכַּרְתִּי אֶת כְּרִתִּים vehicratti eth Kerethim, which we translate I will cut off the Cherethims, translated by the Septuagint καὶ ἐξολοθρεύσω κρητας, I will destroy the Cretans; and Zephaniah 2:5: “Wo unto the inhabitants of the seacoast, the nation of the Cherethites, (גוי כרתִים goi Kerethim, The nation of the Kerethim;”) παρποκοι κρητων, Sept., The sojourners of the Cretans. That these prophets do not speak of the island of Crete is plain from their joining the Kerethim with the Pelishtim as one and the same people. “Thus saith the Lord God, Behold I will stretch out my hand upon the Philistines, and will cut off the Cherethims, and destroy the remnant of the seacoast;” Ezekiel 25:16. “Wo unto the inhabitants of the seacoasts, the nation of the Cherethites; the word of the Lord is against you: O Canaan, the land of the Philistines, I will even destroy thee;” Zephaniah 2:5. Accordingly it appears that the Kerethim were a part of the Philistines. The Kerethim in

Palestine were noted for archery; and we find that some of them were employed by David as his life guards, 2 Samuel 8:18; 15:18; 20:23; 1 Kings 1:38; 1 Chronicles 18:17; in all which places they are called, in our translation, Cherethites; but the Hebrew is כרתִי Kerethi, which the Chaldee paraphrase renders קשתיא kashtia, or קשתייה kashtaiyah, archers. See the Targum of Rab. Joseph. It is very likely that the Kerethi or Kerethim of Palestine had their name from their successful use of their favourite instrument the bow, as by it they destroyed many; for כרת carath, in Hebrew, signifies to destroy or lay waste; and hence the paronomasia of the prophet, quoted above, Ezekiel 25:16: “I will cut off the Cherethims (והכרתִי את כרתים) literally, I will destroy the destroyers.”)

Idomeneus, who assisted Agamemnon in the Trojan war, was the last king of Crete. He left the regency of the island to his adopted son Leucus, who, in the absence of the king, usurped the empire; the usurper was however soon expelled, and Crete became one of the most celebrated republics in antiquity. The Romans at last, under Quintus Metellus, after an immense expenditure of blood and treasure, succeeded in subduing the island, on which he abolished the laws of Minos, and introduced the code of Numa Pompilius. Crete, with the small kingdom of Cyrene, became a Roman province; this was at first governed by proconsul, next by a quaestor and assistant, and lastly by a consul. Constantine the Great, in the new division he made of the provinces of the empire, separated Crete from Cyrene, and left it, with Africa and Illyria, to his third son Constans. In the ninth century, in the reign of Michael II., it was attacked and conquered by the Saracens. About 965, the Emperor Nicephorus Phocas, in the following century, defeated and expelled the Saracens, and reunited the island to the empire, after it had been under the power of the infidels upwards of 100 years. It remained with the empire until the time of Baldwin, earl of Flanders, who, being raised to the throne, rewarded the services of Boniface, marquis of Montferrat, by making him king of Thessalonica, and adding to it the island of Crete. Baldwin, preferring a sum of gold to the government of the island, sold it to the Venetians, A. D. 1194, under whose government it was called Candia, from the Arabic (Arabic) Kandak, a fortification, the name which the Saracens gave to the metropolis which they had built and strongly fortified. In 1645, in the

midst of a profound peace, it was attacked by the Turks with a fleet of 400 sail, which had on board an army of 60, 000 men, under the command of four pachas, to oppose whom the whole island could only muster 3, 500 infantry, and a small number of cavalry; yet with these they held out against a numerous and continually recruited army, disputing every inch of ground, so that the whole Ottoman power was employed for nearly thirty years before they got the entire dominion of the island. In this long campaign against this brave people the Turks lost about 200, 000 men! Since about the year 1675, the whole island has been under the government of the Turks.

The island of Crete is perhaps one of the most salubrious in the world. The soil is rich, and it produces no ferocious or poisonous animal. The present number of its inhabitants may amount to about 350, 200, of whom about 200 are Jews, 150, 000 Greeks, and 200, 000 Turks. This is a large population for a place under Turkish despotism; but had it the blessings of a free government, it could support at least treble the number.

The island is divided into twelve bishops' sees, under the patriarch of Constantinople; but though the execrable Turks profess to allow to the Christians the free exercise of their religion, yet they will not permit them to repair their churches. It is only by the influence of large sums of gold, paid to the pachas, that they can keep their religious houses from total dilapidation. The Mohammedans have indeed converted most of the Christian temples into mosques. In Candia, the metropolis, they have left two churches to the Greeks, one to the Armenians, and a synagogue to the Jews. Candia is about five hundred miles from Constantinople. Is it not strange that the maritime powers of Europe have not driven those oppressors of the human race from this and every inch of Christian ground which they have usurped by treachery and violence, and which they continue to govern by despotism and cruelty?

Many have observed the affinity that subsists between the First Epistle to Timothy and this to Titus. Both epistles are directed to persons left by the writer to preside in their respective Churches during his absence. Both epistles are principally occupied in describing the qualifications of those who should be appointed to ecclesiastical offices; and the ingredients in this description are nearly the same in both epistles. Timothy and Titus

are both cautioned against the same prevailing corruptions; the phrases and expressions in both letters are nearly the same; and the writer accosts his two disciples with the same salutations, and passes on to the business of his epistle with the same transition.

For example:—

Unto Timothy, my own son in the faith — as I besought thee to abide still at Ephesus, etc.; 1 Timothy 1:1-3.

To Titus, my own son after the common faith — for this cause left I thee in Crete; Titus 1:4, 5.

If Timothy was not to give heed to fables and endless genealogies which minister questions, 1 Timothy 1:4;

Titus was also to avoid foolish questions and genealogies, Titus 3:9; not giving heed to Jewish fables, Titus 1:14.

If Timothy was to be a pattern, (τυπος,) 1 Timothy 4:12; so was Titus, Titus 2:7.

If Timothy was to let no man despise his youth, 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus was also to let no man despise him, Titus 2:15.

This verbal consent is also observable in some very peculiar expressions, which have no relation to the particular character of Timothy or Titus.

The phrase πιστος ο λογος, it is a faithful saying, occurs thrice in the First Epistle to Timothy, once in the second, and once in that to Titus; and in no other part of St. Paul's writings. These three epistles were probably written towards the close of his life, and are the only epistles written after his first imprisonment at Rome.

The same observation belongs to another singularity of expression, viz. the epithet sound, (υγιαινων)



The phrase God our Savior stands in the same predicament. It is repeated three times in the First Epistle to Timothy, and thrice in the Epistle to Titus; but does not occur in any other book of the New Testament, except once in the Epistle of Jude.

Similar terms, though intermixed with others, are employed in the two epistles, in enumerating the qualifications required in those who should be advanced to the station of authority in the Church; compare 1 Timothy 3:2-4 with Titus 1:6-8.

The most natural accounts which can be given of these resemblances, is to suppose that the two epistles were written nearly at the same time, and whilst the same ideas and phrases dwelt in the writer's mind.

The journey of St. Paul to Crete, alluded to in this epistle, in which Titus was left in Crete to set in order the things which were wanting, must be carried to the period which intervened between his first and second imprisonment. For the history of the Acts, which reaches to the time of St. Paul's imprisonment, contains no account of his going to Crete, except upon his voyage as a prisoner to Rome; and that this could not be the occasion referred to in this epistle, is evident from hence, that when St. Paul wrote this epistle he appears to have been at liberty; whereas, after that voyage, he continued at least two years in confinement.

It is agreed that St. Paul wrote his First Epistle to Timothy from Macedonia; and that he was in these parts, i.e. in the Peninsula, when he wrote the Epistle to Titus, is rendered probable by his directing Titus to come to him in Nicopolis. The most noted city of that name was in Epirus, near to Actium; but the form of speaking, as well as the nature of the case, renders it probable that the writer was in the neighborhood of this city when he dictated this direction to Titus.

Upon the whole, if we be allowed to suppose that St. Paul, after his liberation at Rome, sailed into Asia, taking Crete in his way; and that from Asia, and from Ephesus its capital, he proceeded to Macedonia, and, crossing the Peninsula in his progress, came into the neighborhood of Nicopolis; we have a route which falls in with every thing. It executes the intention expressed by the apostle of visiting Colosse and Philippi, as soon as he should be set at liberty at Rome. It allows him to leave "Titus

at Crete,” and “Timothy at Ephesus, as he went into Macedonia;” and he wrote to both not long after from the Peninsula of Greece, and probably the neighborhood of Nicopolis; thus bringing together the dates of these two epistles, and thereby accounting for that affinity between them, both in subject and language, which has been above pointed out. Though the journey thus traced out for St. Paul be in a great measure hypothetical, yet it is a species of consistency which seldom belongs to falsehood, to admit of an hypothesis which includes a great number of independent circumstances without contradiction. See Paley’s *Horae Paulinae*, p. 321

**THE**  
**EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO**  
**TITUS**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5573.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5567.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5557.
- Year of the Julian period, 4775.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4069.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4293.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3825.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4424.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2413.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3167.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1005.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 812.
- Year of the CCXith Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 817.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 818.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 377.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 113.
- Year of the Julian era, 110.

- Year of the Spanish era, 103.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 69.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 65 or 66.
- Year of Gessius Florus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 16.
- Year of L. C. Gallus, governor of Syria, 1.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 3.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 66.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 9; or the first after the third embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 6, or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 18.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, F.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the VIIth of the ides of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the seventh of April, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the day after the ides of April, or the XVIIIth of the Calends of May, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 14th of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 28.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 5.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 5, 7, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 12, 14, 14.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 17.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman emperor computing from Augustus Caesar, 12.
- Roman Consuls, A. Licinius Nerva Silanus, and M. Vestinius Atticus; the latter of whom was succeeded by Aninius Cerealis, on July 1st.

## CHAPTER 1

*The apostle's statement of his character, his hope, and his function, 1-3. His address to Titus, and the end for which he left him in Crete, 4, 5. The qualifications requisite in those who should be appointed elders and bishops in the Church of God, 6-9. Of false teachers, 10, 11. The character of the Cretans, and how they were to be dealt with, 12-14. Of the pure, the impure, and false professors of religion, 15, 16.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1

**Verse 1. *Paul, a servant of God*** In several places of his other epistles St. Paul styles himself the servant of Jesus Christ, but this is the only place where he calls himself the servant of God. Some think that he did this to vindicate himself against the Jews, who supposed he had renounced God when he admitted the Gentiles into his Church. But if thus to vindicate himself was at all necessary, why was it not done in his Epistle to the Romans, the grand object of which was to prove that the Gentiles came legally into the Church on believing in Christ, with out submitting to circumcision, or being laid under obligation to observe the rites and ceremonies of the Jewish law? This reason seems too fanciful. It is very likely that in the use of the phrase the apostle had no particular design; for, according to him, he who is the servant of Christ is the servant of God, and he who is God's servant is also the servant of Christ.

***The faith of God's elect*** The Christians, who were now chosen in the place of the Jews, who, for their obstinate rejection of the Messiah, were reprobated; i.e. cast out of the Divine favor.

***The acknowledging of the truth*** For the propagation of that truth, or system of doctrines, which is calculated to promote godliness, or a holy and useful life.

**Verse 2. *In hope of eternal life*** In expectation of a state of being and well being which should last through eternity, when time should be no more. This includes, not only the salvation of the soul and its eternal beatification, but also the resurrection of the body. This was a point but ill understood, and not very clearly revealed, under the Mosaic law; but it was fully revealed under the Gospel, and the doctrine illustrated by the resurrection and ascension of Christ.

**Which God, that cannot lie, promised** We have often seen that the phrase, the foundation of the world, means the Jewish economy, and, before the foundation of the world, the times antecedent to the giving of the law. This is evidently the meaning here. See 2 Timothy 1:9-11.

Supposing the word **αιωνιων** in this verse to signify eternal, says Dr. Macknight, the literal translation of **προ χρονων αιωνιων** would be, before eternal times; but that being a contradiction in terms, our translators, contrary to the propriety of the Greek language, have rendered it before the world began, as Mr. Locke observes on Romans 16:25. The true literal translation is before the secular times, referring us to the Jewish jubilees, by which times were computed among the Hebrews, as among the Gentiles they were computed by generations of men. Hence, Colossians 1:26, The mystery which was kept hid **απο των αιωνων και απο των γενεων**, from the ages and from the generations, signifies the mystery which was kept hid from the Jews and from the Gentiles.

**Verse 3. But hath in due times καιροις ιδιοις** In its own times. See 1 Timothy 2:6; Galatians 4:4; Ephesians 1:10; 2:7. God caused the Gospel to be published in that time in which it could be published with the greatest effect. It is impossible that God should prematurely hasten, or causelessly delay, the accomplishment of any of his works. Jesus was manifested precisely at the time in which that manifestation could best promote the glory of God and the salvation of man.

**Manifested his word τον λογον αυτου** His doctrine — the doctrine of eternal life, by the incarnation, passion, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**Which is committed unto me** That is, to preach it among the Gentiles.

**According to the commandment of God our Savior** This evidently refers to the commission which he had received from Christ. See Acts 9:15: “He is a chosen vessel unto me, to bear my name before the Gentiles.” For, “I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the people and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee; to open their eyes, to turn them

from darkness to light," etc.; Acts 26:16, etc. This is the commandment; and according to it he became the apostle of the Gentiles.

God our Savior. — As the commission was given by Jesus Christ alone,

In every city. — *κατα πολιν*. This seems to intimate that the apostle had gone over the whole of the hecatompolis or hundred cities for which this island was celebrated. Indeed it is not likely that he would leave one in which he had not preached Christ crucified.

**Verse 6.** *If any be blameless* See the notes on 1 Timothy 3:2, etc.

*Having faithful children* Whose family is converted to God. It would have been absurd to employ a man to govern the Church whose children were not in subjection to himself; for it is an apostolic maxim, that he who cannot rule his own house, cannot rule the Church of God; 1 Timothy 3:5.

**Verse 7.** *Not self-willed* *μη αυθαδη*. Not one who is determined to have his own way in every thing; setting up his own judgment to that of all others; expecting all to pay homage to his understanding. Such a governor in the Church of God can do little good, and may do much mischief.

*Not soon angry* *μη οργιλον*. Not a choleric man; one who is irritable; who is apt to be inflamed on every opposition; one who has not proper command over his own temper.

**Verse 8.** *A lover of hospitality* *φιλοξενον*. A lover of strangers. See the note on 1 Timothy 3:2. Instead of *φιλοξενον*, one MS. has *φιλοπτωξον*, a lover of the poor. That minister who neglects the poor, but is frequent in his visits to the rich, knows little of his Master's work, and has little of his Master's spirit.

*A lover of good men* *φιλαγαθον*. A lover of goodness or of good things in general.

*Sober* Prudent in all his conduct. Just in all his dealings. Holy in his heart. Temperate — self-denying and abstemious, in his food and raiment; not too nice on points of honor, nor magisterially rigid in the exercise of his ecclesiastical functions. Qualifications rarely found in spiritual governors.

**Verse 9.** *Holding fast the faithful word* Conscientiously retaining, and zealously maintaining, the true Christian doctrine, *κατα την διδαχην*, according to the instructions, or according to the institutions, form of sound doctrine, or confession of faith, which I have delivered to thee.



***That he may be able by sound doctrine*** If the doctrine be not sound, vain is the profession of it, and vain its influence. It is good to be zealously affected in a good thing; but zeal for what is not of God will do no good to the souls of men, how sincere soever that zeal may be.

***To exhort*** Them to hold the faith, that they may persevere.

***And to convince*** Refute the objections, confound the sophistry, and convert the gainsayers; and thus defend the truth.

**Verse 10. *There are many unruly*** Persons who will not receive the sound doctrine, nor come under wholesome discipline.

***Vain talkers*** Empty boasters of knowledge, rights, and particular privileges; all noise, empty parade, and no work.

***Deceivers*** Of the souls of men by their specious pretensions.

***They of the circumcision*** The Judaizing teachers, who maintained the necessity of circumcision, and of observing the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic law, in order to the perfecting of the Gospel.

**Verse 11. *Whose mouths must be stopped*** Unmask them at once; exhibit them to the people; make manifest their ignorance and hypocrisy; and let them be confounded before the people whom they are endeavoring to seduce.

***Subvert whole houses*** Turn whole Christian families from the faith, attributing to the broad way what belongs only to the strait gate; ministering to disorderly passions, and promising salvation to their proselytes, though not saved from their sins.

**Verse 12. *One of themselves, even a prophet of their own*** This was Epimenides, who was born at Gnossus, in Crete, and was reckoned by many the seventh wise man of Greece, instead of Periander, to whom that honor was by them denied. Many fabulous things are related of this poet, which are not proper to be noticed here. He died about 538 years before the Christian era. When St. Paul calls him a prophet of their own, he only intimates that he was, by the Cretans, reputed a prophet. And, according to Plutarch, (in Solone,) the Cretans paid him divine honors after his death. Diogenes Laertius mentions some of his prophecies: beholding the fort of

Munichia, which guarded the port of Athens, he cried out: “O ignorant men! if they but knew what slaughters this fort shall occasion, they would pull it down with their teeth!” This prophecy was fulfilled several years after, when the king, Antipater, put a garrison in this very fort, to keep the Athenians in subjection. See Diog. Laert., lib. i. p. 73.

Plato, Deuteronomy Legibus, lib. ii., says that, on the Athenians expressing great fear of the Persians, Epimenides encouraged them by saying “that they should not come before ten years, and that they should return after having suffered great disasters.” This prediction was supposed to have been fulfilled in the defeat of the Persians in the battles of Salamis and Marathon.

He predicted to the Lacedemonians and Cretans the captivity to which they should one day be reduced by the Arcadians. This took place under Euricrates, king of Crete, and Archidamus, king of Lacedemon; vide Diog. Laert., lib. i. p. 74, edit. Meibom.

It was in consequence of these prophecies, whether true or false, that his countrymen esteemed him a prophet; that he was termed **ανηρ αθειος**, a divine man, by Plato; and that Cicero, Deuteronomy Divin., lib. i., says he was futura praesciens, et vaticinans per furorem: “He knew future events, and prophesied under a divine influence.” These things are sufficient to justify the epithet of prophet, given him here by St. Paul. It may also be remarked that vates and poeta, prophet and poet, were synonymous terms among the Romans.

***The Cretians are always liars*** The words quoted here by the apostle are, according to St. Jerome, Socrates, Nicephorus, and others, taken from a work of Epimenides, now no longer extant, entitled **περι χρησμων**. Concerning Oracles. The words form a hexameter verse:-

**κρητες αι ψευσαι,  
κακα θηρια, γαστερες αργαι.**

***The Cretans are always liars; destructive wild beasts;  
sluggish gluttons.***

That the Cretans were reputed to be egregious liars, several of the ancients declare; insomuch that **κρητιζειν**, to act like a Cretan, signifies to lie; and

χρησθαι κρητισμῶ, to deceive. The other Greeks reputed them liars, because they said that among them was the sepulchre of Jupiter, who was the highest object of the Greek and Roman worship. By telling this truth, which all others would have to pass for a lie, the Cretans showed that the object of their highest admiration was only a dead man.

**Evil beasts** Ferocious and destructive in their manners.

**Slow bellies**. Addicted to voluptuousness, idleness, and gluttony; sluggish or hoggish men.

**Verse.13. This witness is true.** What Epimenides said of them nearly 600 years before continued still to be true. Their original character had undergone no moral change.

**Rebuke them sharply** ἀποτομῶς· Cuttingly, severely; show no indulgence to persons guilty of such crimes.

**That they may be sound in the faith** That they may receive the incorrupt doctrine, and illustrate it by a holy and useful life.

**Verse 14. Not giving heed to Jewish fables** See on 1 Timothy 1:4; 4:7.

**Commandments of men** The injunctions of the scribes and Pharisees, which they added to the law of God.

**That turn from the truth.** For such persons made the word of God of none effect by their traditions. Sometimes the verb ἀποστρεφομαι signifies to be averse from, slight, or despise. So, here, the persons in question despised the truth, and taught others to do the same.

**Verse 15. Unto the pure all things are pure** This appears to have been spoken in reference to the Jewish distinctions of clean and unclean meats. To the genuine Christian every kind of meat proper for human nourishment is pure, is lawful, and may be used without scruple. This our Lord had long before decided. See on Luke 11:39-41.

**But unto them that are defiled** In their consciences, and unbelieving, ἀπιστοῖς, unfaithful both to offered and received grace, nothing is pure — they have no part in Christ, and the wrath of God abides upon them. Their mind is contaminated with impure and unholy images and ideas, and their conscience is defiled with the guilt of sins already committed against God.

**Verse 16. *They profess that they know God*** He still speaks concerning the unbelieving Jews, the seducing teachers, and those who had been seduced by their bad doctrine. None were so full of pretensions to the knowledge of the true God as the Jews. They would not admit that any other people could have this knowledge; nor did they believe that God ever did or ever would reveal himself to any other people; they supposed that to give the law and the prophets to the Gentiles would be a profanation of the words of God. Hence they became both proud, uncharitable, and intolerant; and in this disposition they continue till the present day.

***But in works they deny him*** Their profession and practice were at continual variance. Full of a pretended faith, while utterly destitute of those works by which a genuine faith is accredited and proved. Dio Cassius represents Caesar as saying of his mutinous soldiers: **ονομα ῥωμαίων εχοντας, εργα δε κελτων δρωντας.** “Having the name of Romans, while they had the manners of the Gauls.” How near are those words to the saying of the apostle!

***Being abominable*** **βδελυκτοι.** This word sometimes refers to unnatural lusts.

***And disobedient*** **απειθεις.** Unpersuadable, unbelieving, and consequently disobedient. Characters remarkably applicable to the Jews through all their generations.

***Unto every good work reprobate.*** **αδοκιμοι.** Adulterate; like bad coin, deficient both in the weight and goodness of the metal, and without the proper sterling stamp; and consequently not current. If they did a good work, they did not do it in the spirit in which it should be performed. They had the name of God’s people; but they were counterfeit. The prophet said; Reprobate silver shall men call them.

1. **THOUGH** the principal part of this chapter, and indeed of the whole epistle, may be found in nearly the same words in the First Epistle to Timothy, yet there are several circumstances here that are not so particularly noted in the other; and every minister of Christ will do well to make himself master of both; they should be carefully registered in his memory, and engraven on his heart.

2. The truth, which is according to godliness, in reference to eternal life, should be carefully regarded. The substantial knowledge of the truth must have faith for its foundation, godliness for its rule, and eternal life for its object and end. He who does not begin well, is never likely to finish fair. He who does not refer every thing to eternity, is never likely to live either well or happily in time.

3. There is one subject in this chapter not sufficiently attended to by those who have the authority to appoint men to ecclesiastical offices; none should be thus appointed who is not able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convince the gainsayers. The powers necessary for this are partly natural, partly gracious, and partly acquired. 1. If a man have not good natural abilities, nothing but a miracle from heaven can make him a proper preacher of the Gospel; and to make a man a Christian minister, who is unqualified for any function of civil life, is sacrilege before God. 2. If the grace of God do not communicate ministerial qualifications, no natural gifts, however splendid, can be of any avail. To be a successful Christian minister, a man must feel the worth of immortal souls in such a way as God only can show it, in order to spend and be spent in the work. He who has never passed through the travail of the soul in the work of regeneration in his own heart, can never make plain the way of salvation to others. 3. He who is employed in the Christian ministry should cultivate his mind in the most diligent manner; he can neither learn nor know too much. If called of God to be a preacher, (and without such a call he had better be a galley slave,) he will be able to bring all his knowledge to the assistance and success of his ministry. If he have human learning, so much the better; if he be accredited, and appointed by those who have authority in the Church, it will be to his advantage; but no human learning, no ecclesiastical appointment, no mode of ordination, whether Popish, Episcopal, Protestant, or Presbyterian, can ever supply the Divine unction, without which he never can convert and build up the souls of men. The piety of the flock must be faint and languishing when it is not animated by the heavenly zeal of the pastor; they must be blind if he be not enlightened; and their faith must be wavering when he can neither encourage nor defend it.

4. In consequence of the appointment of improper persons to the Christian ministry, there has been, not only a decay of piety, but also a

corruption of religion. No man is a true Christian minister who has not grace, gifts, and fruit; if he have the grace of God, it will appear in his holy life and godly conversation. If to this he add genuine abilities, he will give full proof of his ministry; and if he give full proof of his ministry, he will have fruit; the souls of sinners will be converted to God through his preaching, and believers will be built up on their most holy faith. How contemptible must that man appear in the eyes of common sense, who boasts of his clerical education, his sacerdotal order, his legitimate authority to preach, administer the Christian sacraments, etc., while no soul is benefited by his ministry! Such a person may have legal authority to take tithes, but as to an appointment from God, he has none; else his word would be with power, and his preaching the means of salvation to his perishing hearers.

## CHAPTER 2

*Sundry directions to aged men, 1, 2. To aged women, 3. To young women, 4, 5. To young men, 6. Directions to Titus, relative to his own conduct, 7, 8. Directions to servants, 9, 10. What the Gospel of the grace of God teaches all men, 11, 12. The glorious prospect held out by it; salvation from all sin, and final glory, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *But speak thou the things*** This is a conclusion drawn from the preceding chapter: the Judaizing teachers not only taught a false doctrine, but they led an unholy life; Titus was to act directly opposite; he must teach a sacred doctrine, and the things which become it; he must proclaim the truth, and illustrate that truth. The people must not only be well instructed, but they must be holy in their lives. Principle and practice must go hand in hand.

**Verse 2. *That the aged men be sober*** It is very likely that the word aged is to be taken here in its literal sense; that it refers to advanced years, and not to any office in the Church: the whole context seems to require this sense.

For an old man to be a drunkard, a light and trifling person, and a glutton, and not to be sober, grave, and temperate, is not only blamable but monstrous. Seneca has well said: *Luxuriosus adolescens peccat; senex insanit.* "A young man addicted to a life of luxury transgresses; an old man thus addicted runs mad."

**Verse 3. *The aged women likewise*** I believe elderly women are meant, and not deaconesses.

***That they be in behavior εν καταστηματι ιεροπρεπεις*** That they be in their dress, gait, and general deportment, such as their holy calling requires; that they be not like the world, but like the Church, decent without, and adorned with holiness within.

**Not false accusers** μη διαβολους· Not devils; we have had the same expression applied in the same way, 1 Timothy 3:11, where see the note.

**Not given to much wine** η οινω πολλω δεδουλωμενας· Not enslaved by much wine, not habitual drunkards or tipplers; habit is a species of slavery. Both among the Greeks and Romans old women were generally reputed to be fond of much wine; hence the ancient scholiast on Homer, II. vi., speaking of old women, says: χαιρει τω οινω η ηλικια αυτη· At this age they delight in wine; which words Ovid seems to have translated literally: Vinosior aetas haec erat. It is likely, therefore, that it was customary among the elderly women, both Greeks and Romans, to drink much wine, and because it was inconsistent with that moderation, which the Gospel requires, the apostle forbids it: doubtless it was not considered criminal among them, because it was a common practice; and we know that the Greek philosophers and physicians, who denied wine to young persons, judged it to be necessary for the aged. See the note on 1 Timothy 5:23.

**Verse 4. That they may teach the young women to be sober** That it was natural for the young to imitate the old will be readily allowed; it was therefore necessary that the old should be an example of godly living to the young. St. Jerome, taking it for granted that drunkenness and impurity are closely connected, asks this serious question: Quomodo potest docere anus adolescentulas castitatem, cum, si ebrietatem vetulae mulieris adolescentula fuerit imitata, pudica esse non possit? “How can an elderly woman teach young women chastity, when, if the young woman should imitate the drunkenness of the matron, it would be impossible for her to be chaste?”

**To love their husbands** The duties recommended in this and the following verses are so plain as to need no comment; and so absolutely necessary to the character of a wife, that no one deserves the name who does not live in the practice of them.

**Verse 5. Keepers at home** οικουρους· A woman who spends much time in visiting, must neglect her family. The idleness, dirtiness, impudence, and profligacy of the children, will soon show how deeply criminal the mother was in rejecting the apostle’s advice. Instead of οικουρους, keepers of the house, or keepers at home, ACD\*EFG, and several of the Itala, have



οικουργους, workers at home; not only staying in the house and keeping the house, but working in the house. A woman may keep the house very closely, and yet do little in it for the support or comfort of the family.

***That the word of God be not blasphemed.*** The enemies of the Gospel are quick-eyed to spy out imperfections in its professors; and, if they find women professing Christianity living an irregular life, they will not fail to decry the Christian doctrine on this account: “Behold your boasted religion! it professes to reform all things, and its very professors are no better than others! Our heathenism is as good as your Christianity.” These are cutting reproaches; and much they will have to answer for who give cause for these blasphemies.

**Verse 6. *Young men-exhort to be sober-minded.*** Reformation should begin with the old; they have the authority, and they should give the example. The young of both sexes must also give an account of themselves to God; sober-mindedness in young men is a rare qualification, and they who have it not plunge into excesses and irregularities which in general sap the foundation of their constitution, bring on premature old age, and not seldom lead to a fatal end.

**Verse 7. *In all things showing thyself a pattern*** As the apostle had given directions relative to the conduct of old men, Titus 2:2, of old women, Titus 2:3, of young women, Titus 2:4, and of young men, Titus 2:6, the words περι παντα, which we translate in all things, should be rather considered in reference to the above persons, and the behavior required in them: showing thyself a pattern of good works to all these persons — being, in sobriety, gravity, temperance, what thou requirest others to be.

***In doctrine showing uncorruptness*** Mixing nothing with the truth; taking nothing from it; adding nothing to it; and exhibiting it in all its connection, energy, and fullness.

**Verse 8. *Sound speech* λογον υγιη·** Sound or healing doctrine. Human nature is in a state of disease; and the doctrine of the Gospel is calculated to remove the disease, and restore all to perfect health and soundness. All false doctrines leave men under the influence of this spiritual disease; the unadulterated doctrine of the Gospel alone can heal men.

***He that is of the contrary part*** Whether this may refer to the Judaizing teachers in general, or to some one who might, by his false doctrine, have been disturbing the peace of the Churches in Crete, we cannot tell.

***Having no evil thing to say of you.*** Against a person who is sound in his doctrine, and holy in his life, no evil can be justly alleged. He who reports evil of such a person must be confounded when brought to the test. Instead of *περι υμων*, of YOU, *περι ημων*, of US, is the reading of CDEFG, and about forty others; with both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Slavonic, Vulgate, Itala, and several of the primitive fathers. This reading makes a better sense, and is undoubtedly genuine.

**Verse 9. *Exhort servants to be obedient*** The apostle refers to those who were slaves, and the property of their masters; even these are exhorted to be obedient *ιδιοις δεσποταις*, to their own despots, though they had no right over them on the ground of natural justice.

***Please them well in all things*** They were to endeavor to do this in all things, though they could not hope to succeed in every thing.

***Not answering again μη αντιλεγοντας*** Not contradicting or gainsaying. This is no part of a servant's duty; a servant is hired to do his master's work, and this his master has a right to appoint.

**Verse 10. *Not purloining μη νοσφιζομενους*** Neither giving away, privately selling, nor in any way wasting, the master's goods. The word signifies, not only stealing but embezzling another's property; keeping back a part of the price of any commodity sold on the master's account. In Acts 5:2, we translate it, to keep back part of the price; the crime of which Ananias and Sapphira were guilty. It has been remarked that among the heathens this species of fraud was very frequent; and servants were so noted for purloining and embezzling their master's property that *fur*, which signifies a thief, was commonly used to signify a servant; hence that verse in Virgil, Eclog. iii. 16:-

*Quid domini faciant, audent cum talia FURES?*

*“What may not masters do, when servants (thieves) are so bold?”*

On which Servius remarks: Pro SERVO FUREM posuit, furta enim specialiter servorum sunt. Sic Plautus de servo, Homo es trium literarum, i.e. fur. “He puts fur, a thief, to signify a servant, because servants are commonly thieves. Thus Plautus, speaking of a servant, says: Thou art a man of three letters, i.e. f-u-r, a thief.” And Terence denominates a number of servants, munitulus furum, “a bundle of thieves.” Eun. 4, 7, 6. The place in Plautus to which Servius refers is in Aulul., act ii. scene iv. in fine:—

— *Tun’, trium literarum homo, Me vituperas? F-u-r, etiam fur trifurcifer.*

“*Dost thou blame me, thou man of three letters? Thou art a thief, and the most notorious of all knaves.*”

It was necessary, therefore, that the apostle should be so very particular in his directions to servants, as they were in general thieves almost by profession.

**Verse 11.** *The grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men* επεφανη γαρ η ξαρις του θεου η σωτηριος πασιν ανθρωποις. Literally translated, the words stand thus: For the grace of God, that which saves, hath shone forth upon all men. Or, as it is expressed in the margin of our authorized version: The grace of God, that bringeth salvation to all men, hath appeared. As God’s grace signifies God’s favor, any benefit received from him may be termed God’s grace. In this place, and in Colossians 1:6, the Gospel, which points out God’s infinite mercy to the world, is termed the grace of God; for it is not only a favor of infinite worth in itself, but it announces that greatest gift of God to man, the incarnation and atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. Now it cannot be said, except in a very refined and spiritual sense, that this Gospel had then appeared to all men; but it may be well said that it bringeth salvation to all men; this is its design; and it was to taste death for every man that its author came into the world. There is a beauty and energy in the word επεφανη, hath shined out, that is rarely noted; it seems to be a metaphor taken from the sun. As by his rising in the east and shining out, he enlightens, successively, the whole world; so the Lord Jesus, who is called the Sun of righteousness, Malachi 4:2, arises on the whole human race with healing in his wings. And as the light and heat of the sun are denied to no nation nor individual, so the grace of the Lord Jesus, this also shines out upon all; and God designs that all mankind shall be as equally benefited by

it in reference to their souls, as they are in respect to their bodies by the sun that shines in the firmament of heaven. But as all the parts of the earth are not immediately illuminated, but come into the solar light successively, not only in consequence of the earth's diurnal revolution round its own axis, but in consequence of its annual revolution round its whole orbit; so this Sun of righteousness, who has shined out, is bringing every part of the habitable globe into his Divine light; that light is shining more and more to the perfect day; so that gradually and successively he is enlightening every nation, and every man; and, when his great year is filled up, every nation of the earth shall be brought into the light and heat of this unspotted, uneclipsed, and eternal Sun of righteousness and truth. Wherever the Gospel comes, it brings salvation — it offers deliverance from all sin to every soul that hears or reads it. As freely as the sun dispenses his genial

light being created, and in a certain measure dispersed, at least three whole days before the sun was formed; (for his creation was a part of the fourth day's work;) so, previously to the incarnation of Christ, there was spiritual light in the world; for he diffused his beams while his orb was yet unseen. And even now, where by the preaching of his Gospel he is not yet manifested, he is that true light which enlightens every man coming into the world; so that the moral world is no more left to absolute darkness, where the Gospel is not yet preached, than the earth was the four days which preceded the creation of the sun, or those parts of the world are where the Gospel has not yet been preached. The great year is rolling on, and all the parts of the earth are coming successively, and now rapidly, into the light. The vast revolution seems to be nearly completed, and the whole world is about to be filled with the light and glory of God. A heathen poet, apparently under the inspiration of God (for God has his witnesses every where) speaks of those glorious times in words and numbers which nothing but the Spirit of God can equal. It gratifies myself to refer to them, and it will gratify my reader to find them entered here:-

*Ultima Cumaevi venit jam carminis aetas:  
Magnus ab integro saeculorum nascitur ordo.—  
Talia saecla suis dixerunt, currite, fuis  
Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.—  
Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,  
Terrasque, tractusque maris, coelumque profundum:  
Aspice, venturo laetentur ut omnia saeclo!*

*The last great age, foretold by sacred rhymes,  
Renews its finish'd course; Saturnian times  
Roll round again; and mighty years, begun  
From their first orb, in radiant circles run.  
Majestic months, with swift but steady pace,  
Set out with him on their appointed race.—  
The Fates, when they their happy web have spun,  
Shall bless the clew, and bid it smoothly run.—  
See labouring nature calls thee to sustain  
The nodding frame of heaven and earth and main;  
See, to their base restored, earth, seas, and air,  
And joyful ages from behind appear In crowding ranks.*

DRYDEN.

Hasten the time, thou God of ages! Even so. Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

**Verse 12. *Teaching us, that, denying***, etc. **παιδευουσα**. Instructing us as children are instructed. Christ is the great teacher; and men, in order to learn, must become his disciples-must put themselves under his tuition, and learn of him.

***Denying ungodliness*** **ασεβειαν**. All things contrary to God; whatever would lead us to doubt his being, deny any of his essential attributes; his providence or government of the world, and his influence on the souls of men. Every thing, also, which is opposed to his true worship; theoretical and practical atheism, deism, and irreligion in general.

***Worldly lusts*** Such desires, affections, and appetites, as men are governed by who have their portion in this life, and live without God in the world. Gluttony, drunkenness, lasciviousness, anger, malice, and revenge; together with the immoderate love of riches, power, and fame.

***We should live soberly*** Having every temper, appetite, and desire, under the government of reason, and reason itself under the government of the Spirit of God.

***Righteously*** Rendering to every man his due, injuring no person in his body, mind, reputation, or property; doing unto all as we would they should do to us; and filling up the duties of the particular stations in which it has pleased God to fix us, committing no sin, omitting no duty.

***And godly*** **ευσεβως**. Just the reverse of what is implied in ungodliness. See above.

***In this present world*** Not supposing that any thing will be purified in the world to come that is not cleansed in this. The three words above evidently include our duty to God, to our neighbor, and to ourselves. 1. We are to live soberly in respect to ourselves. 2. Righteously in respect to our neighbor. And 3. Godly, or piously, in respect to our Maker.

**Verse 13. *Looking for that blessed hope*** Expecting the grand object of our hope, eternal life. See Titus 1:2. This is what the Gospel teaches us to expect, and what the grace of God prepares the human heart for. This is called a blessed hope; those who have it are happy in the sure prospect of that glory which shall be revealed.

*The glorious appearing* και επιφανειαν της δοξης του μεγαλου θεου και σωτηρος ημων ιησου χριστου. This clause, literally translated, is as follows: And the appearing of the glory of the great God, even our Savior Jesus Christ. On this passage I must refer the reader to the ESSAY ON THE GREEK ARTICLE, by H. S. Boyd, Esq., appended to the notes on the Epistle to the Ephesians, where both the structure and doctrine of this passage are explained at large.

Some think that the blessed hope and glorious appearing mean the same thing; but I do not think so. The blessed hope refers simply to eternal glorification in general; the glorious appearing, to the resurrection of the body; for when Christ appears he will change this vile body, and make it like unto his GLORIOUS BODY, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself. See Philippians 3:20, 21.

**Verse 14. *Who gave himself for us*** Who gave his own life as a ransom price to redeem ours. This is evidently what is meant, as the words λυτρωσεται and λαον περιουσιον imply. The verb λυτρωω signifies to redeem or ransom by paying a price, as I have often had occasion to observe; and περιουσιος signifies such a peculiar property as a man has in what he has purchased with his own money. Jesus gave his life for the world, and thus has purchased men unto himself; and, having purchased the slaves from their thralldom, he is represented as stripping them of their sordid vestments, cleansing and purifying them unto himself that they may become his own servants, and bringing them out of their dishonorable and oppressive servitude, in which they had no proper motive to diligence and could have no affection for the despot under whose authority they were employed. Thus redeemed, they now become his willing servants, and are zealous of good works — affectionately attached to that noble employment which is assigned to them by that Master whom it is an inexpressible honor to serve. This seems to be the allusion in the above verse.

**Verse 15. *These things speak*** That is, teach; for λαλει, speak, has the same meaning here as διδασκε, teach, which, as being synonymous, is actually the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus.

*And exhort παρακαλει* Repeat them again and again, and urge them on their attention and consciences.

**And rebuke** ελεγχε· Demonstrate the importance, utility, and necessity of them; and show them that God requires their obedience.

**With all authority.** μετα πασης επιταγης· With all that authority with which thy office invests thee, and which thou hast received from God.

**Let no man despise thee.** That is: Act so that no person shall have any cause to despise thee, either for thy work, or the manner and spirit in which thou dost perform it.

1. FEW portions of the New Testament excel this chapter. It may well form the creed, system of ethics, and text book of every Christian preacher. Does any man inquire what is the duty of a Gospel minister! Send him to the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus for a complete answer. There he will find what he is to believe, what he is to practice, and what he is to preach. Even his congregation is parcelled out to him. The old and the young of both sexes, and those who are in their employment, are considered to be the objects of his ministry; and a plan of teaching, in reference to those different descriptions of society, is laid down before him. He finds here the doctrine which he is to preach to them, the duties which he is required to inculcate, the motives by which his exhortations are to be strengthened, and the end which both he and his people should have invariably in view.

2. The Godhead of Jesus Christ is here laid down in a most solemn and explicit manner: He is the great God our Savior, ο μεγας θεος και σωτηρ· human language can go no higher, and the expressions are such, and are so placed, that it is impossible either to misunderstand or to misapply them. HE who is the great God, higher than the highest, is our Savior; he who is our Savior is the great God; but Jesus Christ is our Savior, and Jesus Christ is here stated to be the great God.

3. The extent of human redemption is here also pointed out. The saving grace of this great God hath shone out upon every man; none has been passed by, none left uninfluenced, none without the first offer of life eternal, and a sufficiency of grace to qualify him for the state.

4. The operation of Divine grace in preparing the soul for glory is next referred to. It cleanses us from all unrighteousness, it purifies us unto God, and makes us fervent and abundant in good works. This system is worthy



of God, and is properly suited to the state and necessities of man. These are truths which must be preached, which are not preached enough, and which cannot be preached too often. Awake, pastors! and do not the work of the Lord carelessly. Awake, people! and believe to the saving of your souls. How shall he who is styled a minister of the Gospel, and who neither knows, feels, nor heartily inculcates these things, give an account in the great day, of himself, his calling, and his flock, to God? And when this Gospel is preached faithfully and zealously, how shall the people escape who neglect so great a salvation? Neglect, in such a case, is the highest contempt which man can offer to his Maker. Surely such conduct must expect judgment without mixture of mercy. Reader, lay this to heart.

## CHAPTER 3

*The necessity of obedience to the civil powers, and of meek and gentle deportment towards all men, is to be diligently enforced, 1, 2. The wretched state of man, previously to the advent of Christ, 3. The wonderful change which the grace of God makes, and the means which it uses to bring men to glory, 4-7. The necessity of a holy life, and of avoiding things which produce strifes and contentions, and are unprofitable and vain, 8, 9. How to deal with those who are heretics, 10, 11. St. Paul directs Titus to meet him at Nicopolis, and to bring Zenas and Apollos with him, 12; 13. Concluding directions and salutations, 14, 15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1.** *Put them in mind to be subject to principalities*, etc. By principalities, **αρχαις**, we are to understand the Roman emperors, or the supreme civil powers in any place.

By powers, **εξουσιας**, we are to understand the deputies of the emperors, such as proconsuls, etc., and all such as are in authority-under the supreme powers wherever we dwell. See the doctrine of obedience to the civil powers discussed at large in the notes on Romans 13:1-7.

This doctrine of obedience to the civil powers was highly necessary for the Cretans, who were reputed a people exceedingly jealous of their civil privileges, and ready to run into a state of insurrection when they suspected any attempt on the part of their rulers to infringe their liberties. Suidas, under the word **ανεσειον**, they stirred up, gives the following fragment: **οι δε κρητες, φοβουμενοι μη τι τιμωριας τυχωσιν, ανεσειον τα πληθη, παρακαλουντες την εξ αιωνος παραδεδομενην ελευθεριαν διαφυλαττειν.** “But the Cretans, fearing lest they should be punished, stirred up the populace, exhorting them that they should carefully preserve that liberty which they had received from their ancestors.” What part of the history of Crete this refers to I cannot tell; the words stand thus insulated in Suidas, without introduction or

connection. To be jealous of our civil rights and privileges, and most strenuously to preserve them, is highly praiseworthy; but to raise a public tumult to avoid merited chastisement, under pretense that our civil privileges are in danger, is not the part of patriots but insurgents. For such advice as that given here the known character of the Cretans is a sufficient reason: “They were ever liars, ferocious wild beasts, and sluggish gluttons.” Such persons would feel little disposition to submit to the wholesome restraints of law.

**Verse 2. *To speak evil of no man* μηδενά βλασφημειν·** To blaspheme no person, to reproach none, to speak nothing to any man’s injury; but, on the contrary, bearing reproach and contumely with patience and meekness.

**Verse 3. *For we ourselves*** All of us, whether Jews or Gentiles, were, before our conversion to Christ, foolish, disobedient, and deceived. There is no doubt that the apostle felt he could include himself in the above list, previously to his conversion. The manner in which he persecuted the Christians, to whose charge he could not lay one moral evil, is a sufficient proof that, though he walked according to the letter of the law, as to its ordinances and ceremonies, blameless, yet his heart was in a state of great estrangement from God, from justice, holiness, mercy, and compassion.

***Foolish* ανοητοι·** Without understanding — ignorant of God, his nature, his providence, and his grace.

***Disobedient* απειθεις·** Unpersuaded, unbelieving, obstinate, and disobedient.

***Deceived* πλανωμενοι·** Erring-wandering from the right way in consequence of our ignorance, not knowing the right way; and, in consequence of our unbelief and obstinacy, not choosing to know it. It is a true saying, “There are none so blind as those who will not see.” Such persons are proof against conviction, they will not be convinced either by God or man.

***Serving divers lusts and pleasures* δουλευοντες·** Being in a state of continual thralldom; not served or gratified by our lusts and pleasures, but living, as their slaves, a life of misery and wretchedness.

Divers lusts — επιθυμιας· Strong and irregular appetites of every kind.

Pleasures — ἡδοναίς· Sensual pleasures. Persons intent only on the gratification of sense, living like the brutes, having no rational or spiritual object worthy the pursuit of an immortal being.

**Living in malice and envy** ἐν κακία καὶ φθόνῳ διαγοντες· Spending our life in wickedness and envy — not bearing to see the prosperity of others, because we feel ourselves continually wretched.

**Hateful** στυγῆτοι· Abominable; hateful as hell. The word comes from στυξ, Styx, the infernal river by which the gods were wont to swear; and he who (according to the mythology of the heathens) violated this oath, was expelled from the assembly of the gods, and was deprived of his nectar and ambrosia for a year; hence the river was hateful to them beyond all things, and the verb στυγεω, formed from this, signifies to shiver with horror.

It maybe taken actively, says Leigh, as it is read, hateful; or else passively, and so may be read hated, that is, justly execrable and odious unto others, both God and man.

**Hating one another.** μισουντες ἀλλήλους· This word is less expressive than the preceding: there was no brotherly love, consequently no kind offices; they hated each other, and self-interest alone could induce them to keep up civil society. This is the true state of all unregenerate men. The words which the apostle uses in this place give a finished picture of the carnal state of man; and they are not true merely of the Cretans and Jews that then were, but of all mankind in every age and country; they express the wretched state of fallen man.

Some of the Greek moralists expressed a dissolute and sensual life by nearly the same expressions as those employed by the apostle. Plutarch, in Precept. Conjug., says: σωματος ἐστὶ κηδεσθαι, μὴ δουλευοντα ταις ἡδοναίς αὐτου, καὶ ταις ἐπιθυμιαίς· “We must take care of the body, that we may not be enslaved by its lusts and pleasures.” And Josephus, speaking of Cleopatra, Antiq., lib. xv. cap. 4, says: γυναικα πολυτελη, καὶ δουλευουσαν ταις ἐπιθυμιαίς· “She was an expensive woman, enslaved to lusts.”

**Verse 4. *But after that the kindness and love of God*** By *χρηστοτης* we may understand the essential goodness of the Divine nature; that which is the spring whence all kindness, mercy, and beneficence proceed.

Love toward man — *φιλανθρωπια*. Philanthropy. It is to be regretted that this attribute of the Divine nature, as it stands in relation to man, should have been entirely lost by a paraphractical translation.

Philanthropy is a character which God gives here to himself; while human nature exists, this must be a character of the Divine nature. God loves man; he delighted in the idea when formed in his own infinite mind, he formed man according to that idea, and rejoiced in the work of his hands; when man fell, the same love induced him to devise his redemption, and God the Savior flows from God the Philanthropist. Where love is it will be active, and will show itself. So the philanthropy of God appeared, *επεφανη*, it shone out, in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and in his giving his life for the life of the world.

**Verse 5. *Not by works of righteousness*** Those who were foolish, disobedient, and deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, could not possibly have works of righteousness to plead; therefore, if saved at all, they must be saved by mercy. See the note on Ephesians 2:8; and see a discourse entitled, *Salvation by Faith proved*, 8vo., 1816, in which I have examined every system invented by man for his restoration to the Divine favor and image: and have demonstrated, by mere reason, their utter insufficiency to answer the end for which they have been invented; and have proved that the doctrine of salvation by faith is the only rational way of salvation.

***By the washing of regeneration*** *δια λουτρου παλιγγενεσιας*

Undoubtedly the apostle here means baptism, the rite by which persons were admitted into the Church, and the visible sign of the cleansing, purifying influences of the Holy Spirit, which the apostle immediately subjoins. Baptism is only a sign, and therefore should never be separated from the thing signified; but it is a rite commanded by God himself, and therefore the thing signified should never be expected without it.

By the renewing of the Holy Ghost we are to understand, not only the profession of being bound to live a new life, but the grace that renews the heart, and enables us thus to live; so the renewing influences are here

intended. Baptism changes nothing; the grace signified by it cleanses and purifies. They who think baptism to be regeneration, neither know the Scriptures nor the power of God; therefore they do greatly err.

**Verse 6. *Which he shed on us abundantly*** οὐ ἐξέχεεν· Which he poured out on us, as the water was poured out on them in baptism, to which there is here a manifest allusion; but as this was sometimes only sprinkled on the person, the heavenly gift was poured out, not in drops, but **πλουσιως**, richly, in great abundance.

***Through Jesus Christ*** Baptism is nothing in itself; and there had been no outpouring of the Holy Spirit, had there been no saving and atoning Christ. Through him alone all good comes to the souls of men.

**Verse 7. *That, being justified by his grace*** Being freed from sin; for the term justification is to be taken here as implying the whole work of the grace of Christ on the heart, in order to its preparation for eternal glory.

***Should be made heirs*** The Gospel not only gave them the hope of an endless state of glory for their souls, but also of the resurrection and final glorification of their bodies; and they who were children of God were to be made heirs of his glory. See the note on Galatians 4:6, 7.

**Verse 8. *This is a faithful saying*** πιστος ο λογος· This is the true doctrine; the doctrine that cannot fail.

***And these things I will*** και περι τουτων βουλομαι δε διαβεβαιουσθαι· And I will, or desire, thee to maintain earnestly what concerns these points. The things to which the apostle refers are those of which he had just been writing, and may be thus summed up:—

1. The ruined state of man, both in soul and body.
2. The infinite goodness of God which devised his salvation.
3. The manifestation of this goodness, by the incarnation of Jesus Christ.
4. The justification which they who believed received through his blood.
5. The mission of the Holy Spirit, and the purification of the heart by his influence.
6. The hope of the resurrection of the body, and the final glorification of both it and the soul through all eternity.
7. The necessity of obedience to the will of God, and of walking worthy of the vocation wherewith they had been called.
8. And all these points he wills him to press continually on the attention of

believers; and to keep constantly in view, that all good comes from God's infinite kindness, by and through Christ Jesus.

***They which have believed in God*** All Christians; for who can maintain good works but those who have the principle from which good works flow, for without faith it is impossible to please God.

***These things are good and profitable*** They are good in themselves, and calculated to promote the well-being of men.

**Verse 9. *Avoid foolish questions, and genealogies*** In these the Jews particularly delighted; they abounded in the most frivolous questions; and, as they had little piety themselves, they were solicitous to show that they had descended from godly ancestors.

Of their frivolous questions, and the answers given to them by the wisest and most reputable of their rabbins, the following is a specimen:—

Rabbi Hillel was asked: Why have the Babylonians round heads? To which he answered: This is a difficult question, but I will tell the reason: Their heads are round because they have but little wit.

Q. Why are the eyes of the Tarmudians so soft? A. Because they inhabit a sandy country.

Q. Why have the Africans broad feet? A. Because they inhabit a marshy country. See more in Schoettgen.

But ridiculous and trifling as these are, they are little in comparison to those solemnly proposed and most gravely answered by those who are called the schoolmen. Here is a specimen, which I leave the reader to translate:—

Utrum essent excrementa in Paradiso? Utrum sancti resurgent cum intestinis? Utrum, si deipara fuisset vir, potuisset esse naturalis parens Christi?

These, with many thousands of others, of equal use to religion and common sense, may be found in their writings. See the Summa of Thomas Aquinas, passim. Might not the Spirit have these religious triflers in view, rather than the less ridiculous Jews? See the notes on 1 Timothy 1:4; 2 Timothy 2:23.

**Contentions, and strivings about the law** Of legal contentions, and different and conflicting decisions about the meaning of particular rites and ceremonies, the Talmud is full.

**Verse 10. *A man that is a heretic*** Generally defined, one that is obstinately attached to an opinion contrary to the peace and comfort of society, and will neither submit to Scripture nor reason. Here it means a person who maintains Judaism in opposition to Christianity, or who insists on the necessity of circumcision, etc., in order to be saved. This is obviously the meaning of the word heretic in the only place in which it occurs in the sacred writings.

***After the first and second admonition, reject*** Labour to convince him of his error; but if he will not receive instruction, if he have shut his heart against conviction, then—burn him alive? No: even if demonstrably a heretic in any one sense of that word, and a disturber of the peace of the Church, God gives no man any other authority over him but to shun him, **παραιτου**. Do him no harm in body, soul, character, or substance; hold no communion with him; but leave him to God. See the notes on Acts 5:17; 24:14, where the word heresy is particularly explained.

**Verse 11. *Is subverted*** Is turned out of the way in which he may be saved, and consequently sinneth — enters into that way that leads to destruction.

***Being condemned of himself.*** This refers to the Judaizing teacher, who maintained his party and opinions for filthy lucre's sake. He was conscious of his own insincerity; and that he proclaimed not his system from a conscientious love of truth, but from a desire to get his livelihood. Were the Church in all countries, whether established by law or unestablished, strictly scrutinized, multitudes of heretics of this kind would be found. And perhaps this is the only bad sense in which the word should be understood.

**Verse 12. *When I shall send Artemas-or Tychicus*** These were either deacons or presbyters, which the apostle intended to send to Crete, to supply the place of Titus. Who Artemas was we know not; he is not mentioned in any other place in the New Testament. Tychicus was a native of Asia, as we learn from Acts 20:4, where see the note.



***Be diligent to come unto me to Nicopolis*** Nicopolis was a city of Epirus, on the gulf of Ambracia, near to Actium, which Augustus built in commemoration of his victory over Mark Antony. There was another Nicopolis in Thrace, at the entrance of Macedonia, on the river Nessus; but the former is supposed to be the place here intended.

***For I have determined there to winter.*** Hence the apostle was at liberty, seeing his spending the winter at this or at any other practicable place depended on his own determination. It was probably now pretty late in the autumn, and the apostle was now drawing near to Nicopolis; for he certainly was not yet arrived, else he would not have said, I have determined **ἐκεῖ**, THERE, to winter.

**Verse 13. *Bring Zenas the lawyer*** This person is only mentioned in this place; whether he was a Jewish, Roman, or Greek lawyer, we cannot tell.

***And Apollos*** Of this person we have some valuable particulars in Acts 18:24; 1 Corinthians 1:12; 3:5, 6; 4:6. Either St. Paul had left these at Crete when he visited that island, or he had heard that, in their evangelical itinerancy, they were about to pass through it.

***On their journey diligently*** Afford them the means to defray their expenses. The Churches through which these evangelists passed, bore their expenses from one to the other. See 3 John 1:6.

**Verse 14. *And let others also learn to maintain good works*** There is something very remarkable in this expression. The words **καλων εργαων προιστασθαι**, which we translate to maintain good works, occur also in Titus 3:8; and some think they mean, to provide for our own, and the necessities of others, by working at some honest occupation; and that this was necessary to be taught to the Cretans, let OURS also learn, etc., who were naturally and practically idle gluttons. Kypke observed that the words mean, 1. To be employed in good works. 2. To defend good works, and to recommend the performance of them. 3. To promote and forward good works; to be always first in them.

***For necessary uses*** That they may be able at all times to help the Church of God, and those that are in want.

***That they be not unfruitful.*** As they must be if they indulge themselves in their idle, slothful disposition.

**Verse 15. *All that are with me*** He means his companions in the ministry.

***Salute thee.*** Wish thee well, and desire to be affectionately remembered to thee.

***Greet them that love us in the faith,*** All that love us for Christ's sake, and all that are genuine Christians.

***Grace be with you*** May the Divine favor be your portion for ever.

Some MSS. read, The grace of the Lord be with you all; others, The grace of God be with you all; and one, Grace be with THY spirit, as if the greeting was sent to Titus only, whereas the others send it to the whole Church at Crete.

***Amen.*** This is wanting in ACD, and some others.

The subscriptions are, as usual, various. Those of the VERSIONS are the following:—

The Epistle to Titus was written from Nicopolis; and sent by the hands of Zena and Apollo. — SYRIAC.

To the man Titus. — AETHIOPIC.

The end of the epistle: it was written from Nicopolis. Incessant and eternal praise be to the God of glory. Amen. — ARABIC.

Written in Nicopolis, and sent by Artemas, his disciple. — COPTIC.

The Epistle to Titus is ended, who was the first bishop of the Church of the Cretans: and it was written from Nicopolis of MACEDONIA. — PHILOXENIAN SYRIAC.

There is no subscription in the VULGATE.

The MANUSCRIPTS are also various.

To Titus. — C, and Clarom.

That to Titus is completed: that to Philemon begins. — DEFG.

To Titus, written from Nicopolis. — A.

To Titus, written from Nicopolis of Macedonia. — of the Macedonians.  
— From Nicopolis, which is a province of Macedonia.

Paul the apostle's Epistle to Titus.

To Titus, ordained the first bishop of the Church of the Cretans: written from Nicopolis of Macedonia. — Common Greek Text.

To Titus, archbishop of Crete. — One of the Vienna MSS., written A. D. 1331.

THERE is not one of these subscriptions of any authority, and some of them are plainly ridiculous. We do not know that Titus was what we term bishop, much less that he was ordained bishop of Crete, as appointed to a particular see; and still less that he was the first bishop there. As to his being archbishop, that is the fiction of a time of deep darkness. That the epistle was written from some place near to Nicopolis, of Epirus, is very probable. That it was not written at Nicopolis is evident; and that this was not Nicopolis of Macedonia is also very probable. See the preface to this epistle for farther information on this point. And see a treatise by old Mr. Prynne entitled, *The unbishoping of Timothy and Titus*, 4to. Lond. 1636 and 1660, where, among many crooked things, there are some just observations.

## PREFACE

TO

**THE EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO

**PHILEMON**

It may be thought strange that a short letter, written entirely on a private subject, without reference to the proof or defense of any doctrine of the Gospel, should, by the general consent of the Church of God, from the highest Christian antiquity, have been received into the sacred canon, not only as a genuine production of St. Paul, but as a piece designed by the Holy Spirit for the edification of the Church. However, such is the fact; and we may add, that this very piece was held so sacred that even the ancient heretics did not attempt to impugn its authenticity or corrupt its matter, while making dangerously free with the four gospels, and all the other epistles!

Philemon, the person to whom it is addressed, was undoubtedly, at the time in which this epistle was sent, an inhabitant of Colosse, (concerning which city, see the preface to the Epistle to the Colossians,) and was probably a Colossian by birth, though some suppose that he was of Ephesus. It is evident, from Philemon 1:19 of this epistle, that he was converted to the Christian faith by St. Paul; this is agreed on all hands; but as some suppose that the apostle had not visited Colosse previously to the writing of this epistle, they think it probable that he might have met with him at Ephesus, or in some other part of Asia Minor, where he formed an acquaintance with him, and became the means of his conversion. But there is no need for this supposition, as it is most probable that the apostle had not only visited Colosse prior to this, but that the Gospel was planted in that city, as in all other parts of Phrygia, by himself. See the preface to the Colossians, and the note on Colossians 2:1.

That Philemon was a person of some consideration in his own city, and in the Church in that place, is very evident from this epistle. He had a Church in his house, Philemon 1:2, and was so opulent as to be extensive in works of charity, and in entertaining those Christians who from different quarters had occasion to visit Colosse. See Philemon 1:5-7.

Whether he had any office in the Church is not clear: some think he was a bishop, others an elder or deacon; but of this there is no evidence. He was probably no more than a private member, whose house, hand, and property were consecrated to God, his Church, and the poor. He who, by the good providence of God, has property and influence thus to employ, and a heart to do it, need not envy the state of the highest ecclesiastic in the Church of Christ. Both the heart and the means to do secular good are possessed by few, whereas multitudes are found willing both to teach in and govern the Church.

The occasion of writing this letter was the following: Onesimus, a slave, had on some pretense or other run away from his master Philemon, and had come to Rome, where St. Paul was at that time in prison, though not in close confinement, for he dwelt in his own hired house, in which he assiduously preached the Gospel, being guarded only by one soldier. See Acts 28:16, 23.

It appears that Onesimus sought out Paul, whose public preaching, both to Jews and Gentiles, had rendered him famous in the city; and it is very likely that he was led to visit the apostle from having formerly seen him at his master's house in Colosse, and the word of life, preached by the apostle, became the means of his conversion. Being thus brought back to God, he became affectionately attached to his spiritual father, and served him zealously as his son in the Gospel. Onesimus, being thus brought to the acknowledgment of the truth which is according to godliness, gave the apostle a full account of his elopement from his master, and no doubt intimated his wish to return and repair the breach which he had made. Though he was now both dear and necessary to St. Paul, yet, as justice required that reparation should be made, he resolved to send him back; and to remove all suspicion from the mind of Philemon, and to reconcile him to his once unfaithful servant, he wrote the following letter, in which, as Dr. Macknight expresses it, "with the greatest softness of expression, warmth

of affection, and delicacy of address, he not only interceded for Onesimus's pardon, but urged Philemon to esteem him, and put confidence in him as a sincere Christian; and because restitution, by repairing the injury that had been done, restores the person who did it to the character he had lost, the apostle, to enable Onesimus to appear in Philemon's family with some degree of reputation, bound himself in this epistle, by his handwriting, Philemon 1:18, 19, not only to repay all that Onesimus owed to Philemon, but to make full reparation also for whatever injury he had done to him by running away."

It is generally thought that Onesimus had robbed his master; but there is certainly nothing in the epistle from which this can be legitimately inferred; the words, "If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee ought, put that on mine account," Philemon 1:18, certainly do not prove it; they only state a possible case, that he might have wronged his master, or have been under some pecuniary obligation to him; and the apostle, by appearing to assume this, greatly strengthened his own argument, and met the last objection which Philemon could be supposed capable of making. There is neither justice nor piety in making things worse than they appear to be, or in drawing the most unfavourable conclusions from premises which, without constraint, will afford others more consonant to the spirit of charity.

That this epistle was written about the same time with those to the Philippians and Colossians is proved by several coincidences. "As the letter to Philemon and that to the Colossians were written," says Dr. Paley, "at the same time, and sent by the same messenger, the one to a particular inhabitant, the other to the Church of Colosse, it may be expected that the same or nearly the same persons would be about St. Paul, and join with him, as was the practice, in the salutations of the epistle. Accordingly we find the names of Aristarchus, Marcus, Epaphras, Luke, and Demas, in both epistles. Timothy, who is joined with St. Paul in the superscription of the Epistle to the Colossians, is joined with him in this. Tychicus did not salute Philemon because he accompanied the epistle to Colosse, and would undoubtedly there see him." It will not be forgotten that Onesimus, the bearer of this epistle, was one of the bearers of that sent to the Colossians, Colossians 4:9; that when the apostle wrote that he was in bonds, Colossians 4:3, 18, which was his case also when he wrote this; (see Philemon 1:1, 10, 13, 23;) from which, and various other

circumstances, we may conclude that they were written about the same time, viz. the ninth year of Nero, A. D. 62. Other particulars relative to this epistle will be pointed out in the course of the notes, and particularly the uses which the Church of God and the private Christian may derive from it.

**THE**

**EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO**

**PHILEMON.**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, 5570.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5563.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5554.
- Year of the Julian period, 4773.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4066.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4290.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3822.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4421.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2410.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3164.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1002.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 809.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 2.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 809.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 813.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 814.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 815.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 374.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 110.
- Year of the Julian era, 107.



- Year of the Spanish era, 100.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 66.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 62.
- Year of Albinus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 13.
- Year of Domitus Corbulo, governor of Syria, 3.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews, 3.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 63.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 6; or the first after the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 3, or the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 15.
- Dominical Letter, it being the second after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, C.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the IVth of the ides of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the tenth of April, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the IIIId of the ides of April, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 11th of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 25.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 2.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month

## PHILEMON

*Paul's salutation to Philemon, and the Church at his house, 1-3. He extols his faith, love, and Christian charity, 4-7. Entreats forgiveness for his servant Onesimus, 8-14. Urges motives to induce Philemon to forgive him, 15-17. Promises to repair any wrong he had done to his master, 18, 19. Expresses his confidence that Philemon will comply with his request, 20, 21. Directs Philemon to prepare him a lodging, 22. Salutations and apostolical benediction, 23-25.*

## NOTES ON PHILEMON.

**Verse 1. Paul, a prisoner of Jesus Christ** It has already been noted, in the preface, that Paul was a prisoner at Rome when he wrote this epistle, and those to the Colossians and Philippians. But some think that the term prisoner does not sufficiently point out the apostle's state, and that the original word **δεσμιος** should be translated bound with a chain: this is certainly its meaning; and it shows us in some measure his circumstances—one arm was bound with a chain to the arm of the soldier to whose custody he had been delivered.

It has also been remarked that Paul does not call himself an apostle here, because the letter was a letter of friendship, and on private concerns. But the MSS. are not entirely agreed on this subject. Two MSS. have **δουλος**, a servant; the Codex Claromontanus and the Codex Sangermanensis, both in the Greek and Latin, have **αποστολος**, apostle; and Cassiodorus has **αποστολος δεσμιος**, Paul, an imprisoned apostle of Jesus Christ. They, however, generally agree in the omission of the word **αποστολος**.

**Unto Philemon our dearly beloved** There is a peculiarity in the use of proper names in this epistle which is not found in any other part of St. Paul's writings. The names to which we refer are Philemon, Apphia, Archippus, and Onesimus.

PHILEMON, **φιλημων**. Affectionate or beloved, from **φιλημα**, a kiss; this led the apostle to say: To Philemon our DEARLY BELOVED.

**Verse 2. APPHIA. απφια**. Under the word **αφφα** Suidas says: **αδελφης και αδελφου υπακορισμα**: Apphia is the affectionate address of a

brother or sister; or the diminutive of a brother and sister, used to express kindness and affection. Hence the apostle, referring to the meaning of the word, says: **και αφια τη αδελφη αγαπητη**. And to Apphia the beloved sister. Though **αδελωη**, sister, be not in our common text, it is found in AD\*EFG, several others, the Itala, Vulgate, Slavonic, etc.; and is undoubtedly genuine.

ARCHIPPUS, **αρχιπιος**. The ruler or master of the horse; from **αρχων**, a chief, and **ιππος**, a horse. HEROES of old were, both among the Greeks and Trojans, celebrated for their skill in managing and taming the horse, and employing him in war; this frequently occurs in Homer. The import of the name of Archippus might suggest this idea to the apostle's mind, and lead him to say: Archippus our FELLOW SOLDIER.

Suidas mentions a person of this name, who was once victor at the games, in the ninety-first Olympiad.

There was one of the pupils of Pythagoras of this name; and I introduce him here for the sake of a quotation from St. Jerome, (Apol. adv. Ruffin.,) relative to the doctrines taught by him and his fellow disciple, Lysis: **φευκτεον πανταπασι και εκκοπτεον ασθeneian μεν του σωματος, απαιδευσιαν δε της ψυχης, ακολασιαν δε της γαστρος, στασιν δε της πολεως, την δε διαφωνιαν απο της οικιας, και κοινη απο παντων το ακρατες**. "By all means and methods these evils are to be shunned and cut off: effeminacy from the body; IGNORANCE from the soul; delicacies from the belly; sedition from the city; discord from the house; and, in general, intemperance from all things." Vid. FAB. Thes. Erud. Schol.

ONESIMUS, **ονησιμος**. Useful or profitable; from **ονημι**, to help. The import of this name led the apostle to play upon the word thus: I beseech thee for any son Onesimus-which in time past was to thee UNPROFITABLE, but now PROFITABLE to thee and me.

**To the Church in thy house** The congregation of Christians frequently assembling in Philemon's house; for at this time the Christians had neither temples, churches, nor chapels. See the note on Romans 16:5, and the reference there.

It is very probable that Apphia was the wife of Philemon, and Archippus, their son, the pastor of the Church at Philemon's house.

**Verse 4. *I thank my God*** For all the good he has bestowed upon you, making mention of thee always in my prayers, that thou mayest hold fast all that thou hast got, and get all that thou dost farther need.

**Verse 5. *Hearing of thy love and faith*** His faith in Christ Jesus, his love to the saints. Several excellent MSS. and some versions put faith before love, which makes a more natural reading. There is no figure of speech which would vindicate our saying faith in the saints; so that, if we do not allow of the arrangement in the MSS. referred to, we shall be obliged to have recourse to the transposition, because faith must refer to Jesus Christ, and love to the saints.

**Verse 6. *That the communication of thy faith*** The words **ἡ κοινωνία τῆς πίστεως σου**, the fellowship or communication of thy faith, may be understood as referring to the work of love towards the saints — the poor Christians, which his faith in Christ enabled him to perform, faith being taken here for its effects; and indeed the word **κοινωνία** itself is not unfrequently used to denote liberality, almsgiving; and this is very properly remarked by Theophylact here: **κοινωνίαν πίστεως ἐλεημοσύνην καλεῖ, ὡς ἀπο πίστεως πολλῆς γενομένην**. He terms almsgiving the communication of faith, because it is the fruit of much faith.”

***May become effectual*** Dr. Macknight understands these words thus: “That the many good offices which thou dost to the saints may become effectual in bringing others to the acknowledgment of every good disposition which is in you towards Christ Jesus, or towards his members.”

Instead of **ἐνεργης**, energetic or effectual, the Vulgate and some of the fathers, as well as several Latin MSS., have read **εναργης**, evident. This makes a very good sense, and seems to agree best with the scope of the place.

Instead of **ἐν ὑμῖν**, in YOU, **ἐν ἡμῖν** in US, is the reading of all the best MSS., as well as of several versions and fathers.

**Verse 7. *For we have great joy*** This verse does not read harmoniously. The Greek authorizes the following arrangement: For we have great joy and consolation in thy love, O brother, because the bowels of the saints are

refreshed by thee. The apostle speaks here of the works of charity in which Philemon abounded towards poor Christians.

**Verse 8.** *Wherefore, though I might be much bold* It would be better to read: Wherefore, although I have much authority through Christ, to command thee to do what is proper; yet, on account of my love to thee, I entreat thee.

The tenderness and delicacy of this epistle, says Dr. Paley, have long been admired: “Though I might be much bold in Christ to enjoin thee that which is convenient; yet, for love’s sake, I rather beseech thee, being such a one as Paul the aged, and now also a prisoner of Christ Jesus, I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds.”

There is something certainly very melting and persuasive in this and every part of the epistle. Yet, in my opinion, the character of St. Paul prevails in it throughout. The warm, affectionate, authoritative teacher is interceding with an absent friend for a beloved convert. He urges his suit with an earnestness befitting, perhaps, not so much the occasion as the ardour and sensibility of his own mind. Here also, as everywhere, he shows himself conscious of the weight and dignity of his mission; nor does he suffer Philemon, for a moment, to forget it: “I might be much bold in Christ, to enjoin thee that which is convenient.” He is careful also to recall, though obliquely, to Philemon’s memory, the sacred obligation under which he had laid him, by bringing him to the knowledge of Christ: “I do not say to thee, how thou owest to me even thine own self besides.” Without laying aside, therefore, the apostolic character, our author softens the imperative style of his address, by mixing with it every sentiment and consideration that could move the heart of his correspondent. Aged, and in prison, he is content to supplicate and entreat. Onesimus was rendered dear to him by his conversation and his services; the child of his affliction, and “ministering unto him in the bonds of the Gospel.” This ought to recommend him, whatever had been his fault, to Philemon’s forgiveness: “Receive him as myself, as my own bowels.” Every thing, however, should be voluntary. St. Paul was determined that Philemon’s compliance should flow from his own bounty; “Without thy mind would I do nothing, that thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity, but willingly;” trusting, nevertheless, to his gratitude and attachment for the performance

of all that he requested, and for more: “Having confidence in thy obedience, I wrote unto thee, knowing that thou wilt also do more than I say.”

St. Paul’s discourse at Miletus; his speech before Agrippa; his Epistle to the Romans; that to the Galatians, Galatians 4:11-20; to the Philippians, Philippians 1:29; 2:2; the second to the Corinthians, 2 Corinthians 6:1-13; and indeed some part or other of almost every epistle, exhibit examples of a similar application to the feelings and affections of the persons whom he addresses. And it is observable that these pathetic effusions, drawn for the most part from his own sufferings and situation, usually precede a command, soften a rebuke, or mitigate the harshness of some disagreeable truth. *Horae Paulinae*, p. 334.

**Verse 9. *Paul the aged*** If we allow St. Paul to have been about 25 years of age at the utmost, in the year 31, when he was assisting at the martyrdom of Stephen, Acts 7:58; as this epistle was written about A. D. 62, he could not have been at this time more than about 56 years old. This could not constitute him an aged man in our sense of the term; yet, when the whole length of his life is taken in, being martyred about four years after this, he may not improperly be considered an aged or elderly man, though it is generally allowed that his martyrdom took place in the 66th year of our Lord.

But the word *πρεσβυς* signifies, not only an old man, but also an ambassador; because old or elderly men were chosen to fulfill such an office, because of their experience and solidity; and *πρεσβυτης*, for *πρεσβευτης*, is used in the same sense and for the same reason by the Septuagint; hence some have thought that we should translate here, Paul the ambassador. This would agree very well with the scope and even the design of the place.

**Verse 10. *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus*** It is evident from this that Onesimus was converted by St. Paul while he was prisoner at Rome, and perhaps not long before he wrote this epistle.

**Verse 11. *Was to thee unprofitable*** Alluding to the meaning of Onesimus’s name, as has been already noted; though the apostle uses a different Greek word to express the same idea.

**Verse 12. *Whom I have sent again*** The Christian religion never cancels any civil relations; a slave, on being converted, and becoming a free man of Christ, has no right to claim, on that ground, emancipation from the service of his master. Justice, therefore, required St. Paul to send back Onesimus to his master, and conscience obliged Onesimus to agree in the propriety of the measure; but love to the servant induced the apostle to write this conciliating letter to the master.

**Verse 13. *That in thy stead he might have ministered unto me*** As Philemon was one of Paul's converts, he became thereby his spiritual father, and had a right to his services when in need. This was a strong argument, not only to induce Philemon to forgive his servant, but to send him back to the apostle, that he might minister to him in his master's stead.

**Verse 14. *That thy benefit should not be as it were of necessity*** If the apostle had kept Onesimus in his service, and written to Philemon to forgive him and permit him to stay, to this it is probable he would have agreed; but the benefit thus conceded might have lost much of its real worth by the consideration that, had he been at Colosse, Philemon would not have sent him to Rome; but, being there and in the apostle's service, he could not with propriety order him home: thus the benefit to the apostle would have appeared to have been of necessity. The apostle, therefore, by sending him back again, gave Philemon the opportunity to do all as if self-moved to it. This is a very delicate touch.

**Verse 15. *He-departed for a season*** This is another most delicate stroke. He departed thy slave, thy unfaithful slave; he departed for a short time; but so has the mercy of God operated in his behalf, and the providence of God in thine, that he now returns, not an unfaithful slave, in whom thou couldst repose no confidence, but as a brother, a beloved brother in the Lord, to be in the same heavenly family with thee for ever. Thou hast, therefore, reason to be thankful to God that he did depart, that he might be restored to thee again infinitely better than he was when he left thee. God has permitted his unfaithfulness, and overruled the whole both to his advantage and thine. The apology for Onesimus is very similar to that made by Joseph for his brethren, Genesis 45:5.

**Verse 16. *Not now as a servant?*** Do not receive him merely as thy slave, nor treat him according to that condition; but as a brother — as a genuine Christian, and particularly dear to me.

***Both in the flesh and in the Lord?*** There is no reason to believe that Onesimus was of the kindred of Philemon; and we must take the term flesh, here, as referring to the right which Philemon had in him. He was a part of his property and of his family; as a slave, this was his condition; but he now stood in a twofold relation to Philemon: 1. According to the flesh, as above explained, he was one of his family. 2. In the Lord; he was now also a member of the heavenly family, and of the Church at Philemon's house. Philemon's interest in him was now doubled, in consequence of his conversion to Christianity.

**Verse 17. *If thou count me therefore a partner*** If thou dost consider me as a friend; if I have still the place of a friend in thy affection, receive him as myself; for, as I feel him as my own soul, in receiving him thou receivest me.

There is a fine model of recommending a friend to the attention of a great man in the epistle of Horace to Claudius Nero, in behalf of his friend Septimius, Epistolar. lib. i., Ep. 9, which contains several strokes not unlike some of those in the Epistle to Philemon. It is written with much art; but is greatly exceeded by that of St. Paul. As it is very short I shall insert it:-

*Septimius, Claudi, nimirum intelligit unus,  
Quanti me facias; nam cum rogat, et prece cogit  
Scilicet, ut tibi se laudare, et tradere coner,  
Dignum mente domoque legentis honesta  
Neronis, Munere cum fungi propioris censet amici;  
Quid possim videt, ac novit me valdius ipso.  
Multa quidem dixi, cur excusatus abirem:  
Sed timui, mea ne finxisse minora putarer,  
Dissimulator opis propriae, mihi commodus uni.  
Sic ego, majoris fugiens opprobria culpae,  
Frontis ad urbanae descendi praemia.  
Quod si Depositum laudas, ob amici jussa, pudorem;  
Scribe tui gregis hunc, et fortem crede bonumque.*

“O Claudius Septimius alone knows what value thou hast for me; for he asks and earnestly entreats me to recommend him to thee, as a man worthy



of the service and confidence of Nero, who is so correct a judge of merit. When he imagines that I possess the honor of being one of thy most intimate friends, he sees and knows me more particularly than I do myself. I said indeed many things to induce him to excuse me; but I feared lest I should be thought to dissemble my interest with thee, that I might reserve it all for my own advantage. Therefore, in order to shun the reproach of a greater fault, I have assumed all the consequence of a courtier, and have, at the request of my friend, laid aside becoming modesty; which if thou canst pardon, receive this man into the list of thy domestics, and believe him to be a person of probity and worth.”

This is not only greatly outdone by St. Paul, but also by a letter of Pliny to his friend Sabinianus, in behalf of his servant, who, by some means, had incurred his master's displeasure. See it at the conclusion of these notes.

**Verse 18. *If he hath wronged thee, or oweth thee aught*** Had the apostle been assured that Onesimus had robbed his master, he certainly would not have spoken in this hypothetical way; he only puts a possible case: If he have wronged thee, or owe thee aught, place all to my account; I will discharge all he owes thee.

**Verse 19. *I Paul have written it with mine own hand*** It is likely that the whole of the letter was written by St. Paul himself, which was not his usual custom. See on 2 Thessalonians 3:17. But by thus speaking he bound Philemon to do what he requested, as an act of common civility, if he could not feel a higher motive from what he had already urged.

***Albeit I do not say to thee how thou owest unto me*** I ask thee to do this thing to oblige me, though I will not say how much thou owest unto me; even thine own self, as having been the means of thy conversion.

**Verse 20. *Yea, brother*** It is even so, that thou art thus indebted to me. Let me have joy of thee, in forgiving Onesimus, and receiving him into thy favor. In the words *εγε σου οναιμην*, which we should translate, let me have PROFIT of thee, there is an evident paronomasia, or play on the name of Onesimus. See on Philemon 1:2, 11.

***Refresh my bowels*** Gratify the earnest longing of my soul in this. I ask neither thy money nor goods; I ask what will enrich, not impoverish, thee to give.

**Verse 21. *Having confidence in thy obedience*** I know that it will please thee thus to oblige thy friend, and I know that thou wilt do more than I request, because thou feelest the affection of a son to thy spiritual father. Some think that the apostle hints to Philemon that he should manumit Onesimus.

**Verse 22. *But withal prepare me also a lodging*** Does not the apostle mention this as conferring an obligation on Philemon? I will begin to repay thee by taking up my abode at thy house, as soon as I shall be enlarged from prison. But some think he wished Philemon to hire him a house, that he might have a lodging of his own when he returned to Colosse.

***For I trust that through your prayers*** It is very likely that this epistle was written a short time before the liberation of the apostle from his first imprisonment at Rome. See Acts 28:30, and Philippians 2:24; and that he had that liberation now in full prospect.

**Verse 23. *Epaphras, my fellow prisoner*** Epaphras was a Colossian, as we learn from Colossians 4:12: Epaphras, who is one of you. But there is no account there of his being in prison, though the not mentioning of it does not necessarily imply that he was not. Some time or other he had suffered imprisonment for the truth of the Gospel; and on that account St. Paul might, in a general way, call him his fellow prisoner.

**Verse 24. *Marcus, Aristarchus*, etc.** These were all acquaintances of Philemon, and probably Colossians; and may be all considered as joining here with St. Paul in his request for Onesimus. Some think that Marcus was either the evangelist, or John Mark, the nephew of Barnabas, Acts 12:12, 25. Aristarchus was probably the same with him mentioned Acts 19:29; 20:4; 27:2. See Colossians 4:10.

***Demas*** Is supposed to be the same who continued in his attachment to Paul till his last imprisonment at Rome; after which he left him for what is supposed to have been the love of the world, 2 Timothy 4:10; but see the note.

***Lucas*** Is supposed to be Luke the evangelist, and author of the Acts of the Apostles. On these suppositions little confidence can be placed: they may be correct; they may be otherwise.

**Verse 25.** *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit* By using the plural, *ὑμῶν*, your, the apostle in effect directs or addresses the epistle, not only to Philemon, but to all the Church at his house.

*Amen.* Is wanting as usual in the best MSS.

The subscriptions are also various, as in preceding cases.

VERSIONS:

The Epistle to Philemon was written at Rome, and sent by the hand of Onesimus. — SYRIAC.

Through the help of God the epistle is finished. It was written at Rome by the hand of Onesimus, servant to Philemon. — ARABIC.

To the man Philemon. — AETHIOPIC.

It was written at Rome, and sent by Onesimus. — COPTIC.

VULGATE, nothing.

The Epistle to Philemon, Apphia, and Archippus: the end of the Epistle to Philemon and Apphia, the master and mistress of Onesimus; and to Archippus, the deacon of the Church at Colosse: it was written from Rome by Onesimus, a servant. — PHILOXESIAN SYRIAC.

MANUSCRIPTS:

To Philemon. — To Philemon is finished. — To Philemon, written from Rome by Onesimus-Onesiphorus. — From Paul, by Onesimus, a servant. — From the presence of Paul and Timothy. — The Epistle of Paul the apostle to Philemon. — The common Greek text has, To Philemon, written from Rome by Onesimus, a servant.

As some have thought it strange that a private letter, of a particular business and friendship, should have got a place in the sacred canon, others have been industrious to find out the general uses which may be made of it. The following are those which seem to come most naturally from the text:—

1. In a religious point of view, all genuine Christian converts are on a level; Onesimus, the slave, on his conversion becomes the apostle's beloved son, and Philemon's brother.
2. Christianity makes no change in men's civil affairs; even a slave did not become a freeman by Christian baptism.
3. No servant should be either taken or retained from his own master, without the master's consent, Philemon 1:13, 14.

12. We should never despair of reclaiming the wicked. No man is out of the reach of God's mercy as long as he breathes. Pretending to say that such and such cases are hopeless, is only a colouring for our want of zeal, and a pretense to excuse our slothfulness.

13. The anxiety which the apostle showed for the welfare of Onesimus, in return for his affectionate services, could not fail to cherish good dispositions in the breast of Philemon. We do a man a great kindness when we even engage him in acts of mercy and benevolence.

14. From this epistle we learn what sort of man the apostle was in private life. He has here displayed qualities which are in the highest estimation among men; a noble spirit arising from a consciousness of his own dignity, consummate prudence, uncommon generosity, the warmest friendship, the most skillful address, and the greatest politeness, as well as purity of manners; qualities which are never found either in the enthusiast or impostor. See Macknight and Dodd.

There is extant an epistle of Pliny on the very same subject, directed to his friend Sabinianus in behalf of his manumitted slave who had offended him, and was consequently cast out of favor. Dr. Doddridge says that "that epistle, though penned by one who was allowed to excel in the epistolary style, and though it undoubtedly has many beauties, will be found by persons of taste much inferior to this animated composition of the Apostle Paul.

I have already introduced an epistle of Horace on a somewhat similar subject; but that of Pliny is so exactly parallel, and so truly excellent, that I am sure its insertion will gratify every intelligent reader, and I insert it the rather because the works of Pliny are in but few hands, and his epistles are known to very few except the learned.

C. PLINIUS SABINIANO suo, S.

Libertus tuus, cui succensere te dixeras, venit ad me, advolatusque pedibus meis, tanquam tuis, haesit. Flevit multum, multum rogavit, multum etiam tacuit: in summa, fecit mihi fidem poenitentiae. Vere credo emendatum, quia deliquisse se sentit. Irasceres scio; et irasceres merito, id quoque scio: sed tunc praecipua mansuetudinis laus, cum irae causa justissima est.

Amasti hominem; et, spero, amabis: interim sufficit, ut exorari te sinas. Licebit rursus irasci, si meruerit: quod exoratus excusatius facies.

Remitte aliquid adolescentiae ipsius; remitte lachrymis; remitte indulgentiae tuae; ne torseris illum, ne torseris etiam te. Torqueris enim, cum tam lenis irasceris. Vereor, ne videar non rogare, sed cogere, si precibus ejus meas junxero. Jungam tamen tanto plenius et effusius, quanto ipsum acrius severiusque corripui, districte minatus nunquam me postea rogaturum. Hoc illi, quem terreri oportebat; tibi non idem. Nam fortasse iterum rogabo, impetrabo iterum: sit modo tale, ut togare me, ut praestare te deceat. Vale. — Epistolar. lib. ix., Ep. 21.

“CAIUS PLINIUS to SABINIANUS his friend, health.

“Thy freed man, with whom thou didst inform me thou wert incensed, came to me and threw himself at my feet, and grasped them as if they had been thine. He wept much, earnestly entreated, and yet said more by his silence. In short, he fully convinced me that he is a penitent. I do verily believe him reformed, because he feels his guilt. Thou art incensed against him I know, and I know that he has justly merited thy displeasure; but then, clemency has its chief praise when there is the greatest cause for irritation. Thou didst once love the man, and I hope thou wilt love him again. In the meantime permit thyself to be entreated in his behalf. Should he again merit thy displeasure thou wilt have the stronger excuse for indulging it, shouldst thou pardon him now. Consider his youth, consider his tears, consider thy own gentleness of disposition. Do not torment him, do not torment thyself; for, with thy mild disposition, thou must be tormented if thou suffer thyself to be angry. I fear, were I to join my prayers to his, that I should rather seem to compel than to supplicate. Yet I will unite them, and the more largely and earnestly too, as I have sharply and severely reproved him, solemnly threatening, should he offend again, never more to intercede for him. This I said to him, it being necessary that I should alarm him; but I do not say the same to thee, for probably I may entreat thee again, and command thee again, should there be a sufficient reason to induce me to request, and thee to concede. Farewell.”

Nothing on the subject can be finer than this; but Paul has the advantage, because he had Christian motives to urge. If the energetic Roman had had

these, we should have found it difficult to decide between his Latin and the apostle's Greek.

It may be now asked whether St. Paul's application in behalf of Onesimus was successful? We have no direct answer to this question, but we may fairly suppose that such pleading could not be in vain. Philemon was a Christian, and owed too much to his God and Savior, and too much to the apostle, as the instrument of his salvation, not to concede a favor which it is congenial to the very spirit of Christianity to grant.

The application of Horace in behalf of Septimius was successful, and both Claudius Nero and Augustus took him into their warmest confidence. But this was only a common case of recommendation, and had no difficulties in the way. But did the heathen Sabinianus yield to the entreaties of his friend, and forgive his slave? He did; and we have the record of it in another very elegant letter, in which Pliny expresses his obligation to his friend for his prompt attention to his request. I will transcribe it, and give a translation for the farther satisfaction of the reader.

C. PLINIUS SABINIANO suo, S.

Bene fecisti quod libertum aliquando tibi carum, reducentibus epistolis meis, in domum, in animum recepisti. Juvabit hoc te: me certe juvat; primum quod te talem video, ut in ira regi possis: deinde quod tantum mihi tribuis, ut vel auctoritati meae pareas, vel precibus indulgeas. Igitur, et laudo, et gratias ago. Simul in posterum moneo, ut te erroribus tuorum, etsi non fuerit, qui deprecetur, placabilem praestes. Vale. — Epistolar. lib. ix., Ep. 24.

“CAIUS PLINIUS to his friend SABINIANUS, health.

“Thou hast done well, that, in compliance with my letter, thou hast received thy freed man both into thy house and into thy heart. This must be pleasing to thyself, and it is certainly pleasing to me; first, because I find thee to be a person capable of being governed in thy anger; and secondly, because thou showest so much regard for me, as either to yield this to my authority, or concede it to my entreaties. Therefore I both praise and return thee thanks. ‘At the same time I admonish thee to be always ready to forgive the errors of thy servants, although there should be no one to intercede in their behalf. Farewell.’”

These letters contain such excellent lessons of instruction that it will be impossible to read them without profit. They are master pieces in their kind; and no Christian need be ashamed to be indebted to them, whether in regulating his own conduct in respect to forgiveness of injuries, or whether in interceding for them who have fallen under the displeasure of others. Reader, go thou and do likewise.

Finished correcting for a new ed



# INTRODUCTION

TO THE

**EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO THE

## HEBREWS

THE chief points in controversy, relative to the Epistle to the Hebrews, though discussed by many, have not in my opinion been treated so successfully by any writer as by Dr. Lardner; he has entered into the whole controversy, and brought his knowledge from far. I shall avail myself of his labors as the best on the subject, and generally use his own words.

“I shall,” says he,” inquire, 1. To whom it was written. 2. In what language. 3. By whom. 4. The time and place of writing it.

“I. In the first place, let us consider to whom this epistle was written.

“Dr. Lightfoot thought that this epistle was sent by Paul to the believing Jews of Judea; ‘a people,’ says he, ‘that had been much engaged to him, for his care of their poor, getting collections for them all along in his travels.’ He adds, ‘It is not to be doubted, indeed, that he intends the discourse and matter of this epistle to the Jews throughout their dispersion. Yet does he endorse it and send it chiefly to the Hebrews, or the Jews of Judea, the principal part of the circumcision, as the properest center to which to direct it, and from whence it might be best diffused in time to the whole circumference of the dispersion.’ Whitby, in his preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews, is of the same opinion, and argues much after the same manner as Lightfoot.

“So likewise Mill, Pearson, Lewis Capellus, and Beza, in his preface to this epistle, and Beausobre and L’Enfant, the editors of the French New Testament at Berlin, in their general preface to St. Paul’s epistles, and in their preface to this epistle in particular.

“Of this Mr. Hallet had no doubt, who in his synopsis of the epistle, says, that this epistle was particularly designed for the Hebrew Christians, who dwelt in one certain place, and was sent thither, as appears from the apostle’s saying, Hebrews 13:19, 23: ‘I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner: I will see you.’ And what particular place can this be supposed to be but Judea? There, the Christians were continually persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; and as St. Paul takes notice, 1 Thessalonians 2:14; Hebrews 10:32-36; 12:4, 5. By these persecutions the Hebrew Christians were tempted to apostatize from Christianity, and to think there was strength in the arguments used by the persecutors in favor of Judaism. The apostle, therefore, sets himself to guard against both these dangers.

“This appears to me to be the most probable opinion: for, 1. It is the opinion of the ancient Christian writers who received this epistle. It may be taken for granted, that this was the opinion of Clement of Alexandria, and Jerome, and Euthalius, who supposed this epistle to have been first written in Hebrew, and afterwards translated into Greek. It may be allowed to have been also the opinion of many others who quote this epistle, to have been written to Hebrews, when they say nothing to the contrary. Nor do I recollect any of the ancients, who say it was written to Jews living out of Judea.

“Chrysostom says that the epistle was sent to the believing Jews of Palestine, and supposes that the apostle afterwards made them a visit. Theodoret, in his preface to the epistle, allows it to have been sent to the same Jews; and Theophylact, in his argument of the epistle, expressly says, as Chrysostom, that it was sent to the Jews of Palestine. So that this was the general opinion of the ancients.

“There are in this epistle many things especially suitable to the believers in Judea; which must lead us to think it was written to them. I shall select such passages.

“1. Hebrews 1:2: ‘Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.’

“2. Hebrews 4:2: ‘For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.’

or thrice, first in Hebrews 13:7: ‘Remember your rulers, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the end of their conversation.’ These were dead, as Grotius observes. And Theodoret’s note is to this purpose. He intends the saints that were dead—Stephen the proto-martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. Consider these, says he, and, observing their example, imitate their faith. Then again, at Hebrews 13:17: ‘Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls.’ And once more, Hebrews 13:24: ‘Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.’ Upon which Theodoret says: This way of speaking intimates, that their rulers did not need such instruction; for which reason he did not write to them, but to their disciples. That is a fine observation. And Whitby upon that verse says: Hence it seems evident that this epistle was not sent to the bishops or rulers of the Church, but to the whole Church, or the laity; and it may deserve to be considered whether this repeated notice of the rulers among them does not afford ground to believe that some of the apostles were still in Judea. Whether there be sufficient reason to believe that or not, I think these notices very proper and suitable to the state of the Jewish believers in Judea; for I am persuaded, that not only James, and all the other apostles, had exactly the same doctrine with Paul, but that all the elders likewise, and all the understanding men among the Jewish believers, embraced the same doctrine. They were, as I understand, the multitude only, *πληθος*, plebs, or the men of lower rank among them, who were attached to the peculiarities of the Mosaic law and the customs of their ancestors. This may be argued from what James and the elders of Jerusalem say to Paul, Acts 21:20-22: ‘Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law. What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together.’ It is hence evident that the zeal for the law, which prevailed in the minds of many, was not approved by James or the elders. That being the case, these recommendations of a regard for their rulers, whether apostles or elders, were very proper in an epistle sent to the believers in Judea.

“For these reasons, I think that this epistle was sent to the Jewish believers at Jerusalem and in Judea. But there are objections which must be considered.

“Obj. 1. Hebrews 6:10: ‘God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love-in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.’ Upon which Dr. Wall remarks: Here again we are put upon thinking to what Church or what Christians this is said; for as to those of Jerusalem, we read much in Paul’s former letters of their poverty, and of their being ministered to by the Gentile Christians of Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth; and in the Acts, by the Antiochians; but nowhere of their ministering to other saints. This objection, perhaps, might be strengthened from Hebrews 13:2: ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.’ And from Hebrews 13:16: ‘To do good, and to communicate, forget not.’

“Ans. But the poverty of the Jews in Judea, and the contributions of the Gentile Churches for their relief, are no reasons why such admonitions as these should not be sent to them. They are properly directed to all Christians, that they may be induced to exert themselves to the utmost. The Gentile Churches, among whom St. Paul made collections for the saints in Judea, were not rich. As he says, 1 Corinthians 1:26: ‘For ye know your calling, brethren-not many mighty, not many noble, are called.’ And of the Churches in Macedonia, he says, 2 Corinthians 8:2: ‘How that, in a great trial of affliction, the abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, had abounded unto the riches of their liberality.’ In like manner, there might be instances of liberality to the distressed among the believers in Judea. There is a very fine example recorded, Acts 9:36, 39; nor was there ever any city or country in the world to whom that exhortation, ‘Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,’ or, Be not unmindful of hospitality, *της φιλοχενιας μη επιλανθανεσθε*, could be more properly given, than Jerusalem and Judea. For the people there must have been much accustomed to it at their festivals, when there was a great resort thither from all countries; and the writer of an epistle to the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea would naturally think of such an admonition; being desirous that they should not fall short of others in that respect. And we may here, not unfitly, recollect the history of St. Paul’s going to Jerusalem; and how he and his fellow travelers were entertained at Caesarea, in the

house of Philip the evangelist and at Jerusalem, in the house of Mnason, an old disciple, as related Acts 21:8-16.

“Obj. 2. Upon Hebrews 13:18, 19, the same Dr. Wall says: One would think that Paul should have prayed and purposed to go anywhere rather than to Jerusalem, where he had been so used, and where he fell into that five years’ imprisonment, from which he was but just now delivered.

“Ans. But there is not any improbability that Paul might now desire to see his countrymen in Judea, if he might go thither with safety, as I think he might. Almost three years had now passed since he left Judea; and his trial, or apology, had been over two years; and he was now set at liberty by the emperor himself. No man, not very presumptuous would admit a thought of disturbing him.

“Obj. 3. St. Peter’s epistles were written to the Hebrew Christians, scattered in Asia and Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. St. Paul must have written an epistle to those Hebrew Christians to whom St. Peter writes his two epistles. For St. Peter, 2 Peter 3:15, cites to them what Paul had written unto them. No epistle of Paul was written to the Hebrews particularly but this; so that these must be the Hebrews of the above named countries. To which I answer: That St. Peter’s epistles were not sent to Jews, but to Gentiles, or to all Christians in general, in the places above mentioned, as will be clearly shown hereafter. When St. Peter says, As Paul has written unto you, he may intend Paul’s Epistle to the Galatians, and some other epistles written to Gentiles. If he refers at all to this Epistle to the Hebrews, it is comprehended under that expression, 2 Peter 3:16. As also in all his epistles.

“Obj. 4. This Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written in Greek. But if it had been sent to the Jewish believers in Judea, it would have been written in Hebrew. To which I answer: That, allowing the epistle to have been written in Greek, it might be sent to the believers in Judea. If St. Paul wrote to the Jewish believers in Palestine he intended the epistle for general use-for all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile original. Many of the Jews in Judea understood Greek; few of the Jews out of Judea understood Hebrew. The Greek language was almost universal, and therefore generally used. All St Paul’s epistles are in Greek, even that to the Romans. And are not both St. Peter’s epistles in Greek. And St.

John's, and St. Jude's? Did not St. James likewise write in Greek, who is supposed to have resided in Jerusalem from the time of our Lord's ascension to the time of his own death? His epistle is inscribed to the twelve tribes scattered abroad. But I presume that they of the twelve tribes who dwelt in Judea are not excluded by him, but intended. Nor could he be unwilling that this epistle should be read and understood by those who were his especial charge. The epistle written by Barnabas, a Levite, or ascribed to him, was written in Greek; not now to mention any other Jewish writers who have used the Greek language.

“II. Thus we are unawares brought to the inquiry, in what language was this epistle written? For there have been doubts about it, among both ancients and moderns. Yet many learned and judicious moderns have been of opinion that Greek, and not Hebrew, was the original language of this epistle; Beausobre, James Capellus, S. Basnage, Mill, in his *Prolegomena* to the New Testament, and the late Mr. Wetstein, and also Spanheim, in his *Dissertation* concerning the author of this epistle, which well deserves to be consulted. One argument for this, both of Spanheim and Wetstein, is taken from the Greek paronomasias in the epistle, or the frequent concurrence of Greek words of like sound; which seem to be an argument not easy to be answered.

“Some ancient Christian writers were of opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in the Hebrew language, and translated into Greek by Luke or Clement of Rome. Jerome, in particular, seems to have supposed that this epistle was written in Hebrew; and Origen is also sometimes reckoned among those who were of this opinion. But I think I have shown it to be probable that he thought it was written in Greek. It seems likewise that they must have been of the same opinion who considered the elegance of the Greek language of this epistle as an objection against its having been written by St. Paul; for if the Greek epistle had been supposed to be a translation, the superior elegance of the style of this epistle above that of the other epistles of Paul, could have afforded no objection against his being the author of it. Indeed the ancients, as Beausobre said, formerly had no other reason to believe that St. Paul wrote in Hebrew, but that he wrote to the Hebrews. So, likewise, says Capellus. The title deceived them. And because it was written to Hebrews, they concluded it was written IN

Hebrew; for none of the ancients appear to have seen a copy of this epistle in that language.

“III. I now proceed to the third inquiry, Who is the writer of this epistle? And many things offer in favor of the Apostle PAUL.

“1. It is ascribed to him by many of the ancients. Here I think myself obliged briefly to recollect the testimonies of ancient authors; and I shall rank them under two heads: First, the testimonies of writers who used the Greek tongue; then the testimonies of those who lived in that part of the Roman empire where the Latin was the vulgar language.

“There are some passages in the epistles of Ignatius, about the year 107, which may be thought, by some to contain allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle seems to be referred to by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, in his epistle written to the Philippians, in the year 108, and in the relation of his martyrdom, written about the middle of the second century. This epistle is often quoted as Paul’s by Clement of Alexandria, about the year 194. It is received and quoted as Paul’s by Origen, about 230. It was also received as the apostle’s by Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in 247. It is plainly referred to by Theognostus, of Alexandria, about 282. It appears to have been received by Methodius about 292; by Pamphilius, about 294; and by Archelaus, bishop in Mesopotamia, at the beginning of the fourth century; by the Manichees in the fourth; and by the Paulicians, in the seventh century. It was received and ascribed to Paul by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria, in the year 313; and by the Arians, in the fourth century. Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea, about 315, says: ‘There are fourteen epistles of Paul manifest and well known; but yet there are some who reject that to the Hebrews, alleging in behalf of their opinion, that it was not received by the Church of Rome as a writing of Paul.’ It is often quoted by Eusebius himself as Paul’s, and sacred Scripture. This epistle was received by Athanasius, without any hesitation. In his enumeration of St. Paul’s fourteen epistles, this is placed next after the two to the Thessalonians, and before the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The same order is observed in the Synopsis of Scripture, ascribed to him. This epistle is received as Paul’s by Adamantius, author of a dialogue against the Marcionites, in 380; and by Cyril of Jerusalem, in 347; by the council of Laodicea, in 363; where St. Paul’s epistles are



enumerated in the same order as in Athanasius just noticed. This epistle is also received as Paul's by Epiphanius, about 368 by the apostolical constitutions, about the end of the fourth century; by Basil, about 370; by Gregory Nazianzen, in 370; by Amphilochius also. But he says it was not received by all as Paul's. It was received by Gregory Nyssen, about 370; by Didymus, of Alexandria, about the same time; by Ephrem, the Syrian, in 370, and by the Churches of Syria; by Diodorus, of Tarsus, in 378; by Hierax, a learned Egyptian, about the year 302; by Serapion, bishop of Thumis, in Egypt, about 347; by Titus, bishop of Bostria, in Arabia, about 362; by Theodore, bishop of Mopsuestia, in Cilicia, about the year 394; by Chrysostom, about the year 398; by Severian, bishop of Gabala, in Syria, in 401; by Victor, of Antioch, about 401; by Palladius, author of a Life of Chrysostom, about 408; by Isidore, of Pelusium, about 412; by Cyril, bishop of Alexandria, in 412; by Theodoret, in 423; by Eutherius, bishop of Tiana, in Cappadocia, in 431; by Socrates, the ecclesiastical historian, about 440; by Euthalius, in Egypt, about 458; and probably by Dionysius, falsely called the Areopagite, by the author of the *Quaestiones et Responsiones*, commonly ascribed to Justin Martyr, but rather written in the fifth century. It is in the Alexandrian manuscript, about the year 500; and in the Stichometry of Nicephorus, about 806; is received as Paul's by Cosmas, of Alexandria, about 535; by Leontius, of Constantinople, about 610; by John Damascen, in 730; by Photius, about 858; by OEcumenius, about the year 950; and by Theophylact, in 1070. I shall not go any lower.

"I shall now rehearse such authors as lived in that part of the Roman empire where the Latin was the vulgar tongue.

"Here, in the first place, offers Clement, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, written about the year 96, or as some others say, about the year 70. For though he wrote in Greek, we rank him among Latin authors, because he was bishop of Rome. In his epistle are many passages, generally supposed to contain allusions or references to the Epistle to the Hebrews. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons, about 178, as we are assured by Eusebius, alleged some passages out of this epistle, in a work now lost; nevertheless it does not appear that he received it as St. Paul's. By Tertullian, presbyter of Carthage, about the year 200, this epistle is ascribed to Barnabas. Caius, about 212, supposed to have been presbyter in the Church of Rome,

reckoning up the epistles of St. Paul, mentions thirteen only, omitting that to the Hebrews. Here I place Hippolytus, who flourished about 220; but it is not certainly known where he was bishop, whether of Porto, in Italy, or of some place in the east: we have seen evidences that he did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews as St. Paul's, and perhaps that may afford an argument that, though he wrote in Greek, he lived where the Latin tongue prevailed. This epistle is not quoted by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage about 248, and afterwards; nor does it appear to have been received by Novatus, otherwise called Novation, presbyter of Rome about 251. Nevertheless it was in after times received by his followers. It may be thought by some that this epistle is referred to by Arnobius, about 306, and by Lactantius about the same time. It is plainly quoted by another Arnobius, in the fifth century. It was received as Paul's by Hilary, of Poitiers, about 354, and by Lucifer, bishop of Cagliari, in Sardinia, about the same time, and by his followers: it was also received as Paul's by C. M. Victorianus. Whether it was received by Optatus, of Milevi, in Africa, about 370, is doubtful. It was received as Paul's by Ambrose, bishop of Milan, about 374; by the Priscillianists, about 378. About the year 380 was published a Commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul only, ascribed to Hilary, deacon of Rome. It was received as Paul's by Philaster, bishop of Brescia, in Italy, about 380; but he takes notice that it was not then received by all. His successor, Gaudentius, about 387, quotes this epistle as Paul's; it is also readily received as Paul's by Jerome, about 392, and he says it was generally received by the Greeks, and the Christians in the east, but not by all the Latins. It was received as Paul's by Rufinus, in 397; it is also in the Catalogue of the third council of Carthage, in 397. It is frequently quoted by Augustine as St. Paul's. In one place he says: 'It is of doubtful authority with some; but he was inclined to follow the opinion of the Churches in the east, who received it among the canonical Scriptures. It was received as Paul's by Chromatius, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy, about 401; by Innocent, bishop of Rome, about 402; by Paulinus, bishop of Nola, in Italy, about 403. Pelagias, about 405, wrote a commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul, omitting that to the Hebrews; nevertheless it was received by his followers. It was received by Cassian, about 424; by Prosper, of Aquitain, about 434, and by the authors of the works ascribed to him; by Eucherius, bishop of Lyons, in 434; by Sedulius, about 818; by Leo, bishop of Rome, in 440; by Salvian, presbyter of Marseilles, about

440; by Gelatius, bishop of Rome, about 496; by Facundus, an African bishop, about 540; by Junilius, an African bishop, about 556; by Cassiodorus, in 556, by the author of the imperfect work upon St. Matthew, about 560; by Gregory, bishop of Rome, about 590; by Isidore, of Seville, about 596; and by Bede, about 701, or the beginning of the eighth century.

“Concerning the Latin writers, it is obvious to remark, that this epistle is not expressly quoted as Paul’s by any of them in the three first centuries; however, it was known by Iranaeus and Tertullian as we have seen, and possibly to others also. But it is manifest that it was received as an epistle of St. Paul by many Latin writers, in the fourth, fifth, and following centuries.

“The reasons of doubting about the genuineness of this epistle probably were the want of a name at the beginning, and the difference of argument or subject matter, and of the style, from the commonly received epistles of the apostle, as is intimated by Jerome. Whether they are sufficient reasons for rejecting this epistle will be considered in the course of our argument.

“2. There is nothing in the epistle itself that renders it impossible or unlikely to be his; for the epistle appears to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as was of old observed by Chrysostom and Theodoret, and has been argued also by many moderns. That the temple was still standing, and sacrifices there offered, may be inferred from Hebrews 8:4: ‘For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer according to the law;’ and from Hebrews 13:10: ‘We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.’ If the temple had been destroyed, and the worship there abolished, the writer would not have failed to take some notice of it in support of his argument, and for abating the too great attachment of many to the rites of the Mosaic institution. To this purpose speaks Spanheim. It is also probable that those words, Hebrews 3:13, ‘While it is called to-Day,’ refer to the patience which God yet continued to exercise toward the Jewish nation; he seems to have had in view the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, which would put an end to that to-day, and finish the time which God gave to the Jews, as a nation, to hear his voice.

And Lightfoot argues, from Hebrews 12:4, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,' that the epistle was written before the war in Judea was begun.

"Indeed, those words have been the ground of an objection against this epistle having been sent to the believing Jews in Judea, because there had been already several martyrdoms in that country. That difficulty I would now remove; and I have received from a learned friend the following observation, which may be of use: 'It seems to me,' says he, 'that the apostle here, as well as in the preceding context, alludes to the Grecian games or exercises; and he signifies that they to whom he writes had not been called out to the most dangerous combats, and had not run the

it not once be named among you. For this ye know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man-has any inheritance in the kingdom of God.' 4. Hebrews 13:16: 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' That exhortation is very suitable to Paul's doctrine, and has an agreement with what he says elsewhere, as Philippians 4:18: 'An odour of a sweet smell; a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.' Moreover, as is observed by Grotius upon this text, the word communicate or communion is found in a like sense in the Acts, and in other epistles of St. Paul. See Acts 2:42; Romans 15:26; 2 Corinthians 8:4; 9:13.

"4. In the next place, I observe some instances of agreement in the style or phrases, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the acknowledged epistles of St. Paul. 1. Hebrews 2:4: 'God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost:'-signs and wonders, together, seldom occur in other books of the New Testament; but they are found several times in the Acts, and in St. Paul's epistles. The phrase is in Matthew 24:24, and Mark 13:22, and once likewise in St. John's Gospel, John 4:48; but it is several times in the Acts, Acts 2:19; Acts 4:30; 5:12; 6:8; 8:13; 14:3; 15:12. The most remarkable are these where there are three different words, Acts 2:22: 'A man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs.' Romans 15:19: 'Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.' 2 Corinthians 12:12: 'In signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.' 2 Thessalonians 2:9: 'With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.' 2 Hebrews 2:14: 'That, through death, he might destroy him who had the power of death.' The word **καταργεω** or **καταργεομαι** is, I think, nowhere used in the New Testament, except in Luke 13:7, and St. Paul's epistles, where it is several times; and is sometimes used in a sense resembling this place, particularly 2 Timothy 1:10: 'Who has abolished death;' **καταργησαντος μεν τον θανατον**, and 1 Corinthians 15: 26. Compare Dr. Doddridge's Family Expositor, vol. iv., upon 1 Corinthians 15:24. 3. Hebrews 3:1: 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' Philippians 3:14: 'The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' 2 Timothy 1:9: 'Who has called us with a holy calling.' 4. Hebrews 5:12: 'And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' 1 Corinthians 3:2: 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat.' However,

in the original, there is no great agreement in the words, except that in both places milk is used for the first rudiments of the Christian doctrine. 5. Hebrews 8:1: 'Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.' Ephesians 1:20: 'And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.' 6. Hebrews 8:6; 9:15; and Hebrews 12:24, Jesus Christ is styled Mediator. So likewise in Galatians 3:19, 20; 1 Timothy 2:5; and in no other books of the New Testament. 7. Hebrews 8:5: 'Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; **και σκια των επουρανιων**. Hebrews 10:1: 'For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things;' **σκιαν εχων των μελλοντων αγαθων, ουκ αυτην την εικονα των πραγματων**. Colossians 2:17. 'Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ;' **α εστι σκια των μελλοντων το δε σωμα του χριστου**. 8. Hebrews 10:33: 'Whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, or spectacle, both by reproaches and afflictions;' **ονειδισμοις τε και θλιψεσι θεατριζομενοι**. 1 Corinthians 4:9: 'For we are made a spectacle unto the world;' **οτι θεατρον εγεννηθημεν τω κοσμω**. 9. St. Paul, in his acknowledged epistles, often alludes to the exercises and games which were then very reputable and frequent in Greece and other parts of the Roman empire. There are many such allusions in this epistle, which have also great elegance. So Hebrews 6:18: 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us;' or the reward of eternal life, proposed to animate and encourage us. And, Hebrews 12:1, 2, 3: 'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus-who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.' And, Hebrews 12:12: 'Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.' All these texts seem to contain allusions to the celebrated exercises and games of those times. And to these may be added, if I mistake not, the place before noticed, Hebrews 12:4: 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' 10. Hebrews 13:9: 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines;' **διδαχαις ποικιλαις και χεναις μη περιφερεσθε**. Ephesians 4:14: 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;' **κλυδωνιζομενοι και περιφερομενοι παντι ανεμω της διδασκαλιας**. 11. Hebrews 13:10: 'We have an altar whereof they have

no right to eat.' 1 Corinthians 9:13: 'And they that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.' And, 1 Corinthians 10:18: 'Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' 12. Hebrews 13:20, 21: 'Now the God of peace make you perfect;' which is a title of the Deity nowhere found in the New Testament but in St. Paul's epistles, and in them it is several times, and near the conclusion, as here: so Romans 15:33: 'Now the God of peace be with you all.' See likewise Romans 16:20; Philippians 4:9 and 1 Thessalonians 5:23: 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;' and 2 Corinthians 13:11: 'And the God of love and peace shall be with you.'

"5. The conclusion of this epistle has a remarkable agreement with the conclusions of St. Paul's epistles in several respects. 1. He here desires the Christians to whom he is writing to pray for him, Hebrews 13:18: 'Pray for us.' So Romans 15:30; Ephesians 6:18, 19; Colossians 4:3; 1 Thessalonians 5:25; 2 Thessalonians 3:1. 2. It is added in the same Hebrews 13:18: 'For we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;' which may well come from Paul, some of the Jewish believers not being well affected to him, or being even offended with him. So says Theodoret upon this place, and Chrysostom to the like purpose, very largely. To which might be added, Hebrews 13:22: 'And I beseech you, brethren, to suffer the word of exhortation.' It is also observable that St. Paul makes a like profession of his sincerity in pleading against the Jews before Felix, Acts 24:16. 3. Having desired the prayers of these Christians for himself, he prays for them, Hebrews 13:20, 21: 'Now the God of peace make you perfect, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' So Romans 15:30, 32, having asked their prayers for him, he adds, Romans 15:33: 'Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.' Compare Ephesians 6:19, 23, and 1 Thessalonians 5:23; 2 Thessalonians 3:16. 4. Hebrews 13:24: 'Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.' The like salutations are in many of St. Paul's epistles, Rom. 16; 1 Corinthians 16:19-21; 2 Corinthians 13:13; Philippians 4:21, 22; not to refer to any more. 5. The valedictory benediction at the end is that which Paul had made the token of the genuineness of his epistles; 2 Thessalonians 3:18. So here, Hebrews 13:25: 'Grace be with you all. Amen.' Indeed, sometimes it is 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' But at other times it is more

contracted. So Colossians 4:18: 'Grace be with you.' 1 Timothy 6:21: 'Grace be with thee.' See likewise, Ephesians 6:24; 2 Timothy 4:22; Titus 3:15. The same observation is in Theodoret.

"6. The circumstances of this epistle lead us to the Apostle Paul. 1. Hebrews 13:24: 'They of Italy salute you.' The writer, therefore, was then in Italy, whither we know Paul was sent a prisoner, and where he resided two years, Acts 28:; where also he wrote several epistles still remaining. 2. Hebrews 13:19: He desires them the rather to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner. Paul had been brought from Judea to Rome. And he was willing to go thither again, where he had been several times. And though the original words are not the name, there is an agreement between this and Philemon 22: I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.' This particular is one of the arguments of Euthalius, that this epistle is Paul's, and written to the Jews of Palestine. 3. Hebrews 13:23: 'Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.' Timothy was with Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, as is allowed by all: for he is expressly mentioned at the beginning of the Epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon, written when he was in bonds. He is mentioned again, Philippians 2:19. When the apostle writes to Timothy, he calls him his son, or dearly beloved son, 1 Timothy 1:2; 2 Timothy 1:2. But when he mentions him to others, he calls him brother; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; 1 Thessalonians 3:2. In like manner Titus. Compare Titus 1:4 and 2 Corinthians 2:13.

This mention of Timothy has, led many, not only moderns, but ancients likewise, to think of Paul as writer of the epistle, particularly Euthalius; and, undoubtedly, many others have been confirmed in that supposition by this circumstance.

"The original word **απολελυμενον** is ambiguous, being capable of two senses: one of which is, that of our translation, set at liberty, that is, from imprisonment; the other is dismissed, sent abroad on an errand. In this last sense it was understood by Euthalius, who, in the place just cited, says: 'That scarcely any one can be thought of, besides Paul, who would send Timothy abroad upon any service of the Gospel.' And indeed this passage does put us in mind of what Paul says to the Philippians, Philippians



2:19: ‘But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; but I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly,’ Philippians 2:23, 24, which induced Beausobre to say in the preface to this epistle: ‘The sacred author concludes with asking the prayers of the Hebrews, Hebrews 13:19, that he may be restored to them. These words intimate that he was still prisoner, but that he hoped to be set at liberty: therefore, he adds, in Hebrews 13:23, that he intended to come and see them, with Timothy, as soon as he should be returned. If this explication be right, this epistle was written at Rome, some time after the Epistle to the Philippians, and since the departure of Timothy for Macedonia.’

‘All these considerations just mentioned, added to the testimony of many ancient writers, make out an argument of great weight, (though not decisive and demonstrative,) that the Apostle Paul is the writer of this epistle. An objection against this epistle being St. Paul’s is, that it is supposed to have in it an elegance superior to that of his other writings. This has been judged, by Grotius and Leviticus Clerc, sufficient to show that this was not written by Paul.

‘The opinion of Origen, in his homilies upon this epistle, as cited by Eusebius, and by us from him, is, ‘that the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the apostle’s rudeness of speech, but, as to the texture of it, is elegant Greek, as every one will allow who is able to judge of the differences of style.’ Again, he says: ‘The sentiments of the epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle. This will be assented to by every one who reads the writings of the apostle with attention.’ Afterwards he adds: ‘If I were to speak my opinion, I should say, that the sentiments are the apostle’s, but the language and composition another’s, who committed to writing the apostle’s sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master,’ etc.

‘Eusebius himself, speaking of Clement’s Epistle to the Corinthians, says: ‘Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the Evangelist Luke, others, that this very Clement himself, translated it into Greek: which last is most likely, there being a great resemblance between the style of the epistle of Clement and the Epistle to the

Hebrews: nor are the sentiments of those two writings very different. This passage has been already twice quoted by us; once in the chapter of Clement, bishop of Rome, and again in that of Eusebius.’

“Philaster, bishop of Brescia, about 380, says: ‘There are some who do not allow the Epistle to the Hebrews to be Paul’s, but say it is either an epistle of the Apostle Barnabas, or of Clement, bishop of Rome; but some say it is an epistle of Luke the evangelist: moreover, some reject it, as more eloquent than the apostle’s other writings.

“Jerome, about 392, in his article of St. Paul, in the book of Illustrious Men, says: ‘The Epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be his, because of the difference of the argument and style; but either Barnabas’s, as Tertullian thought; or the Evangelist Luke’s, according to some others; or Clement’s, bishop of Rome; who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned Paul’s sense in his own language. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being translated, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.’

“Some learned men of late times, as Grotius and Leviticus Clerc, have thought this to be an insuperable objection. Of this opinion also was Jacob Tollius; who, in his notes upon Longinus, of the sublime, has celebrated the sublimity of this epistle, and particularly the elegance of the beginning of it; which alone he thinks sufficient to show that it was not Paul’s.

“It remains, therefore, it seems to me, that if the epistle be Paul’s, and was originally written in Greek, as we suppose, the apostle must have had some assistance in composing it; so that we are led to the judgment of Origen, which appears to be as ingenious and probable as any. ‘The sentiments are the apostle’s, but the language and composition of some one else, who committed to writing the apostle’s sense; and, as it were, rendered into commentaries the things spoken by his master.’ According to this account the epistle is St. Paul’s, as to the thoughts and matter; but the words are another’s.

“Jerome, as may be remembered, says: ‘He wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, pure Hebrew; it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being translated, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.’ My conjecture, which is not very different, if I may be allowed

to mention it, is, that St. Paul dictated the epistle in Hebrew, and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, immediately wrote down the apostle's sentiments in his own elegant Greek. But who this assistant of the apostle was is altogether unknown.

“The ancients, besides Paul, have mentioned Barnabas, Luke, and Clement, as writers or translators of this epistle; but I do not know that there is any remarkable agreement between the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the style of the epistle commonly ascribed to Barnabas. The style of Clement, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, is verbose and prolix. St. Luke may have some words which are in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but that does not make out the same style. This epistle, as Origen said, as to the texture of the style, is elegant Greek; but that kind of texture appears not in Luke, so far as I can perceive; there may be more art and labor in the writings of Luke than in those of the other evangelists, but not much more elegance that I can discern. This Epistle to the Hebrews is bright and elegant from the beginning to the end, and surpasses as much the style of St. Luke as it does the style of St. Paul in his acknowledged epistles. In short, this is an admirable epistle, but singular in sentiments and language; somewhat different in both respects from all the other writings of the New Testament; and whose is the language seems to me altogether unknown; whether that of Zenas, or Apollos, or some other of the Apostle Paul's assistants and fellow laborers.

“There still remains one objection more against this epistle being written by St. Paul, which is, the want of his name; for to all the thirteen epistles, received as his, he prefixes his name, and generally calls himself apostle. This objection has been obvious in all ages; and the omission has been differently accounted for by the ancients who received this epistle as a genuine writing of St. Paul.

“Clement of Alexandria, in his Institutions, speaks to this purpose: ‘The Epistle to the Hebrews,’ he says, ‘is Paul's, but he did not make use of that inscription Paul the Apostle; for which he assigns this reason: writing to the Hebrews, who had conceived a prejudice against him, and were suspicious of him, he wisely declined setting his name at the beginning lest he should offend them. He also mentions this tradition: ‘forasmuch as the Lord was sent, as the apostle of almighty God, to the Hebrews, Paul, out

of modesty, does not style himself the apostle to the Hebrews, both out of respect to the Lord, and that, being preacher and apostle of the Gentiles, he over and above wrote to the Hebrews.'

“Jerome also speaks to this purpose: ‘That Paul might decline putting his name in the inscription on account of the Hebrews being offended with him;’ so in the article of St. Paul, in his book of Illustrious Men. In his Commentary in the beginning of his Epistle to the Galatians, he assigns another reason: ‘That Paul declined to style himself apostle at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, because he should afterwards call Christ the High Priest and Apostle of our profession,’ Hebrews 3:1.

“Theodoret says, that Paul was especially the apostle of the Gentiles; for which he alleges Galatians 2:9, and Romans 11:13. ‘Therefore writing to the Hebrews, who were not intrusted to his care, he barely delivered the doctrine of the Gospel without assuming any character of authority, for they were the charge of the other apostles.’

“Lightfoot says, ‘Paul’s not affixing his name to this, as he had done to his other epistles, does no more deny it to be his than the First Epistle of John is denied to be John’s on that account.’

“Tillemont says, ‘Possibly Paul considered it to be a book rather than a letter, since he makes an excuse for its brevity, (Hebrews 13:22,) for indeed it is short for a book, but long for a letter.’

“It is, I think, observable, that there is not at the beginning of this epistle any salutation. As there is no name of the writer, so neither is there any description of the people to whom it is sent. It appears, from the conclusion, that it was sent to some people at a certain place; and undoubtedly they to whom it was sent, and by whom it was received, knew very well from whom it came, nevertheless there might be reasons for omitting an inscription and a salutation at the beginning. This might arise from the circumstances of things; there might be danger of offense at sending at that time a long letter to Jews in Judea; and this omission might be in part owing to a regard for the bearer, who too is not named. The only person named throughout the epistle is Timothy; nor was he then present with the writer. Indeed I imagine that the two great objections against this being an epistle of St. Paul—the elegance of the style, and the want of a

name and inscription, are both owing to some particular circumstance of the writer, and the people to whom it was sent. The people to whom it was sent are plainly Jews in Judea; and the writer very probably is St. Paul, whose circumstances at the breaking up of his confinement at Rome, and his setting out upon a new journey, might be attended with some peculiar embarrassments, which obliged him to act differently from his usual method,

“IV. Thus we are brought to the fourth and last part of our inquiry concerning this epistle—the time and place of writing it. Mill was of opinion that this epistle was written by Paul, in the year 63, in some part of Italy, soon after he had been released from his imprisonment at Rome. Mr. Wetstein appears to have been of the same opinion. Tillemont likewise places this epistle in 63, immediately after the apostle’s being set at liberty, who, as he says, was still at Rome, or at least in Italy. Basnage speaks of this epistle at the year 61, and supposes it to be written during the apostle’s imprisonment, for he afterward speaks of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and says it was the last letter the apostle wrote during the time of his bonds. L’Enfant and Beausobre, in their general preface to St. Paul’s epistles, observe, ‘That in the subscription at the end of the epistle it is said to have been written from Italy; the only ground of which, as they add, is what is said Hebrews 13:24: They of Italy salute you. This has made some think that the apostle wrote to the Hebrews after he had been set at liberty, and when he had got into that part of Italy which borders upon Sicily, and in ancient times was called Italy. Nevertheless there is reason to doubt this. When he requests the prayers of the Hebrews, that he might be restored to them the sooner, he intimates that he was not yet set at liberty.’ Accordingly they place this epistle in the year 62.

“There is not any great difference in any of these opinions concerning the time or place of this epistle, all supposing that it was written by the apostle either at Rome or Italy, near the end of his imprisonment at Rome, or soon after it was over, before he removed to any other country.

“I cannot perceive why it may not be allowed to have been written at Rome. St. Paul’s First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus; nevertheless he says, 1 Corinthians 16:19: ‘The Churches of Asia salute you.’ So now he might send salutations from the Christians of Italy, not

excluding, but including, those at Rome, together with the rest throughout that country. The argument of L'Enfant and Beausobre, that Paul was not yet set at liberty, because he requested the prayers of the Hebrews that he might be restored to them the sooner, appears to me not of any weight. Though Paul was no longer a prisoner, he might request the prayers of those to whom he was writing, that he might have a prosperous journey to them whom he was desirous to visit, and that all impediments of his intended journey might be removed; and many such there might be, though he was no longer under confinement. Paul was not a prisoner when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans; yet he was very fervent in his prayers to God, that he might have a prosperous journey, and come to them, Romans 1:10.

“For determining the time of this epistle, it may be observed that, when the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon, he had hopes of deliverance. At the writing of all these epistles Timothy was present with him; but now he was absent, as plainly appears from Hebrews 13:23. This leads us to think that this epistle was written after them. And it is not unlikely that the apostle had now obtained that liberty which he expected when they were written.

“Moreover, in the Epistle to the Philippians, he speaks of sending Timothy to them, Philippians 2:19-23: ‘But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.’ Timothy, therefore, if sent, was to come back to the apostle. ‘Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.’

“It is probable that Timothy did go to the Philippians, soon after writing the above mentioned epistles, the apostle having gained good assurance of being quite released from his confinement. And this Epistle to the Hebrews was written during the time of that absence; for it is said, Hebrews 13:23: ‘Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, or has been sent abroad.’ The word is capable of that meaning, and it is a better and more likely meaning, because it suits the coherence. And I suppose that Timothy did soon come to the apostle, and that they both sailed to Judea, and after that went to Ephesus, where Timothy was left to reside with his peculiar charge.

“Thus this epistle was written at Rome, or in Italy, soon after that Paul had been released from his confinement at Rome, in the beginning of the year 63. And I suppose it to be the last written of all St. Paul’s epistles which have come down to us, or of which we have any knowledge.” — Dr. Lardner’s WORKS, vol. vi., p. 381.

After this able and most circumstantial investigation I think it would be a mere actum agere to enter farther into this discussion; all that the ancients, both Grecian and Roman, and all that the most intelligent of the moderns, have produced, both for and against the argument stated above, has been both judiciously and candidly stated by Dr. Lardner; and it is not going too far to say that few readers will be found who will draw conclusions different from those of Dr. Lardner, from the same premises.

As all the epistles of St. Paul have an evident object and occasion, it is natural to look for these in the Epistle to the Hebrews as well as in those to other Churches. We have already seen that it was most probably written to the converted Jews in Judea, who were then in a state of poverty, affliction, and persecution; and who, it appears, had been assailed by the strongest arguments to apostatize from the faith, and turn back to the poor elementary teaching furnished by Mosaic rites and ceremonies. That in such circumstances they might begin to halt and waver, will not appear strange to any considerate person; and that the apostle should write to guard them against apostasy, by showing them that the religious system which they had embraced was the completion and perfection of all those which had preceded it, and particularly of the Mosaic, is what might be naturally expected. This he has done in the most effectual and masterly manner, and has furnished them with arguments against their opponents which must have given them a complete triumph.

His arguments against backsliding or apostasy are the most awful and powerful that can well be conceived, and are as applicable now to guard Christian believers against falling from grace as they were in the apostolic times, and, from the general laxity in which most professors of religion indulge themselves, not less necessary.

A late sensible writer, Mr. Thomas Olivers, in a discourse on Hebrews 2:3 of this epistle has considered this subject at large, and treated it with great cogency of reasoning. I shall borrow his Analysis of the different chapters,

and a few of his concluding remarks, a perusal of the whole work will amply repay the serious reader. After one hundred and thirty-two pages of previous discussion he goes on thus:—

“I shall,” says he, “sum up all that has been said upon this head by giving a brief account of the OCCASION and DESIGN of this epistle, and of the apostle’s manner of reasoning therein.

“The Christian religion being so contrary to the corrupt principles and practices of the world, those who embraced and propagated it were, on those accounts, rendered very odious wherever they came. The consequence of this was, that heavy persecutions were raised against them in most places. The converted Hebrews, because they had turned their backs on the law of Moses, and embraced the religion of Jesus whom their rulers had crucified, were exceedingly persecuted by their countrymen. Sometimes the unconverted Hebrews persecuted their converted brethren themselves; at other times they stirred up the heathen who were round about to do it. By these means the believing Hebrews had a great fight of afflictions, Hebrews 10:32; and were made gazing-stocks, both by reproaches and afflictions, Hebrews 10:33; and experienced the spoiling of their goods, which for a while they took joyfully, Hebrews 10:34. But this was not all; for, as the Christian religion was then a new thing in the world, it is natural to suppose that the new converts had a great many scruples and reasonings in themselves concerning the lawfulness of what they had done in embracing it: and what added to these scruples was, the constant endeavor of the Judaizing teachers to lay stumbling blocks in the way of these Hebrews, which they too often effected by means of their divers and strange doctrines, mentioned Hebrews 13:9. The consequence of this opposition, both from within and without, was, that great numbers of the Hebrews apostatized from Christ and his Gospel, and went back to the law of Moses; while the fluctuating state of the rest gave the apostles too much reason to fear a general, if not universal apostasy. Now this apparent danger was the OCCASION of this epistle, and the DESIGN of it was to prevent the threatened evil if possible.

“That this account is true will fully appear from a more particular survey of the contents of the whole epistle.



“Chap. 1. The apostle shows that all former dispensations were delivered to the world by men and angels, who were only servants in what they did; but that the Gospel salvation was delivered by Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Heir of all things. How naturally does he then infer the superiority of the Gospel over the law; and, of consequence, the great absurdity of leaving the former for the sake of the latter!

“Chap. 2. He obviates an objection which might be made to the superior excellency of Christ on account of his humiliation. To this end he shows that this humiliation was voluntary; that it was intended for many important purposes, viz. that we might be sanctified, Hebrews 2:11; that through his death we might be delivered from death, Hebrews 2:14, 15; and that Christ, by experiencing our infirmities in his own person, might become a faithful and merciful High Priest, Hebrews 2:17, 18. The inference then is, that his taking our nature upon him, and dying therein, is no argument of his inferiority either to the prophets or to the angels; and therefore it is no excuse for those who apostatize from the Gospel for the sake of the law.

“Chap. 3. Here Christ is particularly compared with Moses, and shown to be superior to him in many respects. As, 1. Christ is shown to be the great Builder of that house of which Moses is only a small part, Hebrews 3:3, 4. 2. Christ is as a son in his own house; but Moses was only as a servant in his master’s house, Hebrews 3:5. Therefore Christ and his salvation are superior to Moses and his law, and ought not to be neglected on account of any thing inferior. From Hebrews 3:7 of this chapter to Hebrews 4:14, the apostle shows the great danger of apostatizing from Christ, by the severe sentence which was passed on those who rebelled against Moses, and apostatized from his law.

“Chap. 5. Christ is compared to Aaron, and preferred to him on several accounts. As, 1. Aaron offered for his own, as well as for the sins of the people; but Christ offered only for the sins of others, having none of his own to offer for, Hebrews 5:3. 2. Christ was not a priest after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchisedec, which was a superior order, Hebrews 5:10. Concerning Melchisedec and Christ, the apostle observed that, through the dulness of the Hebrews, there were some things which they could not easily understand, Hebrews 5:11-14.

“He therefore calls on them, chap. 6:, to labor for a more perfect acquaintance therewith; withal promising them his farther assistance, Hebrews 6:1-3. The necessity of their doing this, of their thus going on unto perfection, he enforced by the following consideration, that, if they did not go forward, they would be in danger of apostatizing in such manner as would be irrecoverable, Hebrews 6:7, 8. From thence to the end of the chapter he encourages them to patience and perseverance, by the consideration of the love, oath, and faithfulness of GOD; and also by the example of their father Abraham.

“Chap. 7. The apostle resumes the parallel between Melchisedec and Christ, and shows that they agree in title and descent, Hebrews 7:1-3; and then, from instances wherein the priesthood of Melchisedec was preferable to the priesthood of Aaron, he infers the superiority of Christ’s priesthood over that of Aaron, Hebrews 7:4-17. From thence to the end of the chapter, he shows that the priesthood of Aaron was only subservient to the priesthood of Christ, in which it was consummated and abolished; and of consequence, that all those legal obligations were thereby abolished. How naturally then did the apostle infer the absurdity of apostatizing from the Gospel to the law, seeing they who did this, not only left the greater for the lesser, but also left that which remained in full force, for the sake of that which was disannulled.

“Chap. 8. is employed partly in recapitulating what had been demonstrated before concerning the superior dignity of our great High Priest, Hebrews 8:1-5; and partly in showing the Superior excellency of the new covenant, as established in Christ, and as containing better promises; Hebrews 8:6 to the end of the chapter. From this last consideration, the impropriety of going from the new covenant to the old is as naturally inferred as from any other of the afore-mentioned considerations.

“With the same view the apostle, chap. 9:, compares Christ and his priesthood to the tabernacle of old, and to what the high priest did therein on the great day of atonement, in all things giving Christ the preference; from Hebrews 9:1 to the end.

“Chap. 10. The apostle sets down the difference between the legal sacrifices and the sacrifice of Christ: the legal sacrifices were weak, and

could not put away sin, Hebrews 10:1-4; but the sacrifice of Christ was powerful, doing that which the other could not do, Hebrews 10:5-10.

“The next point of difference was between the legal priests who offered these sacrifices, and the High Priest of our profession. And first, the legal priests were many; ours is one. Secondly, they stood when they presented their offerings to God; CHRIST sits at the right hand of his Father. Thirdly, they offered often; but CHRIST, once for all. Fourthly, they, with all their offerings, could not put away the smallest sin; but Christ, by his one offering, put away all sin, Hebrews 10:11-18. Now, from all these considerations, the apostle infers the great superiority of the Gospel over the law; and, consequently, the impropriety of leaving the former for the latter.

“The next thing that the apostle does is to improve his doctrine; this he does by showing that, for the reasons above given, the Hebrews ought to cleave to Christ, to hold fast their profession, and not to forsake the assembling themselves together, Hebrews 10:19-25. And, as a farther inducement to cleave to Christ, and to persevere unto the end, he urges the consideration of the difficulties which they had already overcome, and also of the love which they had formerly shown towards Christ and his Gospel, Hebrews 10:32-34. He also encouraged them not to cast away their confidence, seeing it had a great recompense of reward, which they should enjoy if they persevered unto the end, Hebrews 10:35-37. Another consideration which he urged was, that they ought not to depart from faith to the works of the law, because it is by faith that a just man liveth, and not by the works of the law; because God has no pleasure in those who draw back from faith in him; and because every one who does this exposes himself to eternal perdition, Hebrews 10:36-39.

“Another inducement which he laid before them, to continue to expect salvation by faith and patience, was the consideration of the powerful effects of these graces as exemplified in the patriarchs of old, and the rest of the ancient worthies; chap. 11: throughout. ‘This chapter,’ according to Mr. Perkins, ‘depends on the former; thus we may read in the former chapter that many Jews, having received the faith and given their names to Christ, did afterwards fall away; therefore, towards the end of the chapter, there is a notable exhortation, tending to persuade the Hebrews to

persevere in faith unto the end. Now in this chapter he continues the same exhortation; and the whole chapter (as I take it) is nothing else, in substance, but one reason to urge the former exhortation to perseverance in faith, and the reason is drawn from the excellency of it; for this chapter, in divers ways, sets down what an excellent gift of GOD faith is; his whole scope, therefore, is manifest to be nothing else but to urge them to persevere and continue in that faith, proved at large to be so excellent a thing.'

“As a farther encouragement to patience and perseverance he adds the example of Christ, Hebrews 12:1-3: and as to the afflictions they met with on the Gospel’s account, he tells them they ought not to be discouraged and driven away from Christ on their account, seeing they were signs of the Divine favor, and permitted to come upon them merely for their good, Hebrews 12:4-11. He then exhorts them to encourage one another to persevere in well doing, Hebrews 12:12-14. To watch over one another lest any of them fall from the grace of God, Hebrews 12:15-18. And, seeing they were then in possession of privileges, Gospel privileges, such as the law of Moses could not give, he exhorts them to hold fast the grace they had, that thereby they might serve God in such a manner as the great obligation they were under required, which alone would be acceptable to him; and this they ought to do, the rather because, if they did not, they would find God to be as much more severe to them as his Gospel is superior to the law; Hebrews 12:19 to the end of the chapter.

Chap. 13. He exhorts them, instead of apostatizing, to continue their brotherly affection one for another, Hebrews 13:1-3. To continue their purity of behavior, their dependence on God, and their regard for their teachers, Hebrews 13:4-8. He exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be carried about (from Christ and his Gospel) by divers and strange doctrines, but rather to strive to be established in grace, which they would find to be of more service to them than running about after Jewish ceremonies, Hebrews 13:9. Again he exhorts them to cleave to and to follow JESUS without the camp, and continually to give praise to God through him, Hebrews 13:9-16. And instead of turning away after seducers, that they might avoid persecution and the scandal of the cross, he exhorts them to submit to and obey their own Christian teachers, and to pray for their success and welfare, Hebrews 13:17-19, concluding the

whole with some salutations and a solemn benediction from Hebrews 13:20 to the end.

“Now, if we closely attend to these general contents of the epistle, we shall find that every argument and mode of reasoning, which would be proper in a treatise written professedly on the sin and danger of apostasy, is made use of in this epistle.

For, 1. As great temptations to prefer the law of Moses to the Gospel of Christ was one circumstance which exposed them to the danger of apostasy, nothing could be more to the purpose than to show them that the Gospel is superior to the law. Now we have seen how largely this argument is prosecuted in chap. 1.; 2.; 3.; 5.; 7.; 8.; 9.; 10:. If we reduce it to form, it runs as follows: No one ought to prefer that which is less excellent to that which is more so: but the law is less excellent than the Gospel; therefore none ought to prefer the law to the Gospel, by apostatizing from the latter to the former.

“2. Another argument, equally proper on such an occasion, is that taken from the consideration of the punishment which all apostates are exposed to. This argument is urged Hebrews 2:2, 3; Hebrews 3:7-19; 4:1-14; 6:4, 8; 10:26-31; 12:25, 28, 29. In most of these places the apostle compares the punishment which will be inflicted on apostates from Christ and his Gospel to that which was inflicted on the apostate Israelites of old, and he frequently shows that the former will be far greater than the latter. This argument is as follows: You ought not to do that which will expose you to as great and greater punishment than that which God inflicted on the rebellious Israelites of old: but total and final apostasy from Christ will expose you to this; therefore you ought not to apostatize from Christ.

“3. Another argument proper on such an occasion is that taken from the consideration of the great reward which God has promised to perseverance. This the apostle urges, Hebrews 3:6-14; 4:1-9; Hebrews 5:9; 6:9, 11; 9:28; 10:35-39. This argument runs thus: You ought to be careful to do that which God has promised greatly to reward: but he has promised you this on condition of your perseverance in the Gospel of his Son; therefore you ought to be careful to persevere therein.

“4. A fourth argument, which must operate powerfully on such an occasion, is taken from the consideration of losing their present privileges by apostatizing. This argument is insisted on, Hebrews 2:11-18; 3:1; 4:3-16; 6:18-20; 7:19; 8:10, 12; 9:14, 15; Hebrews 10:14, 22; 12:22, 24, 28; 13:10, 14. This argument runs thus: You ought not to do that for which you will lose the Gospel privileges you now enjoy: but if you apostatize from Christ and his Gospel you will lose them; therefore you ought not to apostatize from Christ and his Gospel.

“5. A fifth argument, very proper in such a work, is taken from the consideration of their former zeal and diligence in cleaving to Christ, and in professing his religion. This argument is handled Hebrews 6:10; 10:32-34. The argument here is: Those who have formerly been zealous in well-doing ought not to grow weary, but rather to be steadfast therein unto the end; but you have formerly been zealous in your adherence to Christ, and in professing his religion; therefore you ought not to grow weary of adhering to Christ, or of professing his religion.

“6. Another argument, proper on such an occasion, is taken from the example of such persons as are held in very high esteem. Now this argument is urged, Hebrews 6:12-15; 9: throughout; Hebrews 12:1-3. Here the argument is: Whatever you esteem as an excellency in the example of holy men of old you ought to imitate: but you esteem it as an excellency in their example that they were steadfast, and did not apostatize from God and his ways; therefore you ought to imitate their example in being steadfast, and in not apostatizing from Christ and his Gospel.

“From all that has been said in these several surveys of this epistle, it undeniably appears, 1. That the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of total and final apostasy; 2. That he wrote this epistle to them on purpose to prevent it if possible; and 3. That it was total and final apostasy from Christ and his Gospel, of which the believing Hebrews were in danger, and which the apostle endeavors to prevent.”

For other matters relative to this subject see the preface, and the notes on all the passages referred to.

## PREFACE

TO THE

**EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

TO THE

## HEBREWS

THE Epistle to the Hebrews, on which the reader is about to enter, is by far the most important and useful of all the apostolic writings; all the doctrines of the Gospel are in it embodied, illustrated, and enforced in a manner the most lucid, by references and examples the most striking and illustrious, and by arguments the most cogent and convincing. It is an epitome of the dispensations of God to man, from the foundation of the world to the advent of Christ. It is not only the sum of the GOSPEL, but the sum and completion of the LAW, on which it is also a most beautiful and luminous comment. Without this, the law of Moses had never been fully understood, nor God's design in giving it. With this, all is clear and plain, and the ways of God with man rendered consistent and harmonious. The apostle appears to have taken a portion of one of his own epistles for his text—CHRIST is the END of the LAW for RIGHTEOUSNESS to them that BELIEVE, and has most amply and impressively demonstrated his proposition. All the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Mosaic institution are shown to have had Christ for their object and end, and to have had neither intention nor meaning but in reference to him; yea, as a system to be without substance, as a law to be without reason, and its enactments to be both impossible and absurd, if taken out of this reference and connection. Never were premises more clearly stated; never was an argument handled in a more masterly manner; and never was a conclusion more legitimately and satisfactorily brought forth. The matter is everywhere the most interesting; the manner is throughout the most engaging; and the language is most beautifully adapted to the whole,

everywhere appropriate, always nervous and energetic, dignified as is the subject, pure and elegant as that of the most accomplished Grecian orators, and harmonious and diversified as the music of the spheres.

So many are the beauties, so great the excellency, so instructive the matter, so pleasing the manner, and so exceedingly interesting the whole, that the work may be read a hundred times over without perceiving any thing of sameness, and with new and increased information at each reading. This latter is an excellency which belongs to the whole revelation of God; but to no part of it in such a peculiar and supereminent manner as to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

To explain and illustrate this epistle multitudes have toiled hard; and exhibited much industry, much learning, and much piety. I also will show my opinion; and ten thousand may succeed me, and still bring out something that is new. That it was written to Jews, naturally such, the whole structure of the epistle proves. Had it been written to the Gentiles, not one in ten thousand of them could have comprehended the argument, because unacquainted with the Jewish system; the knowledge of which the writer of this epistle everywhere supposes. He who is well acquainted with the Mosaic law sits down to the study of this epistle with double advantages; and he who knows the traditions of the elders, and the Mishnaic illustrations of the written, and pretended oral law of the Jews, is still more likely to enter into and comprehend the apostle's meaning. No man has adopted a more likely way of explaining its phraseology than Schoettgen, who has traced its peculiar diction to Jewish sources; and, according to him, the proposition of the whole epistle is this:—

### **JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE TRUE GOD.**

And in order to convince the Jews of the truth of this proposition, the apostle uses but three arguments: 1. Christ is superior to the angels. 2. He is superior to Moses. 3. He is superior to Aaron.

These arguments would appear more distinctly were it not for the improper division of the chapters; as he who divided them in the middle ages (a division to which we are still unreasonably attached) had but a superficial knowledge of the word of God. In consequence of this it is that one peculiar excellency of the apostle is not noticed, viz. his application of



every argument, and the strong exhortation founded on it. Schoettgen has very properly remarked, that commentators in general have greatly misunderstood the apostle's meaning through their unacquaintance with the Jewish writings and their peculiar phraseology, to which the apostle is continually referring, and of which he makes incessant use. He also supposes, allowing for the immediate and direct inspiration of the apostle, that he had in view this remarkable saying of the rabbins, on Isaiah 52:13: "Behold, my servant will deal prudently." Rab. Tanchum, quoting Yalcut Simeoni, part ii., fol. 53, says: **זה מלך המשיה**, "This is the King Messiah, who shall be greatly extolled, and elevated: he shall be elevated beyond Abraham; shall be more eminent than Moses; and more exalted than **ממלאכי השרה** the ministering angels." Or, as it is expressed in Yalcut Kadosh, fol. 144: **מלכי השרה משיה גדול מן האבות ומן משה ומן** Mashiach gadol min ha-aboth; umin Mosheh; umin Malakey hashshareth. "The Messiah is greater than the patriarchs; than Moses; and than the ministering angels." These sayings he shows to have been fulfilled in our Messiah; and as he dwells on the superiority of our Lord to all these illustrious persons because they were at the very top of all comparisons among the Jews; he, according to their opinion, who was greater than all these, must be greater than all created beings.

This is the point which the apostle undertakes to prove, in order that he may show the Godhead of Christ; therefore, if we find him proving that Jesus was greater than the patriarchs, greater than Aaron, greater than Moses, and greater than the angels, he must be understood to mean, according to the Jewish phraseology, that Jesus is an uncreated Being, infinitely greater than all others, whether earthly or heavenly. For, as they allowed the greatest eminence (next to God) to angelic beings, the apostle concludes "that he who is greater than the angels is truly God: but Christ is greater than the angels; therefore Christ is truly God." Nothing can be clearer than that this is the apostle's grand argument; and the proofs and illustrations of it meet the reader in almost every verse.

That the apostle had a plan on which he drew up this epistle is very clear, from the close connection of every part. The grand divisions seem to be three:—

I. The proposition, which is very short, and is contained in chap. 1:1-3. The majesty and pre-eminence of Christ.

II. The proof or arguments which support the proposition, viz.:—

**CHRIST IS GREATER THAN THE ANGELS.**

1. Because he has a more excellent name than they, chap. 1:4, 5. 2. Because the angels of God adore him, chap. 1:6. 3. Because the angels were created by him, chap. 1:7. 4. Because, in his human nature, he was endowed with greater gifts than they, chap. 1:8, 9. 5. Because he is eternal, chap. 1:10, 11, 12. 6. Because he is more highly exalted, chap. 1:13. 7. Because the angels are only the servants of God; he, the Son, chap. 1:14.

In the application of this argument he exhorts the Hebrews not to neglect Christ, chap. 2:1, by arguments drawn:—

1. From the minor to the major, chap. 2:2, 3.
2. Because the preaching of Christ was confirmed by miracles, chap. 2:4.
3. Because, in the economy of the New Testament, angels are not the administrators; but the Messiah himself, to whom all things are subject, chap. 2:5.

Here the apostle inserts a twofold objection, professedly drawn from Divine revelation:—

1. Christ is man, and is less than the angels. What is man—thou madest him a little lower than the angels, chap. 2:6, 7. Therefore he cannot be superior to them.

To this it is answered: 1. Christ as a mortal man, by his death and resurrection, overcame all enemies, and subdued all things to himself; therefore he must be greater than the angels, chap. 2:9.

2. Though Christ died, and was in this respect inferior to the angels, yet it was necessary that he should take on him this mortal state, that he might be of the same nature with those whom he was to redeem; and this he did without any prejudice to his Divinity, chap. 2:10-18.

## CHRIST IS GREATER THAN MOSES.

1. Because Moses was only a servant; Christ, the Lord, Hebrews 3:2-6.

The application of this argument he makes from Psalm 95:7-11, which he draws out at length, Hebrews 3:7-18; 4:1-13.

## CHRIST IS GREATER THAN AARON, AND ALL THE OTHER HIGH PRIESTS.

1. Because he has not gone through the veil of the tabernacle to make an atonement for sin, but has entered for this purpose into heaven itself, chap. 4:14.

2. Because he is the Son of God, chap. 4:14.

3. Because it is from him we are to implore grace and mercy, chap. 4:15, 16, and chap. 4:1, 2, 3.

4. Because he was consecrated High Priest by God himself, chap. 5:4-10.

5. Because he is not a priest according to the order of Aaron, but according to the order of Melchisedec, which was much more ancient, and much more noble, chap. 7. For the excellence and prerogatives of this order, see the notes.

6. Because he is not a typical priest, prefiguring good things to come, but the real Priest, of whom the others were but types and shadows, chap. 8:1-9:11. For the various reasons by which this argument is supported, see also the notes.

In this part of the epistle the apostle inserts a digression, in which he reproves the ignorance and negligence of the Hebrews in their mode of treating the sacred Scriptures. See chap. 5:11, and chap. 6.

The application of this part contains the following exhortations:—

1. That they should carefully retain their faith in Christ as the true Messiah, chap. 10:19-23. 2. That they should be careful to live a godly life, chap. 10:24, 25. 3. That they should take care not to incur the punishment of disobedience, chap. 10:32-37, and chap. 12:3-12. 4. That they should place their whole confidence in God, live by faith, and not turn back to perdition chap. 10:38; 12:2. 5. That they should consider and

imitate the faith and obedience of their eminent ancestors, chap. 11. 6. That they should take courage, and not be remiss in the practice of the true religion, chap. 12:12-24. 7. That they should take heed not to despise the Messiah, now speaking to them from heaven, chap. 12:25-29.

III. Practical and miscellaneous exhortations relative to sundry duties, chap. 13.

All these subjects, (whether immediately designed by the apostle himself, in this particular order, or not,) are pointedly considered in this most excellent epistle; in the whole of which the superiority of CHRIST, his Gospel, his priesthood, and his sacrifice, over Moses, the law, the Aaronic priesthood, and the various sacrifices prescribed by the law, is most clearly and convincingly shown.

Different writers have taken different views of the order in which these subjects are proposed, but most commentators have produced the same results.

For other matters relative to the author of the epistle, the persons to whom it was sent, the language in which it was composed, and the time and place in which it was written, the reader is referred to the introduction, where these matters are treated in sufficient detail.

**THE**

**EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE**

**TO THE**

**HEBREWS**

*Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5571.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5565.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5555.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4067.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4291.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3823.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4422 -Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2411.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3165.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1003.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 3.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 810.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 814.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 815.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 816.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 375.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 111.
- Year of the Julian era, 108.
- Year of the Spanish era, 101.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 67.

- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 63.
- Year of Albinus, governor of the Jews, 2.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 14.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 4.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 64.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 7; or the second after the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 4, or the first after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 16.
- Dominical Letter, it being the third after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the IIIId of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the thirtieth of March, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the IIIId of the nones of April, named by the Jews the 19th of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 3d of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 6.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 13.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 13, 15, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 20, 22, 22.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty- first of March to the Jewish Passover, 9.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Caesar, properly the first Roman emperor, 10.
- Roman Consuls, C. Memmius Regulus and L. Verginius Rufus.

## CHAPTER 1

*Different discoveries made of the Divine will to the ancient Israelites by the prophets, 1. The discovery now perfected by the revelation of Jesus Christ, of whose excellences and glories a large description is given, 2-13. Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1.** *God, who at sundry times and in divers manners* We can scarcely conceive any thing more dignified than the opening of this epistle; the sentiments are exceedingly elevated, and the language, harmony itself! The infinite God is at once produced to view, not in any of those attributes which are essential to the Divine nature, but in the manifestations of his love to the world, by giving a revelation of his will relative to the salvation of mankind, and thus preparing the way, through a long train of years, for the introduction of that most glorious Being, his own Son. This Son, in the fullness of time, was manifested in the flesh that he might complete all vision and prophecy, supply all that was wanting to perfect the great scheme of revelation for the instruction of the world, and then die to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The description which he gives of this glorious personage is elevated beyond all comparison. Even in his humiliation, his suffering of death excepted, he is infinitely exalted above all the angelic host, is the object of their unceasing adoration, is permanent on his eternal throne at the right hand of the Father, and from him they all receive their commands to minister to those whom he has redeemed by his blood. in short, this first chapter, which may be considered the introduction to the whole epistle is, for importance of subject, dignity of expression, harmony and energy of language, compression and yet distinctness of ideas, equal, if not superior, to any other part of the New Testament.

*Sundry times* πολυμερως, from πολυς, many, and μέρος, a part; giving portions of revelation at different times.

*Divers manners* πολυτροπως, from πολυς, many, and τροπος, a manner, turn, or form of speech; hence trope, a figure in rhetoric. Lambert Bos supposes these words to refer to that part of music which is denominated harmony, viz. that general consent or union of musical sounds which is made up of different parts; and, understood in this way, it may signify the agreement or harmony of all the Old Testament writers, who with one consent gave testimony to Jesus Christ, and the work of redemption by him. To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins; Acts 10:43.

But it is better to consider, with Kypke, that the words are rather intended to point out the imperfect state of Divine revelation under the Old Testament; it was not complete, nor can it without the New be considered a sufficiently ample discovery of the Divine will. Under the Old Testament, revelations were made πολυμερως και πολυτροπως, at various times, by various persons, in various laws and forms of teaching, with various degrees of clearness, under various shadows, types, and figures, and with various modes of revelation, such as by angels, visions, dreams, mental impressions, etc. See Numbers 12:6, 8. But under the New Testament all is done απλως, simply, by one person, i.e. JESUS, who has fulfilled the prophets, and completed prophecy; who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the founder, mediator, and governor of his own kingdom.

One great object of the apostle is, to put the simplicity of the Christian system in opposition to the complex nature of the Mosaic economy; and also to show that what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, Jesus has accomplished by the merit of his death, and the energy of his Spirit.

Maximus Tyrius, Diss. 1, page 7, has a passage where the very words employed by the apostle are found, and evidently used nearly in the same sense: τη ρος ανθρωπου ψυχη δυο οργανων οντων προς συνεσιν, του μεν απλου, ον καλουμεν νουν, του δε ποικιλου και πολυμερους και πολυτροπου, ας αισθησεις καλουμεν. “The soul of man has two organs of intelligence: one simple, which we call mind; the other diversified, and acting in various modes and various ways, which we term sense.”



A similar form of expression the same writer employs in Diss. 15, page 171: “The city which is governed by the mob, *πολυφωνον τε ειναι και πολυμερη και πολυπαθη*, is full of noise, and is divided by various factions and various passions.”

The excellence of the Gospel above the law is here set down in three points: 1. God spake unto the faithful under the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets, worthy servants, yet servants; now the Son is much better than a servant, ver. 4. 2. Whereas the body of the Old Testament was long in compiling, being about a thousand years from Moses to Malachi; and God spake unto the fathers by piecemeal, one while raising up one prophet, another while another, now sending them one parcel of prophecy or history, then another; but when Christ came, all was brought to perfection in one age; the apostles and evangelists were alive, some of them, when every part of the New Testament was completely finished. 3. The Old Testament was delivered by God in divers manners, both in utterance and manifestation; but the delivery of the Gospel was in a more simple manner; for, although there are various penmen, yet the subject is the same, and treated with nearly the same phraseology throughout; James, Jude, and the Apocalypse excepted. See Leigh.

**Verse 2. *Last days*** The Gospel dispensation, called the last days and the last time, because not to be followed by any other dispensation; or the conclusion of the Jewish Church and state now at their termination.

***By his Son*** It is very remarkable that the pronoun *αυτου*, his, is not found in the text; nor is it found in any MS. or version. We should not therefore supply the pronoun as our translators have done; but simply read *εν υιω*, BY A SON, or IN A SON, whom he hath appointed heir of all things. God has many sons and daughters, for he is the Father of the spirits of all flesh; and he has many heirs, for if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ; but he has no Son who is heir of all things, none by whom he made the worlds, none in whom he speaks, and by whom he has delivered a complete revelation to mankind, but Jesus the Christ.

The apostle begins with the lowest state in which Christ has appeared: 1. His being a SON, born of a woman, and made under the law. He then ascends, 2. So his being an Heir, and an Heir of all things. 3. He then

describes him as the Creator of all worlds. 4. As the Brightness of the Divine glory. 5. As the express Image of his person, or character of the Divine substance. 6. As sustaining the immense fabric of the universe; and this by the word of his power. 7. As having made an atonement for the sin of the world, which was the most stupendous of all his works.

*“Twas great to speak a world from nought;  
Twas greater to redeem.”*

8. As being on the right hand of God, infinitely exalted above all created beings; and the object of adoration to all the angelic host. 9. As having an eternal throne, neither his person nor his dignity ever changing or decaying. 10. As continuing to exercise dominion, when the earth and the heavens are no more! It is only in God manifested in the flesh that all these excellences can possibly appear, therefore the apostle begins this astonishing climax with the simple Sonship of Christ, or his incarnation; for, on this, all that he is to man, and all that he has done for man, is built.

**Verse 3. *The brightness of his glory* απαυγασμα της δοξης** The resplendent outbeaming of the essential glory of God. Hesy chius interprets απαυγασμα by ηλιου φεγγος, the splendor of the sun. The same form of expression is used by an apocryphal writer, Wisdom chap. 7:26, where, speaking of the uncreated wisdom of God, he says: “For she is the splendor of eternal light, απαυγασμα γαρ εστι φωτος αιδιου, and the unsullied mirror of the energy of God, and the image of his goodness.” The word αυγασμα is that which has splendor in itself απαυγασμα is the splendor emitted from it; but the inherent splendor and the exhibited splendor are radically and essentially the same.

***The express image of his person* χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου**· The character or impression of his hypostasis or substance. It is supposed that these words expound the former; image expounding brightness, and person or substance, glory. The hypostasis of God is that which is essential to him as God; and the character or image is that by which all the likeness of the original becomes manifest, and is a perfect fac-simile of the whole. It is a metaphor taken from sealing; the die or seal leaving the full impression of its every part on the wax to which it is applied.

From these words it is evident, 1. That the apostle states Jesus Christ to be of the same essence with the Father, as the **απαυγασμα**, or proceeding splendor, must be the same with the **αυγασμα**, or inherent splendor.

2. That Christ, though proceeding from the Father, is of the same essence; for if one **αυγη**, or splendor, produce another **αυγη**, or splendor, the produced splendor must be of the same essence with that which produces it.

3. That although Christ is thus of the same essence with the Father, yet he is a distinct person from the Father; as the splendor of the sun, though of the same essence, is distinct from the sun itself, though each is essential to the other; as the **αυγασμα**, or inherent splendor, cannot subsist without its **απαυγασμα**, or proceeding splendor, nor the proceeding splendor subsist without the inherent splendor from which it proceeds.

4. That Christ is eternal with the Father, as the proceeding splendor must necessarily be coexistent with the inherent splendor. If the one, therefore, be uncreated, the other is uncreated; if the one be eternal, the other is eternal.

***Upholding all things by the word of his power*** This is an astonishing description of the infinitely energetic and all pervading power of God. He spake, and all things were created; he speaks, and all things are sustained. The Jewish writers frequently express the perfection of the Divine nature by the phrases, He bears all things, both above and below; He carries all his creatures; He bears his world; He bears all worlds by his power. The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was written, would, from this and other circumstances, fully understand that the apostle believed Jesus Christ to be truly and properly God.

***Purged our sins*** There may be here some reference to the great transactions in the wilderness.

1. Moses, while in communion with God on the mount, was so impressed with the Divine glories that his face shone, so that the Israelites could not behold it. But Jesus is infinitely greater than Moses, for he is the splendor of God's glory; and,

2. Moses found the government of the Israelites such a burden that he altogether sank under it. His words, Numbers 11:12, are very remarkable: Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, CARRY them in thy BOSOM-unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? But Christ not only carried all the Israelites, and all mankind; but he upholds ALL THINGS by the word of his power.

3. The Israelites murmured against Moses and against God, and provoked the heavy displeasure of the Most High; and would have been consumed had not Aaron made an atonement for them, by offering victims and incense. But Jesus not only makes an atonement for Israel, but for the whole world; not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood: hence it is said that he purged our sins **δι αυτου**, by himself his own body and life being the victim. It is very likely that the apostle had all these things in his eye when he wrote this verse; and takes occasion from them to show the infinite excellence of Jesus Christ when compared with Moses; and of his Gospel when compared with the law. And it is very likely that the Spirit of God, by whom he spoke, kept in view those maxims of the ancient Jews, concerning the Messiah, whom they represent as being infinitely greater than Abraham, the patriarchs, Moses, and the ministering angels. So Rabbi Tanchum, on Isaiah 52: 13, Behold my servant shall deal prudently, says, **זה מלך המשיח** Zeh melek hammashiach, this is the King Messiah; and shall be exalted, and be extolled, and be very high. “He shall be exalted above Abraham, and shall be extolled beyond Moses, and shall be more sublime than the ministering angels-.” See the preface.

***The right hand of the Majesty on high*** As it were associated with the supreme Majesty, in glory everlasting, and in the government of all things in time and in eternity; for the right hand is the place of the greatest eminence, 1 Kings 2:19. The king himself, in eastern countries, sits on the throne; the next to him in the kingdom, and the highest favourite, sits on his right hand; and the third greatest personage, on his left.

**Verse 4. *So much better than the angels*** Another argument in favor of the Divinity of our Lord. The Jews had the highest opinion of the transcendent excellence of angels, they even associate them with God in

the creation of the world, and suppose them to be of the privy council of the Most High; and thus they understand Genesis 1:26: Let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness; “And the Lord said to the ministering angels that stood before him, and who were created the second day, Let us make man,” etc. See the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel. And they even allow them to be worshipped for the sake of their Creator, and as his representatives; though they will not allow them to be worshipped for their own sake. As, therefore, the Jews considered them next to God, and none entitled to their adoration but God; on their own ground the apostle proves Jesus Christ to be God, because God commanded all the angels of heaven to worship him. He, therefore, who is greater than the angels, and is the object of their adoration, is God. But Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, and the object of their adoration; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

**By inheritance obtained** κληρονομηκεν ονομα. The verb κληρονομειν signifies generally to participate, possess, obtain, or acquire; and is so used by the purest Greek writers: Kypke has produced several examples of it from Demosthenes. It is not by inheritance that Christ possesses a more excellent name than angels, but as God: he has it naturally and essentially; and, as God manifested in the flesh, he has it in consequence of his humiliation, sufferings, and meritorious death. See Philippians 2:9.

**Verse 5. *Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee*** These words are quoted from Psalm 2:7, a psalm that seems to refer only to the Messiah; and they are quoted by St. Paul, Acts 13:33, as referring to the resurrection of Christ. And this application of them is confirmed by the same apostle, Romans 1:4, as by his resurrection from the dead he was declared — manifestly proved, to be the Son of God with power; God having put forth his miraculous energy in raising that body from the grave which had truly died, and died a violent death, for Christ was put to death as a malefactor, but by his resurrection his innocence was demonstrated, as God could not work a miracle to raise a wicked man from the dead. As Adam was created by God, and because no natural generation could have any operation in this case, therefore he was called the son of God, Luke 3:38, and could never have seen corruption if he had not sinned, so the human nature of Jesus Christ, formed by the energy of the eternal Spirit in

the womb of the virgin, without any human intervention, was for this very reason called the Son of God, Luke 1:35; and because it had not sinned, therefore it could not see corruption, nor was it even mortal, but through a miraculous display of God's infinite love, for the purpose of making a sacrificial atonement for the sin of the world and God, having raised this sacrificed human nature from the dead, declared that same Jesus (who was, as above stated, the Son of God) to be his Son, the promised Messiah; and as coming by the Virgin Mary, the right heir to the throne of David, according to the uniform declaration of all the prophets.

The words, This day have I begotten thee, must refer either to his incarnation, when he was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit; or to his resurrection from the dead, when God, by this sovereign display of his almighty energy, declared him to be his Son, vindicated his innocence, and also the purity and innocence of the blessed virgin, who was the mother of this son, and who declared him to be produced in her womb by the power of God. The resurrection of Christ, therefore, to which the words most properly refer, not only gave the fullest proof that he was an innocent and righteous man, but also that he had accomplished the purpose for which he died, and that his conception was miraculous, and his mother a pure and unspotted virgin.

This is a subject of infinite importance to the Christian system, and of the last consequence in reference to the conviction and conversion of the Jews, for whose use this epistle was sent by God. Here is the rock on which they split; they deny this Divine Sonship of Jesus Christ, and their blasphemies against him and his virgin mother are too shocking to be transcribed. The certainty of the resurrection of Jesus refutes their every calumny; proves his miraculous conception; vindicates the blessed virgin; and, in a word, declares him to be the Son of God with power.

This most important use of this saying has passed unnoticed by almost every Christian writer which I have seen; and yet it lies here at the foundation of all the apostle's proofs. If Jesus was not thus the Son of God, the whole Christian system is vain and baseless: but his resurrection demonstrates him to have been the Son of God; therefore every thing built on this foundation is more durable than the foundations of heaven, and as inexpugnable as the throne of the eternal King.

*He shall be to me a Son?* As the Jews have ever blasphemed against the Sonship of Christ, it was necessary that the apostle should adduce and make strong all his proofs, and show that this was not a new revelation; that it was that which was chiefly intended in several scriptures of the Old Testament, which, without farther mentioning the places where found, he immediately produces. This place, which is quoted from 2 Samuel 7:14, shows us that the seed which God promised to David, and who was to sit upon his throne, and whose throne should be established for ever, was not Solomon, but Jesus Christ; and indeed he quotes the words so as to intimate that they were so understood by the Jews. See among the observations at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 6.** *And again, when he bringeth in the firstborn* This is not a correct translation of the Greek, ὅταν δε παλιν εισαγαγη τον πρωτοτοκον εις την οικουμενην. But when he bringeth again, or the second time, the first-born into the habitable world. This most manifestly refers to his resurrection, which might be properly considered a second incarnation; for as the human soul, as well as the fullness of the Godhead bodily, dwelt in the man, Christ Jesus on and during his incarnation, so when he expired upon the cross, both the Godhead and the human spirit left his dead body; and as on his resurrection these were reunited to his revived manhood, therefore, with the strictest propriety, does the apostle say that the resurrection was a second bringing of him into the world.

I have translated οικουμενη the habitable world, and this is its proper meaning; and thus it is distinguished from κοσμος, which signifies the terraqueous globe, independently of its inhabitants; though it often expresses both the inhabited and uninhabited parts. Our Lord's first coming into the world is expressed by this latter word, chap. 10:5: Wherefore when he cometh into the world, διο εισερχομενος εις τον κοσμος, and this simply refers to his being incarnated, that he might be capable of suffering and dying for man. But the word is changed on this second coming, I mean his resurrection, and then οικουμενη is used; and why? (fancy apart) because he was now to dwell with man; to send his gospel everywhere to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to accompany that Gospel wherever he sent it, and to be wherever two or three should be gathered together in his name. Wherever the messengers of Jesus Christ go,

preaching the kingdom of God, even to the farthest and most desolate parts of the earth where human beings exist, there they ever find Christ; he is not only in them, and with them, but he is in and among all who believe on him through their word.

*Let all the angels of God worship him.* The apostle recurs here to his former assertion, that Jesus is higher than the angels, ver. 4, that he is none of those who can be called ordinary angels or messengers, but one of the most extraordinary kind, and the object of worship to all the angels of God. To worship any creature is idolatry, and God resents idolatry more than any other evil. Jesus Christ can be no creature, else the angels who worship him must be guilty of idolatry, and God the author of that idolatry, who commanded those angels to worship Christ.

There has been some difficulty in ascertaining the place from which the apostle quotes these words; some suppose Psalm 97:7: Worship him, all ye gods; which the Septuagint translate thus: *προσκυνησατε αυτω, παντες αγγελοι αυτου*. Worship him, all ye his angels; but it is not clear that the Messiah is intended in this psalm, nor are the words precisely those used here by the apostle. Our marginal references send us with great propriety to the Septuagint version of Deuteronomy 32:43, where the passage is found verbatim et literatim; but there is nothing answering to the words in the present Hebrew text. The apostle undoubtedly quoted the Septuagint, which had then been for more than 300 years a version of the highest repute among the Jews; and it is very probable that the copy from which the Seventy translated had the corresponding words. However this may be, they are now sanctioned by Divine authority; and as the verse contains some singular additions, I will set it down in a parallel column with that of our own version, which was taken immediately from the Hebrew text, premising simply this, that it is the last verse of the famous prophetic song of Moses, which seems to point out the advent of the Messiah to discomfit his enemies, purify the land, and redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Deuteronomy 32:43, from the Hebrew.

Rejoice, O ye nations, for he will avenge in him; for he will avenge the the blood of his servants; and will render vengeance to his adversaries and will be merciful to his land and to his people.



Deuteronomy 32:43, from the Septuagint.

Rejoice, ye heaven, together with him; and let all the angels of God . .  
 .Rejoice, O ye nations, with | worship him. Rejoice, ye his people;  
 Gentiles, with his people; and let the children of God be strengthened in  
 him blood of his children; he will avenge, and will repay judgment to his  
 vengeance: adversaries; and those who hate him . | will he recompense: and  
 the Lord will purge the land of his people.

This is a very important verse; and to it, as it stands in the Septuagint, St. Paul has referred once before; see Romans 15:10. This very verse, as it stands now in the Septuagint, thus referred to by an inspired writer, shows the great importance of this ancient version; and proves the necessity of its being studied and well understood by every minister of Christ. In Rom. 3: there is a large quotation-from Psalm 14:, where there are six whole verses in the apostle's quotation which are not found in the present Hebrew text, but are preserved in the Septuagint! How strange it is that this venerable and important version, so often quoted by our Lord and all his apostles, should be so generally neglected, and so little known! That the common people should be ignorant of it, is not to be wondered at, as it has never been put in an English dress; but that the ministers of the Gospel should be unacquainted with it may be spoken to their shame.

**Verse 7. *Who maketh his angels spirits*** They are so far from being superior to Christ, that they are not called God's sons in any peculiar sense, but his servants, as tempests and lightnings are. In many respects they may have been made inferior even to man as he came out of the hands of his Maker, for he was made in the image and likeness of God; but of the angels, even the highest order of them, this is never spoken. It is very likely that the apostle refers here to the opinions of the Jews relative to the angels. In Pirkey R. Elieser, c. 4, it is said: "The angels which were created the second day, when they minister before God, נעשי של אש become fire." In Shemoth Rabba, s. 25, fol. 123, it is said: "God is named the Lord of hosts, because with his angels he doth whatsoever he wills: when he pleases, he makes them sit down; Judges 6:11: And the angel of the Lord came, and sat under a tree. When he pleases, he causes them to stand; Isaiah 6:2: The seraphim stood. Sometimes he makes them like women; Zechariah 5:9: Behold there came two women, and the wind was

in their wings. Sometimes he makes them like men; Genesis 18:2: And, lo, three men stood by him. Sometimes he makes them spirits; Psalm 104:4: Who maketh his angels spirits. Sometimes he makes them fire; *ibid.* His ministers a flame of fire.”

In Yalcut Simeoni, par. 2, fol. 11, it is said: “The angel answered Manoah, I know not in whose image I am made, for God changeth us every hour: sometimes he makes us fire, sometimes spirit, sometimes men, and at other times angels.” It is very probable that those who are termed angels are not confined to any specific form or shape, but assume various forms and appearances according to the nature of the work on which they are employed and the will of their sovereign employer. This seems to have been the ancient Jewish doctrine on this subject.

**Verse 8. *Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever*** If this be said of the Son of God, i.e. Jesus Christ, then Jesus Christ must be God; and indeed the design of the apostle is to prove this. The words here quoted are taken from Psalm 45:6, 7, which the ancient Chaldee paraphrast, and the most intelligent rabbins, refer to the Messiah. On the third verse of this Psalm, Thou art fairer than the children of men, the Targum says: “Thy beauty, מלכא משיחא malca Meshicha, O King Messiah, is greater than the children of men.” Aben Ezra says: “This Psalm speaks of David, or rather of his son, the Messiah, for this is his name,” Ezekiel 34:24: And David my servant shall be a Prince over them for ever. Other rabbins confirm this opinion.

This verse is very properly considered a proof, and indeed a strong one, of the Divinity of Christ; but some late versions of the New Testament have endeavored to avoid the evidence of this proof by translating the words thus: God is thy throne for ever and ever; and if this version be correct, it is certain the text can be no proof of the doctrine. Mr. Wakefield vindicates this translation at large in his History of Opinions; and ο θεος, being the nominative case, is supposed to be a sufficient justification of this version. In answer to this it may be stated that the nominative case is often used for the vocative, particularly by the Attics; and the whole scope of the place requires it should be so used here; and, with due deference to all of a contrary opinion, the original Hebrew cannot be consistently translated any other way, כסאך אלהים עולם ועד kisaca Elohim olam vaed, Thy

throne, O God, is for ever, and to eternity. It is in both worlds; and extends over all time; and will exist through all endless duration. To this our Lord seems to refer, Matthew 28:18: All power is given unto me, both in HEAVEN and EARTH. My throne, i.e. my dominion, extends from the creation to the consummation of all things. These I have made, and these I uphold; and from the end of the world, throughout eternity, I shall have the same glory-sovereign, unlimited power and authority, which I had with the Father before the world began; John 17:5. I may add that none of the ancient versions has understood it in the way contended for by those who deny the Godhead of Christ, either in the Psalm from which it is taken, or in this place where it is quoted. Aquila translates אלהים Elohim, by θεε, O God, in the vocative case; and the Arabic adds the sign of the vocative (Arabic) ya, reading the place thus: (Arabic) korsee yallaho ila abadilabada, the same as in our version. And even allowing that ο θεος here is to be used as the nominative case, it will not make the sense contended for, without adding εστι to it, a reading which is not countenanced by any version, nor by any MS. yet discovered. Wiclif, Coverdale, and others, understood it as the nominative, and translated it so; and yet it is evident that this nominative has the power of the vocative: forsothe to the sone God thi troone into the world of world: a gerde of equite the gerde of thi reume. I give this, pointing and all, as it stands in my old MS. Bible. Wiclif is nearly the same, but is evidently of a more modern cast: but to the sone he seith, God thy trone is into the world of world, a gherd of equitye is the gherd of thi rewme. Coverdale translates it thus: But unto the sonne he sayeth, God, thi seate endureth for ever and ever: the cepter of thi kyngdome is a right cepter. Tindal and others follow in the same way, all reading it in the nominative case, with the force of the vocative; for none of them has inserted the word εστι, is, because not authorized by the original: a word which the opposers of the Divinity of our Lord are obliged to beg, in order to support their interpretation. See some farther criticisms on this at the end of this chapter.

***A scepter of righteousness*** The scepter, which was a sort of staff or instrument of various forms, was the ensign of government, and is here used for government itself. This the ancient Jewish writers understand also of the Messiah.

**Verse 9. *Thou hast loved righteousness*** This is the characteristic of a just governor: he abhors and suppresses iniquity; he countenances and supports righteousness and truth.

***Therefore God, even thy God*** The original, **δια τουτο εχρισε σε ο θεος, ο θεος σου**, may be thus translated: Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee. The form of speech is nearly the same with that in the preceding verse; but the sense is sufficiently clear if we read, Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee, etc.

***With the oil of gladness*** We have often had occasion to remark that, anciently, kings, priests, and prophets were consecrated to their several offices by anointing; and that this signified the gifts and influences of the Divine Spirit. Christ, **ο χριστος**, signifies The Anointed One, the same as the Hebrew Messiah; and he is here said to be anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows. None was ever constituted prophet, priest, and king, but himself; some were kings only, prophets only, and priests only; others were kings and priests, or priests and prophets, or kings and prophets; but none had ever the three offices in his own person but Jesus Christ, and none but himself can be a King over the universe, a Prophet to all intelligent beings, and a Priest to the whole human race. Thus he is infinitely exalted beyond his fellows — all that had ever borne the regal, prophetic, or sacerdotal offices.

Some think that the word **μετοχους**, fellows, refers to believers who are made partakers of the same Spirit, but cannot have its infinite plenitude. The first sense seems the best. Gladness is used to express the festivities which took place on the inauguration of kings, etc.

**Verse 10. *And, Thou, Lord*** This is an address to the Son as the Creator, see ver. 2; for this is implied in laying the foundation of the earth. The heavens, which are the work of his hands, point out his infinite wisdom and skill.

**Verse 11. *They shall perish*** Permanently fixed as they seem to be, a time shall come when they shall be dissolved, and afterward new heavens and a new earth be formed, in which righteousness alone shall dwell. See 2 Peter 3:10-13.

***Shall wax old as doth a garment*** As a garment by long using becomes unfit to be longer used, so shall all visible things; they shall wear old, and wear out; and hence the necessity of their being renewed. It is remarkable that our word world is a contraction of wear old; a term by which our ancestors expressed the sentiment contained in this verse. That the word was thus compounded, and that it had this sense in our language, may be proved from the most competent and indisputable witnesses. It was formerly written (Anglo-Saxon) weorold, and (Anglo-Saxon) wereld. This etymology is finely alluded to by our excellent poet, Spencer, when describing the primitive age of innocence, succeeded by the age of depravity:-

*“The lion there did with the lambe consort,  
And eke the dove sat by the faulcon’s side;  
Nehemiah each of other feared fraude or tort,  
But did in safe security abide,  
Withouten perill of the stronger pride:  
But when the WORLD woxe old, it woxe warre old,  
Whereof it hight, and having shortly tride  
The trains of wit, in wickednesse woxe bold,  
And dared of all sinnes, the secrets to unfold.”*

Even the heathen poets are full of such allusions. See Horace, Carm. lib. iii., od. 6; Virgil, AEn. viii., ver. 324.

***Thou remainest*** Instead of  $\delta\iota\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , some good MSS. read  $\delta\iota\alpha\mu\epsilon\nu\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ , the first, without the circumflex, being the present tense of the indicative mood; the latter, with the circumflex, being the future-thou shalt remain. The difference between these two readings is of little importance.

**Verse 12. *And they shall be changed*** Not destroyed ultimately, or annihilated. They shall be changed and renewed.

***But thou art the same*** These words can be said of no being but God; all others are changeable or perishable, because temporal; only that which is eternal can continue essentially, and, speaking after the manner of men, formally the same.

***Thy years shall not fail.*** There is in the Divine duration no circle to be run, no space to be measured, no time to be reckoned.

All is eternity-infinite and onward.

**Verse 13. *But to which of the angels*** We have already seen, from the opinions and concessions of the Jews, that, if Jesus Christ could be proved to be greater than the angels, it would necessarily follow that he was God: and this the apostle does most amply prove by these various quotations from their own Scriptures; for he shows that while he is the supreme and absolute Sovereign, they are no more than his messengers and servants, and servants even to his servants, i.e. to mankind.

**Verse 14. *Are they not all ministering spirits*** That is, They are all ministering spirits; for the Hebrews often express the strongest affirmative by an interrogation.

All the angels, even those of the highest order, are employed by their Creator to serve those who believe in Christ Jesus. What these services are, and how performed, it would be impossible to state. Much has been written on the subject, partly founded on Scripture, and partly on conjecture. They are, no doubt, constantly employed in averting evil and procuring good. If God help man by man, we need not wonder that he helps man by angels. We know that he needs none of those helps, for he can do all things himself; yet it seems agreeable to his infinite wisdom and goodness to use them. This is part of the economy of God in the government of the world and of the Church; and a part, no doubt, essential to the harmony and perfection of the whole. The reader may see a very sensible discourse on this text in vol. ii., page 133, of the Rev. John Wesley's works, American edition. Dr. Owen treats the subject at large in his comment on this verse, vol. iii., page 141, edit. 8vo., which is just now brought to my hand, and which appears to be a very learned, judicious, and important work, but by far too diffuse. In it the words of God are drowned in the sayings of man.

THE Godhead of Christ is a subject of such great importance, both to the faith and hope of a Christian, that I feel it necessary to bring it full into view, wherever it is referred to in the sacred writings. It is a prominent article in the apostle's creed, and should be so in ours. That this doctrine cannot be established on ver. 8 has been the assertion of many. To what I have already said on this verse, I beg leave to subjoin the following criticisms of a learned friend, who has made this subject his particular study.

## BRIEF REMARKS ON HEBREWS, chap. 1, ver. 8.

ὁ θρονος σου, ο θεος, εις τους αιωνας.

It hath ever been the opinion of the most sound divines, that these words, which are extracted from the 45th Psalm, are addressed by God the Father unto God the Son. Our translators have accordingly rendered the passage thus: “Thy throne, O God, is for ever.” Those who deny the Divinity of Christ, being eager to get rid of such a testimony against themselves, contend that ο θεος is here the nominative, and that the meaning is: “God is thy throne for ever.” Now it is somewhat strange, that none of them have had critical acumen enough to discover that the words cannot possibly admit of this signification. It is a rule in the Greek language, that when a substantive noun is the subject of a sentence, and something is predicated of it, the article, if used at all, is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate. The Greek translators of the Old, and the authors of the New Testament, write agreeably to this rule. I shall first give some examples from the latter:—

θεος ην ο λογος. — “The Word was God.” John 1:1.

ὁ λογος σαρξ εγενετο. — “The Word became flesh.” John 1:14.

πνευμα ο θεος. — “God is a Spirit.” John 4:24.

ὁ θεος αγαπη εστι. — “God is love.” 1 John 4:8.

ὁ θεος φως εστι. — “God is light.” 1 John 1:5.

If we examine the Septuagint version of the Psalms, we shall find, that in such instances the author sometimes places the article before the subject, but that his usual mode is to omit it altogether. A few examples will suffice:—

ὁ θεος κριτης δικαιος. — “God is a righteous judge.” Psalm 7:11.

ὁ θεος ημων καταφυγη και δυναμις, — “God is our refuge and strength.” Psalm 46:1.

κυριος βοηθος μου. — “The Lord is my helper.” Psalm 28:7.

κυριος στερεωμα μου και καταφυγη μου. — “The Lord is my firm support and my refuge.” Psalm 18:2.

θεος μεγας κυριος. — “The Lord is a great God.” Psalm 95:3.

We see what is the established phraseology of the Septuagint, when a substantive noun has something predicated of it in the same sentence. Surely, then, we may be convinced that if in Psalm 45:6, the meaning which they who deny our Lord’s Divinity affix, had been intended, it would rather have been written **θρονος σου, ο θεος, or θρονος σου, θεος**. This our conviction will, if possible, be increased, when we examine the very next clause of this sentence, where we shall find that the article is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate.

**ῥαβδος ευθυτηρος η ραβδος της βασιλειας σου.** — “The scepter of thy kingdom is a scepter of rectitude.”

“But it may be doubted whether **θεος** with the article affixed be ever used in the vocative case.” Your doubt will be solved by reading the following examples, which are taken not promiscuously from the Septuagint, but all of them from the Psalms.

**κρινον αυτους, ο θεος.** — “Judge them, O God.” Psalm 5:10.

**ο θεος, ο θεος μου.** — “O God, my God.” Psalm 22:1.

**σοι ψαλω, ο θεος μου.** — “Unto thee will I sing, O my God.” Psalm 59:17.

**υψωσω σε, ο θεος μου.** — “I will exalt thee, O my God.” Psalm 145:1.

**κυριε, ο θεος μου.** — “O Lord my God.” Psalm 104:1.

I have now removed the only objection which can, I think, be started. It remains, that the son of Mary is here addressed as the God whose throne endures for ever.

I know that a pronoun sometimes occurs with the article prefixed to its predicate; but I speak only of nouns substantive.

I must not fail to observe, that the rule about the subject and predicate, like that of the Greek prepositive article, pervades all classes of writers. It will



be sufficient, if I give three or four examples. The learned reader may easily collect more.

προσκηνιον μεν ο ουρανος απας, θεατρον δ' η οικουμενη. “The whole heaven is his stage, and the world his theater.” Chrysostom. We have here two instances in one sentence. The same is the case in the following examples:—

βραχυς μεν ο ξυλλογος, μεγας δ ο ποθος. — “Small indeed is the assembly, but great is the desire.” Chrysostom.

καλον γαρ το αθλον, και η ελπις μεγαλη. — “For the prize is noble, and the hope is great.” Plato.

το τ' αισχρον εχθρον, και το χρηστον ευκλεες. — “That which is base is hateful; and that which is honest, glorious.” Sophocles.

Having spoken of nouns substantive only, I ought to state that the rule applies equally to adjectives and to participles. Near the opening of the fifth of Matthew, we find eight consecutive examples of the rule. In five of these the subject is an adjective, and in the other three, a participle. Indeed one of them has two participles, affording an instance of the rule respecting the prepositive article, as well as of that which we are now considering. μακαριοι οι πεινωντες και διψωντες. “Blessed are they who hunger and thirst.” In the Apocalypse there are four examples of the rule with participles, and in all these twelve cases the predicate is placed first. See the supplement to my Essay on the Greek Article, at the end of Dr. A. Clarke’s commentary on Ephesians.

I am aware that an exception now and then occurs in the sacred writings; but I think I may assert that there are no exceptions in the Septuagint version of the book of Psalms. As the words ο θρονος σου, ο θεος, occur in the book of Psalms, the most important question is this: Does that book always support the orthodox interpretation? With regard to the deviations which are elsewhere occasionally found, I think there can be little doubt that they are owing to the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers, for the rule is unquestionably genuine. — H. S. BOYD.

The preceding remarks are original, and will be duly respected by every scholar.

I have shown my reasons in the note on Luke 1:35, why I cannot close in with the common view of what is called the eternal Sonship of Christ. I am inclined to think that from this tenet Arianism had its origin. I shall here produce my authority for this opinion. Arius, the father of what is called Arianism, and who flourished in A. D. 300, was a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, a man of great learning and eloquence, and of deeply mortified manners; and he continued to edify the Church by his teaching and example till the circumstance took place which produced that unhappy change in his religious sentiments, which afterwards gave rise to so much distraction and division in the Christian Church. The circumstance to which I refer is related by Socrates Scholasticus, in his supplement to the History of Eusebius, lib. i., c. 5; and is in substance as follows: Alexander, having succeeded Achilles in the bishopric of Alexandria, self-confidently philosophizing one day in the presence of his presbyters and the rest of his clergy concerning the holy Trinity, among other things asserted that there was a Monad in the Triad, **φιλοτιμοτερον περι της αγιας τριαδος, ες τριαδι Μοναδα ειναι φιλοσοφων εθεολογει**. What he said on the derived nature or eternal Sonship of Christ is not related. Arius, one of his presbyters, a man of considerable skill in the science of logic, **ανηρ ουκ αμοιρος της διαλεκτικης λεσχης**, supposing that the bishop designed to introduce the dogmas of Sabellius, the Libyan, who denied the personality of the Godhead, and consequently the Trinity, sharply opposed the bishop, arguing thus: "If the Father begot the Son, he who was thus begotten had a beginning of his existence; and from this it is manifest, that there was a time in which the Son was not. Whence it necessarily follows, that he has his subsistence from what exists not." The words which Socrates quotes are the following, of which the above is as close a translation as the different idioms will allow: **ει ο πατηρ εγεννησε τον υιον, αρχην υπαρξεως εχει ο γεννηθεις· και εκ τουτου δηλον, οτι ην οτε ουκ ην ο υιος· ακολουθει τε εξ αναγκης, εξ ουκ οντων εχειν αυτον την υποστασιν**. Now, it does not appear that this had been previously the doctrine of Arius, but that it was the consequence which he logically drew from the doctrine laid down by the bishop; and, although Socrates does not tell us what the bishop stated, yet, from the conclusions drawn, we may at once see what the premises were; and these must have been some incautious assertions concerning the Sonship of the Divine nature of Christ: and I have shown elsewhere that these are fair deductions

from such premises. “But is not God called Father; and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? “Most certainly. That God graciously assumes the name of Father, and acts in that character towards mankind, the whole Scripture proves; and that the title is given to him as signifying Author, Cause, Fountain, and Creator, is also sufficiently manifest from the same Scriptures. In this sense he is said to be the Father of the rain, Job 38:28; and hence also it is said, He is the Father of spirits, Hebrews 12:9; and he is the Father of men because he created them; and Adam, the first man, is particularly called his son, Luke 3:38. But he is the Father of the human nature of our blessed Lord in a peculiar sense, because by his energy this was produced in the womb of the virgin. Luke 1:35, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; THEREFORE also that HOLY THING WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE shall be called THE SON OF GOD. It is in consequence of this that our blessed Lord is so frequently termed the Son of God, and that God is called his Father. But I know not any scripture, fairly interpreted, that states the Divine nature of our Lord to be begotten of God, or to be the Son of God. Nor can I see it possible that he could be begotten of the Father, in this sense, and be eternal; and if not eternal, he is not God. But numberless scriptures give him every attribute of Godhead; his own works demonstrate it; and the whole scheme of salvation requires this. I hope I may say that I have demonstrated his supreme, absolute, and unoriginated Godhead, both in my note on Colossians 1:16, 17, and in my Discourse on Salvation by Faith. And having seen that the doctrine of the eternal Sonship produced Arianism, and Arianism produced Socinianism, and Socinianism produces a kind of general infidelity, or disrespect to the sacred writings, so that several parts of them are rejected as being uncanonical, and the inspirations of a major part of the New Testament strongly suspected; I find it necessary to be doubly on my watch to avoid every thing that may, even in the remotest way, tend to so deplorable a catastrophe.

It may be said: “Is not God called the eternal Father? And if so, there can be no eternal Father if there be no eternal Son.” I answer: God is not called in any part of Scripture, as far as I can recollect, either the eternal or everlasting Father in reference to our blessed Lord, nor indeed in reference to any thing else; but this very title, strange to tell, is given to Jesus Christ

himself: His name shall be called the EVERLASTING FATHER, Isaiah 9:6; and we may on this account, with more propriety, look for an eternal filiation proceeding from him, than from any other person of the most holy Trinity.

Should it be asked: “Was there no trinity of persons in the Godhead before the incarnation!” I answer: That a trinity of persons appears to me to belong essentially to the eternal Godhead, neither of which was before, after, or produced from another; and of this the Old Testament is full: but the distinction was not fully evident till the incarnation; and particularly till the baptism in Jordan, when on him, in whom dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead, the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape, like a dove; and a voice from heaven proclaimed that baptized person God’s beloved Son: in which transaction there were three persons occupying distinct places; as the person of Christ in the water, the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape, and the voice from heaven, sufficiently prove; and to each of these persons various scriptures give all the essential attributes of God.

On the doctrine of the eternal Sonship of the Divine nature of Christ I once had the privilege of conversing with the late reverend John Wesley, about three years before his death; he read from a book in which I had written it, the argument against this doctrine, which now stands in the note on Luke 1:35. He did not attempt to reply to it; but allowed that, on the ground on which I had taken it, the argument was conclusive. I observed, that the proper, essential Divinity of Jesus Christ appeared to me to be so absolutely necessary to the whole Christian scheme, and to the faith both of penitent sinners and saints, that it was of the utmost importance to set it in the clearest and strongest point of view; and that, with my present light, I could not credit it, if I must receive the common doctrine of the Sonship of the Divine nature of our Lord. He mentioned two eminent divines who were of the same opinion; and added, that the eternal Sonship of Christ had been a doctrine very generally received in the Christian Church; and he believed no one had ever expressed it better than his brother Samuel had done in the following lines:-

*“From whom, in one eternal now,  
The SON, thy offspring, flow’d;  
An everlasting Father thou,  
An everlasting God.”*

He added not one word more on the subject, nor ever after mentioned it to me, though after that we had many interviews. But it is necessary to mention his own note on the text, that has given rise to these observations; which shows that he held the doctrine as commonly received, when he wrote that note; it is as follows:—

*“Thou art my Son* God of God, Light of Light. This day have I begotten Thee — I have begotten Thee from eternity, which, by its unalterable permanency of duration, is one continued unsuccessive day.” Leaving the point in dispute out of the question, this is most beautifully expressed; and I know not that this great man ever altered his views on this subject, though I am certain that he never professed the opinion as many who quote his authority do; nor would he at any time have defended what he did hold in their way. I beg leave to quote a fact. In 1781, he published in the fourth volume of the Arminian Magazine, p. 384, an article, entitled “An Arian Antidote;” in this are the following words: “Greater or lesser in infinity, is not; inferior Godhead shocks our sense; Jesus was inferior to the Father as touching his manhood, John 14:28; he was a son given, and slain intentionally from the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8, and the first-born from the dead of every creature, Colossians 1:15, 18. But, our Redeemer, from everlasting (Isaiah 63:16) had not the inferior name of Son; in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God from eternity, and the Word, made flesh, was God,” etc. This is pointedly against the eternal Sonship of the Divine nature. But why did Mr. W. insert this? and if by haste, etc., why did he not correct this when he published in 1790, in the 13th vol. of the Magazine, eight tables of errata to the eight first volumes of that work? Now, although he had carefully noticed the slightest errors that might affect the sense in those preceding volumes, yet no fault is found with the reasoning in the Arian Antidote, and the sentence, “But, our Redeemer, from everlasting, had not the inferior name of Son,” etc., is passed by without the slightest notice! However necessary this view of the subject may appear to me, I do not presume to say that others, in order to be saved, must view it in the same

light: I leave both opinions to the judgment of the reader; for on such a point it is necessary that every man should be clear in his own mind, and satisfied in his own conscience. Any opinion of mine my readers are at perfect liberty to receive or reject. I never claimed infallibility; I say, with St. Augustine, *Errare possum; haereticus esse nolo*. Refined Arians, with some of whom I am personally acquainted, are quite willing to receive all that can be said of the dignity and glory of Christ's nature, provided we admit the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, and omit the word unoriginated, which I have used in my demonstration of the Godhead of the Savior of men; but, as far as it respects myself, I can neither admit the one, nor omit the other. The proper essential Godhead of Christ lies deep at the foundation of my Christian creed; and I must sacrifice ten thousand forms of speech rather than sacrifice the thing. My opinion has not been formed on slight examination.

## CHAPTER 2

*The use we should make of the preceding doctrine, and the danger of neglecting this great salvation, 1-4. The future world is not put in subjection to the angels, but all is under the authority of Christ, 5-8. Jesus has tasted death for every man, 9. Nor could he accomplish man's redemption without being incarnated and without dying; by which he destroys the devil, and delivers all that believe on him from the fear of death and spiritual bondage, 10-15. Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but the nature of Abraham, that he might die, and make reconciliation for the sins of the people, 16-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *Therefore*** Because God has spoken to us by his Son; and because that Son is so great and glorious a personage; and because the subject which is addressed to us is of such infinite importance to our welfare.

***We ought to give the more earnest heed*** We should hear the doctrine of Christ with care, candour, and deep concern.

***Lest at any time we should let them slip.*** μη ποτε παραρρωμεν. “Lest at any time we should leak out.” This is a metaphor taken from unstanched vessels; the staves not being close together, the fluid put into them leaks through the chinks and crevices. Superficial hearers lose the benefit of the word preached, as the unseasoned vessel does its fluid; nor can any one hear to the saving of his soul, unless he give most earnest heed, which he will not do unless he consider the dignity of the speaker, the importance of the subject, and the absolute necessity of the salvation of his soul. St. Chrysostom renders it μη ποτε απολωμεθα, εκπεσωμεν, lest we perish, lest we fall away.

**Verse 2. *If the word spoken by angels*** The law, (according to some,) which was delivered by the mediation of angels, God frequently employing these to communicate his will to men. See Acts 7:53; and Galatians 3:19.

But the apostle probably means those particular messages which God sent by angels, as in the case of Lot, Genesis 19:, and such like.

*Was steadfast* Was so confirmed by the Divine authority, and so strict,



Those who neglect it, **αμελησαντες**, are not only they who oppose or persecute it, but they who pay no regard to it; who do not meddle with it, do not concern themselves about it, do not lay it to heart, and consequently do not get their hearts changed by it. Now these cannot escape the coming judgments of God; not merely because they oppose his will and commandment, but because they sin against the very cause and means of their deliverance. As there is but one remedy by which their diseased souls can be saved, so by refusing to apply that one remedy they must necessarily perish.

**Which at the first began to be spoken** Though John the Baptist went before our Lord to prepare his way, yet he could not be properly said to preach the Gospel; and even Christ's preaching was only a beginning of the great proclamation: it was his own Spirit in the apostles and evangelists, the men who heard him preach, that opened the whole mystery of the kingdom of heaven. And all this testimony had been so confirmed in the land of Judea as to render it indubitable; and consequently there was no excuse for their unbelief, and no prospect of their escape if they should continue to neglect it.

**Verse 4. God also bearing them witness** He did not leave the confirmation of these great truths to the testimony of men; he bore his own testimony to them by signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost, **πνευματος ἁγίου μερισμοις**. And all these were proved to come from himself; for no man could do those miracles at his own pleasure, but the power to work them was given according to God's own will; or rather, God himself wrought them, in order to accredit the ministry of his servants.

For the meaning of signs, wonders, etc., See the note on "Deuteronomy 4:34".

**Verse 5. The world to come** That **עולם הבא** *olam habba*, the world to come, meant the days of the Messiah among the Jews, is most evident, and has been often pointed out in the course of these notes; and that the administration of this kingdom has not been intrusted to angels, who were frequently employed under the law, is also evident, for the government is on the shoulder of Jesus Christ; he alone has the keys of death and hell; he alone shuts, and no man opens; opens, and no man shuts; he alone has the

residue of the Spirit; he alone is the Governor of the universe, the Spirit, Soul, Heart, and Head of the Church: all is in his authority, and under subjection to him.

But some think that the world to come means future glory, and suppose the words are spoken in reference to the Angel of God's presence, Exodus 23:20, who introduced the Israelites into the promised land, which land is here put in opposition to the heavenly inheritance. And it is certain that in this sense also we have an entrance into the holiest only by the blood of Jesus. Dr. Macknight contends for this latter meaning, but the former appears more consistent with the Jewish phraseology.

**Verse 6. *But one in a certain place*** This one is David; and the certain place, Psalm 8:4, 5, 6. But why does the apostle use this indeterminate mode of quotation? Because it was common thus to express the testimony of any of the inspired writers; **כְּתַב אִמַר הַהוּא** amar hahu kethab, thus saith a certain scripture. So Philo, Deuteronomy Plant. Noe: **εἶπε γὰρ πού**, he saith somewhere; **εἶπε θὰπ τις**, a certain person saith. Thus even the heathens were accustomed to quote high authorities; so Plato, Tim.: **ὡς εφη τις**, as a certain person saith, meaning Heraclitus. See in Rosenmuller. It is such a mode of quotation as we sometimes use when we speak of a very eminent person who is well known; as that very eminent person, that great philosopher, that celebrated divine, that inspired teacher of the Gentiles, the royal psalmist, the evangelical prophet, hath said. The mode of quotation therefore implies, not ignorance, but reverence.

***What is man*** This quotation is verbatim from the Septuagint; and, as the Greek is not as emphatic as the Hebrew, I will quote the original: **תִּפְקְדֵנוּ מִה אֲנוֹשׁ כִּי תִזְכְּרֵנוּ וּב אָדָם כִּי** mah enosh ki thizkerenu, uben Adam ki thiphkedenu; What is miserable man, that thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam, that thou visitest him? The variation of the terms in the original is very emphatic. Adam, **אָדָם**, is the name given to man at his creation, and expresses his origin, and generic distinction from all other animals. Enosh, **אֲנוֹשׁ**, which signifies sick, weak, wretched, was never given to him till after his fall. The son of Adam means here, any one or all of the fallen posterity of the first man. That God should remember in the way of mercy these wretched beings, is great condescension; that he should visit them, manifest himself to them, yea, even dwell among them,

and at last assume their nature, and give up his life to ransom them from the bitter pains of eternal death, is mercy and love indescribable and eternal.

**Verse 7. *Thou madest him a little lower than the angels*** We must again have recourse to the original from which this quotation is made: מאלהים ותחסרהו מעט vattechasserehu meat meelohim. If this be spoken of man as he came out of the hands of his Maker, it places him at the head of all God's works; for literally translated it is: Thou hast made him less than God. And this is proved by his being made in the image and likeness of God, which is spoken of no other creature either in heaven or earth; and it is very likely that in his original creation he stood at the head of all the works of God, and the next to his Maker. This sentiment is well expressed in the following lines, part of a paraphrase on this psalm, by the Rev. C. Wesley:-

*“Him with glorious majesty  
Thy grace vouchsafed to crown:  
Transcript of the One in Three,  
He in thine image shone.  
Foremost of created things,  
Head of all thy works he stood;  
Nearest the great King of kings,  
And little less than God.”*

If we take the words as referring to Jesus Christ, then they must be understood as pointing out the time of his humiliation, as in ver. 9; and the little lower, βραχυ τι, in both verses, must mean for a short time, or a little while, as is very properly inserted among our marginal readings. Adam was originally made higher than the angels, but by sin he is now brought low, and subjected to death; for the angelic nature is not mortal. Thus, taking the words in their common acceptance, man in his present state may be said to be lessened below the angels. Jesus Christ, as the eternal Logos, or God with God, could not die, therefore a body was prepared for him; and thus βραχυ τι, for a short while, he was made lower than the angels, that he might be capable of suffering death. And indeed the whole of the passage suits him better than it does any of the children of men, or than even Adam himself in a state of innocence; for it is only under the feet of Jesus that all things are put in subjection, and it was in consequence of his humiliation that he had a name above every name, that

at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, Philippians 2:9-11. Therefore he must be infinitely higher than the angels, for they, as well as all the things in heaven, bow in subjection to him.

***Thou crownedst him with glory and honor*** This was strictly true of Adam in his state of innocence, for he was set over all things in this lower world; all sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth over the paths of the seas, Psalm 8:7, 8. So far all this perfectly applies to Adam; but it is evident the apostle takes all in a much higher sense, that of universal dominion; and hence he says, he left nothing that is not put under him. These verses, collated with the above passage from the Epistle to the Philippians, mutually illustrate each other. And the crowning Christ with glory and honor must refer to his exaltation after his resurrection, in which, as the victorious Messiah, he had all power given to him in heaven and earth. And although we do not yet see all things put under him, for evil men, and evil spirits, are only under the subjection of control, yet we look forward to that time when the whole world shall be bowed to his sway, and when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall become great, and fill the whole earth. What was never true of the first Adam, even in his most exalted state, is true of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ; and to him, and to him alone, it is most evident that the apostle applies these things; and thus he is higher than the angels, who never had nor can have such dominion and consequent glory.

**Verse 9. *Should taste death for every man.*** In consequence of the fall of Adam, the whole human race became sinful in their nature, and in their practice added transgression to sinfulness of disposition, and thus became exposed to endless perdition. To redeem them Jesus Christ took on him the nature of man, and suffered the penalty due to their sins.

It was a custom in ancient times to take off criminals by making them drink a cup of poison. Socrates was adjudged to drink a cup of the juice of hemlock, by order of the Athenian magistrates: *πινειν το φαρμακον, αναγκαζοντων των αρχοντων*. The sentence was one of the most unjust ever pronounced on man. Socrates was not only innocent of every crime laid to his charge, but was the greatest benefactor to his country. He was

duly conscious of the iniquity of his sentence, yet cheerfully submitted to his appointed fate; for when the officer brought in the poison, though his friends endeavored to persuade him that he had yet a considerable time in which he might continue to live, yet, knowing that every purpose of life was now accomplished, he refused to avail himself of a few remaining moments, seized the cup, and drank off the poison with the utmost cheerfulness and alacrity; **επισχομενος και μαλα ευχερωσ και ευκολωσ εξεπιε**. Plato, Phaed. sub. fin. The reference in the text seems to point out the whole human race as being accused, tried, found guilty, and condemned, each having his own poisoned cup to drink; and Jesus, the wonderful Jesus, takes the cup out of the hand of each, and cheerfully and with alacrity drinks off the dregs! Thus having drunk every man's poisoned cup, he tasted that death which they must have endured, had not their cup been drunk by another. Is not this the cup to which he refers, Matthew 26: 39: O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me? But without his drinking it, the salvation of the world would have been impossible; and therefore he cheerfully drank it in the place of every human soul, and thus made atonement for the sin of the whole world: and this he did, **χαριτι θεου**, by the grace, mercy, or infinite goodness of God. Jesus Christ, incarnated, crucified, dying, rising, ascending to heaven, and becoming our Mediator at God's right hand, is the full proof of God's infinite love to the human race.

Instead of **χαριτι θεου**, by the grace of God, some MSS. and the Syriac have **χωρις θεου**, without God, or God excepted; i.e. the manhood died, not the Deity. This was probably a marginal gloss, which has crept into the text of many MSS., and is quoted by some of the chief of the Greek and Latin fathers. Several critics contend that the verse should be read thus: "But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made less than angels, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor." Howsoever it be taken, the sense is nearly the same: 1. Jesus Christ was incarnated. 2. He suffered death as an expiatory victim. 3. The persons in whose behalf he suffered were the whole human race; every man — all human creatures. 4. This Jesus is now in a state of the highest glory and honor.

**Verse 10. *For it became him*** It was suitable to the Divine wisdom, the requisitions of justice, and the economy of grace, to offer Jesus as a sacrifice, in order to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

***For whom—and by whom*** God is the cause of all things, and he is the object or end of them.

***Perfect through sufferings.*** Without suffering he could not have died, and without dying he could not have made an atonement for sin. The sacrifice must be consummated, in order that he might be qualified to be the Captain or Author of the salvation of men, and lead all those who become children of God, through faith in him, into eternal glory. I believe this to be the sense of the passage; and it appears to be an answer to the grand objection of the Jews: “The Messiah is never to be conquered, or die; but will be victorious, and endure for ever.” Now the apostle shows that this is not the counsel of God; on the contrary, that it was entirely congruous to the will and nature of God, by whom, and for whom are all things, to bring men to eternal glory through the suffering and death of the Messiah. This is the decision of the Spirit of God against their prejudices; and on the Divine authority this must be our conclusion. Without the passion and death of Christ, the salvation of man would have been impossible.

As there are many different views of this and some of the following verses, I shall introduce a paraphrase of the whole from

Dr. Dodd, who gives the substance of what Doddridge, Pearce, and Owen, have said on this subject.

**Verse 10. *For it became him***, etc. Such has been the conduct of God in the great affair of our redemption; and the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent in proportion to the degree in which it is examined; for, though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory, it well became him — it was expedient, that, in order to act worthy of himself, he should take this method; Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things — that glorious Being who is the first cause and last end of all, in pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of conducting many, whom he is pleased to adopt as his sons, to the possession of that inheritance of glory intended for them, to make and constitute Jesus, his first-begotten and well beloved Son, the Leader

and Prince of their salvation, and to make him perfect, or completely fit for the full execution of his office, by a long train of various and extreme sufferings, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly consecrated to it.

**Verse 11.** Now, in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, the great Sanctifier, who engages and consecrates men to the service of God, and

consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now, changing their lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life.”

**Verse 11. *For both he that sanctifieth*** The word *ο αγιαζων* does not merely signify one who sanctifies or makes holy, hut one who makes atonement or reconciliation to God; and answers to the Hebrew *כִּפָּר* caphar, to expiate. See Exodus 29:33-36. He that sanctifies is he that makes atonement; and they who are sanctified are they who receive that atonement, and, being reconciled unto God, become his children by adoption, through grace.

In this sense our Lord uses the word, John 17:19: For their sakes I sanctify myself; *υπερ αυτων εγω αγιαζω εμαυτον*, on their account I consecrate myself to be a sacrifice. This is the sense in which this word is used generally through this epistle.

***Are all of one*** *εξ ενος παντες*. What this one means has given rise to various conjectures; father, family, blood, seed, race, nature, have all been substituted; nature seems to be that intended, see ver. 14; and the conclusion of this verse confirms it. Both the Sanctifier and the sanctified — both Christ and his followers, are all of the same nature; for as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, i.e. of human nature, he partook of the same, and thus he was qualified to become a sacrifice for man.

***He is not ashamed to call them brethren*** Though, as to his Godhead, he is infinitely raised above men and angels; yet as he has become incarnate, notwithstanding his dignity, he blushes not to acknowledge all his true followers as his brethren.

**Verse 12. *I will declare thy name*** See Psalm 22:22. The apostle certainly quotes this psalm as referring to Jesus Christ, and these words as spoken by Christ unto the Father, in reference to his incarnation; as if he had said: “When I shall be incarnated, I will declare thy perfections to mankind; and among my disciples I will give glory to thee for thy mercy to the children of men.” See the fulfillment of this, John 1:18: No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM. Nor were the perfections of God ever properly



known or declared, till the manifestation of Christ. Hear another scripture, Luke 10:21, 22: In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, etc. Thus he gave praise to God.

**Verse 13.** *I will put my trust in him.* It is not clear to what express place of Scripture the apostle refers: words to this effect frequently occur; but the place most probably is Psa 18:2, several parts of which psalm seem to belong to the Messiah.

***Behold I and the children which God hath given me.*** This is taken from Isaiah 8:18. The apostle does not intend to say that the portions which he has quoted have any particular reference, taken by themselves, to the subject in question; they are only catch-words of whole paragraphs, which, taken together, are full to the point; because they are prophecies of the Messiah, and are fulfilled in him. This is evident from the last quotation: Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel. Jesus and his disciples wrought a multitude of the most stupendous signs and wonders in Israel. The expression also may include all genuine Christians; they are for signs and wonders throughout the earth. And as to the 18th Psalm, the principal part of it seems to refer to Christ's sufferings; but the miracles which were wrought at his crucifixion, the destruction of the Jewish state and polity, the calling of the Gentiles, and the establishment of the Christian Church, appear also to be intended. See among others the following passages: SUFFERINGS-The sorrows of death compassed me-in my distress I called upon the Lord. MIRACLES at the crucifixion-The earth shook and trembled-and darkness was under his feet. DESTRUCTION of the Jewish state-I have pursued mine enemies and overtaken them; they are fallen under my feet. CALLING of the GENTILES-Thou hast made me head of the heathen; a people whom I have never known shall serve me; as soon as they hear of me-they shall obey me, etc., etc. A principal design of the apostle is to show that such scriptures are prophecies of the Messiah; that they plainly refer to his appearing in the flesh in Israel; and that they have all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel. To establish these points was of great importance.

**Verse 14. *The children are partakers of flesh and blood*** Since those children of God, who have fallen and are to be redeemed, are human beings; in order to be qualified to redeem them by suffering and dying in their stead, He himself likewise took part of the same — he became incarnate; and thus he who was God with God, became man with men. By the children here we are to understand, not only the disciples and all genuine Christians, as in ver. 13, but also the whole human race; all Jews and all Gentiles; so John 11:51, 52: He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the CHILDREN of GOD that were scattered abroad; meaning, probably, all the Jews in every part of the earth. But collate this with 1 John 2:2, where: the evangelist explains the former words: He is the propitiation for our sins, (the Jews,) and not for ours only, but for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD. As the apostle was writing to the Hebrews only, he in general uses a Jewish phraseology, pointing out to them their own privileges; and rarely introduces the Gentiles, or what the Messiah has done for the other nations of the earth.

***That through death*** That by the merit of his own death, making atonement for sin, and procuring the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, he might counterwork *καταργηση*, or render useless and ineffectual, all the operations of him who had the power, *κρατος*, or influence, to bring death into the world; so that death, which was intended by him who was a murderer from the beginning to be the final ruin of mankind, becomes the instrument of their exaltation and endless glory; and thus the death brought in by Satan is counterworked and rendered ineffectual by the death of Christ.

***Him that had the power of death*** This is spoken in conformity to an opinion prevalent among the Jews, that there was a certain fallen angel who was called *מלאך המות* malak hammaveth, the angel of death; i.e. one who had the power of separating the soul from the body, when God decreed that the person should die. There were two of these, according to some of the Jewish writers: one was the angel of death to the Gentiles; the other, to the Jews. Thus Tob haarets, fol. 31: “There are two angels which preside over death: one is over those who die out of the land of Israel, and his name is Sammael; the other is he who presides over those who die in the land of Israel, and this is Gabriel.” Sammael is a common name for the

devil among the Jews; and there is a tradition among them, delivered by the author of Pesikta rabbetha in Yalcut Simeoni, par. 2, f. 56, that the angel of death should be destroyed by the Messiah! "Satan said to the holy blessed God: Lord of the world, show me the Messiah. The Lord answered: Come and see him. And when he had seen him he was terrified, and his countenance fell, and he said: Most certainly this is the Messiah who shall cast me and all the nations into hell, as it is written Isaiah 25:8, The Lord shall swallow up death for ever." This is a very remarkable saying, and the apostle shows that it is true, for the Messiah came to destroy him who had the power of death. Dr. Owen has made some collections on this head from other Jewish writers which tend to illustrate this verse; they may be seen in his comment, vol. i., p. 456, 8vo. edition.

**Verse 15. *And deliver them who through fear of death*** It is very likely that the apostle has the Gentiles here principally in view. As they had no revelation, and no certainty of immortality, they were continually in bondage to the fear of death. They preferred life in any state, with the most grievous evils, to death, because they had no hope beyond the grave. But it is also true that all men naturally fear death; even those that have the fullest persuasion and certainty of a future state dread it: genuine Christians, who know that, if the earthly house of their tabernacle were dissolved, they have a house not made with hands, a building framed of God, eternal in the heavens, only they fear it not. In the assurance they have of God's love, the fear of death is removed; and by the purification of their hearts through faith, the sting of death is extracted. The people who know not God are in continual torment through the fear of death, and they fear death because they fear something beyond death. They are conscious to themselves that they are wicked, and they are afraid of God, and terrified at the thought of eternity. By these fears thousands of sinful, miserable creatures are prevented from hurrying themselves into the unknown world. This is finely expressed by the poet:-

*“To die, — to sleep, —  
 No more: — and, by a sleep, to say we end  
 The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
 That flesh is heir to, — ‘tis a consummation  
 Devoutly to be wished. To die, — to sleep, —  
 To sleep! — perchance to dream; — ay, there’s the rub;  
 For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
 When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
 Must give us pause: — There’s the respect  
 That makes calamity of so long life:  
 For who could bear the whips and scorns of time,  
 The oppressor’s wrong, the proud man’s contumely,  
 The pangs of despised love, the law’s delay,  
 The insolence of office, and the spurns  
 That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
 When he himself might his quietus make  
 With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear  
 To grunt and sweat under a weary life;  
 But that the dread of something after death, —  
 The undiscovered country from whose bourn  
 No traveler returns,—puzzles the will;  
 And makes us rather bear those ills we have,  
 Than fly to others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought;  
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
 With this regard, their currents turn awry  
 And lose the name of action.”*

I give this long quotation from a poet who was well acquainted with all the workings of the human heart; and one who could not have described scenes of distress and anguish of mind so well, had he not passed through them.

**Verse 16.** *For verily he took not on him the nature of angels* ου γαρ δηπου αγγελων επιλαμβανεται, αλλα σπερματος αβρααμ επιλαμβανεται. Moreover, he doth not at all take hold of angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold. This is the marginal reading, and is greatly to be preferred to that in the text Jesus Christ, intending not to redeem angels, but to redeem man, did not assume the angelic nature, but was made man, coming directly by the seed or posterity of Abraham, with whom the original covenant was made, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and it is on this account that the apostle mentioned the seed of Abraham, and not the seed of Adam; and it is

strange that to many commentators should have missed so obvious a sense. The word itself signifies not only to take hold of, but to help, succor, save from sinking, etc. The rebel angels, who sinned and fell from God, were permitted to fall downe, alle downe, as one of our old writers expresses it, till they fell into perdition: man sinned and fell, and was falling downe, alle downe, but Jesus laid hold on him and prevented him from falling into endless perdition. Thus he seized on the falling human creature, and prevented him from falling into the bottomless pit; but he did not seize on the falling angels, and they fell down into outer darkness. By assuming the nature of man, he prevented this final and irrecoverable fall of man; and by making an atonement in human nature, he made a provision for its restoration to its forfeited blessedness. This is a fine thought of the apostle, and is beautifully expressed. Man was falling from heaven, and Jesus caught hold of the falling creature, and prevented its endless ruin. In this respect he prefers men to angels, and probably for this simple reason, that the human nature was more excellent than the angelic; and it is suitable to the wisdom of the Divine Being to regard all the works of his hands in proportion to the dignity or excellence with which he has endowed them.

**Verse 17. *Wherefore in all things*** Because he thus laid hold on man in order to redeem him, it was necessary that he should in all things become like to man, that he might suffer in his stead, and make an atonement in his nature.

***That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest*** ἵνα ελεημων γενηται. That he might be merciful — that he might be affected with a feeling of our infirmities, that, partaking of our nature with all its innocent infirmities and afflictions, he might know how to compassionate poor, afflicted, suffering man. And that he might be a faithful high priest in those things which relate to God, whose justice requires the punishment of the transgressors, or a suitable expiation to be made for the sins of the people. The proper meaning of ἱλασκεσθαι τας αμαρτιας is to make propitiation or atonement for sins by sacrifice. See the note on this word, “Luke 18:13”, where it is particularly explained. Christ is the great High Priest of mankind; 1. He exercises himself in the things pertaining to GOD, taking heed that God’s honor be properly secured, his worship properly regulated, his laws properly enforced, and both his justice and mercy magnified. Again, 2. He exercises himself in things pertaining to MEN, that

he may make an atonement for them, apply this atonement to them, and liberate them thereby from the curse of a broken law, from the guilt and power of sin, from its inbeing and nature, and from all the evils to which they were exposed through it, and lastly that he might open their way into the holiest by his own blood; and he has mercifully and faithfully accomplished all that he has undertaken.

**Verse 18.** *For in that he himself hath suffered* The maxim on which this verse is founded is the following: A state of suffering disposes persons to be compassionate, and those who endure most afflictions are they who feel most for others. The apostle argues that, among other causes, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should partake of human nature, exposed to trials, persecutions, and various sufferings, that he might the better feel for and be led to succor those who are afflicted and sorely tried. This sentiment is well expressed by a Roman poet:-

*Me quoque per multas similis fortuna labores  
Jactatam hac demum voluit consistere terra:  
Non ignara mali, miseris succurere disco.*

VIRG. *AEn.* i., v. 632.

*“For I myself like you, have been distress’d,  
Till heaven afforded me this place of rest;  
Like you, an alien in a land unknown,  
I learn to pity woes so like my own.”*

DRYDEN.

“There are three things,” says Dr. Owen, “of which tempted believers do stand in need: 1. Strength to withstand their temptations; 2. Consolations to support their spirits under them; 3. Seasonable deliverance from them. Unto these is the succor afforded by our High Priest suited; and it is variously administered to them: 1. By his word or promises; 2. By his Spirit; (and, that, 1. By communicating to them supplies of grace or spiritual strength; 2. Strong consolation; 3. By rebuking their tempters and temptations;) and 3. By his providence disposing of all things to their good and advantage in the issue.” Those who are peculiarly tempted and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ. They, particularly, may go with boldness to the throne of grace, where they shall assuredly obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Were the

rest of the Scripture silent on this subject, this verse might be an ample support for every tempted soul.

## CHAPTER 3

*Jesus is the High Priest of our profession, 1. And is counted worthy of more honor than Moses, as the Son Israelites did, and were excluded from the earthly rest in Canaan, 7-11. We should be on our guard against unbelief, 12. And exhort each other, lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and we should hold fast the beginning of our confidence to the end, and not provoke God as the Israelites did, and who were destroyed in the wilderness, 13-17. They were promised the earthly rest, but did not enter because of unbelief, 18, 19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *Holy brethren*** Persons consecrated to God, as the word literally implies, and called, in consequence, to be holy in heart, holy in life, and useful in the world. The Israelites are often called a holy people, saints, etc., because consecrated to God, and because they were bound by their profession to be holy; and yet these appellations are given to them in numberless instances where they were very unholy. The not attending to this circumstance, and the not discerning between actual positive holiness, and the call to it, as the consecration of the persons, has led many commentators and preachers into destructive mistakes. Antinomianism has had its origin here: and as it was found that many persons were called saints, who, in many respects, were miserable sinners, hence it has been inferred that they were called saints in reference to a holiness which they had in another; and hence the Antinomian imputation of Christ's righteousness to unholy believers, whose hearts were abominable before God, and whose lives were a scandal to the Gospel. Let, therefore, a due distinction be made between persons by their profession holy, i.e. consecrated to God; and persons who are faithful to that profession, and are both inwardly and outwardly holy. They are not all Israel who are of Israel: a man, by a literal circumcision, may be a Jew outwardly; but the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit makes a man a Jew inwardly. A man may be a Christian in profession, and not such in heart; and those who pretend that, although they are unholy in themselves, they are reputed



holy in Christ, because his righteousness is imputed to them, most awfully deceive their own souls.

Dr. Owen has spoken well on the necessity of personal holiness against the Antinomians of his day. "If a man be not made holy he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is this that makes them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; as without it they are not meet for their duty, so are they not capable of their reward. Yea, heaven itself, in the true light and notion of it, is undesirable to an unsanctified person. Such a one neither can nor would enjoy God if he might. In a word, there is no one thing required of the sons of God that an unsanctified person can do, and no one thing promised unto them that he can enjoy.

"There is surely then a woful mistake in the world. If Christ sanctify all whom he saves, many will appear to have been mistaken in their expectations at another day. It is grown amongst us almost an abhorreny to all flesh to say, the Church of God is to be holy. What! though God has promised that it should be so; that Christ has undertaken to make it so? What! if it be required to be so? What! if all the duties of it be rejected of God, if it be not so? It is all one, if men be baptized, whether they will or not, and outwardly profess the name of Christ, though not one of them be truly sanctified, yet they are, it is said, the Church of Christ. Why then let them be so; but what are they the better for it? Are their persons or their services therefore accepted with God? Are they related or united to Christ? Are they under his conduct unto glory? Are they meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Not at all: not all nor any of these things do they obtain thereby. What is it then that they get by the furious contest which they make for the reputation of this privilege? Only this: that, satisfying their minds by it, resting if not priding themselves in it, they obtain many advantages to stifle all convictions of their condition, and so perish unavoidably. A sad success, and for ever to be bewailed! Yet is there nothing at all at this day more contended for in this world than that Christ might be thought to be a captain of salvation to them, unto whom he is not a sanctifier; that he may have an unholy Church, a dead body. These things tend neither to the glory of Christ, nor to the good of the souls of men. Let none then deceive themselves; sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary to them who will be under the conduct of the Lord Christ unto salvation; he leads none to heaven but

whom he sanctifies on earth. The holy God will not receive unholy persons. This living head will not admit of dead members, nor bring men into possession of a glory which they neither love nor like.”

**Heavenly calling** The Israelites had an earthly calling; they were called out of Egypt to go into the promised land: Christians have a heavenly calling; they are invited to leave the bondage of sin, and go to the kingdom of God. These were made partakers of this calling; they had already embraced the Gospel, and were brought into a state of salvation.

**Apostle and High Priest of our profession** Among the Jews the high priest was considered to be also the apostle of God; and it is in conformity to this notion that the apostle speaks. And he exhorts the Hebrews to consider Jesus Christ to be both their High Priest and Apostle; and to expect these offices to be henceforth fulfilled by him, and by him alone. This was the fullest intimation that the Mosaic economy was at an end, and the priesthood changed. By *της ομολογιας ημων*, our profession, or that confession of ours, the apostle undoubtedly means the Christian religion. Jesus was the Apostle of the Father, and has given to mankind the new covenant; and we are to consider the whole system of Christianity as coming immediately from him. Every system of religion must have a priest and a prophet; the one to declare the will of God, the other to minister in holy things. Moses was the apostle under the old testament, and Aaron the priest. When Moses was removed, the prophets succeeded him; and the sons of Aaron were the priests after the death of their father. This system is now annulled; and Jesus is the Prophet who declares the Father’s will, and he is the Priest who ministers in the things pertaining to God, see chap. 2:17; as he makes atonement for the sins of the people, and is the Mediator between God and man.

**Verse 2. Who was faithful to him** In Numbers 12:7, God gives this testimony to Moses: My servant Moses-is faithful in all my house; and to this testimony the apostle alludes. House not only means the place where a family dwells, but also the family itself. The whole congregation of Israel was the house or family of God, and God is represented as dwelling among them; and Moses was his steward, and was faithful in the discharge of his office; strictly enforcing the Divine rights; zealously maintaining God’s honor; carefully delivering the mind and will of God to the people;

proclaiming his promises, and denouncing his judgments, with the most inflexible integrity, though often at the risk of his life. Jesus Christ has his house — the whole great family of mankind, for all of whom he offered his sacrificial blood to God; and the Christian Church, which is especially his own household, is composed of his own children and servants, among and in whom he lives and constantly resides. He has been faithful to the trust reposed in him as the apostle of God; he has faithfully proclaimed the will of the Most High; vindicated the Divine honor against the corrupters of God's worship; testified against them at the continual hazard of his life; and, at last, not only died as a victim to cancel sin, but also as a martyr to his faithfulness. Christ's faithfulness, says Leigh, consists in this: "That he has as fully revealed unto us the doctrine of the Gospel, as Moses did that of the law; and that he hath faithfully performed and fulfilled all the types of himself and all the things signified by Moses' ceremonies, as Moses hath faithfully and distinctly set them down."

But there is a sense given to the word **נֶאֱמָן** neeman, Numbers 12:7, which we translate faithful, by several of the Jewish writers, which is well worthy of note: it signifies, say they, "one to whom secrets are confided, with the utmost confidence of their being safely and conscientiously kept." The secret of God was with Moses, but all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge were in Christ. Life and immortality were comparatively secrets till Christ revealed and illustrated them, and even the Divine nature was but little known, and especially the Divine philanthropy, till Jesus Christ came; and it was Jesus alone who declared that GOD whom no man had ever seen. Moses received the secrets of God, and faithfully taught them to the people; Jesus revealed the whole will of God to mankind. Moses was thus faithful to a small part of mankind, viz. the Jewish people; but in this sense Jesus was faithful to all mankind: for he was the light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.

**Verse 3. *For this man was counted*** As Jesus Christ, in the character of apostle and high priest, is here intended, the word apostle, or this person or personage, should have been supplied, if any, instead of man. Indeed, the pronoun **οὗτος** should have been translated this person, and this would have referred immediately to Jesus Christ, verse 1.

***More glory than Moses*** We have already seen that the apostle's design is to prove that Jesus Christ is higher than the angels, higher than Moses, and higher than Aaron. That he is higher than the angels has been already proved; that he is higher than Moses he is now proving.

***He who hath builded the house*** There can be no doubt that a man who builds a house for his own accommodation is more honorable than the house itself; but the house here intended is the Church of God. This Church, here called a house or family, is built by Christ; he is the Head, Governor, Soul and Life of it; he must therefore be greater than Moses, who was only a member and officer in that Church, who never put a stone in this spiritual building but was even himself put in it by the great Architect. Moses was in this house, and faithful in this house; but the house was the house of God, and builded and governed by Christ.

**Verse 4. *For every house is builded by some man*** The literal sense is plain enough: "Every structure plainly implies an architect, and an end for which it was formed. The architect may be employed by him for whose use the house is intended; but the efficient cause of the erection is that which is here to be regarded." The word house, here, is still taken in a metaphorical sense as above, it signifies family or Church. Now the general meaning of the words, taken in this sense, is: "Every family has an author, and a head or governor. Man may found families, civil and religious communities, and be the head of these; but God alone is the Head, Author, and Governor, of all the families of the earth; he is the Governor of the universe. But the apostle has a more restricted meaning in the words **τα πάντα**, all these things; and as he has been treating of the Jewish and Christian Churches, so he appears to have them in view here. Who could found the Jewish and Christian Church but God? Who could support, govern, influence, and defend them, but himself? Communities or societies, whether religious or civil, may be founded by man; but God alone can build his own Church. Now as all these things could be builded only by God, so he must be God who has built all these things. But as Jesus is the Founder of the Church, and the Head of it, the word GOD seems here to be applied to him; and several eminent scholars and critics bring this very text as a proof of the supreme Deity of Christ: and the apostle's argument seems to require this; for, as he is proving that Christ is preferred before Moses because he built this house, which Moses could not do, where he to be

understood as intimating that this house was built by another, viz. the Father, his whole argument would fall to the ground; and for all this, Moses might be equal, yea, superior to Christ. On this ground Dr. Owen properly concludes: “This then is that which the apostle intends to declare; namely, the ground and reason whence it is that the house was or could be, in that glorious manner, built by Christ, even because he is GOD, and so able to effect it; and by this effect of his power, he is manifested so to be.”

**Verse 5. *As a servant*** The fidelity of Moses was the fidelity of a servant; he was not the framer of that Church or house; he was employed, under God, to arrange and order it: he was steward to the Builder and Owner.

***For a testimony of those things*** Every ordinance under the law was typical; every thing bore a testimony to the things which were to be spoken after; i.e. to Jesus Christ, his suffering, death, and the glory which should follow; and to his Gospel in all its parts. The faithfulness of Moses consisted in his scrupulous attention to every ordinance of God; his framing every thing according to the pattern showed him by the Lord; and his referring all to that Christ of whom he spoke as the prophet who should come after him, and should be raised up from among themselves; whom they should attentively hear and obey, on pain of being cut off from being the people of the Lord. Hence our Lord told the Jews, John 5:46: If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me; “namely;” says Dr. Macknight, “in the figures, but especially in the prophecies, of the law, where the Gospel dispensation, the coming of its Author, and his character as Messiah, are all described with a precision which adds the greatest lustre of evidence to Jesus and to his Gospel.”

**Verse 6. *But Christ as a Son over his own house*** Moses was faithful as a servant IN the house; Jesus was faithful, as the first-born Son, OVER the house of which he is the Heir and Governor. Here, then, is the conclusion of the argument in reference to Christ’s superiority over Moses. Moses did not found the house or family, Christ did; Moses was but in the house, or one of the family, Christ was over the house as its Ruler; Moses was but servant in the house, Christ was the Son and Heir; Moses was in the house of another, Christ in his own house.

It is well known to every learned reader that the pronoun **αυτου**, without an aspirate, signifies his simply; and that with the aspirate, **αυτου**, it signifies his own: the word being in this form a contraction, not uncommon, of **εαυτου**. If we read **αυτου** without the aspirate, then his must refer to God, ver. 4.

But Christ as a Son over his (that is, God's) house: if we read **αυτου**, with the aspirate, as some editions do, then what is spoken refers to Christ; and the words above convey the same sense as those words, Acts 20:28: Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood. Some editions read the word thus; and it is evident that the edition which our translators used had the word **αυτου**, his own, and not **αυτου**, his. The Spanish and London Polyglots have the same reading. From the most ancient MSS. we can get no help to determine which is to be preferred, as they are generally written without accents. The two first editions of the Greek Testament, that of Complutum, 1514, and that of Erasmus, 1516, have **αυτου**, his; and they are followed by most other editions: but the celebrated edition of Robert Stephens, 1550, has **αυτου**, his own. The reading is certainly important; but it belongs to one of those difficulties in criticism which, if the context or collateral evidence do not satisfactorily solve it, must remain in doubt; and every reader is at liberty to adopt which reading he thinks best.

**Whose house are we** We Christians are his Church and family; he is our Father, Governor, and Head.

**If we hold fast the confidence** We are now his Church, and shall continue to be such, and be acknowledged by him IF we maintain our Christian profession, **την παρρησιαν**, that liberty of access to God, which we now have, and the rejoicing of the hope, i.e. of eternal life, which we shall receive at the resurrection of the dead. The word **παρρησια**, which is here translated confidence, and which signifies freedom of speech, liberty of access, etc., seems to be used here to distinguish an important Christian privilege. Under the old testament no man was permitted to approach to God: even the very mountain on which God published his laws must not be touched by man nor beast; and only the high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies, and that only once a year, on the great day of atonement; and even then he must have the blood of the victim to

propitiate the Divine justice. Under the Christian dispensation the way to the holiest is now laid open; and we have **παρησιαν**, liberty of access, even to the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. Having such access unto God, by such a Mediator, we may obtain all that grace which is necessary to fit us for eternal glory; and, having the witness of his Spirit in our heart, we have a well grounded hope of endless felicity, and exult in the enjoyment of that hope. But IF we retain not the grace, we shall not inherit the glory.

**Verse 7. *Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today*** These words are quoted from Psalm 95:7; and as they were written by David, and attributed here to the Holy Ghost, it proves that David wrote, by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. As these words were originally a warning to the Israelites not to provoke God, lest they should be excluded from that rest which he had promised them, the apostle uses them here to persuade the Christians in Palestine to hold fast their religious privileges, and, the grace they had received, lest they should come short of that state of future glory which Christ had prepared for them. The words strongly imply, as indeed does the whole epistle, the possibility of falling from the grace of God, and perishing everlastingly; and without this supposition these words, and all such like, which make more than two-thirds of the whole of Divine revelation, would have neither sense nor meaning. Why should God entreat man to receive his mercy, if he have rendered this impossible? Why should he exhort a believer to persevere, if it be impossible for him to fall away? What contemptible quibbling have men used to maintain a false and dangerous tenet against the whole tenor of the word of God! Angels fell-Adam fell-Solomon fell-and multitudes of believers have fallen, and, for aught we know, rose no more; and yet we are told that we cannot finally lose the benefits of our conversion! Satan preached this doctrine to our first parents; they believed him, sinned, and fell; and brought a whole world to ruin!

**Verse 8. *Harden not your hearts*** Which ye will infallibly do, if ye will not hear his voice.

***Provocation*** **παραπικρασμος**· From **παρα**, signifying intensity, and **πικραινω**, to make bitter; the exasperation, or bitter provocation. "The Israelites provoked God first in the wilderness of Sin, (Pelusium,) when they murmured for want of bread, and had the manna given them, Exodus

16:4. From the wilderness of Sin they journeyed to Rephidim, where they provoked God a second time for want of water, and insolently saying, Is the Lord God among us or not? Exodus 17:2-9, on which account the place was called Massah and Meribah. See 1 Corinthians 10:4, note 1. From Rephidim they went into the wilderness of Sinai, where they received the law, in the beginning of the third year from their coming out of Egypt. Here they provoked God again, by making the golden calf, Exodus 32:10. After the law was given they were commanded to go directly to Canaan, and take possession of the promised land, Deuteronomy 1:6, 7: God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vales, and in the south, and by the seaside, to the land if the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, the river Euphrates. The Israelites, having received this order, departed from Horeb, and went forward three days' journey, Numbers 10:33, till they came to Taberah, Numbers 11:3, where they provoked God the fourth time, by murmuring for want of flesh to eat; and for that sin were smitten with a very great plague, Numbers 11:33; this place was called Kibroth-hattaavah, because there they buried the people who lusted. From Kibroth-hattaavah they went to Hazeroth, Numbers 11:35, and from thence into the wilderness of Paran, Numbers 12:16, to a place called Kadesh, Numbers 13:26. Their journey from Horeb to Kadesh is thus described by Moses, Deuteronomy 1:19-21: And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and, we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it. But the people proposed to Moses to send spies, to bring them an account of the land, and of its inhabitants, Deuteronomy 1:22. These after forty days returned to Kadesh; and, except Caleb and Joshua, they all agreed in bringing an evil report of the land, Numbers 13:25-32; whereby the people were so discouraged that they refused to go up, and proposed to make a captain, and return into Egypt, Numbers 14:4. Wherefore, having thus shown an absolute disbelief of God's promises, and an utter distrust of his power, he swore that not one



should all die in the wilderness, Numbers 14:20; Deuteronomy 1:34, 35; and ordered them to turn, and get into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea. In that wilderness the Israelites, as Moses informs us, sojourned thirty-eight years, Deuteronomy 2:14: And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zereb, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord sware unto them. Wherefore, although the Israelites provoked God to wrath in the wilderness, from the day they came out of the land of Egypt until their arrival in Canaan, as Moses told them, Deuteronomy 9:7, their greatest provocation, the provocation in which they showed the greatest degree of evil disposition, undoubtedly was their refusing to go into Canaan from Kadesh. It was therefore very properly termed the bitter provocation and the day of temptation, by way of eminence; and justly brought on them the oath of God, excluding them from his rest in Canaan. To distinguish this from the provocation at Rephidim, it is called Meribah-Kadesh,” Deuteronomy 32:51. See Dr. Macknight.

**Verse 9.** *When your fathers tempted me* It would be better to translate **oo** where than when, as the Vulgate has done in its ubi; and this translation has been followed by Wiclif, Coverdale, Tindal, and our first translators in general. In my old MS. Bible the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses stand thus:—

Wherefore as the Holy Gost seith, to-day gif yhe han herde his voyce: nye yhe herden ghour hertis as in wrath-thinge, after the day of temptacioun in desert. Where ghoure fadris temptiden me: provyden and saiden my werkis. Wherefore fourtye yeere I was offendid or wrothe to this generatoun.

In behalf of this translation, Dr. Macknight very properly argues: “The word WHEN implies that, at the time of the bitter provocation, the Israelites had seen God’s works forty years; contrary to the history, which shows that the bitter provocation happened, in the beginning of the third year after the Exodus: whereas the translation where, as well as the matter of fact, represents God as saying, by David, that the Israelites tempted God in the wilderness during forty years, notwithstanding all that time they had seen God’s miracles.”

**Verse 10. *Wherefore I was grieved*** God represents himself as the Father of this great Jewish family, for whose comfort and support he had made every necessary provision, and to whom he had given every proof of tenderness and fatherly affection; and because, they disobeyed him, and walked ill that way in which they could not but be miserable, therefore he represents himself as grieved and exceedingly displeased with them.

***They do always err in their hearts*** Their affections are set on earthly things, and they do not acknowledge my ways to be right — holy, just, and good. They are radically evil; and they are evil, continually. They have every proof, of my power and goodness, and lay nothing to heart. They might have been saved, but they would not. God was grieved on this account. Now, can we suppose that it would have grieved him if, by a decree of his own, he had rendered their salvation impossible?

**Verse 11. *So I swear in my wrath*** God's grief at their continued disobedience became wrath at their final impenitence, and therefore he excluded them from the promised rest.

**Verse 12. *Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you*** Take warning by those disobedient Israelites; they were brought out of the house of bondage, and had the fullest promise of a land of prosperity and rest. By their disobedience they came short of it, and fell in the wilderness. Ye have been brought from the bondage of sin, and have a most gracious promise of an everlasting inheritance among the saints in light; through unbelief and disobedience they lost their rest, through the same ye may lose yours. An evil heart of unbelief will head away from the living God. What was possible in their case, is possible in yours. The apostle shows here five degrees of apostasy: 1. Consenting to sin, being deceived by its solicitations. 2. Hardness of heart, through giving way to sin. 3. Unbelief in consequence of this hardness which leads them to call even the truth of the Gospel in question. 4. This unbelief causing them to speak evil of the Gospel, and the provision God has made for the salvation of their souls. 5. Apostasy itself, or falling off from the living God; and thus extinguishing all the light that was in them, and finally grieving the Spirit of God, so that he takes his flight, and leaves them to a seared conscience and reprobate mind. See Leigh. He who begins to give the least way to sin is in danger of final apostasy; the best remedy against this is to get the evil heart

removed, as one murderer in the house is more to be dreaded than ten without.

**Verse 13. *But exhort one another daily*** This supposes a state of close Church fellowship, without which they could not have had access to each other.

***While it is called to-day*** Use time while you have: it, for by and by there will be no more present time; all will be future; all will be eternity. Daily signifies time continued. To-day, all present time. Your fathers said: Let us make ourselves a captain, and return back unto Egypt, Numbers 14:4. Thus they exhorted each other to depart from the living God. Be ye warned by their example; let not that unbelieving heart be in you that was in them; exhort each other daily to cleave to the living God; lest, if ye, do not, ye, like them, may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

**Verse 14. *For we are made partakers of Christ*** Having believed in Christ as the promised Messiah, and embraced the whole Christian system, they were consequently made partakers of all its benefits in this life, and entitled to the fulfillment of all its exceeding great and precious promises relative to the glories of the eternal world. The former they actually possessed, the latter they could have only in case of their perseverance; therefore the apostle says, If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end, i.e. of our life. For our participation of glory depends on our continuing steadfast in the faith, to the end of our Christian race.

The word **υποστασις**, which we here translate confidence, from **υπο**, under, and **ιστημι**, to place or stand, signifies properly a basis or foundation; that on which something else is builded, and by which it is supported. Their faith in Christ Jesus was this hypostasis or foundation; on that all their peace, comfort, and salvation were builded. If this were not held fast to the end, Christ, in his saving influences, could not be held fast; and no Christ, no heaven. He who has Christ in him, has the well-founded hope of glory; and he who is found in the great day with Christ in his heart, will have an abundant entrance into eternal glory.

**Verse 15. *While it is said, To-day*** You may see the necessity of perseverance from the saying, “Today, if ye will hear his voice,” therefore

harden not your hearts — do not neglect so great a salvation; hold fast what ye have obtained, and let no man take your crown. See on ver. 7, 8, 9, and 12.

**Verse 16.** *For some, when they had heard, did provoke* There is a various reading here, which consists merely in the different placing of an accent, and yet gives the whole passage a different turn: **-τινες**, from **τις**, who, if read with the accent on the epsilon, **τινες**, is the plural indefinite, and signifies some, as in our translation; if read with the accent on the iota, **τινες**, it has an interrogative meaning; and, according to this, the whole clause, **τινες γαρ ακουσαντες παρεπικραναν**: But who were those hearers who did bitterly provoke? **αλλ' ος παντες οι εξελθοντες εξ αιγυπτου δια μωσεως**; Were they not all they who came out of the land of Egypt by Moses? Or, the whole clause may be read with one interrogation: But who were those hearers that did bitterly provoke, but all those who came out of Egypt by Moses? This mode of reading is followed by some editions, and by Chrysostom and Theodoret, and by several learned moderns. It is more likely that this is the true reading, as all that follows to the end of the 18th verse is a series of interrogations.

Should it be said that all did not provoke, for Joshua and Caleb are expressly excepted; I answer, that the term all may be with great propriety used, when out of many hundreds of thousands only two persons were found who continued faithful. To these also we may add the priests and the whole tribe of Levi, who, it is very likely, did not provoke; for, as Dr. Macknight very properly remarks, they were not of the number of those who were to fight their way into Canaan, being entirely devoted to the service of the sanctuary. See Numbers 1:3, 45, and 49. And therefore what remained of them after forty years, no doubt, entered Canaan; for it appears from Numbers 34:17, and Joshua 24:33, that Eleazar, the son of Aaron, was one of those who did take possession of Canaan. Should it be still said our version appears to be most proper, because all did not provoke; it may be answered, that the common reading, **τινες**, some, is too contracted in its meaning to comprehend the hundreds of thousands who did rebel.

**Verse 17.** *But with whom was he grieved forty years?* I believe it was Surenhusius who first observed that “the apostle, in using the term forty

years, elegantly alludes to the space of time which had elapsed since the ascension of our Lord till the time in which this epistle was written, which was about forty years." But this does not exactly agree with what appears to be the exact date of this epistle. However, God had now been a long time provoked by that race rejecting the manifested Messiah, as he was by the conduct of their forefathers in the wilderness; and as that provocation was punished by a very signal judgment, so they might expect this to be punished also. The analogy was perfect in the crimes, and it might reasonably be expected to be so in the punishment. And was not the destruction of Jerusalem a proof of the heinous nature of their crimes, and of the justice of God's outpoured wrath?

*Whose carcasses fell* **ων τα κωλα επεσεν**. Whose members fell; for **τα κωλα** properly signifies the members of the body, and here may be an allusion to the scattered, bleached bones of this people, that were a long time apparent in the wilderness, continuing there as a proof of their crimes, and of the judgments of God.

**Verse 18. *To whom sware he*** God never acts by any kind of caprice; whenever he pours out his judgments, there are the most positive reasons to vindicate his conduct.

Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were they who had sinned. And those who did not enter into his rest were those who believed not. God is represented here as swearing that they should not enter in, in order to show the determinate nature of his purpose, the reason on which it was founded, and the height of the aggravation which occasioned it.

**Verse 19. *So we see that they could not enter in*** It was no decree of God that prevented them, it was no want of necessary strength to enable them, it was through no deficiency of Divine counsel to instruct them; all these they had in abundance: but they chose to sin, and would not believe. Unbelief produced disobedience, and disobedience produced hardness of heart and blindness of mind; and all these drew down the judgments of God, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

1. THIS whole chapter, as the epistle in general, reads a most awful lesson against backsliders, triflers, and loiterers in the way of salvation. Every believer in Christ is in danger of apostasy, while any remains of the evil

heart of unbelief are found in him. God has promised to purify the heart; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. It is therefore the highest wisdom of genuine Christians to look to God for the complete purification of their souls; this they cannot have too soon, and for this they cannot be too much in earnest.

2. No man should defer his salvation to any future time. If God speaks to-day, it is to-day that he should be heard and obeyed. To defer reconciliation to God to any future period, is the most reprehensible and destructive presumption. It supposes that God will indulge us in our sensual propensities, and cause his mercy to tarry for us till we have consummated our iniquitous purposes. It shows that we prefer, at least for the present, the devil to Christ, sin to holiness, and earth to heaven. And can we suppose that God will be thus mocked? Can we suppose that it can at all consistent with his mercy to extend forgiveness to such abominable provocation? What a man sows that shall he reap. If he sows to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption. Reader, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

3. Unbelief has generally been considered the most damning of all sins. I wish those who make this assertion would condescend to explain themselves. What is this unbelief that damns and ruins mankind? Their not permitting their minds to be persuaded of the truths which God speaks. **απιστια**, from **α**, negative, and **πιστις**, faith, signifies faithless or to be without faith. And this is an effect from another cause. In chap. 4:11, these very people are said to have fallen through unbelief; but there the word is **απειθεια**, from **α**, negative, and **πειθω**, to persuade. They heard the Divine instructions, they saw God's stupendous miracles; but they would not suffer themselves to be persuaded, that he who said and did such things would perform those other things which he had either threatened or promised: hence they had no faith, because they were unpersuaded; and their unbelief was the effect of their unpersuaded or unpersuadable mind. And their minds were not persuaded of God's truth, because they had ears open only to the dictates of the flesh; see on chap. 4:2. Here then is the damning sin, the not inferring, from what God has said and done, that he will do those other things which he has either threatened or promised. And how few are there who are not committing this sin daily! Reader, dost thou in this state dream of heaven? Awake out of sleep!

4. Where there are so many snares and dangers it is impossible to be too watchful and circumspect. Satan, as a roaring lion, as a subtle serpent, or in the guise of an angel of light, is momentarily going about seeking whom he may deceive, blind, and devour; and, when it is considered that the human heart, till entirely renewed, is on his side, it is a miracle of mercy that any soul escapes perdition: no man is safe any longer than he maintains the spirit of watchfulness and prayer; and to maintain such a spirit, he has need of all the means of grace. He who neglects any of them which the mercy of God has placed in his power, tempts the devil to tempt him. As a preventive of backsliding and apostasy, the apostle recommends mutual exhortation. No Christian should live for himself alone; he should consider his fellow Christian as a member of the same body, and feel for him accordingly, and have, succor, and protect him. When this is carefully attended to in religious society, Satan finds it very difficult to make an inroad on the Church; but when coldness, distance, and a want of brotherly love take place, Satan can attack each singly, and, by successive victories over individuals, soon make an easy conquest of the whole.

## CHAPTER 4

*As the Christian rest is to be obtained by faith, we should beware of unbelief lest we lose it, as the Hebrews did theirs, 1. The reason why they were not brought into the rest promised to them, 2. The rest promised to the Hebrews was a type of that promised to Christians, 3-10. Into this rest we should earnestly labor to enter, 11. A description of the word of God, 12, 13. Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest, 15. Through him we have confidence to come to God, 16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1.** *Let us therefore fear* Seeing the Israelites lost the rest of Canaan, through obstinacy and unbelief, let us be afraid lest we come short of the heavenly rest, through the same cause.

*Should seem to come short of it.* Lest any of us should actually come short of it; i.e. miss it. See the note on the verb **δοκειν**, to seem, Luke 8:18. What the apostle had said before, relative to the rest, might be considered as an allegory; here he explains and applies that allegory, showing that Canaan was a type of the grand privileges of the Gospel of Christ, and of the glorious eternity to which they lead.

*Come short* The verb **υστερειν** is applied here metaphorically; it is an allusion, of which there are many in this epistle, to the races in the Grecian games: he that came short was he who was any distance, no matter how small, behind the winner. Will it avail any of us how near we get to heaven, if the door be shut before we arrive? How dreadful the thought, to have only missed being eternally saved! To run well, and yet to permit the devil, the world, or the flesh, to hinder in the few last steps! Reader, watch and be sober.

**Verse 2.** *For unto us was the Gospel preached* **και γαρ εσμεν ευηγγελισμενοι**. For we also have received good tidings as well as they. They had a gracious promise of entering into an earthly rest; we have a gracious promise of entering into a heavenly rest. God gave them every



requisite advantage; he has done the same to us. Moses and the elders spoke the word of God plainly and forcibly to them: Christ and his apostles have done the same to us. They might have persevered; so may we: they disbelieved, disobeyed, and fell: and so may we.

***But the word preached did not profit them*** *ἀλλ οὐκ ὠφελήσεν ὁ λόγος τῆς ἀκοῆς ἐκείνους*. But the word of hearing did not profit them. The word and promise to which the apostle most probably refers is that in Deuteronomy 1:20, 21: Ye are come unto to the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto to us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not. Many exhortations they had to the following effect: Arise, that we may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth; Judges 18:9, 10. But instead of attending to the word of the Lord by Moses, the whole congregation murmured against him and Aaron, and said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt; Numbers 14:2, 4. But they were dastardly through all their generations. They spoke evil of the pleasant land, and did not give credence to his word. Their minds had been debased by their Egyptian bondage, and they scarcely ever arose to a state of mental nobility.

***Not being mixed with faith in them that heard*** There are several various readings in this verse, and some of them important. The principal are on the word *συγκεκραμενος*, mixed; which in the common text refers to *ὁ λόγος*, the word mixed; but, in ABCD and several others, it is *συγκεκραμενους*, referring to, and agreeing with, *ἐκείνους*, and may be thus translated: The word of hearing did not profit them, they not being mixed with those who heard it by faith. That is, they were not of the same spirit with Joshua and Caleb. There are other variations, but of less importance; but the common text seems best.

The word *συγκεκραμενος*, mixed, is peculiarly expressive; it is a metaphor taken from the nutrition of the human body by mixing the aliment taken into the stomach with the saliva and gastric juice, in consequence of which it is concocted, digested, reduced into chyle, which,

absorbed by the lacteal vessels, and thrown into the blood, becomes the means of increasing and supporting the body, all the solids and fluids being thus generated; so that on this process, properly performed, depend (under God) strength, health, and life itself. Should the most nutritive aliment be received into the stomach, if not mixed with the above juices, it would be rather the means of death than of life; or, in the words of the apostle, it would not profit, because not thus mixed. Faith in the word preached, in reference to that God who sent it, is the grand means of its becoming the power of God to the salvation of the soul. It is not likely that he who does not credit a threatening, when he comes to hear it, will be deterred by it from repeating the sin against which it is levelled; nor can he derive comfort from a promise who does not believe it as a pledge of God's veracity and goodness. Faith, therefore, must be mixed with all that we hear, in order to make the word of God effectual to our salvation.

This very use of the word, and its explanation, we may find in Maximus Tyrius, in his description of health, Dissert. x., page 101. "Health," says he, it is a certain disposition *υγρων και ξηρων και ψυχρων και θερμων δυναμεων, η υπο τεχνης συγκραθεισων καλωσ, η υπο φυσεως απμοσθεισων τεξνικως*, which consists in a proper mixture together of the wet and the dry, the cold and the hot, either by an artificial process, or by the skillful economy of nature."

**Verse 3.** *For we which have believed do enter into rest* The great spiritual blessings, the forerunners of eternal glory, which were all typified by that earthly rest or felicity promised to the ancient Israelites, we Christians do, by believing in Christ Jesus, actually possess. We have peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; are saved from the guilt and power of sin; and thus enjoy an inward rest.

But this is a rest differing from the seventh day's rest, or Sabbath, which was the original type of Canaan, the blessings of the Gospel, and eternal glory; seeing God said, concerning the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest, notwithstanding the works of creation were finished, and the seventh day's rest was instituted from the foundation of the world; consequently the Israelites had entered into that rest before the oath was sworn. See MacKnight.

We who believe, **οι πιστευσαντες**, is omitted by Chrysostom, and some few MSS. And instead of **εισερχομεθα γαρ**, for we do enter, AC, several others, with the Vulgate and Coptic, read **εισερχομεθα ουν**, therefore let us enter; and thus it answers to **φωβηθωμεν ουν**, therefore let us fear, ver. 1; but this reading cannot well stand unless **οι πιστευσαντες** be omitted, which is acknowledged to be genuine by every MS. and version of note and importance. The meaning appears to be this: We Jews, who have believed in Christ, do actually possess that rest-state of happiness in God, produced by peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost-which was typified by the happiness and comfort to be enjoyed by the believing Hebrews, in the possession of the promised land. See before.

**From the foundation of the world.** The foundation of the world, **καταβολη κοσμου**, means the completion of the work of creation in six days. In those days was the world, i.e. the whole system of mundane things, begun and perfected; and this appears to be the sense of the expression in this place.

**Verse 4. For he spake in a certain place** This certain place or somewhere, **που**, is probably Genesis 2: 2; and refers to the completion of the work of creation, and the setting apart the seventh day as a day of rest for man, and a type of everlasting felicity. See the notes on “Genesis 2:1”, etc., and See here “Hebrews 2:6”.

**Verse 5. And in this place again** In the ninety-fifth Psalm, already quoted, ver. 3. {Psalm 95:4} This was a second rest which the Lord promised to the believing, obedient seed of Abraham; and as it was spoken of in the days of David, when the Jews actually possessed this long promised Canaan, therefore it is evident that that was not the rest which God intended, as the next verse shows.

**Verse 6. It remaineth that some must enter therein** Why our translators put in the word must here I cannot even conjecture. I hope it was not to serve a system, as some have since used it: “Some must go to heaven, for so is the doctrine of the decree; and there must be certain persons infallibly brought thither as a reward to Christ for his sufferings; and in this the will of man and free agency can have no part,” etc, etc. Now, supposing that even all this was true, yet it does not exist either positively or by implication in the text. The words **επει ουν απολειπεται τινας**

εισελθειν εις αυτην, literally translated, are as follows: Seeing then it remaineth for some to enter into it; or, Whereas therefore it remaineth that some enter into it, which is Dr. Owen's translation, and they to whom it was first preached (οι προτερον ευαγγελισθεντες, they to whom the promise was given; they who first received the good tidings; i.e., the Israelites, to whom was given the promise of entering into the rest of Canaan) did not enter in because of their unbelief; and the promise still continued to be repeated even in the days of David; therefore, some other rest must be intended.

**Verse 7. *He limiteth a certain day*** The term day signifies not only time in general, but also present time, and a particular space. Day here seems to have the same meaning as rest in some other parts of this verse. The day or time of rest relative to the ancient Jews being over and past, and a long time having elapsed between God's displeasure shown to the disobedient Jews in the wilderness and the days of David, and the true rest not having been enjoyed, God in his mercy has instituted another day — has given another dispensation of mercy and goodness by Christ Jesus; and now it may be said, as formerly, To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. God speaks now as he spoke before; his voice is in the Gospel as it was in the law. Believe, love, obey, and ye shall enter into this rest.

**Verse 8. *For if Jesus had given them rest*** It is truly surprising that our translators should have rendered the **ιησους** of the text Jesus, and not Joshua, who is most clearly intended. They must have known that the **יהושע** Yehoshua of the Hebrew, which we write Joshua, is everywhere rendered **ιησους**, Jesus, by the Septuagint; and it is their reading which the apostle follows. It is true the Septuagint generally write **ιησους ναυη**, or **υιος ναυη**, Jesus Nave, or Jesus, son of Nave, for it is thus they translate **נו יהושע ב נון** Yehoshua ben Nun, Joshua the son of Nun; and this is sufficient to distinguish it from Jesus, son of David. But as Joshua, the captain general of Israel, is above intended, the word should have been written Joshua, and not Jesus. One MS., merely to prevent the wrong application of the name, has **ιησους ο του ναυη**, Jesus the son of Nave. Theodoret has the same in his comment, and one Syriac version has it in the text. It is Joshua in Coverdale's Testament, 1535; in Tindal's 1548; in that edited by Edmund Becke, 1549; in Richard Cardmarden's, Rouen, 1565; several modern translators, Wesley, Macknight, Wakefield, etc., read

Joshua, as does our own in the margin. What a pity it had not been in the text, as all the smaller Bibles have no marginal readings, and many simple people are bewildered with the expression.

The apostle shows that, although Joshua did bring the children of Israel into the promised land, yet this could not be the intended rest, because long after this time the Holy Spirit, by David, speaks of this rest; the apostle, therefore, concludes,

**Verse 9. *There, remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.*** It was not, 1. The rest of the Sabbath; it was not, 2. The rest in the promised land, for the psalmist wrote long after the days of Joshua; therefore there is another rest, a state of blessedness, for the people of God; and this is the Gospel, the blessings it procures and communicates, and the eternal glory which it prepares for, and has promised to, genuine believers.

There are two words in this chapter which we indifferently translate rest, *καταπαυσις* and *σabbatismos* the first signifying a cessation from labor, so that the weary body is rested and refreshed; the second meaning, not only a rest from labor, but a religious rest; sabbatismus, a rest of a sacred kind, of which both soul and body partake. This is true, whether we understand the rest as referring to Gospel blessings, or to eternal felicity, or to both.

**Verse 10. *For he that is entered into his rest*** The man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest; the state of happiness which he has provided, and which is the forerunner of eternal glory.

***Hath ceased from his own works*** No longer depends on the observance of Mosaic rites and ceremonies for his justification and final happiness. He rests from all these works of the law as fully as God has rested from his works of creation.

Those who restrain the word rest to the signification of eternal glory, say, that ceasing from our own works relates to the sufferings, tribulations, afflictions, etc., of this life; as in Revelation 14:13. I understand it as including both.

In speaking of the Sabbath, as typifying a state of blessedness in the other world, the apostle follows the opinions of the Jews of his own and after

times. The phrase **שבת עלאה ושבת התאה** shabbath illaah, veshabbath tethaah, the sabbath above, and the sabbath below, is common among the Jewish writers; and they think that where the plural number is used, as in Leviticus 19:30: Ye shall keep my Sabbaths, that the lower and higher sabbaths are intended, and that the one is prefigured by the other. See many examples in Schoettgen.

**Verse 11. *Let us labor therefore*** The word **σπουδασωμεν** implies every exertion of body and mind which can be made in reference to the subject. Rebus aliis omissis, hoc agamus; All things else omitted, this one thing let us do. We receive grace, improve grace, retain grace, that we may obtain eternal glory.

***Lest any man fall*** Lest he fall off from the grace of God, from the Gospel and its blessings, and perish everlastingly. This is the meaning of the apostle, who never supposed that a man might not make final shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, as long as he was in a state of probation.

**Verse 12. *For the word of God is quick, and powerful*** Commentators are greatly divided concerning the meaning of the phrase **‘ο λογος τος θεου**, the word of God; some supposing the whole of Divine revelation to be intended; others, the doctrine of the Gospel faithfully preached; others, the mind of God or the Divine intellect; and others, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is thus denominated in John 1:1, etc., and Revelation 19:13; the only places in which he is thus incontestably characterized in the New Testament. The disputed text, 1 John 5:7, I leave at present out of the question. In the introduction to this epistle I have produced sufficient evidence to make it very probable that St. Paul was the author of this epistle. In this sentiment the most eminent scholars and critics are now agreed. That Jesus Christ, the eternal, uncreated WORD, is not meant here, is more than probable from this consideration, that St. Paul, in no part of his thirteen acknowledged epistles, ever thus denominates our blessed Lord; nor is he thus denominated by any other of the New Testament writers except St. John. Dr. Owen has endeavored to prove the contrary, but I believe to no man’s conviction who was able to examine and judge of the subject. He has not been able to find more than two texts which even appeared to look his way. The first is, Luke 1:2: Us, which-were eye witnesses, and ministers **του λογου**, of the word; where it is evident the

whole of our Lord's ministry is intended. The second is, Acts 20:32: I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace; where nothing but the gracious doctrine of salvation by faith, the influence of the Divine Spirit, etc., etc., can be meant: nor is there any legitimate mode of construction with which I am acquainted, by which the words in either place can be personally applied to our Lord. That the phrase was applied to denominate the second subsistence in the glorious Trinity, by Philo and the rabbinical writers, I have already proved in my notes on John 1., where such observations are alone applicable.

Calmet, who had read all that either the ancients or moderns have said on this subject, and who does not think that Jesus Christ is here intended, speaks thus: "None of the properties mentioned here can be denied to the Son of God, the eternal Word; he sees all things, knows all things, penetrates all things, and can do all things. He is the ruler of the heart, and can turn it where he pleases. He enlightens the soul, and calls it gently and efficaciously, when and how he wills. Finally, he punishes in the most exemplary manner the insults offered to his Father and himself by infidels, unbelievers, and the wicked in general. But it does not appear that the Divine Logos is here intended, 1. Because St. Paul does not use that term to express the Son of God. 2. Because the conjunction  $\gamma\alpha\rho$ , for, shows that this verse is an inference drawn from the preceding, where the subject in question is concerning the eternal rest, and the means by which it is to be obtained. It is therefore more natural to explain the term of the word, order, and will of God, for the Hebrews represent the revelation of God as an active being, living, all-powerful, illumined, executing vengeance, discerning and penetrating all things. Thus Wisd. 16:26: 'Thy children, O Lord, know that it is not the growing of fruits that nourisheth man, but that it is thy word that preserveth them that put their trust in thee.' See Deuteronomy 8:3. That is, the sacred Scriptures point out and appoint all the means of life. Again, speaking of the Hebrews who were bitten with the fiery serpents, the same writer says, Wisd. 16:12: 'For it was neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored them to health, but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things;' i.e. which describes and prescribes the means of healing. And it is very likely that the purpose of God, sending the destroying angel to slay the firstborn in Egypt is intended by the same expression, Wisd. 18:15, 16: 'Thine almighty word leaped down from

heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword, and, standing up, filled all things with death.’ This however may be applied to the eternal Logos, or uncreated Word.

“And this mode of speech is exactly conformable to that of the Prophet Isaiah, Isaiah 55:10, 11, where to the word of God, spoken by his prophets, the same kind of powers are attributed as those mentioned here by the apostle: For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my WORD BE that GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. The centurion seems to speak a similar language, Luke 7:7: But say in a word, (*αλλα ειπε λογω*, speak to thy word,) and my servant shall be healed.” This is the sum of what this very able commentator says on the subject.

In Dr. Dodd’s collections we find the following:—

“The word of God, which promises to the faithful, an entrance into God’s rest in David’s time, and now to us, is not a thing which died or was forgotten as soon as it was uttered, but it continues one and the same to all generations; it is *ζων*, quick or living. So Isaiah says: The word of our God shall stand for ever; Isaiah 40:8. Compare chap. Isaiah 51:6; 55:11; 1 Esdras 4:38; John 3:34; 1 Peter 1:23. And powerful, *ενργης*, efficacious, active; sufficient, if it be not actually hindered, to produce its effects; effectual, Philemon 6. See 2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Thessalonians 2:13. And sharper than any two-edged sword; *τομωτερος υπερ*, more cutting than. The word of God penetrates deeper into a man than any sword; it enters into the soul and spirit, into all our sensations, passions, appetites, nay, to our very thoughts; and sits as judge of the most secret intentions, contrivances, and sentiments of the heart. Phocylides has an expression very similar to our author, where he says, of reason, ‘that it is a weapon which penetrates deeper into a man than a sword.’ See also Isaiah 40:4; Ephesians 6:17; Revelation 1: 16; 2:16.

“Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. — When the soul is thus distinguished from the spirit, by the former is meant that inferior



faculty by which we think of and desire what concerns our present being and welfare. By spirit is meant a superior power by which we prefer future things to present, by which we are directed to pursue truth and right above all things, and even to despise what is agreeable to our present state, if it stand in competition with, or is prejudicial to, our future happiness. See 1 Thessalonians 5:23. Some have thought that by the expression before us is implied that the word of God is able to bring death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; for, say they, if the soul and spirit, or the joints and marrow are separated one from another, it is impossible that life can remain. But perhaps the meaning of the latter clause may rather be: 'It can divide the joints and divide the marrow; i.e. enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce some sentiment which perhaps it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.' Mr. Pierce observes that our author has been evidently arguing from a tremendous judgment of God upon the ancient Israelites, the ancestors of those to whom this epistle is directed; and in this verse, to press upon them that care and diligence he had been recommending, he sets before them the efficacy and virtue of the word of God, connecting this verse with the former by a for in the beginning of it; and therefore it is natural to suppose that what he says of the word of God may have a relation to somewhat remarkable in that sore punishment of which he had been speaking, particularly to the destruction of the people by lightning, or fire from heaven. See Leviticus 10:1-5; Numbers 11:1-3, 16:35; Psalm 78:21. All the expressions in this view will receive an additional force, for nothing is more quick and living, more powerful and irresistible, sharp and piercing, than lightning. If this idea be admitted, the meaning of the last clause in this verse will be, 'That the word of God is a judge, to censure and punish the evil thoughts and intents of the heart.' And this brings the matter home to the exhortation with which our author began, chap. 3:12, 3:13; for under whatever disguise they might conceal themselves, yet, from such tremendous judgments as God executed upon their fathers, they might learn to judge as Moses did, Numbers 32:23: If ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." See Hammond, Whitby, Sykes, and Pierce.

Mr. Wesley's note on this verse is expressed with his usual precision and accuracy:—

“For the word of God — preached, ver. 2, and armed with threatenings, ver. 3, is living and powerful — attended with the power of the living God, and conveying either life or death to the hearers; sharper than any two-edged sword — penetrating the heart more than this does the body; piercing quite through, and laying open, the soul and spirit, joints and marrow — the inmost recesses of the mind, which the apostle beautifully and strongly expresses by this heap of figurative words; and is a discerner, not only of the thoughts, but also of the intentions.”

The law, and the word of God in general, is repeatedly compared to a two-edged sword among the Jewish writers, **חרב שתי פיפיות** *chereb shetey piphiyoth*, the sword with the two mouths. By this sword the man himself lives, and by it he destroys his enemies. This is implied in its two edges. See also Schoettgen.

***Is a discerner of the thoughts*** **και κριτικός ενθυμησεων και ευνοιω καρδιας**; Is a critic of the propensities and suggestions of the heart. How many have felt this property of God’s word where it has been faithfully preached! How often has it happened that a man has seen the whole of his own character, and some of the most private transactions of his life, held up as it were to public view by the preacher; and yet the parties absolutely unknown to each other! Some, thus exhibited, have even supposed that their neighbors must have privately informed the preacher of their character and conduct; but it was the word of God, which, by the direction and energy of the Divine Spirit, thus searched them out, was a critical examiner of the propensities and suggestions of their hearts, and had pursued them through all their public haunts and private ways. Every genuine minister of the Gospel has witnessed such effects as these under his ministry in repeated instances.

But while this effect of the word or true doctrine of God is acknowledged, let it not be supposed that it, of itself can produce such effects. The word of God is compared to a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces, Jeremiah 23:29; but will a hammer break a stone unless it is applied by the skill and strength of some powerful agent? It is here compared to a two-edged sword; but will a sword cut or pierce to the dividing of joints and marrow, or separation of soul and spirit, unless some hand push and direct it? Surely, no. Nor can even the words and doctrine of God produce any

effect but as directed by the experienced teacher, and applied by the Spirit of God. It is an instrument the most apt for the accomplishing of its work; but it will do nothing, can do nothing, but as used by the heavenly workman. To this is the reference in the next verse.

**Verse 13.** *Neither is there any creature that is not manifest* God, from

public morals, and the care he took to extirpate informers, etc., he says: Nihil tamen gratius, nihil saeculo dignius, quam quod contigit desuper intueri delatorum supina ora, retortasque cervices. Agnoscebamus et fruebamur, cum velut piaculares publicae sollicitudinis victimae, supra sanguinem noxiorum ad lenta supplicia gravioreque poenas ducerentur. Plin. Paneg., cap. 34. “There is nothing, however, in this age which affects us more pleasingly, nothing more deservedly, than to behold from above the supine faces and reverted necks of the informers. We thus knew them, and were gratified when, as expiatory victims of the public disquietude, they were led away to lingering punishments, and sufferings more terrible than even the blood of the guilty.”

The term was also used to describe the action of wrestlers who, when they could, got their hand under the chin of their antagonists, and thus, by bending both the head and neck, could the more easily give them a fall; this stratagem is sometimes seen in ancient monuments. But some suppose that it refers to the custom of dragging them by the neck. Diogenes the philosopher, observing one who had been victor in the Olympic games often fixing his eyes upon a courtesan, said, in allusion to this custom: *ιδε κριον αρειμανιον, ως υπο του τυχοντος κορασιου τραχηλιζεται*. “See how this mighty champion (martial ram) is drawn by the neck by a common girl.” See Stanley, page 305.

***With whom we have to do.*** *προς ον ημιν ο λογος*; To whom we must give an account. He is our Judge, and is well qualified to be so, as all our hearts and actions are naked and open to him.

This is the true meaning of *λογος* in this place; and it is used in precisely the same meaning in Matthew 12:36; 18:23; Luke 16:2. Romans 14:12: So then every one of us *λογος δωσει*, shall give an account of himself to God. And Hebrews 13:17: They watch for your souls, *ως λογον αποδωσοντες*, as those who must give account. We translate the words, With whom we have to do; of which, though the phraseology is obsolete, yet the meaning is nearly the same. To whom a worde to us, is the rendering of my old MS. and Wiclif. Of whom we speake, is the version of our other early translators.

**Verse 14.** ***Seeing then that we have a great high priest*** It is contended, and very properly, that the particle *ουν*, which we translate seeing, as if

what followed was an immediate inference from what the apostle had been speaking, should be translated now; for the apostle, though he had before mentioned Christ as the High Priest of our profession, chap. 3:1, and as the High Priest who made reconciliation for the sins of the people, chap. 2:17, does not attempt to prove this in any of the preceding chapters, but now enters upon that point, and discusses it at great length to the end of chap. 10.

After all, it is possible that this may be a resumption of the discourse from chap. 3:6; the rest of that chapter, and the preceding thirteen verses of this, being considered as a parenthesis. These parts left out, the discourse runs on with perfect connection. It is very likely that the words, here, are spoken to meet an objection of those Jews who wished the Christians of Palestine to apostatize: “You have no tabernacle-no temple-no high priest-no sacrifice for sin. Without these there can be no religion; return therefore to us, who have the perfect temple service appointed-by God.” To these he answers: We have a High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God; therefore let us hold fast our profession. See on chap. 3:1, to which this verse seems immediately to refer.

Three things the apostle professes to prove in this epistle:—

1. That Christ is greater than the angels.
2. That he is greater than Moses.
3. That he is greater than Aaron, and all high priests.

The two former arguments, with their applications and illustrations, he has already despatched; and now he enters on the third. See the preface to this epistle.

The apostle states, 1. That we have a high priest. 2. That this high priest is Jesus, the Son of God; not a son or descendant of Aaron, nor coming in that way, but in a more transcendent line.

3. Aaron and his successors could only pass into the holy of holies, and that once a year; but our High Priest has passed into the heavens, of which that was only the type. There is an allusion here to the high priest going into the holy of holies on the great day of atonement. 1. He left the congregation of the people. 2. He passed through the veil into the holy place, and was not seen even by the priests. 3. He entered through the second veil into the holy of holies, where was the symbol of the majesty

of God. Jesus, our High Priest, 1. Left the people at large. 2. He left his disciples by ascending up through the visible heavens, the clouds, as a veil, screening him from their sight. 3. Having passed through these veils, he went immediately to be our Intercessor: thus he passed **ουρανους**, the visible or ethereal heavens, into the presence of the Divine Majesty; through the heavens, **διεληλυθοτα τους ουρανους**, and the empyreum, or heaven of heavens.

**Verse 15. *For we have not a high priest*** To the objection, “Your High Priest, if entered into the heavens, can have no participation with you, and no sympathy for you, because out of the reach of human feelings and infirmities,” he answers: **ου γαρ εχομεν απχιερα μη δυναμενον συμπαθησαι ταις ασθeneιαις ημων**. We have not a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness. Though he be the Son of God, as to his human nature, and equal in his Divine nature with God; yet, having partaken of human nature, and having submitted to all its trials and distresses, and being in all points tempted like as we are, without feeling or consenting to sin; he is able to succor them that are tempted. See chap. 2:18, and the note there.

The words **κατα παντα καθ’ ομοιοτητα** might be translated, in all points according to the likeness, i.e. as far as his human nature could bear affinity to ours; for, though he had a perfect human body and human soul, yet that body was perfectly tempered; it was free from all morbid action, and consequently from all irregular movements. His mind, or human soul, being free from all sin, being every way perfect, could feel no irregular temper, nothing that was inconsistent with infinite purity. In all these respects he was different from us; and cannot, as man, sympathize with us in any feelings of this kind: but, as God, he has provided support for the body under all its trials and infirmities, and for the soul he has provided an atonement and purifying sacrifice; so that he cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness, and fills the soul with his Holy Spirit, and makes it his own temple and continual habitation. He took our flesh and blood, a human body and a human soul, and lived a human life. Here was the likeness of sinful flesh, Romans 8:5; and by thus assuming human nature, he was completely qualified to make an atonement for the sins of the world.

**Verse 16.** *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace* The allusion to the high priest, and his office on the day of atonement, is here kept up. The approach mentioned here is to the כַּפֹּרֶת kapporeth, ἱλαστήριον, the propitiatory or mercy-seat. This was the covering of the ark of the testimony or covenant, at each end of which was a cherub, and between them the shechinah, or symbol of the Divine Majesty, which appeared to, and conversed with, the high priest. Here the apostle shows the great superiority of the privileges of the new testament above those of the old; for there the high priest only, and he with fear and trembling, was permitted to approach; and that not without the blood of the victim; and if in any thing he transgressed, he might expect to be struck with death. The throne of grace in heaven answers to this propitiatory, but to this ALL may approach who feel their need of salvation; and they may approach μετὰ παρρησίας, with freedom, confidence, liberty of speech, in opposition to the fear and trembling of the Jewish high priest. Here, nothing is to be feared, provided the heart be right with God, truly sincere, and trusting alone in the sacrificial blood.

*That we may obtain mercy* ἵνα λαβόμεν ελεον· That we may take mercy — that we may receive the pardon of all our sins; there is mercy for the taking. As Jesus Christ tasted death for every man, so every man may go to that propitiatory, and take the mercy that is suited to his degree of guilt.

*And find grace* Mercy refers to the pardon of sin, and being brought into the favor of God. Grace is that by which the soul is supported after it has received this mercy, and by which it is purified from all unrighteousness, and upheld in all trials and difficulties, and enabled to prove faithful unto death.

*To help in time of need.* εἰς ευκαιρον βοηθειαν· For a seasonable support; that is, support when necessary, and as necessary, and in due proportion to the necessity. The word βοηθεια is properly rendered assistance, help, or support; but it is an assistance in consequence of the earnest cry of the person in distress, for the word signifies to run at the cry, θειν εἰς βοην, or ἐπι βοην θειν. So, even at the throne of grace, or great propitiatory, no help can be expected where there is no cry, and where there is no cry there is no felt necessity; for he that feels he is

perishing will cry aloud for help, and to such a cry the compassionate High Priest will run; and the time of need is the time in which God will show mercy; nor will he ever delay it when it is necessary. We are not to cry to-day to be helped to-morrow, or at some indefinite time, or at the hour of death. We are to call for mercy and grace when we need them; and we are to expect to receive them when we call. This is a part of our liberty or boldness; we come up to the throne, and we call aloud for mercy, and God hears and dispenses the blessing we need.

That this exhortation of the apostle may not be lost on us, let us consider:—

1. That there is a throne of grace, i.e. a propitiatory, the place where God and man are to meet.
2. That this propitiatory or mercy-seat is sprinkled with the atoning blood of that Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.
3. That we must come up, *προσερχομεθα*, to this throne; and this implies faith in the efficacy of the sacrifice.
4. That we must call aloud on God for his mercy, if we expect him to run to our assistance.
5. That we must feel our spiritual necessities, in order to our calling with fervency and earnestness.
6. That calling thus we shall infallibly get what we want; for in Christ Jesus, as a sacrificial offering, God is ever well pleased; and he is also well pleased with all who take refuge in the atonement which he has made.
7. That thus coming, feeling, and calling, we may have the utmost confidence; for we have boldness, liberty of access, freedom of speech; may plead with our Maker without fear; and expect all that heaven has to bestow; because Jesus, who died, sitteth upon the throne! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.
8. All these are reasons why we should persevere.



## CHAPTER 5

*The nature of the high priesthood of Christ; his pre-eminence, qualifications, and order, 1-10. Imperfect state of the believing Hebrews, and the necessity of spiritual improvement, 11-14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5

**Verse 1.** *For every high priest taken from among men* This seems to refer to Leviticus 21:10, where it is intimated that the high priest shall be taken מֵאַחֵיֶיךָ mechaiv, from his brethren; i.e. he shall be of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

*Is ordained for men* ὑπερ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τα πρὸς τὸν θεόν· Is appointed to preside over the Divine worship in those things which relate to man's salvation.

*That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins* God ever appeared to all his followers in two points of view: 1. As the author and dispenser of all temporal good. 2. As their lawgiver and judge. In reference to this twofold view of the Divine Being, his worship was composed of two different parts: 1. Offerings or gifts. 2. Sacrifices. 1. As the creator and dispenser of all good, he had offerings by which his bounty and providence were acknowledged. 2. As the lawgiver and judge, against whose injunctions offenses had been committed, he had sacrifices offered to him to make atonement for sin. The δῶρα, or gifts, mentioned here by the apostle, included every kind of eucharistical offering. The θυσιαί, sacrifices, included victims of every sort, or animals whose lives were to be offered in sacrifice, and their blood poured out before God, as an atonement for sins. The high priest was the mediator between God and the people; and it was his office, when the people had brought these gifts and sacrifices, to offer them to God in their behalf. The people could not legitimately offer their own offerings, they must be all brought to the priest, and he alone could present them to God. As we have a high priest

over the house of God, to offer all our gifts and his own sacrifice, therefore we may come with boldness to the throne of grace. See above.

**Verse 2. *Who can have compassion on the ignorant*** The word **μετριοπαθειν**, signifies, not merely to have compassion, but to act with moderation, and to bear with each in proportion to his ignorance, weakness, and untoward circumstances, all taken into consideration with the offenses he has committed: in a word, to pity, feel for, and excuse, as far as possible; and, when the provocation is at the highest, to moderate one's passion towards the culprit, and be ready to pardon; and when punishment must be administered, to do it in the gentlest manner.

Instead of **αγνοουσι**, the ignorant, one MS. only, but that of high repute, has **ασθενουσι**, the weak. Most men sin much through ignorance, but this does not excuse them if they have within reach the means of instruction. And the great majority of the human race sin through weakness. The principle of evil is strong in them; the occasions of sin are many; through their fall from God they are become exceedingly weak; and what the apostle calls, chap. 12:1, that **ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν**, the well-circumstanced sin, often occurs to every man. But, as in the above ease, weakness itself is no excuse, when the means of strength and succor are always at hand. However, all these are circumstances which the Jewish high priest took into consideration, and they are certainly not less attended to by the High Priest of our profession.

The reason given why the high priest should be slow to punish and prone to forgive is, that he himself is also compassed with weakness; **περικειται ασθενειαν**; weakness lies all around him, it is his clothing; and as he feels his clothing, so should he feel it; and as he feels it, so he should deplore it, and compassionate others.

**Verse 3. *And by reason hereof*** As he is also a transgressor of the commands of God, and unable to observe the law in its spirituality, he must offer sacrifices for sin, not only for the people, but for himself also: this must teach him to have a fellow feeling for others.

**Verse 4. *This honor*** **την τιμην** undoubtedly signifies here the office, which is one meaning of the word in the best Greek writers. It is here an

honorable office, because the man is the high priest of God, and is appointed by God himself to that office.

***But he that is called of God, as was Aaron.*** God himself appointed the tribe and family out of which the high priest was to be taken, and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high priesthood. As God alone had the right to appoint his own priest for the Jewish nation, and man had no authority here; so God alone could provide and appoint a high priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people; Christ, for all mankind.

Some make this “an argument for the uninterrupted succession of popes and their bishops in the Church, who alone have the authority to ordain for the sacerdotal office; and whosoever is not thus appointed is, with them, illegitimate.” It is idle to employ time in proving that there is no such thing as an uninterrupted succession of this kind; it does not exist, it never did exist. It is a silly fable, invented by ecclesiastical tyrants, and supported by clerical coxcombs. But were it even true, it has nothing to do with the text. It speaks merely of the appointment of a high priest, the succession to be preserved in the tribe of Levi, and in the family of Aaron. But even this succession was interrupted and broken, and the office itself was to cease on the coming of Christ, after whom there could be no high priest; nor can Christ have any successor, and therefore he is said to be a priest for ever, for he ever liveth the intercessor and sacrifice for mankind. The verse, therefore, has nothing to do with the clerical office, with preaching God’s holy word, or administering the sacraments; and those who quote it in this way show how little they understand the Scriptures, and how ignorant they are of the nature of their own office.

**Verse 5. *Christ glorified not himself*** The man Jesus Christ, was also appointed by God to this most awful yet glorious office, of being the High Priest of the whole human race. The Jewish high priest represented this by the sacrifices of beasts which he offered; the Christian High Priest must offer his own life: Jesus Christ did so; and, rising from the dead, he ascended to heaven, and there ever appeareth in the presence of God for us. Thus he has reassumed the sacerdotal office; and because he never dies, he can never have a successor. He can have no vicars, either in heaven or

upon earth; those who pretend to be such are impostors, and are worthy neither of respect nor credit.

***Thou art my Son*** See on chap. 1:5, and the observations at the end of that chapter. And thus it appears that God can have no high priest but his Son; and to that office none can now pretend without blasphemy, for the Son of God is still the High Priest in his temple.

**Verse 6. *He saith also in another place*** That is, in Psalm 110:4, a psalm of extraordinary importance, containing a very striking prediction of the birth, preaching, suffering, death, and conquests of the Messiah. See the notes there. For the mode of quotation here, See the note on “Hebrews 2:6”.

***Thou art a priest for ever*** As long as the sun and moon endure, Jesus will continue to be high priest to all the successive generations of men, as he was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If he be a priest for ever, there can be no succession of priests; and if he have all power in heaven and in earth, and if he be present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he can have no vicars; nor can the Church need one to act in his place, when he, from the necessity of his nature, fills all places, and is everywhere present. This one consideration nullifies all the pretensions of the Romish pontiff, and proves the whole to be a tissue of imposture.

***After the order of Melchisedec.*** Who this person was must still remain a secret. We know nothing more of him than is written in Genesis 14:18, etc., where see the notes, and particularly the observations at the end of that chapter, in which this very mysterious person is represented as a type of Christ.

**Verse 7. *Who in the days of his flesh*** The time of his incarnation, during which he took all the infirmities of human nature upon him, and was afflicted in his body and human soul just as other men are, irregular and sinful passions excepted.

***Offered up prayers and supplications*** This is one of the most difficult places in this epistle, if not in the whole of the New Testament. The labors of learned men upon it have been prodigious; and even in their sayings it is hard to find the meaning.

I shall take a general view of this and the two following verses, and then examine the particular expressions.

It is probable that the apostle refers to something in the agony of our Lord, which the evangelists have not distinctly marked.

The Redeemer of the world appears here as simply man; but he is the representative of the whole human race. He must make expiation for sin by suffering, and he can suffer only as man. Suffering was as necessary as death; for man, because he has sinned, must suffer, and because he has broken the law, should die. Jesus took upon himself the nature of man, subject to all the trials and distresses of human nature. He is now making atonement; and he begins with sufferings, as sufferings commence with human life; and he terminates with death, as that is the end of human existence in this world. Though he was the Son of God, conceived and born without sin, or any thing that could render him liable to suffering or death, and only suffered and died through infinite condescension; yet, to constitute him a complete Savior, he must submit to whatever the law required; and therefore he is stated to have learned OBEEDIENCE by the things which he suffered, ver. 8, that is, subjection to all the requisitions of the law; and being made perfect, that is, having finished the whole by dying, he, by these means, became the author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him, ver. 9; to them who, according to his own command, repent and believe the Gospel, and, under the influence of his Spirit, walk in holiness of life. "But he appears to be under the most dreadful apprehension of death; for he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death, ver. 7." I shall consider this first in the common point of view, and refer to the subsequent notes. This fear of death was in Christ a widely different thing from what it is in men; they fear death because of what lies beyond the grave; they have sinned, and they are afraid to meet their Judge. Jesus could have no fear on these grounds: he was now suffering for man, and he felt as their expiatory victim; and God only can tell, and perhaps neither men nor angels can conceive, how great the suffering and agony must be which, in the sight of infinite Justice, was requisite to make this atonement. Death, temporal and eternal, was the portion of man; and now Christ is to destroy death by agonizing and dying! The tortures and torments necessary to effect this destruction Jesus Christ alone could feel,

Jesus Christ alone could sustain, Jesus Christ alone can comprehend. We are referred to them in this most solemn verse; but the apostle himself only drops hints, he does not attempt to explain them: he prayed; he supplicated with strong crying and tears; and he was heard in reference to that which he feared. His prayers, as our Mediator, were answered; and his sufferings and death were complete and effectual as our sacrifice. This is the glorious sum of what the apostle here states; and it is enough. We may hear it with awful respect; and adore him with silence whose grief had nothing common in it to that of other men, and is not to be estimated according to the measures of human miseries. It was:-

A weight of wo, more than whole worlds could bear.

I shall now make some remarks on particular expressions, and endeavor to show that the words may be understood with a shade of difference from the common acceptation.

*Prayers and supplications*, etc. There may be an allusion here to the manner in which the Jews speak of prayer, etc. “Rabbi Yehudah said: All human things depend on repentance and the prayers which men make to the holy blessed God; especially if tears be poured out with the prayers. There is no gate which tears will not pass through.” Sohar, Exod., fol. 5.

“There are three degrees of prayer, each surpassing the other in sublimity; prayer, crying, and tears: prayer is made in silence; crying, with a loud voice; but tears surpass all.” Synops. Sohar, p. 33.

The apostle shows that Christ made every species of prayer, and those especially by which they allowed a man must be successful with his Maker.

The word **ικητηριας**, which we translate supplications, exists in no other part of the New Testament. **ικητης** signifies a supplicant, from **ικομαι**, I come or approach; it is used in this connection by the purest Greek writers. Nearly the same words are found in Isocrates, Deuteronomy Pace: **ικητηριας πολλας και δεησεις ποιουμενοι**. Making many supplications and prayers. **ικητηρια**, says Suidas, **καλειται ελαιας κλαδος, στεμματι εστεμμενος**----**εστιν, ην οι δεομενοι κατατιθενται που, η μετα χειρας εχουσις**. “Hiketeria is a branch of olive, rolled round with wool-is what suppliants were accustomed to

deposite in some place, or to carry in their hands.” And **ικητης**, hiketes, he defines to be, **ο δουλοπρεπως παρακαλων, και δεομενος περι τινος οτουουν**. “He who, in the most humble and servile manner, entreats and begs any thing from another.” In reference to this custom the Latins used the phrase *velamenta pratendere*, “to hold forth these covered branches,” when they made supplication; and Herodian calls them **ικητηριας θαλλους**, “branches of supplication.” Livy mentions the custom frequently; see lib. xxv. cap. 25: lib. xxix. c. 16; lib. xxxv. c. 34; lib. xxxvi. c. 20. The place in lib. xxix. c. 16, is much to the point, and shows us the full force of the word, and nature of the custom. “Decem legati Locrensium, obsiti squalore et sordibus, in comitio sedentibus consulibus *velamenta supplicium, ramos oleae (ut Graecis mos est,) porrigentes, ante tribunal cum flebili vociferatione humi procubuerunt.*” “Ten delegates from the Locrians, squalid and covered with rags, came into the hall where the consuls were sitting, holding out in their hands olive branches covered with wool, according to the custom of the Greeks; and prostrated themselves on the ground before the tribunal, with weeping and loud lamentation.” This is a remarkable case, and may well illustrate our Lord’s situation and conduct. The Locrians, pillaged, oppressed, and ruined by the consul, Q. Plemmius, send their delegates to the Roman government to implore protection and redress they, the better to represent their situation, and that of their oppressed fellow citizens, take the hiketeria, or olive branch wrapped round with wool, and present themselves before the consuls in open court, and with wailing and loud outcries make known their situation. The senate heard, arrested Plemmius, loaded him with chains, and he expired in a dungeon. Jesus Christ, the representative of and delegate from the whole human race, oppressed and ruined by Satan and sin, with the hiketeria, or ensign of a most distressed suppliant, presents himself before the throne of God, with strong crying and tears, and prays against death and his ravages, in behalf of those whose representative he was; and he was heard in that he feared — the evils were removed, and the oppressor cast down. Satan was bound, he was spoiled of his dominion, and is reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day.

Every scholar will see that the words of the Roman historian answer exactly to those of the apostle; and the allusion in both is to the same custom. I do not approve of allegorizing or spiritualizing; but the allusion

and similarity of the expressions led me to make this application. Many others would make more of this circumstance, as the allusion in the text is so pointed to this custom. Should it appear to any of my readers that I should, after the example of great names, have gone into this house of Rimmon, and bowed myself there, they will pardon their servant in this thing.

***To save him from death*** I have already observed that Jesus Christ was the representative of the human race; and have made some observations on the peculiarity of his sufferings, following the common acceptance of the words in the text, which things are true, howsoever the text may be interpreted. But here we may consider the pronoun **αυτον**, him, as implying the collective body of mankind; the children who were partakers of flesh and blood, chap. 2:14; the seed of Abraham, chap. 2:16, who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage. So he made supplication with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save THEM from death; for I consider the **τουτους**, them, of chap. 2:15, the same or implying the same thing as **αυτον**, him, in this verse; and, thus understood, all the difficulty vanishes away. On this interpretation I shall give a paraphrase of the whole verse: Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh, (for he was incarnated that he might redeem the seed of Abraham, the fallen race of man,) and in his expiatory sufferings, when representing the whole human race, offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him who was able to save THEM from death: the intercession was prevalent, the passion and sacrifice were accepted, the sting of death was extracted, and Satan was dethroned.

If it should be objected that this interpretation occasions a very unnatural change of person in these verses, I may reply that the change made by my construction is not greater than that made between verses 6 and 7; in the first of which the apostle speaks of Melchisedec, who at the conclusion of the verse appears to be antecedent to the relative who in ver. 7; and yet, from the nature of the subject, we must understand Christ to be meant. And I consider, ver. 8, Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered, as belonging, not only to Christ considered in his human nature, but also to him in his collective capacity; i.e., belonging to all the sons and daughters of God, who, by means of suffering and various chastisements, learn submission, obedience and righteousness; and



this very subject the apostle treats in considerable detail in chap. 12:2-11, to which the reader will do well to refer.

**Verse 8. *Though he were a Son*** *καὶ υἱὸς ἦν* See the whole of the preceding note.

**Verse 9. *And being made perfect*** *καὶ τελειωθεὶς*· And having finished all-having died and risen again. *τελειωθῆναι* signifies to have obtained the goal; to have ended one's labor, and enjoyed the fruits of it. Chap. 12:23: The spirits of just men made perfect, *πνεύμασι δικαίων τετελειωμένων*, means the souls of those who have gained the goal, and obtained the prize. So, when Christ had finished his course of tremendous sufferings, and consummated the whole by his death and resurrection, he became *αἰτίος σωτηρίας αἰώνιος*, the cause of eternal salvation unto all them who obey him. He was consecrated both high priest and sacrifice by his offering upon the cross.

“In this verse,” says Dr. Macknight, “three things are clearly stated: 1. That obedience to Christ is equally necessary to salvation with believing on him. 2. That he was made perfect as a high priest by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, chap. 8:3. 3. That, by the merit of that sacrifice, he hath obtained pardon and eternal life for them who obey him.” He tasted death for every man; but he is the author and cause of eternal salvation only to them who obey him. It is not merely believers, but obedient believers, that shall be finally saved. Therefore this text is an absolute, unimpeachable evidence, that it is not the imputed obedience of Christ that saves any man. Christ has bought men by his blood; and by the infinite merit of his death he has purchased for them an endless glory; but, in order to be prepared for it, the sinner must, through that grace which God withholds from no man, repent, turn from sin, believe on Jesus as being a sufficient ransom and sacrifice for his soul, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, be a worker together with him, walk in conformity to the Divine will through this Divine aid, and continue faithful unto death, through him, out of whose fullness he may receive grace upon grace.

**Verse 10. *Called of God a high priest*** *προσαγορευθεὶς*· Being constituted, hailed, and acknowledged to be a high priest. In Hesychius we find *προσαγορευεῖν*, which he translates *ἀσπαζεται*· hence we learn that one meaning of this word is to salute; as when a man was constituted or anointed king, those who accosted him would say, Hail king! On this verse

Dr. Macknight has the following note, with the insertion of which the reader will not be displeased: “As our Lord, in his conversation with the Pharisees, recorded Matthew 22:43, spake of it as a thing certain of itself, and universally known and acknowledged by the Jews, that David wrote the 110th Psalm by inspiration, concerning the Christ or Messiah; the apostle was well founded in applying the whole of that Psalm to Jesus. Wherefore, having quoted the fourth verse, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec, as directed to Messiah, David’s Lord, he justly termed that speech of the Deity a salutation of Jesus, according to the true import of the word **προσαγορευθεις**, which properly signifies to address one by his name, or title, or office; accordingly Hesychius explains **προσαγορευομαι** by **ασπαζομαι**. Now, that the deep meaning of this salutation may be understood, I observe, First, that, by the testimony of the inspired writers, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when he returned to heaven, after having finished his ministry upon earth; Mark 16:19; Acts 7:56; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 1 Peter 3:22. Not, however, immediately, but after that he had offered the sacrifice of himself in heaven, by presenting his crucified body before the presence of God; Hebrews 1:3; 10:10. Secondly, I observe, that God’s saluting Messiah a priest after the order of Melchisedec, being mentioned in the psalm after God is said to have invited him to sit at his right hand, it is reasonable to think the salutation was given him after he had offered the sacrifice of himself; and had taken his seat at God’s right hand. Considered in this order, the salutation of Jesus, as a priest after the order of Melchisedec, was a public declaration on the part of God that he accepted the sacrifice of himself, which Jesus then offered, as a sufficient atonement for the sin of the world, and approved of the whole of his ministrations on earth, and confirmed all the effects of that meritorious sacrifice, And whereas we are informed in the psalm that, after God had invited his Son, in the human nature; to sit at his right hand as Governor of the world, and foretold the blessed fruits of his government, he published the oath by which he made him a Priest for ever, before he sent him into the world to accomplish the salvation of mankind; and declared that he would never repent of that oath: The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a Priest for ever after the similitude of Melchisedec. It was, in effect, a solemn publication of the method in which God would pardon sinners; and a promise that the effects of his Son’s government as a King, and of his ministrations as a Priest,

should be eternal; see chap. 6:20. Moreover, as this solemn declaration of the dignity of the Son of God, as a King and a Priest for ever in the human nature, was made in the hearing of the angelical hosts, it was designed for this instruction, that they might understand their subordination to God's Son, and pay him that homage that is due to him as Governor of the world, and as Savior of the human race; Philippians 2:9, 10; Hebrews 1:6. The above explanation of the import of God's saluting Jesus a Priest for ever, is founded on the apostle's reasonings in the seventh and following chapters, where he enters into the deep meaning of the oath by which that salutation was conferred."

**Verse 11.** *Of whom we have many things to say* The words *περι ου*, which we translate of whom, are variously applied: 1. To Melchisedec; 2. To Christ; 3. To the endless priesthood. Those who understand the place of Melchisedec, suppose that it is in reference to this that the apostle resumes the subject in the seventh chapter, where much more is said on this subject, though not very difficult of comprehension; and indeed it is not to be supposed that the Hebrews could be more capable of understanding the subject when the apostle wrote the seventh chapter than they were when, a few hours before, he had written the fifth. It is more likely, therefore, that the words are to be understood as meaning Jesus, or that endless priesthood, of which he was a little before speaking, and which is a subject that carnal Christians cannot easily comprehend.

**Hard to be uttered** *δυσερμηνευτος*: Difficult to be interpreted, because Melchisedec was a typical person. Or if it refer to the priesthood of Christ, that is still more difficult to be explained, as it implies, not only his being constituted a priest after this typical order, but his paying down the ransom for the sins of the whole world; and his satisfying the Divine justice by this sacrifice, but also thereby opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and giving the whole world an entrance to the holy of holies by his blood.

**Dull of hearing.** *νωθροι ταις ακοαις*: Your souls do not keep pace with the doctrines and exhortations delivered to you. As *νωθρος* signifies a person who walks heavily and makes little speed, it is here elegantly applied to those who are called to the Christian race, have the road laid down plain before them, how to proceed specified, and the blessings to be

obtained enumerated, and yet make no exertions to get on, but are always learning, and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

**Verse 12. *For when for the time*** They had heard the Gospel for many years, and had professed to be Christians for a long time; on these accounts they might reasonably have been expected to be well instructed in Divine things, so as to be able to instruct others.

***Which be the first principles*** *τινα ρα στοιχεια*. Certain first principles or elements. The word *τινα* is not the nominative plural, as our translators have supposed, but the accusative case, governed by *διδασκειν* and therefore the literal translation of the passage is this: Ye have need that one teach you a second time (*παλιν*) certain elements of the doctrines of Christ, or oracles of God; i.e. the notices which the prophets gave concerning the priesthood of Jesus Christ, such as are found in Psalm 110; and in Isaiah 53: By the oracles of God the writings of the Old Testament, are undoubtedly meant.

***And are become such*** The words seem to intimate that they had once been better instructed, and had now forgotten that teaching; and this was occasioned by their being dull of hearing; either they had not continued to hear, or they had heard so carelessly that they were not profited by what they heard. They had probably totally omitted the preaching of the Gospel, and consequently forgotten all they had learned. Indeed, it was to reclaim those Hebrews from backsliding, and preserve them from total apostasy, that this epistle was written.

***Such as have need of milk*** Milk is a metaphor by which many authors, both sacred and profane, express the first principles of religion and science; and they apply sucking to learning; and every student in his novitiate, or commencement of his studies, was likened to an infant that derives all its nourishment from the breast of its mother, not being able to digest any other kind of food. On the contrary, those who had well learned all the first principles of religion and science, and knew how to apply them, were considered as adults who were capable of receiving *στερεα τροφη*, solid food; i.e. the more difficult and sublime doctrines. The rabbins abound with this figure; it occurs frequently in Philo, and in the Greek ethic writers also. In the famous Arabic poem called (Arabic) al Bordah, written by Abi Abdallah Mohammed ben Said ben Hamad Albusiree, in praise of

Mohammed and his religion, every couplet of which ends with the letter (Arabic) mim, the first letter in Mohammed's name, we meet with a couplet that contains a similar sentiment to that of the apostle:-

(Arabic)

*“The soul is like to a young infant, which, if permitted, will grow up to manhood in the love of sucking; but if thou take it from the breast it will feel itself weaned.”*

Dr. Owen observes that there are two Sorts of hearers of the Gospel, which are here expressed by an elegant metaphor or similitude; this consists, 1. In the conformity that is between bodily food and the Gospel as preached. 2. In the variety of natural food as suited to the various states of them that feed on it, answered by the truths of the Gospel, which are of various kinds; and, in exemplification of this metaphor, natural food is reduced to two kinds: 1. milk; 2. strong or solid meat; and those who feed on these are reduced to two sorts: 1. children; 2. men of ripe age. Both of which are applied to hearers of the Gospel.

1. Some there are who are **νηπιοι**, babes or infants, and some are **τελειοι**, perfect or full grown. 2. These babes are described by a double properly: 1. They are dull of hearing; 2. They are unskilful in the word of righteousness.

In opposition to this, those who are spiritually adult are, 1. They who are capable of instruction. 2. Such as have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

3. The different means to be applied to these different sorts for their good, according to their respective conditions, are expressed in the terms of the metaphor: to the first, **γαλα**, milk; to the others, **στεοεα τροφη**, strong meat. All these are compromised in the following scheme:-

The hearers of the Gospel are,

I. **νηπιοι**· BABES or INFANTS. II. **τελειοι**· PERFECT or ADULT Who are Who are 1. **νωθροι ταις ακοαις**· Dull of 1. **φρονιμοι**· Wise and hearing. prudent. 2. **απειροι λογου δικαιοσυνης**· 2. **τα αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα** Inexperienced in the **εχοντες**· And have their doctrine of

righteousness. senses properly exercised. These have need These have need **γαλακτος**· Of milk. **στερεας τροφης**· Of solid food.

But all these are to derive their nourishment or spiritual instruction **εκ των λογιων του θεου**, from the oracles of God. The word oracle, by which we translate the **λογιον** of the apostle, is used by the best Greek writers to signify a divine speech, or answer of a deity to a question proposed. It always implied a speech or declaration purely celestial, in which man had

Were every thing conducted according to these oracles, we should have neither war nor desolation in the earth; families would be well governed, and individuals universally made happy.

Those who consulted the ancient oracles were obliged to go to enormous expenses, both in sacrifices and in presents to the priests. And when they had done so, they received oracles which were so equivocal, that, howsoever the event fell out, they were capable of being interpreted that way.

**Verse 13. *For every one that useth milk*** It is very likely that the apostle, by using this term, refers to the doctrines of the law, which were only the rudiments of religion, and were intended to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

***The word of righteousness*** *αογος δικαιοσυνης*. The doctrine of justification. I believe this to be the apostle's meaning. He that uses milk — rests in the ceremonies and observances of the law, is unskilful in the doctrine of justification; for this requires faith in the sacrificial death of the promised Messiah.

**Verse 14. *But strong meat*** The high and sublime doctrines of Christianity; the atonement, justification by faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fullness of Christ dwelling in the souls of men, triumph in and over death, the resurrection of the body, the glorification of both body and soul in the realms of blessedness, and an endless union with Christ in the throne of his glory. This is the strong food which the genuine Christian understands, receives, digests, and by which he grows.

***By reason of use*** Who, by constant hearing, believing, praying, and obedience, use all the graces of God's Spirit; and, in the faithful use of them, find every one improved, so that they daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

***Have their senses exercised*** The word *αισθητηρια* signifies the different organs of sense, as the eyes, ears, tongue, and palate, nose, and finger ends, and the nervous surface in general, through which we gain the sensations called seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling. These organs of sense, being frequently exercised or employed on a variety of subjects, acquire the power to discern the various objects of sense: viz. all objects of light;

difference of sounds; of tastes or savours; of odours or smelling; and of hard, soft, wet, dry, cold, hot, rough, smooth, and all other tangible qualities.

There is something in the soul that answers to all these senses in the body. And as universal nature presents to the other senses their different and appropriate objects, so religion presents to these interior senses the objects which are suited to them. Hence in Scripture we are said, even in spiritual things, to see, hear, taste, smell, and touch or feel. These are the means by which the soul is rendered comfortable, and through which it derives its happiness and perfection.

In the adult Christian these senses are said to be *γεγυμνασμενα*, exercised, a metaphor taken from the *athletae* or contenders in the Grecian games, who were wont to employ all their powers, skill, and agility in mock fights, running, wrestling, etc., that they might be the better prepared for the actual contests when they took place. So these employ and improve all their powers, and in using grace get more grace; and thus, being able to discern good from evil, they are in little danger of being imposed on by false doctrine, or by the pretensions of hypocrites; or of being deceived by the subtleties of Satan. They feel that their security depends, under God, on this exercise-on the proper use which they make of the grace already given them by God. Can any reader be so dull as not to understand this?



## CHAPTER 6

*We must proceed from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ unto perfection, and not lay the foundation a second time, 1-3. Those who were once enlightened, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the various blessings of the Gospel, if they apostatize from Christ, and finally reject him as their Savior, cannot be renewed again to repentance, 4-6. The double similitude of the ground blessed of God, and bearing fruit; and of that ground which is cursed of God, and bears briars and thorns, 7, 8. The apostle's confidence in them, and his exhortation to diligence and perseverance, 9-12. God's promise and oath to Abraham, by which the immutability of his counsel is shown, in order to excite our hope, 13-18. Hope is the anchor of the soul, and enters within the veil, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1. *Therefore*** Because ye have been so indolent, slow of heart, and have still so many advantages.

***Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ*** Ceasing to continue in the state of babes, who must be fed with milk — with the lowest doctrines of the Gospel, when ye should be capable of understanding the highest.

***Let us go on unto perfection*** Let us never rest till we are adult Christians — till we are saved from all sin, and are filled with the spirit and power of Christ.

The words **τον της αρχης του χριστου λογον** might be translated, The discourse of the beginning of Christ, as in the margin; that is, the account of his incarnation, and the different types and ceremonies in the law by which his advent, nature, office, and miracles were pointed out. The whole law of Moses pointed out Christ, as may be seen at large in my comment on the Pentateuch; and therefore the words of the apostle may be understood thus: Leave the law, and come to the Gospel. Cease from Moses, and come to the Messiah.

Let us go on unto perfection. — The original is very emphatic: **ἐπι τὴν τελειότητα φερωμεθα**. Let us be carried on to this perfection. God is ever ready by the power of his Spirit, to carry us forward to every degree of light, life, and love, necessary to prepare us for an eternal weight of glory. There can be little difficulty in attaining the end of our faith, the salvation of our souls from all sin, if God carry us forward to it; and this he will do if we submit to be saved in his own way, and on his own terms. Many make a violent outcry against the doctrine of perfection, i.e. against the heart being cleansed from all sin in this life, and filled with love to God and man, because they judge it to be impossible! Is it too much to say of these that they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God? Surely the Scripture promises the thing; and the power of God can carry us on to the possession of it.

**Laying again the foundation of repentance** The phrase **νεκρὰ ἔργα**, dead works, occurs but once more in the sacred writings, and that is in chap. 9:14 of this epistle; and in both places it seems to signify such works as deserve death — works of those who were dead in trespasses, and dead in sins; and dead by sentence of the law, because they had by these works broken the law. Repentance may be properly called the foundation of the work of God in the soul of man, because by it we forsake sin, and turn to God to find mercy.

**Faith toward God** Is also a foundation, or fundamental principle, without which it is impossible to please God, and without which we cannot be saved. By repentance we feel the need of God's mercy, by faith we find that mercy.

But it is very likely that the apostle refers here to the Levitical law, which, in its painful observances, and awful denunciations of Divine wrath against every breach of that law, was well calculated to produce repentance, and make it a grievous and bitter thing to sin against God. And as to faith in God, that was essentially necessary, in order to see the end of the commandment; for without faith in him who was to come, all that repentance was unavailable, and all ritual observances without profit.

**Verse 2. Of the doctrine of baptisms** “There were two things,” says Dr. Owen, “peculiar to the Gospel, the doctrine of it and the gifts of the Holy Ghost. Doctrine is called baptism, Deuteronomy 32:2; hence the people

are said to be baptized to Moses, when they were initiated into his doctrines, 1 Corinthians 10:2. The baptism of John was his doctrine, Acts 19:3; and the baptism of Christ was the doctrine of Christ, wherewith he was to sprinkle many nations, Isaiah 52:15. This is the first baptism of the Gospel, even its doctrine. The other was the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, Acts 1:5; and this alone is what is intended by the laying on of hands; and then the sense will be the foundation of the Gospel baptisms, namely preaching and the gifts of the Holy Ghost.”

I am afraid, with all this great man’s learning, he has not hit the meaning of the apostle. As teaching is the means by which we are to obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost, surely the apostle never designed to separate them, but to lead men immediately through the one to the possession of the other. Nor is the word baptism mentioned in the passage in Deuteronomy which he quotes; nor, indeed, any word properly synonymous. Neither βαπτισμος, baptism, ραντισμος, sprinkling, nor any verb formed from them, is found in the Septuagint, in that place. But the other proofs are sufficiently in point, viz. that by baptism in the other places referred to, doctrine or TEACHING is meant; but to call TEACHING one baptism, and the gifts of THE HOLY GHOST another baptism, and to apply this to the explanation of the difficulty here, is very far from being satisfactory.

I am inclined to think that all the terms in this verse, as well as those in the former, belong to the Levitical law, and are to be explained on that ground.

Baptisms, or immersions of the body in water, sprinklings, and washings, were frequent as religious rites among the Hebrews, and were all emblematical of that purity which a holy God requires in his worshippers, and without which they cannot be happy here, nor glorified in heaven.

**Laying on of hands** Was also frequent, especially in sacrifices: the person bringing the victim laid his hands on its head, confessed his sins over it, and then gave it to the priest to be offered to God, that it might make atonement for his transgressions. This also had respect to Jesus Christ, that Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

The doctrine also of the resurrection of the dead and of eternal judgment, were both Jewish, but were only partially revealed, and then referred to the Gospel. Of the resurrection of the dead there is a fine proof in Isaiah

26:19, where it is stated to be the consequence of the death and resurrection of Christ, for so I understand the words, Thy dead shall live; with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead. The valley of dry bones, Ezekiel 37:1, etc., is both an illustration and proof of it. And Daniel has taught both the resurrection and the eternal

would bring on themselves and their land swift destruction. See the 4th and following verses, and particularly the notes on verses 8 and 9.

**Verse 3. *And this will we do*** God being my helper, I will teach you all the sublime truths of the Gospel; and show you how all its excellences were typified by the law, and particularly by its sacrificial system.

**Verse 4. *For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened*** Before I proceed to explain the different terms in these verses, it is necessary to give my opinion of their design and meaning: 1. I do not consider them as having any reference to any person professing Christianity. 2. They do not belong, nor are they applicable, to backsliders of any kind. 3. They belong to apostates from Christianity; to such as reject the whole Christian system, and its author, the Lord Jesus. 4. And to those of them only who join with the blaspheming Jews, call Christ an impostor, and vindicate his murderers in having crucified him as a malefactor; and thus they render their salvation impossible, by wilfully and maliciously rejecting the Lord that bought them. No man believing in the Lord Jesus as the great sacrifice for sin, and acknowledging Christianity as a Divine revelation, is here intended, though he may have unfortunately backslidden from any degree of the salvation of God.

The design of these solemn words is evidently, First, to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degrees of grace was possible; and that those who were highest in the favor of God might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly. Secondly, to warn them against such an awful state of perdition, that they might not be led away, by either the persuasions or persecutions of their countrymen, from the truth of the heavenly doctrine which had been delivered to them. And, Thirdly, to point out the destruction which was shortly to come upon the Jewish nation.

Once enlightened-Thoroughly instructed in the nature and design of the Christian religion, having received the knowledge of the truth, chap. 10:32; and being convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and led to Jesus the Savior of sinners.

***Tasted of the heavenly gift*** Having received the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins, through the Day Spring which from on high had

visited them; such having received Christ, the heavenly gift of God's infinite love, John 3:16; the living bread that came down from heaven, John 6:51; and thus tasting that the Lord is gracious; 1 Peter 2:3, and witnessing the full effects of the Christian religion.

***Partakers of the Holy Ghost*** The Spirit himself witnessing with their spirits that they were the children of God, and thus assuring them of God's mercy towards them, and of the efficacy of the atonement through which they had received such blessings.

**Verse 5. *And have tasted the good word of God*** Have had this proof of the excellence of the promise of God in sending the Gospel, the Gospel being itself the good word of a good God, the reading and preaching of which they find sweet to the taste of their souls. Genuine believers have an appetite for the word of God; they taste it, and then their relish for it is the more abundantly increased. The more they get, the more they wish to have.

***The powers of the world to come*** δυναμεις τε μελλοντος αιωνος. These words are understood two ways: 1. The powers of the world to come may refer to the stupendous miracles wrought in confirmation of the Gospel, the Gospel dispensation being the world to come in the Jewish phraseology, as we have often seen; and that δυναμεις is often taken for a mighty work or miracle, is plain from various parts of the gospels. The prophets had declared that the Messiah, when he came, should work many miracles, and should be as mighty in word and deed as was Moses; see Deuteronomy 18:15-19. And they particularly specify the giving sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, strength to the lame, and speech to the dumb; Isaiah 35:5, 6. All these miracles Jesus Christ did in the sight of this very people; and thus they had the highest evidence they could have that Jesus was this promised Messiah, and could have no pretense to doubt his mission, or apostatize from the Christian faith which they had received; and hence it is no wonder that the apostle denounces the most awful judgments of God against those who had apostatized from the faith, which they had seen thus confirmed.

2. The words have been supposed to apply to those communications and foretastes of eternal blessedness, or of the joys of the world to come, which they who are justified through the blood of the covenant, and walk

faithfully with their God, experience; and to this sense the word **γευσάμενους** have tasted, is thought more properly to apply. But **γενομαι**, to taste, signifies to experience or have full proof of a thing. Thus, to taste death, Matthew 16:28, is to die, to come under the power of

consulted not his creed but his candour. Had our translators, who were excellent and learned men, leaned less to their own peculiar creed in the present authorized version, the Church of Christ in this country would not have been agitated and torn as it has been with polemical divinity.

It appears from this, whatever sentiment may gain or lose by it, that there is a fearful possibility of falling away from the grace of God; and if this scripture did not say so, there are many that do say so. And were there no scripture express on this subject, the nature of the present state of man, which is a state of probation or trial, must necessarily imply it. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.

**To renew them again unto repentance** As repentance is the first step that a sinner must take in order to return to God, and as sorrow for sin must be useless in itself unless there be a proper sacrificial offering, these having rejected the only available sacrifice, their repentance for sin, had they any, would be nugatory, and their salvation impossible on this simple account; and this is the very reason which the apostle immediately subjoins:—

**Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God** They reject him on the ground that he was an impostor, and justly put to death. And thus they are said to crucify him to themselves — to do that in their present apostasy which the Jews did; and they show thereby that, had they been present when he was crucified, they would have joined with his murderers.

**And put him to an open shame.** παραδειγματιζοντας· And have made him a public example; or, crucifying unto themselves and making the Son of God a public example. That is, they show openly that they judge Jesus Christ to have been worthy of the death which he suffered, and was justly made a public example by being crucified. This shows that it is final apostasy, by the total rejection of the Gospel, and blasphemy of the Savior of men, that the apostle has in view. See the note on “Hebrews 6:4.

**Verse 7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain** As much as if he had said: In giving up such apostates as utterly incurable, we act as men do in cultivating their fields; for as the ground, which drinketh in the rain by which the providence of God waters it, brings forth fruit to compensate the toil of the tiller, and continues to be cultivated, God granting his blessing to the labors of the husbandman; so,



**Verse 8. *That which beareth thorns and briars is rejected*** That is: The land which, notwithstanding the most careful cultivation, receiving also in due times the early and latter rain, produces nothing but thorns and briars, or noxious weeds of different kinds, is rejected, *αδοκιμος*, is given up as unimprovable; its briars, thorns, and brushwood burnt down; and then left to be pastured on by the beasts of the field. This seems to be the custom in husbandry to which the apostle alludes. The nature of the case prevents us from supposing that he alludes to the custom of pushing and burning, in order to farther fertilization. This practice has been common from very early times:-

*Saepe Etiam Steriles Incendere Profuit Agros;  
Atque Levem Stipulam Crepitantibus Urere Flammis.  
VIRG. Geor. I., 5:84.*

*Long Practice Has A Sure Improvement Found,  
With Kindled Fires To Burn The Barren Ground;  
When The Light Stubble To The Flames Resign'd,  
Is Driven Along, And Crackles In The Wind.*

DRYDEN.

But this, I say the circumstances of the case prevent us from supposing to be intended.

***Is nigh unto cursing*** It is acknowledged, almost on all hands, that this epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This verse is in my opinion a proof of it, and here I suppose the apostle refers to that approaching destruction; and perhaps he has this all along in view, but speaks of it covertly, that he might not give offense.

There is a good sense in which all these things may be applied to the Jews at large, who were favored by our Lord's ministry and miracles. They were enlightened by his preaching; tasted of the benefits of the heavenly gift — the Christian religion established among them; saw many of their children and relatives made partakers of the Holy Ghost; tasted the good word of God, by the fulfillment of the promise made to Abraham; and saw the almighty power of God exerted, in working a great variety of miracles. Yet, after being convinced that never man spake as this man, and that none could do those miracles which he did, except God were with him; after having followed him in thousands, for three years, while he preached to

them the Gospel of the kingdom of God; they fell away from all this, crucified him who, even in his sufferings as well as his resurrection, was demonstrated by miracles to be the Son of God; and then to vindicate their unparalleled wickedness, endeavored to make him a public example, by reproaches and blasphemies. Therefore their state, which had received much moral cultivation from Moses, the prophets, Christ, and his apostles; and now bore nothing but the most vicious fruits, pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, contempt of God's word and ordinances, blasphemy, and rebellion; was rejected — reprobated, of God; was nigh unto cursing — about to be cast off from the Divine protection; and their city and temple were shortly to be burnt up by the Roman armies. Thus the apostle, under the case of individuals, points out the destruction that was to come upon this people in general, and which actually took place about seven years after the writing of this epistle! And this appears to be the very subject which the apostle has in view in the parallel solemn passages, chap. 10:26-31; and, viewed in this light, much of their obscurity and difficulty vanishes away.

**Verse 9. *But, beloved*** Here he softens what he had before said; having given them the most solemn warning against apostasy, he now encourages them to persevere, commends the good that is in them, and excites them to watchfulness and activity.

***Better things of you*** Than that you shall resemble that unfruitful ground that can be improved by no tillage, and is thrown into waste, and is fit only for the beasts of the forests to roam in.

***Things that accompany salvation*** τα εχομενα σωτηριας· Things that are suitable to a state of salvation; you give proofs still that you have not, whatever others have done, departed from the living God. Several of your brethren have already apostatized, and the whole nation is in a state of rebellion against God; and, in consequence of their final rejection of Christ and his Gospel, are about to be finally rejected by God. They must meet with destruction; they have the things that are suitable to, and indicative of, a state of reprobation; the wrath of God will come upon them to the uttermost; but, while they meet with destruction, you shall meet with salvation. It is worthy of remark, that no genuine Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem; they all, previously to the siege by Titus,

escaped to Pella, in Coelosyria; and it is as remarkable that not one Jew escaped! all either fell by the sword, perished by famine, or were led into captivity! According to their own imprecation, His blood be upon us and our children, God visited and avenged the innocent blood of Christ upon them and upon their posterity; and they continue to be monuments of his displeasure to the present day.

**Verse 10. *God is not unrighteous*** God is only bound to men by his own promise: this promise he is not obliged to make; but, when once made, his righteousness or justice requires him to keep it; therefore, whatever he has promised he will certainly perform. But he has promised to reward every good work and labor of love, and he will surely reward yours; God's promise is God's debt.

Every good work must spring from faith in the name, being, and goodness of God; and every work that is truly good must have love for its motive, as it has God for its end.

The word **του κοπου**, labor, prefixed to love, is wanting in almost every MS. and version of importance. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

***Ministered to the saints*** Have contributed to the support and comfort of the poor Christians who were suffering persecution in Judea. As they had thus ministered, and were still ministering, they gave full proof that they had a common cause with the others; and this was one of the things that proved them to be in a state of salvation.

**Verse 11. *We desire επιθυμουμεν***, We earnestly wish, that each person among you may continue **ενδεικνυσθαι**, to manifest, exhibit to full view, the same diligence. There might be reason to suspect that some, through fear of man, might not wish the good they did to be seen, lest they also should suffer persecution. This would not comport with the generous, noble spirit of the Gospel; the man who is afraid to let his decided attachment to God be known, is not far from backsliding. He who is more afraid of man than he is of God Almighty, can have very little religion. As the Church of Christ required all those who in these times embraced the Gospel to be publicly baptized, those who submitted to this rite gave full proof that they were thoroughly convinced of the truths of Christianity; and they gave this as a public pledge that they would be faithful.

***The same diligence*** They had an active faith and a labouring love, and the apostle wishes them to persevere in both. They were diligent, very diligent, and he desires them to continue so.

To the full assurance of hope, **προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος**: “The full assurance of faith,” says Mr. Wesley, “relates to present pardon; the full assurance of hope, to future glory: the former is the highest degree of Divine evidence that God is reconciled to me in the Son of his love; the latter is the same degree of Divine evidence, wrought in the soul by the same immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of persevering grace, and of eternal glory. So much as faith every moment beholds with open face, so much, and no more, does hope see to all eternity. But this assurance of faith and hope is not an opinion, not a bare construction of Scripture, but is given immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost, and what none can have for another, but for himself only.”

We must not misapprehend these excellent sayings of this eminent man. 1. The person who has this full assurance of hope is he who not only knows and feels that his sins are forgiven through Christ Jesus, but also that his heart is purified from all unrighteousness, that the whole body of sin and death is destroyed, and that he is fully made a partaker of the Divine nature. As without holiness, complete, entire holiness, no man can see God: so, without this, none can scripturally or rationally hope for eternal glory; it being a contradiction to profess to have the full assurance of hope to enjoy a state and place for which the soul is conscious it is not prepared. 2. All that is said here must be understood as still implying the absolute necessity of continuing in the same degree of grace from which this full assurance of hope is derived. This full assurance, therefore, does not imply that the man will absolutely persevere to the end; but that, if he do persevere in this same grace, he shall infallibly have an eternal glory. There is no unconditional perseverance in the Scripture, nor can there be such in a state of probation.

**Verse 12. *That ye be not slothful*** This shows how the full assurance of hope is to be regulated and maintained. They must be diligent; slothfulness will deprive them both of hope and faith. That faith which worketh by love will maintain hope in its full and due exercise.

***Followers of them*** μιμηται δε -- κληρονομουντων τας επαγγελιας·

That ye be mimics or imitators of them who are inheriting the promises. And they inherited these promises by faith in him who is invisible, and who, they knew, could not lie; and they patiently endured, through difficulties and adversities of every kind, and persevered unto death. “The promises made to Abraham and to his seed were, 1. That Abraham should have a numerous seed by faith as well as by natural descent. 2. That God would be a God to him and to his seed in their generations, by being the object of their worship and their protector. 3. That he would give them the possession of Canaan. 4. That he would bless all the nations of the earth in him. 5. That he would thus bless the nations through Christ, Abraham’s seed. 6. That through Christ, likewise, he would bless the nations with the Gospel revelation. Four of these promises the believing Gentiles were inheriting at the time the apostle wrote this letter. 1. They were become Abraham’s seed by faith. 2. God was become the object of their worship and their protector. 3. They were enjoying the knowledge of God in the Gospel Church, and the gifts of the Spirit. Galatians 3:4. All these blessings were bestowed upon them through Christ. By observing that the believing Gentiles were actually inheriting the promises; i.e. the four promised blessings above mentioned, the apostle appealed to an undeniable fact, in proof that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, were heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed.” See Dr. Macknight. The promises may be considered as referring to the rest of faith here, and the rest of glory hereafter.

**Verse 13. *When God made promise to Abraham*** The promise referred to is that made to Abraham when he had offered his son Isaac on the altar, Genesis 22:16-18: “By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed.” Of this promise the apostle only quotes a part, as is generally the case, because he knew that his readers were well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly with the law.

***He sware by himself*** He pledged his eternal power and Godhead for the fulfillment of the promise; there was no being superior to himself to whom he could make appeal, or by whom he could be bound, therefore he appeals to and pledges his immutable truth and Godhead.

**Verse 14. *Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee*** I will continue to bless thee.

***Multiplying I will multiply thee.*** I will continue to increase thy posterity. In the most literal manner God continues to fulfill this promise; genuine Christians are Abraham's seed, and God is increasing their number daily. See the notes on Genesis 22:12-18; and 23:1.

**Verse 15. *He obtained the promise.*** Isaac was supernaturally born; and in his birth God began to fulfill the promise: while he lived, he saw a provision made for the multiplication of his seed; and, having continued steadfast in the faith, he received the end of all the promises in the enjoyment of an eternal glory. And the inference from this is: If we believe and prove faithful unto death, we shall also inherit the promises; and this is what is implied in the apostle's exhortation, ver. 12: Be not slothful, but followers of them, etc.

**Verse 16. *Men verily swear by the greater*** One who has greater authority; who can take cognizance of the obligation, and punish the breach of it.

***An oath for confirmation*** "This observation teaches us," says Dr. Macknight, "that both promissory oaths concerning things lawful and in our power, and oaths for the confirmation of things doubtful, when required by proper authority, and taken religiously, are allowable under the Gospel."

**Verse 17. *The heirs of promise*** All the believing posterity of Abraham, and the nations of the earth or Gentiles in general.

***The immutability of his counsel*** His unchangeable purpose, to call the Gentiles to salvation by Jesus Christ; to justify every penitent by faith; to accept faith in Christ for justification in place of personal righteousness; and finally to bring every persevering believer, whether Jew or Gentile, to eternal glory.

**Verse 18. *That by two immutable things*** The promise and oath of God: the promise pledged his faithfulness and justice; the oath, all the infinite perfections of his Godhead, for he swore by himself. There is a good saying in Beracoth on Exodus 32:13, fol. 32: Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self. “What is the meaning of by thine own self? Rab. Eleazar answered, Thus said Moses to the holy blessed God, Lord of all the world. If thou hadst sworn to them by the heavens and the earth, then I should have said, As the heavens and the earth shall pass away, so may thy oath pass away. But now thou hast sworn unto them by thy great name, which liveth, and which endureth for ever, and for ever and ever; therefore thy oath shall endure for ever, and for ever and ever.”

This is a good thought; if God had sworn by any thing finite, that thing might fail, and then the obligation would be at an end, but he has sworn by what is infinite, and cannot fail; therefore his oath is of eternal obligation.

***We might have a strong consolation*** There appears to be an allusion here to the cities of refuge, and to the persons who fled to them for safety. As the person who killed his neighbor unawares was sure if he gained the city of refuge he should be safe, and had strong consolation in the hope that he should reach it, this hope animated him in his race to the city; he ran, he fled, knowing that, though in danger the most imminent of losing his life, yet, as he was now acting according to an ordinance of God, he was certain of safety provided he got to the place.

It is easy to apply this to the case of a truly penitent sinner. Thou hast sinned against God and against thy own life! The avenger of blood is at thy heels! Jesus hath shed his blood for thee, he is thy intercessor before the throne; flee to him! Lay hold on the hope of eternal life which is offered unto thee in the Gospel! Delay not one moment! Thou art never safe till thou hast redemption in his blood! God invites thee! Jesus spreads his hands to receive thee! God hath sworn that he willeth not the death of a sinner; then he cannot will thy death: take God's oath, take his promise; credit what he hath spoken and sworn! Take encouragement! Believe on the Son of God, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life!

**Verse 19. *Which hope we have as an anchor*** The apostle here changes the allusion; he represents the state of the followers of God in this lower

world as resembling that of a vessel striving to perform her voyage through a troublesome, tempestuous, dangerous sea. At last she gets near the port; but the tempest continues, the water is shallow, broken, and dangerous, and she cannot get in: in order to prevent her being driven to sea again she heaves out her sheet anchor, which she has been able to get within the pier head by means of her boat, though she could not herself get in; then, swinging at the length of her cable, she rides out the storm in confidence, knowing that her anchor is sound, the ground good in which it is fastened, and the cable strong. Though agitated, she is safe; though buffeted by wind and tide, she does not drive; by and by the storm ceases, the tide flows in, her sailors take to the capstan, wear the ship against the anchor, which still keeps its bite or hold, and she gets safely into port. See on “Hebrews 6:20”.

The comparison of hope to an anchor is frequent among the ancient heathen writers, who supposed it to be as necessary to the support of a man in adversity, as the anchor is to the safety of the ship when about to be driven on a lee shore by a storm. “To ground hope on a false supposition,” says Socrates, “is like trusting to a weak anchor.” He said farther, **ουτε ναυν εξ ενος αγκυριου, ουτε βιον εκ μιας ελπιδος ορμιστεον**· a ship ought not to trust to one anchor, nor life to one hope. Stob., Serm. 109.

The hope of eternal life is here represented as the soul’s anchor; the world is the boisterous, dangerous sea; the Christian course, the voyage; the port, everlasting felicity; and the veil or inner road, the royal dock in which that anchor was cast. The storms of life continue but a short time; the anchor, hope, if fixed by faith in the eternal world, will infallibly prevent all shipwreck; the soul may be strongly tossed by various temptations, but will not drive, because the anchor is in sure ground, and itself is steadfast; it does not drag, and it does not break; faith, like the cable, is the connecting medium between the ship and the anchor, or the soul and its hope of heaven; faith sees the haven, hope desires and anticipates the rest; faith works, and hope holds fast; and, shortly, the soul enters into the haven of eternal repose.

**Verse 20. *Whither the forerunner*** The word **προδρομος**, *prodromos*, does not merely signify one that goes or runs before another, but also one



who shows the way, he who first does a particular thing; also the first fruits. So in the Septuagint, Isaiah 28:4, **προδρομος συκου** signifies the first fruits of the fig tree, or the first ripe figs.

To this meaning of the word Pliny refers, Hist. Nat., lib. xvi., c. 26: Ficus et praecoces habet, quas Athenis PRODRAMOS (**προδρομος**,) vocant. “The fig tree produces some figs which are ripe before the rest, and these are called by the Athenians prodromos, forerunner.” The word is interpreted in the same way by Hesychius; it occurs in no other part of the New Testament, but may be found in Eccles. 12:8, and in Isaiah 28:4, quoted above from the Septuagint. From this we may at once perceive the meaning of the phrase: Jesus is the first fruits of human nature that has entered into the heavenly kingdom; the first human body that was ripe for glory, and ripe long before the rest of the children who are partakers of flesh and blood. And he is entered for us, as the first fruits of all who have found redemption in his blood. Compare John 14:2; 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23; and the notes there.

The metaphorical allusion is to the person who carries the anchor within the pier head, because there is not yet water sufficient to carry the ship in; and to this I have already referred.

***After the order of Melchisedec.*** After a long digression the apostle resumes his explanation of Psalm 110:4, which he had produced, Hebrews 5:6, 10, in order to prove the permanency of the high priesthood of Christ.

1. WE have in this chapter a very solemn warning against backsliding and apostasy, and that negligence and sloth which are their forerunners. A man cannot be careless about God and heaven, till he has lost his relish for sacred things; and this relish he cannot lose while he is diligent and faithful. The slightest departure from truth and purity may ultimately lead to a denying, and even reviling, of the Lord who bought him.

2. Every obedient believer in Christ Jesus has both the oath and promise of God that he will make all grace abound towards him, for in blessing God will bless him; he may be greatly agitated and distressed, but, while he continues in the obedience of faith, he will ride out the storm. His anchor is within the veil while his heart is right with God. Jesus is gone before to prepare a place for him; and where the first fruits are, there will soon be

the whole lump. He who perseveres unto death shall as surely see God as Jesus Christ now does. God's oath and promise cannot fail.

## CHAPTER 7

*Concerning the greatness of Melchisedec, after whose order Christ is a high priest, 1-4. The Levites had authority to take tithes of the people; yet Abraham, their representative, paid tithes to Melchisedec, 5-10. Perfection cannot come by the Mosaic law, else there could be no need for another priest after the order of Melchisedec, according to the prediction of David in Psalm cx., which priest is sprung from a tribe to which the priesthood, according to the law, did not appertain; but Christ is a priest for ever, not according to the law, but after the order of an endless life, 11-17. The law, therefore, is disannulled, because of its unprofitableness and imperfection; and Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, 18-24. He is therefore able always to save them that come unto him, being in every respect a suitable Savior; and he has offered up himself for the sins of the people, 25-27. The law makes those priests who have infirmity; but he who is consecrated by the oath is perfect, and endures for ever, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

**Verse 1.** *For this Melchisedec, king of Salem* See the whole of this history largely explained in the notes, See “Genesis 14:18”, etc., and the concluding observations at the end of that chapter.

The name Melchisedec, מלכי צדק is thus expounded in Bereshith Rabba, sec. 43, fol. 42, מצדיק את יושביו matsdie eth Yoshebaiv, “The Justifier of those who dwell in him;” and this is sufficiently true of Christ, but false of Jerusalem, to which the rabbins apply it, who state that it was originally called Tsedek, and that it justified its inhabitants.

Salem is generally understood to be Jerusalem; but some think that it was that city of Shechem mentioned Joshua 20:7. St. Jerome was of this opinion.

**Verse 2.** *Gave a tenth part of all* It was an ancient custom, among all the nations of the earth, to consecrate a part or tenth of the spoils taken in war

to the objects of their worship. Many examples of this kind occur. This however was not according to any provision in law, but merely ad libitum, and as a eucharistic offering to those to whom they imagined they owed the victory. But neither Abraham's decimation, nor theirs, had any thing to do, either with tithes as prescribed under the Mosaic dispensation, or as claimed under the Christian.

**Verse 3. *Without father, without mother*** The object of the apostle, in thus producing the example of Melchisedec, was to show, 1. That Jesus was the person prophesied of in the 110th Psalm; which psalm the Jews uniformly understood as predicting the Messiah. 2. To answer the objections of the Jews against the legitimacy of the priesthood of Christ, taken from the stock from which he proceeded. The objection is this: If the Messiah is to be a true priest, he must come from a legitimate stock, as all the priests under the law have regularly done; otherwise we cannot acknowledge him to be a priest: but Jesus of Nazareth has not proceeded from such a stock; therefore we cannot acknowledge him for a priest, the antitype of Aaron. To this objection the apostle answers, that it was not necessary for the priest to come from a particular stock, for Melchisedec was a priest of the most high God, and yet was not of the stock, either of Abraham or Aaron, but a Canaanite. It is well known that the ancient Hebrews were exceedingly scrupulous in choosing their high priest; partly by Divine command, and partly from the tradition of their ancestors, who always considered this office to be of the highest dignity. 1. God had commanded. Leviticus 21:10, that the high priest should be chosen from among their brethren, i. e. from the family of Aaron; 2. that he should marry a virgin; 3. he must not marry a widow; 4. nor a divorced person; 5. nor a harlot; 6. nor one of another nation. He who was found to have acted contrary to these requisitions was, *jure divino*, excluded from the pontificate. On the contrary, it was necessary that he who desired this honor should be able to prove his descent from the family of Aaron; and if he could not, though even in the priesthood, he was cast out, as we find from Ezra 2:62, and Nehemiah 7:63.

To these Divine ordinances the Jews have added, 1. That no proselyte could be a priest; 2. nor a slave; 3. nor a bastard; 4. nor the son of a Nethinim; 5. nor one whose father exercised any base trade. And that they might be well assured of all this, they took the utmost care to preserve

their genealogies, which were regularly kept in the archives of the temple. When any person aspired to the sacerdotal function, his genealogical table was carefully inspected; and, if any of the above blemishes were found in him, he was rejected.

He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences, was said by the Jews to be without father. Thus in Bereshith Rabba, sect. 18, fol. 18, on these words, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, it is said: If a proselyte to the Jewish religion have married his own sister, whether by the same father or by the same mother, they cast her out according to Rabbi Meir. But the wise men say if she be of the same mother, they cast her out; but if of the same father, they retain her, **שׂאִין אֵב לְגוֹי** shein ab legoi, “for a Gentile has no father;” i.e. his father is not reckoned in the Jewish genealogies. In this way both Christ and Melchisedec were without father and without mother; i.e. were not descended from the original Jewish sacerdotal stock. Yet Melchisedec, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God. This sense Suidas confirms under the word Melchisedec, where, after having stated that, having reigned in Salem 113 years, he died a righteous man and a bachelor, **αγενεαλογητος ειριυαι, παρα το μη υπαρχειν εκ του σπερματος αβρααμ ολως, ειναυ δε χαναναυον το γενοσ, και εκ της επαρατου σπορας ορμωμενον, οθεν ουδε γενεαλογιασ ηξιωτο**, he adds, “He is, therefore, said to be without descent or genealogy, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of Canaanitish origin, and sprung from an accursed seed; therefore he is without the honor of a genealogy.” And he farther adds, “That, because it would have been highly improper for him, who was the most righteous of men, to be joined in affinity to the most unrighteous of nations, he is said to be **απατορα και αμητορα**, without father and without mother.” This sort of phraseology was not uncommon when the genealogy of a person was unknown or obscure; so Seneca, in his 108th epistle, speaking of some of the Roman kings, says: Deuteronomy Servii matre dubitatur; Anci pater nullus dicitur. “Of the mother of Servius Tullus there are doubts; and Ancus Marcus is said to have no father.” This only signifies that the parents were either unknown or obscure. Titus Livius, speaking of Servius, says he was born of a slave, named Cornicularia, da patre nullo, of no father, i.e. his father was unknown. Horace is to be understood in the same way:-

*Ante potestatem Tulli, atque ignobile regnum,  
Multos saepe viros, NULLIS MAJORIBUS ortos,  
Et vixisse probos, amplis et honoribus auctos.*

*Serm. l. 1. Sat. vi., ver. 9.*

*Convinced that, long before the ignoble reign  
And power of Tullius, from a servile strain  
Full many rose, for virtue high renown'd,  
By worth ennobled, and with honors crown'd.*

FRANCIS.

The *viri nullis majoribus orti*, men sprung from no ancestors, means simply men who were born of obscure or undistinguished parents; i.e. persons, who had never been famous, nor of any public account.

The old Syriac has given the true meaning by translating thus:-

(Syriac)

Dela abuhi vela, emeh ethcathebu besharbotho.

Whose father and mother are not inscribed among the genealogies.

The Arabic is nearly the same:—

(Arabic)

He had neither father nor mother; the genealogy not being reckoned.

The Aethiopic: He had neither father nor mother upon earth, nor is his genealogy known.

As this passage has been obscure and troublesome to many, and I have thought it necessary to show the meaning of such phraseology by different examples, I shall, in order to give the reader full information on the subject, add a few observations from Dr. Owen.

“It is said of Melchisedec in the first place that he was *απατωρ, αμητωρ*, without father and without mother, whereon part of the latter clause, namely, without beginning of days, doth depend. But how could a mortal man come into the world without father or mother? ‘Man that is born of a woman’ is the description of every man; what, therefore, can be intended! The next word declares he was *αγενεαλογητος* ‘without descent,’ say

we. But **γενεαλογία** is a generation, a descent, a pedigree, not absolutely, but rehearsed, described, recorded. **γενεαλογητος** is he whose stock and descent is entered on record. And so, on the contrary, **αγενεαλογητος** is not he who has no descent, no genealogy; but he whose descent and pedigree is nowhere entered, recorded, reckoned up. Thus the apostle himself plainly expresses this word, ver. 6: **ο μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων**, ‘whose descent is not counted;’ that is, reckoned up in record. Thus was Melchisedec without father or mother, in that the Spirit of God, who so strictly and exactly recorded the genealogies of other patriarchs and types of Christ, and that for no less an end than to manifest the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, speaks nothing to this purpose concerning him. He is introduced as it were one falling from heaven, appearing on a sudden, reigning in Salem, and officiating in the office of priesthood to the high God.

“2. On the same account is he said to be **μητε αρχην ημερων, μητε ζωης τελος εχων**, ‘without beginning of days or end of life.’ For as he was a mortal man he had both. He was assuredly born, and did no less certainly die than other men. But neither of these is recorded concerning him. We have no more to do with him, to learn from him, nor are concerned in him, but only as he is described in the Scripture; and there is no mention therein of the beginning of his days, or the end of his life. Whatever therefore he might have in himself, he had none to us. Consider all the other patriarchs mentioned in the writings of Moses, and you shall find their descent recorded, who was their father, and so up to the first man; and not only so, but the time of their birth, the beginning of their days, and the end of their life, are exactly recorded. For it is constantly said of them, such a one lived so long, and begat such a son, which fixed the time of birth. Then of him so begotten it is said, he lived so many years, which determines the end of his days. These things are expressly recorded. But concerning Melchisedec none of these things are spoken. No mention is made of father or mother; no genealogy is recorded of what stock or progeny he was; nor is there any account of his birth or death. So that all these things are wanting to him in his historical narration, wherein our faith and knowledge are alone concerned.”

***Made like unto the Son of God*** Melchisedec was without father and mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. His genealogy is

not recorded; when he was born and when he died, is unknown. His priesthood, therefore, may be considered as perpetual. In these respects he was like to Jesus Christ, who, as to his Godhead, had neither father nor mother, beginning of time nor end of days; and has an everlasting priesthood. The priesthood of Melchisedec is to abide continually on the same ground that he is said to be without father and mother; i.e. there is no record of the end of his priesthood or life, no more than there is any account of his ancestry.

**Verse 4. *Consider how great this man was*** There is something exceedingly mysterious in the person and character of this king of Salem; and to find out the whole is impossible. He seems to have been a sort of universal priest, having none superior to him in all that region; and confessedly superior even to Abraham himself, the father of the faithful, and the source of the Jewish race. See ver. 7.

***The patriarch Abraham*** ὁ πατριάρχης. Either from πατήρ, a father, and αρχή, a chief or head; or from πατριὰς αρχή, the head of a family.' But the title is here applied, by way of eminence, to him who was the head or chief of all the fathers — or patriarch of the patriarchs, and father of the faithful. The Syriac translates it (Syriac) Rish Abahatha, "head of the fathers." The character and conduct of Abraham place him, as a man, deservedly at the head of the human race.

**Verse 5. *They that are of the sons of Levi*** The priests who are of the posterity of the Levites, and receive the priesthood in virtue of their descent from Aaron, have authority from the law of God to receive tithes from the people.

***According to the law*** That is, the Levites received a tenth from the people. The priests received a tenth of this tenth from the Levites, who are here called their brethren, because they were of the same tribe, and employed in the same sacred work. The apostle is proceeding to show that Melchisedec was greater even than Abraham, the head of the fathers, for to him Abraham gave tithes; and as the Levites were the posterity of Abraham, they are represented here as paying tithes to Melchisedec through him. Yet Melchisedec was not of this family, and therefore must be considered as having a more honorable priesthood than even Aaron himself; for he took the tenth from Abraham, not for his maintenance, for



he was a king, but in virtue of his office as universal high priest of all that region.

**Verse 6. *Blessed him that had the promises.*** This is a continuation of the same argument, namely, to show the superiority of Melchisedec; and, in consequence, to prove the superiority of the priesthood of Christ beyond that of Aaron. As in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Abraham received a sacerdotal blessing from Melchisedec, who was the representative of the Messiah, the promised seed, to show that it was through him, as the high priest of the human race, that this blessing was to be derived on all mankind.

**Verse 7. *The less is blessed of the better.*** That the superior blesses the inferior is a general proposition; but Abraham was blessed of Melchisedec, therefore Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. “The blessing here spoken of,” says Dr. Macknight, “is not the simple wishing of good to others, which may be done by inferiors to superiors; but it is the action of a person authorized to declare God’s intention to bestow good things on another. In this manner Isaac and Jacob blessed their children under a prophetic impulse; in this manner the priests under the law blessed the people; in this manner, likewise, Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham.”

**Verse 8. *Here men that die receive tithes*** The apostle is speaking of the ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews, which was standing at the time this epistle was written. Under the Jewish dispensation, though the priests were successively removed by death, yet they were as duly replaced by others appointed from the same family, and the payment of tithes was never interrupted. But as there is no account of Melchisedec ceasing to be a priest, or of his dying, he is represented as still living, the better to point him out as a type of Christ, and to show his priesthood to be more excellent than that which was according to the law, as an unchanging priesthood must be more excellent than that which was continually changing.

***But there he receiveth them*** The *ὡδε*, here, in the first clause of this verse refers to Mosaical institutions, as then existing: the *εκει*, there, in this clause refers to the place in Genesis (Genesis 14:20) where it is related that Abraham gave tithes to Melchisedec, who is still considered as being alive

or without a successor, because there is no account of his death, nor of any termination of his priesthood.

**Verse 9.** *And as I may so say* και ως επος ειπειν· And so to speak a word. This form of speech, which is very frequent among the purest Greek writers, is generally used to soften some harsh expression, or to limit the

but it is much better to understand  $\epsilon\pi' \alpha\upsilon\tau\eta$  on account of it, instead of under it; for it is a positive fact that the law was given before any

**Verse 13. *For he of whom these things are spoken*** That is, Jesus the Messiah, spoken of in Psalm 110:4, who came, not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe no priest ever ministered at a Jewish altar, nor could minister according to the law.

**Verse 14. *For it is evident*** As the apostle speaks here with so much confidence, it follows that our Lord's descent from the tribe of Judah was incontrovertible. The genealogical tables, both in Matthew and Luke, establish this point; and whatever difficulties we may find in them now, there were none apprehended in those days, else the enemies of the Gospel would have urged these as a chief and unanswerable argument against Christ and his Gospel.

**Verse 15. *And it is yet far more evident* και περισσοτερον επι καταδηλον εστιν** And besides, it is more abundantly strikingly manifest. It is very difficult to translate these words, but the apostle's meaning is plain, viz., that God designed the Levitical priesthood to be changed, because of the oath in Psa. cx., where, addressing the Messiah, he says: Thou art a Priest for ever after the order, or **ομοιοτητα**, similitude, of Melchisedec, who was not only a priest, but also a king. None of the Levitical priests sustained this double office; but they both, with that of prophet, appear and were exercised in the person of our Lord, who is the Priest to which the apostle alludes.

**Verse 16. *Who is made*** Appointed to this high office by God himself, not succeeding one that was disabled or dead, according to that law or ordinance directed to weak and perishing men, who could not continue by reason of death.

This is probably all that the apostle intends by the words carnal commandment, **εντολης σαρκικης**, for carnal does not always mean sinful or corrupt, but feeble, frail, or what may be said of or concerning man in his present dying condition.

***But after the power of an endless life.*** Not dying, or ceasing through weakness to be a priest; but properly immortal himself, and having the power to confer life and immortality on others. HE ever lives, as Priest, to make intercession for men; and they who believe on him shall never perish, but have everlasting life.

**Verse 17. *For he testifieth*** That is, either the Scripture, in the place so often quoted, or God by that Scripture.

***Thou art a priest for ever*** This is the proof that he was not appointed according to the carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life, because he is a priest for ever; i.e. one that never dies, and is never disabled from performing the important functions of his office; for if he be a priest for ever, he ever lives.

**Verse 18. *For there is verily a disannulling*** There is a total abrogation, **προαγωγης εντολης**, of the former law, relative to the Levitical priesthood. See ver. 19.

***For the weakness*** It had no energy; it communicated none; it had no Spirit to minister; it required perfect obedience, but furnished no assistance to those who were under it.

***And unprofitableness*** No man was benefited by the mere observance of its precepts: it pardoned no sin, changed no heart, reformed no life; it found men dead in trespasses and sins, and it consigned them to eternal death. It was therefore weak in itself, and unprofitable to men.

The Jews, who still cleave to it, are a proof that it is both weak and unprofitable; for there is not a more miserable, distressed, and profligate class of men on the face of the earth.

**Verse 19. *For the law made nothing perfect*** It completed nothing; it was only the outline of a great plan, the shadow of a glorious substance; see on ver. 11. It neither pardoned sin, nor purified the heart, nor gave strength to obey the moral precepts. **ουδεν**, nothing, is put here for **ουδενα**, no person.

***But the bringing in of a better hope*** The original is very emphatic, **επεισαγωγη**, the superintroduction, or the after introduction; and this seems to be put in opposition to the **προαγουσα εντολη**, the preceding commandment, or former Levitical law, of ver. 18. This went before to prepare the way of the Lord; to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the strict justice of God. The better hope, which referred not to earthly but to spiritual good, not to temporal but eternal felicity, founded on the priesthood and atonement of Christ, was afterwards introduced for the

purpose of doing what the law could not do, and giving privileges and advantages which the law would not afford. One of these privileges immediately follows:—

***By the which we draw nigh unto God.*** This is a sacerdotal phrase: the high priest alone could approach to the Divine presence in the holy of holies; but not without the blood of the sacrifice, and that only once in the year. But through Christ, as our high priest, all believers in him have an entrance to the holiest by his blood; and through him perform acceptable service to God. The better hope means, in this place, Jesus Christ, who is the author and object of the hope of eternal life, which all his genuine followers possess. He is called our hope, 1 Timothy 1:1; Colossians 1:27.

**Verse 20. *Not without an oath*** “The apostle’s reasoning here is founded on this, that God never interposed his oath, except to show the certainty and immutability of the thing sworn. Thus he swore to Abraham, Genesis 22:16-18, that in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed; and to the rebellious Israelites, Deuteronomy 1:34, 35, that they should not enter into his rest; and to Moses, Deuteronomy 4:21, that he should not go into Canaan; and to David, Psalm 89:4, that his seed should endure for ever, and his throne unto all generations. Wherefore, since Christ was made a priest, not without an oath that he should be a priest for ever, after the similitude of Melchisedec, that circumstance showed God’s immutable resolution never to change or abolish his priesthood, nor to change or abolish the covenant which was established on his priesthood; whereas the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses, being established without an oath, were thereby declared to be changeable at God’s pleasure.” This judicious note is from Dr. Macknight.

**Verse 21. *Those priests*** The Levitical, were made without an oath, to show that the whole system was changeable, and might be abolished.

***But this*** The everlasting priesthood of Christ, with an oath, to show that the Gospel dispensation should never change, and never be abolished.

***By him*** God the Father, that said unto him — the promised Messiah, Psalm 110:4, The Lord swore, to show the immutability of his counsel, and will not repent — can never change his mind nor purpose, Thou art a priest for ever — as long as time shall run, and the generations of men be

continued on earth. Till the necessity of the mediatorial kingdom be superseded by the fixed state of eternity, till this kingdom be delivered up unto the Father, and God shall be all in all, shall this priesthood of Christ endure.

**Verse 22. *By so much*** This solemn, unchangeable oath of God, was Jesus made a surety, *εγγυος*, a mediator, one who brings the two parties together, witnesses the contract, and offers the covenant sacrifice on the occasion. See at the end of the chapter.

***A better testament.*** *κρειττονος διαθηκης*. A better covenant; called, in the title to the sacred books which contain the whole Christian code, *ἡ καινη διαθηκη*, THE NEW COVENANT, thus contradistinguished from the Mosaic, which was the old covenant; and this is called the new and better covenant, because God has in it promised other blessings, to other people, on other conditions, than the old covenant did. The new covenant is better than the old in the following particulars: 1. God promised to the Jewish nation certain secular blessings, peculiar to that nation, on condition of their keeping the law of Moses; but under the new covenant he promises pardon of sin, and final salvation to all mankind, on condition of believing on Jesus Christ, and walking in his testimonies. 2. The Jewish priests, fallible, dying men, were mediators of the old covenant, by means of their sacrifices, which could not take away sin, nor render the comers thereunto perfect. But Jesus Christ, who liveth for ever, who is infinite in wisdom and power, by the sacrifice of himself has established this new covenant, and by the shedding of his blood has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

**Verse 23. *And they truly were many priests*** Under the Mosaic law it was necessary there should be a succession of priests, because, being mortal, they were not suffered to continue always by reason of death.

**Verse 24. *But this*** *ὁ δε*, But he, that is, Christ, because he continueth ever — is eternal, hath an unchangeable priesthood, *απαρβατον ιερωσυνην*, a priesthood that passeth not away from him; he lives for ever, and he lives a priest for ever.

**Verse 25. *Wherefore*** Because he is an everlasting priest, and has offered the only available sacrifice, he is able to save, from the power, guilt, nature,

and punishment of sin, to the uttermost, **εις το παντελες**, to all intents, degrees, and purposes; and always, and in and through all times, places, and circumstances; for all this is implied in the original word: but in and through all times seems to be the particular meaning here, because of what follows, he ever liveth to make intercession for them; this depends on the perpetuity of his priesthood, and the continuance of his mediatorial office. As Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, has an everlasting priesthood, and is a continual intercessor; it is in virtue of this that all who were saved from the foundation of the world were saved through him, and all that shall be saved to the end of the world will be saved through him. He ever was and ever will be the High Priest, Sacrifice, Intercessor, and Mediator of the human race. All successive generations of men are equally interested in him, and may claim the same privileges. But none can be saved by his grace that do not come unto God through him; i.e. imploring mercy through him as their sacrifice and atonement; confidently trusting that God can be just, and yet the justifier of them who thus come to him, believing on Christ Jesus.

The phrase **εντυγχανειν τιμι**, to make intercession for a person, has a considerable latitude of meaning. It signifies, 1. To come to or meet a person on any cause whatever. 2. To intercede, pray for, or entreat in the behalf of, another. 3. To defend or vindicate a person. 4. To commend. 5. To furnish any kind of assistance or help. 6. And, with the preposition **κατα**, against, to accuse, or act against another in a judicial way.

“The nature of the apostle’s arguments,” says Dr. Macknight, “requires that, by Christ’s always living, we understand his always living in the body; for it is thus that he is an affectionate and sympathizing High Priest, who, in his intercession, pleads the merit of his death to procure the salvation of all who come unto God through him. Agreeably to this account of Christ’s intercession, the apostle, in verse 27, mentions the sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered for the sins of the people as the foundation of his intercession. Now, as he offered that sacrifice in heaven, chap. 8:2, 3, by presenting his crucified body there, (See “Hebrews 8:5”,) and as he continually resides there in the body, some of the ancients were of opinion that his continual intercession consists in the continual presentation of his humanity before his Father, because it is a continual declaration of his earnest desire of the salvation of men, and of his having,



in obedience to his Father's will, made himself flesh, and suffered death to accomplish it. See "Romans 8:34", note 3. This opinion is confirmed by the manner in which the Jewish high priest made intercession for the people on the day of atonement, and which was a type of Christ's intercession in heaven. He made it, not by offering of prayers for them in the most holy place, but by sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on the mercy-seat, in token of their death. And as, by that action, he opened the earthly holy places to the prayers and worship of the Israelites during the ensuing year; so Jesus, by presenting his humanity continually before the presence of his Father, opens heaven to the prayers of his people in the present life, and to their persons after the resurrection."

**Verse 26. *Such a high priest became us*** Such a high priest was in every respect suitable to us, every way qualified to accomplish the end for which he came into the world. There is probably here an allusion to the qualifications of the Jewish high priest:—

1. He was required to be holy, **οσιος**, answering to the Hebrew **חַסִּיד** chasid, merciful. Holiness was his calling; and, as he was the representative of his brethren, he was required to be merciful and compassionate.
2. He was to be harmless, **ακακος**, without evil — holy without, and holy within; injuring none, but rather living for the benefit of others.
3. He was undefiled, **αμιαντος** answering to the Hebrew **בַּאֵל מוֹם** baal mum, without blemish — having no bodily imperfection. Nothing low, mean, base, or unbecoming in his conduct.
4. He was separate from sinners, **κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων**. By his office he was separated from all men and worldly occupations, and entirely devoted to the service of God. And as to sinners, or heathens, he was never to be found in their society.
5. Higher than the heavens. There may be some reference here to the exceeding dignity of the high priesthood; it was the highest office that could be sustained by man, the high priest himself being the immediate

1. He was holy, infinitely so; and merciful, witness his shedding his blood for the sins of mankind.
2. Harmless — perfectly without sin in his humanity, as well as his divinity.
3. Undeified — contracted no sinful infirmity in consequence of his dwelling among men.
4. Separate from sinners — absolutely unblamable in the whole of his conduct, so that he could challenge the most inveterate of his enemies with, Which of you convicteth me of sin? Who of you can show in my conduct the slightest deviation from truth and righteousness!
5. Higher than the heavens — more exalted than all the angels of God, than all created beings, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, because all these were created by him and for him, and derive their continued subsistence from his infinite energy.

But how was a person of such infinite dignity suitable to us! His greatness is put in opposition to our meanness. HE was holy; WE, unholy. HE was harmless; WE, harmful, injuring both ourselves and others. HE was undeified; WE, deified, most sinfully spotted and impure. HE was separate from sinners; WE were joined to sinners, companions of the vile, the worthless, the profane, and the wicked. HE was higher than the heavens; WE, baser and lower than the earth, totally unworthy to be called the creatures of God. And had we not had such a Savior, and had we not been redeemed at an infinite price, we should, to use the nervous language of Milton on another occasion, “after a shameful life and end in this world, have been thrown down eternally into the darkest and deepest gulf of hell, where, under the spiteful control, the trample and spurn, of all the other damned, and in the anguish of their torture should have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial tyranny over us as their slaves, we must have remained in that plight for ever, the basest, the lower-most, the most dejected, most under-foot and down-trodden vassals of perdition.”

MILTON on Reformation, in fine.

**Verse 27. *Who needeth not daily*** Though the high priest offered the great atonement only once in the year, yet in the Jewish services there was a daily acknowledgment of sin, and a daily sacrifice offered by the priests, at

whose head was the high priest, for their own sins and the sins of the people. The Jews held that a priest who neglected his own expiatory sacrifice would be smitten with death. (Sanhedr., fol. 83.) When they offered this victim, they prayed the following prayer: "O Lord, I have sinned, and done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the, people of thy holiness. I beseech thee, for thy name's sake, blot out the sins, iniquities, and transgressions by which I have sinned, done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the people of thy holiness; as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, (Leviticus 16:30:) On that day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord!" To which the Levites answered: "Blessed be the name of the glory of thy kingdom, for ever and ever!"

This prayer states that the priest offered a sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people, as the apostle asserts.

***For this he did once*** For himself he offered no sacrifice; and the apostle gives the reason—he needed none, because he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: and for the people he offered himself once for all, when he expired upon the cross,

It has been very properly remarked, that the sacrifice offered by Christ differed in four essential respects from those, offered by the Jewish priests: 1. He offered no sacrifice for himself, but only for the people. 2. He did not offer that sacrifice annually, but once for all. 3. The sacrifice which he offered was not of calves and goats, but of himself. 4. This sacrifice he offered, not for one people, but for the whole human race; for he tasted death for every man.

**Verse 28. *For the law maketh men high priests*** The Jewish priests have need of these repeated offerings and sacrifices, because they are fallible, sinful men: but the word of the oath (still referring to Psalm 110:4) which was since the law; for David, who mentions this, lived nearly 500 years after the giving of the law, and consequently that oath, constituting another priesthood, abrogates the law; and by this the SON is consecrated, **τετελειωμενον**, is perfected, for evermore. Being a high priest without blemish, immaculately holy, every way perfect, immortal, and eternal, HE is a priest **εις τον αιωνα**, to ETERNITY.

I. THERE are several respects in which the apostle shows the priesthood of Christ to be more excellent than that of the Jews, which priesthood was typified by that of Melchisedec.

1. Being after the order of Melchisedec, there was no need of a rigorous examination of his genealogy to show his right.
2. He has an eternal priesthood; whereas theirs was but temporal.
3. The other priests, as a token of the dignity of their office, and their state

signifies an engagement made by C. with A. that B. shall fulfill certain conditions then and there specified, for which C. makes himself answerable; if, therefore, B. fails, C. becomes wholly responsible to A. In such suretiship it is never designed that C. shall pay any debt or fulfill any engagement that belongs to B.; but, if B. fail, then C. becomes responsible, because he had pledged himself for B. In this scheme A. is the person legally empowered to take the bail or pledge, B. the debtor, and C. the surety. The idea therefore of B. paying his own debt, is necessarily implied in taking the surety. Were it once to be supposed that the surety undertakes absolutely to pay the debt, his suretiship is at an end, and he becomes the debtor; and the real debtor is no longer bound. Thus the nature of the transaction becomes entirely changed, and we find nothing but debtor and creditor in the case. In this sense, therefore, the word **εγγυος**, which we translate surety, cannot be applied in the above case, for Christ never became surety that, if men did not fulfill the conditions of this better covenant, i.e. repent of sin, turn from it, believe on the Son of God, and having received grace walk as children of the light, and be faithful unto death, he would do all these things for them himself! This would be both absurd and impossible: and hence the gloss of some here is both absurd and dangerous, viz., “That Christ was the surety of the first covenant to pay the debt; of the second, to perform the duty.” That it cannot have this meaning in the passage in question is sufficiently proved by Dr. Macknight; and instead of extending my own reasoning on the subject, I shall transcribe his note.

“The Greek commentators explain this word **εγγυος** very properly by **μεσιτης**, a mediator, which is its etymological meaning; for it comes from **εγγυς**, near, and signifies one who draws near, or who causes another to draw near. Now, as in this passage a comparison is stated between Jesus as a high priest, and the Levitical high priests; and as these were justly considered by the apostle as the mediators of the Sinaitic covenant, because through their mediation the Israelites worshipped God with sacrifices, and received from him, as their king, a political pardon, in consequence of the sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement; it is evident that the apostle in this passage calls Jesus the High Priest, or Mediator of the better covenant, because through his mediation, that is, through the sacrifice of himself which he offered to God, believers

receive all the blessings of the better covenant. And as the apostle has said, Hebrews 7:19, that by the introduction of a better hope, *εγγιζομεν*, we draw near to God; he in this verse very properly calls Jesus *εγγυος*, rather than *μεσιτης*, to denote the effect of his mediation. See Hebrews 7:25. Our translators indeed, following the Vulgate and Beza, have rendered *εγγυος* by the word surety, a sense which it has, Ecclus. 29:16, and which naturally enough follows from its etymological meaning; for the person who becomes surety for the good behavior of another, or for his performing something stipulated, brings that other near to the party to whom he gives the security; he reconciles the two. But in this sense the word *εγγυος* is not applicable to the Jewish high priests; for to be a proper surety, one must either have power to compel the party to perform that for which he has become his surety; or, in case of his not performing it, he must be able to perform it himself. This being the ease, will any one say that the Jewish high priests were sureties to God for the Israelites performing their part of the covenant of the law! Or to the people for God's performing his part of the covenant! As little is the appellation, surety of the new covenant, applicable to Jesus. For since the new covenant does not require perfect obedience, but only the obedience of faith; if the obedience of faith be not given by men themselves, it cannot be given by another in their room; unless we suppose that men can be saved without personal faith. I must therefore infer, that those who speak of Jesus as the surety of the new covenant, must hold that it requires perfect obedience; which, not being in the power of believers to give, Jesus has performed for them. But is not this to make the covenant of grace a covenant of works, contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture! For these reasons I think the Greek commentators have given the true meaning of the word *εγγυος*, in this passage, when they explain it by *μεσιτης*, mediator.”

The chief difference lies here. The old covenant required perfect obedience from the very commencement of life; this is impossible, because man comes into the world depraved. The new covenant declares God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are past; and furnishes grace to enable all true believers to live up to all the requisitions of the moral law, as found in the gospels. But in this sense Christ cannot be called the surety, for the reasons given above; for he does not perform the obedience or faith in behalf of any man. It is the highest privilege of believers to love

God with all their hearts, and to serve him with all their strength; and to remove their obligation to keep this moral law would be to deprive them of the highest happiness they can possibly have on this side heaven.

## CHAPTER 8

*The sum, or chief articles, of what the apostle has spoken, concerning the eternal priesthood of Christ, 1-5: The excellency of the new covenant beyond that of the old, 6-9. The nature and perfection of the new covenant stated from the predictions of the prophets, 10-12. By this new covenant the old is abolished, 13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 8.

**Verse 1.** *Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum* The word κεφαλαιον, which we translate sum, signifies the chief, the principal, or head; or, as St. Chrysostom explains it, κεφαλαιον αι το μεγαιστον λεγεται, “that which is greatest is always called kephalaion,” i.e. the head, or chief.

*Who is set on the right hand of the throne* This is what the apostle states to be the chief or most important point of all that he had yet discussed. His sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God, proves, 1. That he is higher than all the high priests that ever existed. 2. That the sacrifice which he offered for the sins of the world was sufficient and effectual, and as such accepted by God. 3. That he has all power in the heavens and in the earth, and is able to save and defend to the uttermost all that come to God through him. 4. That he did not, like the Jewish high priest, depart out of the holy of holies, after having offered the atonement; but abides there at the throne of God, as a continual priest, in the permanent act of offering his crucified body unto God, in behalf of all the succeeding generations of mankind. It is no wonder the apostle should call this sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the Divine Majesty, the chief or head of all that he had before spoken.

**Verse 2.** *A minister of the sanctuary των αγιων λειτουργος* A public minister of the holy things or places. The word λειτουργος, from λειτος, public, and εργον, a work or office, means a person who officiated for the public, a public officer; in whom, and his work, all the people had a common right: hence our word liturgy, the public work of prayer and



praise, designed for the people at large; all having a right to attend it, and each having an equal interest in it. Properly speaking, the Jewish priest was the servant of the public; he transacted the business of the people with God. Jesus Christ is also the same kind of public officer; both as Priest and Mediator he transacts the business of the whole human race with God. He performs the holy things or acts in the true tabernacle, HEAVEN, of which the Jewish tabernacle was the type. The tabernacle was the place among the Jews where God, by the symbol of his presence, dwelt. This could only typify heaven, where God, in his essential glory, dwells, and is manifest to angels and glorified saints; and hence heaven is called here the true tabernacle, to distinguish it from the type.

*Which*

**Verse 4. *For if he were on earth*** As the Jewish temple was standing when this epistle was written, the whole temple service continued to be performed by the legal priests, descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; therefore if Christ had been then on earth, he could not have performed the office of a priest, being of the tribe of Judah, to which tribe the office of the priesthood did not appertain.

***There are priests that offer gifts*** This is an additional proof that this epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. As the word **θυσιαι**, sacrifices, is not added here as it is in ver. 3, is it any evidence that bloody sacrifices had then ceased to be offered? Or, are both kinds included in the word **δωρα**, gifts? But is **δωρον**, a gift, ever used to express a bloody sacrifice? I believe the Septuagint never used it for **זבֿח** zebach, which signifies an animal offered to God in sacrifice.

Verse 5. **Who serve** **οιτινες λατρευουσι** Who perform Divine worship.

***Unto the example and shadow*** **υποδειγματι και σκια**, WITH the representation and shadow; this is Dr. Macknight's translation, and probably the true one.

The whole Levitical service was a representation and shadow of heavenly things; it appears, therefore, absurd to say that the priests served UNTO an example or representation of heavenly things; they served rather unto the substance of those things, WITH appropriate representations and shadows.

***As Moses was admonished*** **καθως κεχηρηματισται μωσης** As Moses was Divinely warned or admonished of God.

***According to the pattern*** **κατα τον τυπον** According to the type, plan, or form. It is very likely that God gave a regular plan and specification of the tabernacle and all its parts to Moses; and that from this Divine plan the whole was constructed. See on "Exodus 25:40".

**Verse 6. *Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry*** His office of priesthood is more excellent than the Levitical, because the covenant is better, and established on better promises: the old covenant referred to earthly things; the new covenant, to heavenly. The old covenant had promises of secular good; the new covenant, of spiritual and eternal blessings. As far as Christianity is preferable to Judaism, as far as Christ is

preferable to Moses, as far as spiritual blessings are preferable to earthly blessings, and as far as the enjoyment of God throughout eternity is preferable to the communication of earthly good during time; so far does the new covenant exceed the old.

**Verse 7. *If that first had been faultless*** This is nearly the same argument with that in chap. 7:11. The simple meaning is: If the first covenant had made a provision for and actually conferred pardon and purity, and given a title to eternal life, then there could have been no need for a second; but the first covenant did not give these things, therefore a second was necessary; and the covenant that gives these things is the Christian covenant.

**Verse 8. *For finding fault with them*** The meaning is evidently this: God, in order to show that the first covenant was inefficient, saith to them, the Israelites, Behold, the days come when I will make a new covenant, etc. He found fault with the covenant, and addressed the people concerning his purpose of giving another covenant, that should be such as the necessities of mankind required. As this place refers to Jeremiah 31:31-34, the words finding fault with them may refer to the Jewish people, of whom the Lord complains that they had broken his covenant though he was a husband to them. See below.

***With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah*** That is, with all the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. This is thought to be a promise of the conversion of all the Jews to Christianity; both of the lost tribes, and of those who are known to exist in Asiatic and European countries.

**Verse 9. *Not according to the covenant*** The new covenant is of a widely different nature to that of the old; it was only temporal and earthly in itself, though it pointed out spiritual and eternal things. The new covenant is totally different from this, as we have already seen; and such a covenant, or system of religion, the Jews should have been prepared to expect, as the Prophet Jeremiah had, in the above place, so clearly foretold it.

***They continued not in my covenant*** It should be observed that the word *διαθικη*, which we translate covenant, often means religion itself; and its various precepts. The old covenant in general stated, on God's side, I will be your God; on the Israelites' side, We will be thy people. This covenant

they brake; they served other gods, and neglected the precepts of that holy religion which God had delivered to them.

*And I regarded them not* καγω ημελησα αυτων· And I neglected them or despised them; but the words in the Hebrew text of the prophet are **בַּמְּי וְאֲנֹכִי בַעֲלָתִי** veanochi baalti bam, which we translate, although I was a husband to them. If our translation be correct, is it possible to account for this most strange difference between the apostle and the prophet? Could the Spirit of God be the author of such a strange, not to say contradictory, translation of the same words? Let it be observed: 1. That the apostle quotes from the Septuagint; and in quoting a version accredited by and commonly used among the Jews, he ought to give the text as he found it, unless the Spirit of God dictated an extension of meaning, as is sometimes the case; but in the present case there seems to be no necessity to alter the meaning. 2. The Hebrew words will bear a translation much nearer to the Septuagint and the apostle than our translation intimates. The words might be literally rendered, And I was Lord over them, or I lorded or ruled over them; i.e., I chastised them for their transgressions, and punished them for their iniquities; ημελησα, I took no farther care of them, and gave them up into the hands of their enemies, and so they were carried away into captivity. This pretty nearly reconciles the Hebrew and the Greek, as it shows the act of God in reference to them is nearly the same when the proper meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words is considered.

Some suppose that the letter **ע** ain in **בַּעֲלָתִי** is changed for **ח** cheth, and that the word should be read **בַּחֲלָתִי** bachalti, I have hated or despised them. An ancient and learned Jew, Rab. Parchon, has these remarkable words on this passage, **כַּחֲזִיתִּי שֶׁגַּם נִבְשָׁם כְּחֵלָה וְאֲנֹכִי בַּעֲלָתִי בַּמְּי**, **בִּי בְּשִׁנְאָה אוֹתִי שְׁנֵאוֹתִים וְזוֹ הָעִזִּי מִתְחַלְבָּה**, and I baatti baam, translate, I hated them; for **א** ain is here changed and stands for **ח** cheth, as it is said, their soul bachalah bi, translate, hath hated me." None of the Hebrew MSS. collated by Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi give any various reading on this word. Some of the versions have used as much latitude in their translations of the Hebrew as the Septuagint. But it is unnecessary to discuss this subject any farther; the word **בַּעַל** baal itself, by the consent of the most learned men, signifies to disdain or despise, and this is pretty nearly the sense of the apostle's expression.

**Verse 10. *This is the covenant*** This is the nature of that glorious system of religion which I shall publish among them after those days, i.e., in the times of the Gospel.

***I will put my laws into their mind*** I will influence them with the principles of law, truth, holiness, etc.; and their understandings shall be fully enlightened to comprehend them.

***And write them in their hearts*** All their affections, passions, and appetites, shall be purified and filled with holiness and love to God and man; so that they shall willingly obey, and feel that love is the fulfilling of the law: instead of being written on tables of stone, they shall be written on the fleshly tables of their hearts.

***I will be to them a God*** These are the two grand conditions by which the parties in this covenant or agreement are bound: 1. I will be your God. 2. Ye shall be my people. As the object of religious adoration to any man is that Being from whom he expects light, direction, defense, support, and happiness: so God, promising to be their God, promises in effect to give them all these great and good things. To be God's people implies that they should give God their whole hearts, serve him with all their light and strength, and have no other object of worship or dependence but himself. Any of these conditions broken, the covenant is rendered null and void, and the other party absolved from his engagement.

**Verse 11. *They shall not teach every man his neighbor*** Under the old covenant, properly speaking, there was no public instruction; before the erection of synagogues all worship was confined at first to the tabernacle, afterwards to the temple. When synagogues were established they were used principally for the bare reading of the law and the prophets; and scarcely any such thing as a public ministry for the continual instruction of the common people was found in the land till the time of John the Baptist, our Lord, and his apostles. It is true there were prophets who were a sort of general teachers, but neither was their ministry extended through all the people; and there were schools of the prophets and schools of the rabbins, but these were for the instruction of select persons. Hence it was necessary that every man should do what he could, under that dispensation, to instruct his neighbor and brother. But the prophecy here indicates that there should be, under the Gospel dispensation, a profusion

of Divine light; and this we find to be the case by the plentiful diffusion of the sacred writings, and by an abundant Gospel ministry: and these blessings are not confined to temples or palaces, but are found in every corner of the land; so that, literally, all the people, from the least to the greatest, know and acknowledge the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Almost every man, at least in this land, has a Bible, and can read it; and there is not a family that has not the opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached, explained, and enforced.

Some have thought that from the least to the greatest is intended to signify the order in which God proceeds with a work of grace; he generally begins with the poor, and through these the great and the high often hear the Gospel of Christ.

**Verse 12. *I will be merciful to their unrighteousness*** In order to be their God, as mentioned under the preceding verse, it is requisite that their iniquity should be pardoned; this is provided for by the immolation of Jesus Christ as the covenant sacrifice. By his blood, redemption has been purchased, and all who with penitent hearts believe on the Lord Jesus receive remission of sins, and God remembers their iniquities no more against them so as to punish them on that account. All spiritual evil against the nature and law of God is represented here under the following terms:—

1. Unrighteousness, **αδικια**, injustice or wrong. This is against God, his neighbor, and himself.
2. Sin, **αμαρτια**, deviation from the Divine law; MISSING THE MARK; aiming at happiness but never attaining it, because sought out of God, and in the breach of his laws.
3. Iniquity, **ανομια**, lawlessness, not having, knowing, or acknowledging, a law; having no law written in their hearts, and restrained by none in the conduct of their lives. All these are to be removed by God's mercy; and this is to be understood of his mercy in Christ Jesus.

**Verse 13. *He hath made the first old***. That is: He has considered it as antiquated, and as being no longer of any force.

***That which decayeth and waxeth old*** Here is an allusion to the ancient laws, which either had perished from the tables on which they were written through old age, or were fallen into disuse, or were abrogated.

***Is ready to vanish away.*** εγγυς αφανισμου· Is about to be abolished. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, speaking of the laws of Numa, which had been written on oak boards, says: ας αφανισθηναι συνεβη τω χρονω· “which had perished through old age.” And the word αφανιζειν is used to express the abolition of the law. The apostle, therefore, intimates that the old covenant was just about to be abolished; but he expresses himself cautiously and tenderly, that he might not give unnecessary offense.

WHEN the apostle said, All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest, under the new covenant, he had copious authority for saying so from the rabbins themselves. In Sohar Chadash, fol. 42, it is said: “In the days of the Messiah knowledge shall be renewed in the world, and the law shall be made plain among all; as it is written, Jeremiah 31:33, All shall know me, from the least to the greatest.” We find the following legend in Midrash Yalcut Simeoni, part 2, fol. 46: “The holy blessed God shall sit in paradise and explain the law; all the righteous shall sit before him, and the whole heavenly family shall stand on their feet; and the holy blessed God shall sit, and the new law, which he is to give by the Messiah, shall be interpreted.”

In Sohar Genes., fol. 74, col. 291, we find these remarkable words: “When the days of the Messiah shall approach, even the little children in this world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom; and in that time all things shall be revealed to all men.”

And in Sohar Levit., fol. 24, col. 95: “There shall be no time like this till the Messiah comes, and then the knowledge of God shall be found in every part of the world.”

This day are all these sayings fulfilled in our ears: the word of God is multiplied; many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased; all the nations of the earth are receiving the book of God; and men of every clime, and of every degree-Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites; the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, in Libya; strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes;

Cretes and Arabians; Americans, Indians, and Chinese-hear, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.



## CHAPTER 9

*Of the first covenant, and its ordinances, 1. The tabernacle, candlestick, table, show-bread, veil, holy of holies, censer, ark, pot of manna, Aaron's rod, tables of the covenant, cherubim of glory, and mercy seat, 2-5. How the priests served, 6, 7. What was signified by the service, 8-10. The superior excellency of Christ's ministry and sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, 11-26. As men must once die and be judged, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and shall come without a sin-offering, a second time, to them that expect him, 27, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

**Verse 1.** *The first covenant had also ordinances* Our translators have introduced the word covenant, as if *διαθηκη* had been, if not originally in the text, yet in the apostle's mind. Several MSS., but not of good note, as well as printed editions, with the Coptic version, have *σκηνη* tabernacle; but this is omitted by ABDE, several others, both the Syriac, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, some copies of the Itala, and several of the Greek fathers; it is in all probability a spurious reading, the whole context showing that covenant is that to which the apostle refers, as that was the subject in the preceding chapter, and this is a continuation of the same discourse.

*Ordinances* *δικαιωματα*: Rites and ceremonies.

*A worldly sanctuary.* *ἄγιον κοσμικον*. It is supposed that the term worldly, here, is opposed to the term heavenly, chap. 8:5; and that the whole should be referred to the carnality or secular nature of the tabernacle service. But I think there is nothing plainer than that the apostle is speaking here in praise of this sublimely emblematic service, and hence he proceeds to enumerate the various things contained in the first tabernacle, which added vastly to its splendor and importance; such as the table of the show-bread, the golden candlestick, the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, in which was the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables which God

had written with his own finger: hence I am led to believe that **κοσμικος** is here taken in its proper, natural meaning, and signifies adorned, embellished, splendid; and hence **κοσμος**, the world: Tota hujus universi machina, coelum et terram complectens et quicquid utroque contineret, **κοσμος** dicitur, quod nihil ea est mundus, pulchrius, et ornatus. “The whole machine of this universe, comprehending the heavens and the earth, and whatsoever is contained in both, is called **κοσμος**, because nothing is more beautiful, more fair, and more elegant.” So Pliny, Hist. Nat., l. ii. c. 5: Nam quem **κοσμον** Graeci nomine ornamenti appellaverunt, eum nos a perfecta absolutaque elegantia, MUNDUM. “That which the Greeks call **κοσμος**, ornament, we, (the Latins,) from its perfect and absolute elegance call mundum, world.” See on “Genesis 2:1”.

The Jews believe that the tabernacle was an epitome of the world; and it is remarkable, when speaking of their city, that they express this sentiment by the same Greek word, in Hebrew letters, which the apostle uses here: so in Bereshith Rabba, s. 19, fol. 19: **כל קוזמיקו שלו שם הוא** col kozmikon (**κοσμικον**) shelo sham hu. “All his world is placed there.” Philo says much to the same purpose.

If my exposition be not admitted, the next most likely is, that God has a worldly tabernacle as well as a heavenly one; that he as truly dwelt in the Jewish tabernacle as he did in the heaven of heavens; the one being his worldly house, the other his heavenly house.

**Verse 2. *For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein*** The sense is here very obscure, and the construction involved: leaving out all punctuation, which is the case with all the very ancient MSS., the verse stands thus: **σκηνη γαρ κατασκευασθη η πρωτη εν η η τε λυχνια, κ. τ. λ.** which I suppose an indifferent person, who understood the language, would without hesitation render, For, there was the first tabernacle constructed, in which were the candlestick, etc. And this tabernacle or dwelling may be called the first dwelling place which God had among men, to distinguish it from the second dwelling place, the temple built by Solomon; for tabernacle here is to be considered in its general sense, as implying a dwelling.

To have a proper understanding of what the apostle relates here, we should endeavor to take a concise view of the tabernacle erected by Moses

in the wilderness. This tabernacle was the epitome of the Jewish temple; or rather, according to this as a model was the Jewish temple built. It comprised, 1. The court where the people might enter. 2. In this was contained the altar of burnt-offerings, on which were offered the sacrifices in general, besides offerings of bread, wine, and other things. 3. At the bottom or lower end of this court was the tent of the covenant; the two principal parts of the tabernacle were, the holy place and the holy of holies. In the temple built by Solomon there was a court for the Levites, different from that of the people; and, at the entrance of the holy place, a vestibule. But in the tabernacle built by Moses these parts were not found, nor does the apostle mention them here.

In the holy place, as the apostle observes, there were,

1. The golden candlestick of seven branches, on the south.
2. The golden altar, or altar of incense, on the north.
3. The altar, or table of the show-bread; or where the twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes, were laid before the Lord.

1. In each branch of the golden candlestick was a lamp; these were lighted every evening, and extinguished every morning. They were intended to give light by night. 2. The altar of incense was of gold; and a priest, chosen by lot each week, offered incense every morning and evening in a golden censer, which he probably left on the altar after the completion of the offering. 3. The table of the show-bread was covered with plates of gold; and on this, every Sabbath, they placed twelve loaves in two piles, six in each, which continued there all the week till the next Sabbath, when they were removed, and fresh loaves put in their place. The whole of this may be seen in all its details in the book of Exodus, from chap. 35 to 40. See Calmet also.

**Which is called the sanctuary.** ἡτις λεγεται αγια· This is called holy. This clause may apply to any of the nouns in this verse, in the nominative case, which are all of the feminine gender; and the adjective **αγια**, holy, may be considered here as the nominative singular feminine, agreeing with **ητις**. Several editions accent the words in reference to this construction. The word **σκηνη**, tabernacle, may be the proper antecedent; and then we

may read *αγία*, instead of *αγία*: but these niceties belong chiefly to grammarians,

**Verse 3. *And after the second veil*** The first veil, of which the apostle has not yet spoken, was at the entrance of the holy place, and separated the temple from the court, and prevented the people, and even the Levites, from seeing what was in the holy place.

The second veil, of which the apostle speaks here, separated the holy place from the holy of holies.

***The tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all*** That is, that part of the tabernacle which is called the holy of holies.

**Verse 4. *Which had the golden censer*** It is evident that the apostle speaks here of the tabernacle built by Moses, and of the state and contents of that tabernacle as they were during the lifetime of Moses. For, as Calmet remarks, in the temple which was afterwards built there were many things added which were not in the tabernacle, and several things left out. The ark of the covenant and the two tables of the law were never found after the return from the Babylonish captivity. We have no proof that, even in the time of Solomon, the golden pot of manna, or the rod of Aaron, was either in or near the ark. In Solomon's temple the holy place was separated from the holy of holies by a solid wall, instead of a veil, and by strong wooden doors, 1 Kings 6:31-33. In the same temple there was a large vestibule before the holy place; and round about this and the holy of holies there were many chambers in three stories, 1 Kings 6:5, 6. But there was nothing of all this in the Mosaic tabernacle; therefore, says Calmet, we need not trouble ourselves to reconcile the various scriptures which mention this subject; some of which refer to the tabernacle, others to Solomon's temple, and others to the temple built by Zorobabel; which places were very different from each other.

The apostle says that the golden censer was in the holy of holies; but this is nowhere mentioned by Moses. But he tells us that the high priest went in, once every year, with the golden censer to burn incense; and Calmet thinks this censer was left there all the year, and that its place was supplied by a new one, brought in by the priest the year following. Others think it was left just within the veil, so that the priest, by putting his hand

under the curtain, could take it out, and prepare it for his next entrance into the holiest.

***The ark of the covenant*** This was a sort of chest overlaid with plates of gold, in which the two tables of the law, Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, etc., were deposited. Its top, or lid, was the propitiatory or mercy-seat.

**Verse 5. *And over it the cherubims of glory*** Cherubim is the plural of cherub, and it is absurd to add our plural termination (s) to the plural termination of the Hebrew. The glory here signifies the shechinah or symbol of the Divine presence.

***Shadowing the mercy-seat*** One at each end of the ark, with their faces turned toward each other, but looking down on the cover or propitiatory, **ἱλαστήριον**, here called the mercy-seat.

***Of which we cannot now speak particularly.*** The apostle did not judge any farther account of these to be necessary; and I may be excused from considering them particularly here, having said so much on each in the places where they occur in the Pentateuch. What these point out or signify is thus explained by St. Cyril: Christus licet unus sit, multifariam tamen a nobis intelligitur: Ipse est Tabernaculum propter carnis tegumentum: Ipse est Mensa, quia noster cibus est et vita: Ipse est Arca habens legem Dei reconditam, quia est Verbum Patris: Ipse est Candelabrum, quia est lux spiritualis: Ipse est Altare incensi, quia est odor suavitatis in sanctificationem: Ipse est Altare holocausti, quia est hostia pro totius mundi vita in cruce oblata. "Although Christ be but one, yet he is understood by us under a variety of forms. He is the Tabernacle, on account of the human body in which he dwelt. He is the Table, because he is our Bread of life. He is the Ark which has the law of God enclosed within, because he is the Word of the Father. He is the Candlestick, because he is our spiritual light. He is the Altar of incense, because he is the sweet-smelling odour of sanctification. He is the Altar of burnt-offering, because he is the victim, by death on the cross, for the sins of the whole world." This father has said, in a few words, what others have employed whole volumes on, by refining, spiritualizing, and allegorizing.

**Verse 6. *When these thing were thus ordained*** When the tabernacle was made, and its furniture placed in it, according to the Divine direction.

***The priests went always into the first Tabernacle*** That is, into the first part of the tabernacle, or holy place, into which he went every day twice, accomplishing the services, *τας λατρειας επιτελουντες*, which included his burning the incense at the morning and evening sacrifice, dressing the lamps, removing the old show-bread and laying on the new, and sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings before the veil Leviticus 4:6: and for these works he must have constant access to the place.

**Verse 7. *But into the second*** That is, the holy of holies, or second part of the tabernacle, the high priest alone, once every year, that is, on one day in the year only, which was the day on which the general atonement was made. The high priest could enter into this place only on one day in the year; but on that day he might enter several times. See Lev. 16.

***Not without blood*** The day prescribed by the law for this great solemnity was the tenth of the month Tisri, in which the high priest brought in the incense or perfumes, which he placed on the golden censer; he brought also the blood of the bullock; and sprinkled some portion of it seven times before the ark, and the veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. See Leviticus 16:14. He then came out, and, taking some of the blood of the goat which had been sacrificed, he sprinkled it between the veil and the ark of the covenant, Leviticus 16:15.

***Which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people*** ὑπερ των του λαου αγνοηματων· For transgressions of which they were not conscious: there were so many niceties in the ritual worship of the Jews, and so many ways in which they might offend against the law and incur guilt, that it was found necessary to institute sacrifices to atone for these sins of ignorance. And as the high priest was also clothed with infirmity, he required to have an interest in the same sacrifice, on the same account. This was a national sacrifice; and by it the people understood that they were absolved from all the errors of the past year, and that they now had a renewed right of access to the mercy-seat.

**Verse 8. *The Holy Ghost this signifying*** These services were divinely appointed, and by each of them the Holy Spirit of God is supposed to speak.

***The way into the holiest*** That full access to God was not the common privilege of the people, while the Mosaic economy subsisted. That the apostle means that it is only by Christ that any man and every man can approach God, is evident from chap. 10:19-22, and it is about this, and not about the tabernacle of this world, that he is here discoursing.

I have already observed that the apostle appears to use the word **σκηνη**, or tabernacle, in the general sense of a dwelling place; and therefore applies it to the temple, which was reputed the house or dwelling place of God, as well as the ancient tabernacle. Therefore, what he speaks here concerning the first tabernacle, may be understood as applying with propriety to the then Jewish temple, as well as to the ancient tabernacle, which, even with all their sacrifices and ceremonies, could not make the way of holiness plain, nor the way to God's favor possible.

**Verse 9. *Which*** Tabernacle and its services, was a figure, **παραβολη**, a dark enigmatical representation, for the time then present — for that age and dispensation, and for all those who lived under it.

In which, **καθ' ον**, during which, time or dispensation were offered both gifts and sacrifices-eucharistic offerings and victims for sin, that could not make him that did the service, whether the priest who made the offering, or the person who brought it in the behalf of his soul, perfect as pertaining to the conscience — could not take away guilt from the mind, nor purify the conscience from dead works. The whole was a figure, or dark representation, of a spiritual and more glorious system: and although a sinner, who made these offerings and sacrifices according to the law, might be considered as having done his duty, and thus he would be exempted from many ecclesiastical and legal disabilities and punishments; yet his conscience would ever tell him that the guilt of sin was still remaining, and that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take it away. Thus even he that did the service best continued to be imperfect — had a guilty conscience, and an unholy heart.

The words καθ' ον, in which, referred in the above paraphrase to τον καιρον, the time, are read καθ' ην by ABD, and several others, one copy of the Slavonic, the Vulgate, and some of the fathers, and thus refer to την σκηνην, the tabernacle; and this is the reading which our translators appear to have followed. Griesbach places it in his margin, as a very probable reading; but I prefer the other.

**Verse 10. *In meats and drinks, and divers washings*** He had already mentioned eucharistic and sacrificial offerings, and nothing properly remained but the different kinds of clean and unclean animals which were used, or forbidden to be used, as articles of food; together with the different kinds or drinks, washings, βαπτισμοις, baptisms, immersions, sprinklings and washings of the body and the clothes, and carnal ordinances, or things which had respect merely to the body, and could have no moral influence upon the soul, unless considered in reference to that of which they were the similitudes, or figures.

***Carnal ordinances*** δικαιωματα σαρκος; Rites and ceremonies pertaining merely to the body. The word carnal is not used here, nor scarcely in any part of the New Testament, in that catachrestical or degrading sense in which many preachers and professors of Christianity take the liberty to use it.

***Imposed on them until the time of reformation.*** These rites and ceremonies were enacted, by Divine authority, as proper representations of the Gospel system, which should reform and rectify all things.

The time of reformation, καιρος διορθωσης, the time of rectifying, signifies the Gospel dispensation, under which every thing is set straight; every thing referred to its proper purpose and end; the ceremonial law fulfilled and abrogated; the moral law exhibited and more strictly enjoined; (see our Lord's sermon upon the mount;) and the spiritual nature of God's worship taught, and grace promised to purify the heart: so that, through the power of the eternal Spirit, all that was wrong in the soul is rectified; the affections, passions, and appetites purified; the understanding enlightened; the judgment corrected; the will refined; in a word, all things made new.



**Verse 11. *But Christ being come a high priest of good things*** I think this and the succeeding verses not happily translated: indeed, the division of them has led to a wrong translation; therefore they must be taken together, thus: But the Christ, the high priest of those good things (or services) which were to come, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of the same workmanship, entered once for all into the sanctuary; having obtained eternal redemption for us, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, ver. 13. For if the blood of GOATS, and bulls, and calves, and a heifer's ashes, sprinkled on the unclean, sanctifieth to the cleansing of the flesh, (ver. 14,) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, in order to worship (or that ye may worship) the living God?

In the above translation I have added, in ver. 13, **τραγων**, of goats, on the authority of ABDE, three others, the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Vulgate, two copies of the Itala, and Theodoret. And I have rendered **εις το λατρευειν**, (ver. 14,) IN ORDER to worship, or THAT YE MAY worship; for this is the meaning of these particles **εις το** in many parts of the New Testament. I shall now make a few observations on some of the principal expressions.

***High priest of good things*** Or services, to come, **των μελλοντων αγαθων**. He is the High Priest of Christianity; he officiates in the behalf of all mankind; for by him are all the prayers, praises, and services of mankind offered to God; and he ever appears in the presence of God for us.

***A greater and more perfect tabernacle*** This appears to mean our Lord's human nature. That, in which dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, was fitly typified by the tabernacle and temple, in both of which the majesty of God dwelt.

***Not made with hands*** Though our Lord's body was a perfect human body, yet it did not come in the way of natural generation; his miraculous conception will sufficiently justify the expressions used here by the apostle.

**Verse 12. *But by his own blood*** Here the redemption of man is attributed to the blood of Christ; and this blood is stated to be shed in a sacrificial way, precisely as the blood of bulls, goats and calves was shed under the law.

**Once** Once for all, *εφαπαξ*, in opposition to the annual entering of the high priest into the holiest, with the blood of the annual victim.

**The holy place** Or sanctuary, *τα αγια*, signifies heaven, into which Jesus entered with his own blood, as the high priest entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the victims which he had sacrificed.

**Eternal redemption** *αιωνιαν λυτρωσιν*. A redemption price which should stand good for ever, when once offered; and an endless redemption from sin, in reference to the pardon of which, and reconciliation to God, there needs no other sacrifice: it is eternal in its merit and efficacy.

**Verse 13. *Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh*** Answers the end proposed by the law; namely, to remove legal disabilities and punishments, having the body and its interests particularly in view, though adumbrating or typifying the soul and its concerns.

**Verse 14. *Who through the eternal Spirit*** This expression is understood two ways: 1. Of the Holy Ghost himself. As Christ's miraculous conception was by the Holy Spirit, and he wrought all his miracles by the Spirit of God, so his death or final offering was made through or by the eternal Spirit; and by that Spirit he was raised from the dead, 1 Peter 3:18. Indeed, through the whole of his life he was justified by the Spirit; and we find that in this great work of human redemption, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were continually employed: therefore the words may be understood of the Holy Spirit properly. 2. Of the eternal Logos or Deity which dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, through the energy of which the offering of his humanity became an infinitely meritorious victim; therefore the Deity of Christ is here intended. But we cannot well consider one of these distinct from the other; and hence probably arose the various readings in the MSS. and versions on this article. Instead of *δια πνευματος αιωνιου*, by the ETERNAL Spirit, *δια πνευματος ἁγιου*, by the HOLY Spirit, is the reading of D\*, and more than twenty others of good note, besides the Coptic, Slavonic, Vulgate, two copies of the Itala,

Cyril, Athanasius sometimes, Damascenus, Chrysostom, and some others. But the common reading is supported by ABD\*\*, and others, besides the Syriac, all the Arabic, Armenian, AÆthiopic, Athanasius generally, Theodoret, Theophylact, and Ambrosius. This, therefore, is the reading that should be preferred, as it is probable that the Holy Ghost, not the Logos, is what the apostle had more immediately in view. But still we must say, that the Holy Spirit, with the eternal Logos, and the almighty Father, equally concurred in offering up the sacrifice of the human nature of Christ, in order to make atonement for the sin of the world.

***Purge your conscience*** καθαριει την συνειδησιν· Purify your conscience. The term purify should be everywhere, both in the translation of the Scriptures, and in preaching the Gospel, preferred to the word purge, which, at present, is scarcely ever used in the sense in which our translators have employed it.

***Dead works*** Sin in general, or acts to which the penalty of death is annexed by the law. See the phrase explained, “Hebrews 6:1”.

**Verse 15. *And for this cause*** Some translate δια τουτο, on account of this (blood.) Perhaps it means no more than a mere inference, such as therefore, or wherefore.

***He is the Mediator of the new testament*** There was no proper reason why our translators should render διαθηκη by testament here, when in almost every other case they render it covenant, which is its proper ecclesiastical meaning, as answering to the Hebrew בְרִית berith, which see largely explained, Genesis 15:10, and in other places of the Pentateuch.

Very few persons are satisfied with the translation of the following verses to the 20th, particularly the 16th and 17th; at all events the word covenant must be retained. He — Jesus Christ, is Mediator; the μεσιτης, or mediator, was the person who witnessed the contract made between the two contracting parties, slew the victim, and sprinkled each with its blood.

***Of the new testament*** The new contract betwixt God and the whole human race, by Christ Jesus the Mediator, distinguished here from the old covenant between God and the Israelites, in which Moses was the mediator.

***That by means of death*** His own death upon the cross.

***For the redemption of the transgressions*** To make atonement for the transgressions which were committed under the old covenant, which the blood of bulls and calves could not do; so the death of Jesus had respect to all the time antecedent to it, as well as to all the time afterward till the conclusion of the world.

***They which are called*** The GENTILES, might receive the promise — might, by being brought into a covenant with God, have an equal right with the Jews, not merely to an inheritance such as the promised land, but to an eternal inheritance, and consequently infinitely superior to that of the Jews, inasmuch as the new covenant is superior in every point of view to the old.

How frequently the Gentiles are termed *οι κλητοι* and *οι κεκλημενοι*, the called, all St. Paul's writings show. And they were thus termed because they were called and elected in the place of the Jews, the ancient called and elect, who were now divorced and reprobated because of their disobedience.

**Verse 16. *For where a testament is*** A learned and judicious friend furnishes me with the following translation of this and the 17th verse:—

“For where there is a covenant, it is necessary that the death of the appointed victim should be exhibited, because a covenant is confirmed over dead victims, since it is not at all valid while the appointed victim is alive.”

He observes, “There is no word signifying testator, or men, in the original. *διαθεμενος* is not a substantive, but a participle, or a participial adjective, derived from the same root as *διατηκη*, and must have a substantive understood. I therefore render it the disposed or appointed victim, alluding to the manner of disposing or setting apart the pieces of the victim, when they were going to ratify a covenant; and you know well the old custom of ratifying a covenant, to which the apostle alludes. I refer to your own notes on Genesis 6:18, and Genesis 15:10. — J. C.”

Mr. Wakefield has translated the passage nearly in the same way.

“For where a covenant is, there must be necessarily introduced the death of that which establisheth the covenant; because a covenant is confirmed

over dead things, and is of no force at all whilst that which establisheth the covenant is alive.” This is undoubtedly the meaning of this passage; and we should endeavor to forget that testament and testator were ever introduced, as they totally change the apostle’s meaning. See the observations at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 18.** *Whereupon* ὅθεν. Wherefore, as a victim was required for the ratification of every covenant, the first covenant made between God and the Hebrews, by the mediation of Moses, was not dedicated, *εγκεκαίνισται*, renewed or solemnized, without blood — without the death of a victim, and the aspersion of its blood.

**Verse 19.** *When Moses had spoken every precept* The place to which the apostle alludes is Exodus 24:4-8, where the reader is requested to consult the notes.

*And sprinkled both the book* The sprinkling of the book is not mentioned in the place to which the apostle refers, (see above,) nor did it in fact take place. The words *αυτο τε το βιβλιον*, and the book itself, should be referred to *λαβων*, having taken, and not to *εργραντισε*, he sprinkled; the verse should therefore be read thus: For after every commandment of the law had been recited by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves, and of the goats, with water and scarlet wool, and the book itself, and sprinkled all the people. The rite was performed thus: Having received the blood of the calves and goats into basins, and mingled it with water to prevent it from coagulating, he then took a bunch of hyssop, and having bound it together with thread made of scarlet wool, he dipped this in the basin, and sprinkled the blood and water upon the people who were nearest to him, and who might be considered on this occasion the representatives of all the rest; for it is impossible that he should have had blood enough to have sprinkled the whole of the congregation.

Some think that the blood was actually sprinkled upon the book itself, which contained the written covenant, to signify that the covenant itself was ratified by the blood.

**Verse 20.** *This is the blood of the testament* (covenant.) Our Lord refers to the conduct of Moses here, and partly quotes his words in the institution of the eucharist: This is my blood of the new covenant, which

is shed for many for the remission of sins, Matthew 26:28. And by thus using the words and applying them, he shows that his sacrificial blood was intended by the blood shed and sprinkled on this occasion, and that by it alone the remission of sins is obtained.

**Verse 21. *He sprinkled-with blood-all the vessels of the ministry.*** To intimate that every thing used by sinful man is polluted, and that nothing can be acceptable in the sight of a holy God that has not in effect the sprinkling of the atoning blood.

**Verse 22. *And almost all things are-purged with blood*** The apostle says almost, because in some cases certain vessels were purified by water, some by fire, Numbers 31:23, and some with the ashes of the red heifer, Numbers 19:2-10, but it was always understood that every thing was at first consecrated by the blood of the victim.

***And without shedding of blood is no remission.*** The apostle shows fully here what is one of his great objects in the whole of this epistle, viz. that there is no salvation but through the sacrificial death of Christ, and to prefigure this the law itself would not grant any remission of sin without the blood of a victim. This is a maxim even among the Jews themselves, **אֵין כַּפָּרָה אֱלֹא בְדָם אִי כַפָּרָה** ein capparah ella bedam, “There is no expiation but by blood.” Yoma, fol. 5, 1; Menachoth, fol. 93, 2. Every sinner has forfeited his life by his transgressions, and the law of God requires his death; the blood of the victim, which is its life, is shed as a substitute for the life of the sinner. By these victims the sacrifice of Christ was typified. He gave his life for the life of the world; human life for human life, but a life infinitely dignified by its union with God.

**Verse 23. *The patterns of things in the heavens*** That is: The tabernacle and all its utensils, services, etc., must be purified by these, viz.: The blood of calves and goats, and the sprinkling of the blood and water with the bunch of hyssop bound about with scarlet wool. These are called patterns, **υποδειγματα**, exemplars, earthly things, which were the representatives of heavenly things. And there is no doubt that every thing in the tabernacle, its parts, divisions, utensils, ministry, etc., as appointed by God, were representations of celestial matters; but how far and in what way we cannot now see.

Purification implies, not only cleansing from defilement, but also dedication or consecration. All the utensils employed in the tabernacle service were thus purified though incapable of any moral pollution.

***But the heavenly things themselves*** Some think this means heaven itself, which, by receiving the sacrificed body of Christ, which appears in the presence of God for us, may be said to be purified, i.e., set apart for the reception of the souls of those who have found redemption in his blood. 2. Others think the body of Christ is intended, which is the tabernacle in which his Divinity dwelt; and that this might be said to be purified by its own sacrifice, as he is said, John 17:19, to sanctify himself; that is, to consecrate himself unto God as a sin-offering for the redemption of man. 3. Others suppose the Church is intended, which he is to present to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing. 4. As the entrance to the holy of holies must be made by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, and as that holy of holies represented heaven, the apostle's meaning seems to be that there was and could be no entrance to the holiest but through his blood; and therefore, when by a more perfect tabernacle, ver. 11, 12, he passed into the heavens, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, he thus purified or laid open the entrance to the holiest, by a more valuable sacrifice than those required to open the entrance of the holy of holies. It was necessary, therefore, for God had appointed it so, that the tabernacle and its parts, etc., which were patterns of things in the heavens, should be consecrated and entered with such sacrifices as have already been mentioned; but the heaven of heavens into which Jesus entered, and whither he will bring all his faithful followers, must be propitiated, consecrated, and entered, by the infinitely better sacrifice of his own body and blood. That this is the meaning appears from the following verse.

**Verse 24. *Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands*** He is not gone into the holy of holies of the tabernacle or temple, as the Jewish high priest does once in the year with the blood of the victim, to sprinkle it before the mercy-seat there; but into heaven itself, which he has thus opened to all believers, having made the propitiatory offering by which both he and those whom he represents are entitled to enter and enjoy eternal blessedness. And hence we may consider that Christ, appearing in his crucified body before the throne, is a real offering of himself to the Divine justice in behalf of man; and that there he continues

in the constant act of being offered, so that every penitent and believer, coming unto God through him, find him their ever ready and available sacrifice, officiating as the High Priest of mankind in the presence of God.

**Verse 25. *Nor yet that he should offer himself often*** The sacrifice of Christ is not like that of the Jewish high priest; his must be offered every year, Christ has offered himself once for all: and this sacrificial act has ever the same efficacy, his crucified body being still a powerful and infinitely meritorious sacrifice before the throne.

**Verse 26. *For then must he often have suffered*** In the counsel of God, Christ was considered the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Revelation 13:8, so that all believers before his advent were equally interested in his sacrificial death with those who have lived since his coming. Humanly speaking, the virtue of the annual atonement could not last long, and must be repeated; Christ's sacrifice is ever the same; his life's blood is still considered as in the act of being continually poured out. See Revelation 5:6.

***The end of the world*** The conclusion of the Jewish dispensation, the Christian dispensation being that which shall continue till the end of time.

***To put away sin*** εἰς ἀθετησὶν ἁμαρτίας; To abolish the sin-offerings; i.e. to put an end to the Mosaic economy by his one offering of himself. It is certain that, after Christ had offered himself, the typical sin-offerings of the law ceased; and this was expressly foretold by the Prophet Daniel, Daniel 9:24. Some think that the expression should be applied to the putting away the guilt, power, and being of sin from the souls of believers.

**Verse 27. *As it is appointed*** ἀποκείται. It is laid before them by the Divine decree: Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return. Unto men generally, during the course of the present world, not all men as some falsely quote; for Enoch and Elijah have not died, and those that shall be alive at the day of judgment shall not die, but be changed.

***But after this the judgment*** They shall die but once, and be judged but once, therefore there is no metempsychosis, no transmigration from body to body; judgment succeeds to dying; and as they shall be judged but once, they can die but once.



**Verse 28. *So Christ was once offered*** He shall die no more; he has borne away the sins of many, and what he has done once shall stand good for ever. Yet he will appear a second time without sin, *χωρις αμαρτιας*, without a sin-offering; THAT he has already made.

***Unto salvation.*** To deliver the bodies of believers from the empire of death, to reunite them to their purified souls, and bring both into his eternal glory. This is salvation, and the very highest of which the human being is capable. Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus! Hallelujah!

1. IN the preceding notes I have given my reasons for dissenting from our translation of the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses. Many learned men are of the same opinion; but I have not met with one who appears to have treated the whole in a more satisfactory manner than Dr. Macknight, and for the edification of my readers I shall here subjoin the substance of what he has written on this point.

“Verse 15. Mediator of the new covenant. See Hebrews 8:7. The word *διαθηκη*, here translated covenant, answers to the Hebrew word berith, which all the translators of the Jewish Scriptures have understood to signify a covenant. The same signification our translators have affixed to the word *διαθηκη*, as often as it occurs in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, except in the history of the institution of the supper, and in 2 Corinthians 3:6: and Hebrews 7:22, and in the passage under consideration; in which places, copying the Vulgate version, they have rendered *διαθηκη* by the word testament. Beza, following the Syriac Version, translates *διαθηκη* everywhere by the words foedas, pactum, except in the 16th, 17th, and 20th verses of this chapter, where likewise following the Syriac version, he has testamentum. Now if *καινη διαθηκη*, the new testament, in the passages above mentioned, means the Gospel covenant, as all interpreters acknowledge, *παλαια διαθηκη*, the old testament, 2 Corinthians 3:14, and *πρωτη διαθηκη*, the first testament, Hebrews 9:15, must certainly be the Sinaitic covenant or law of Moses, as is evident also from Hebrews 9:20. On this supposition it may be asked, 1. In what sense the Sinaitic covenant or law of Moses, which required perfect obedience to all its precepts under penalty of death, and allowed no mercy to any sinner, however penitent, can be called a testament, which is a deed conferring something valuable on a person who may accept or

refuse it, as he thinks fit? Besides, the transaction at Sinai, in which God promised to continue the Israelites in Canaan, on condition they refrained from the wicked practices of the Canaanites, and observed his statutes, Lev. 18, can in no sense be called a testament. 2. If the law of Moses be a testament, and if, to render that testament valid, the death of the testator be necessary, as the English translators have taught us, ver. 16, I ask who it was that made the testament of the law? Was it God or Moses? And did either of them die to render it valid? 3. I observe that even the Gospel covenant is improperly called a testament, because, notwithstanding all its blessings were procured by the death of Christ, and are most freely bestowed, it lost any validity which, as a testament, it is thought to have received by the death of Christ, when he revived again on the third day. 4. The things affirmed in the common translation of ver. 15, concerning the new testament, namely, that it has a Mediator; that that Mediator is the Testator himself; that there were transgressions of a former testament, for the redemption of which the Mediator of the new testament died; and, ver. 19, that the first testament was made by sprinkling the people in whose favor it was made with blood; are all things quite foreign to a testament. For was it ever known in any nation that a testament needed a mediator? Or that the testator was the mediator of his own testament? Or that it was necessary the testator of a new testament should die to redeem the transgressions of a former testament? Or that any testament was ever made by sprinkling the legatees with blood? These things however were usual in covenants. They had mediators who assisted at the making of them, and were sureties for the performance of them. They were commonly ratified by sacrifices, the blood of which was sprinkled on the parties; withal, if any former covenant was infringed by the parties, satisfaction was given at the making of a second covenant. 5. By calling Christ the Mediator of the new testament our thoughts are turned away entirely from the view which the Scriptures give us of his death as a sacrifice for sin; whereas, if he is called the Mediator of the new covenant, which is the true translation of *διαθηκης καινης μεσιτης*, that appellation directly suggests to us that the new covenant was procured and ratified by his death as a sacrifice for sin. Accordingly Jesus, on account of his being made a priest by the oath of God, is said to be the Priest or Mediator of a better covenant than that of which the Levitical priests were the mediators. I acknowledge that in classical Greek *διαθηκη*,

commonly signifies a testament. Yet, since the Seventy have uniformly translated the Hebrew word *berith*, which properly signifies a covenant, by the word *διαθηκη*, in writing Greek the Jews naturally used *διαθηκη* for *συνθηκη* as our translators have acknowledged by their version of Hebrews 10:16. To conclude: Seeing in the verses under consideration *διαθηκη* may be translated a covenant; and seeing, when so translated, these verses make a better sense, and agree better with the scope of the apostle's reasoning than if it were translated a testament; we can be at no loss to know which translation of *διαθηκη* in these verses ought to be preferred. Nevertheless, the absurdity of a phraseology to which readers have been long accustomed, without attending distinctly to its meaning, does not soon appear.

“He is the Mediator. Here it is remarkable that Jesus is not called *διαθεμενος*, the Testator, but *μεσιτης*, the Mediator, of the new covenant; first, because he procured the new covenant for mankind, in which the pardon of sin is promised; for, as the apostle tells us, his death, as a sacrifice for sin, is the consideration on account of which the pardon of the transgressions of the first covenant is granted. Secondly, because the new covenant having been ratified as well as procured by the death of Christ, he is fitly called the Mediator of that covenant in the same sense that God's oath is called, Hebrews 6:17, the mediator, or confirmor, of his promise. Thirdly, Jesus, who died to procure the new covenant, being appointed by God the high priest thereof, to dispense his blessings, he is on that account also called, Hebrews 8:6, the mediator of that better covenant.

**Verse 16.** *For where a covenant* (*ἵσ μαδε βθ σαχριφιχε*;) there is a necessity that the death of the appointed sacrifice be produced. This elliptical expression must be completed, if, as is probable, the apostle had now in his eye the covenant which God made with Noah and Abraham. His covenant is recorded, Genesis 8:20, where we are told, that on coming out of the ark Noah offered a burnt-offering of every clean beast and fowl. And the Lord smelled a sweet savor. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done. This promise or declaration God called his covenant with men, and with every living creature. Genesis 9:9, 10. In like manner God made a covenant with Abraham by sacrifice, Genesis 15:9, 18, and

with the Israelites at Sinai, Exodus 24:8. See also Psalm 50:5. By making his covenants with men in this manner, God taught them that his intercourses with them were all founded on an expiation afterwards to be made for their sins by the sacrifice of the seed of the woman, the bruising of whose heel, or death, was foretold at the fall. On the authority of these examples, the practice of making covenants by sacrifice prevailed among the Jews; Jeremiah 34:18; Zechariah 9:11; and even among the heathens; for they had the knowledge of these examples by tradition. *Stabant et caesa jungebant foedera porca*; Virgil, *Aeneid*, viii. 611. Hence the phrases, *foedus ferire* and *percutere*, to strike or kill the covenant.

“There is a necessity that the death **του διαθεμενου**, of the appointed. Here we may supply either the word **θυματος**, sacrifice, or **ζουου**, animal, which might be either a calf, a goat, a bull, or any other animal which the parties making the covenant chose. **διαθεμενου** is the participle of the second aorist of the middle voice of the verb **διατιθημι**, constituo, I appoint. Wherefore its primary and literal signification is, of the appointed. Our translators have given the word this sense, Luke 22:29; **καγω διατιθεμαι υμιν, καθως διετιθετο μοι ο πατηρ μου, βασιλειαν**. And I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me a kingdom.

“Be brought in; **θανατον αναγκη φερεσθαι του διαθεμενου**, Elsnor, vol. ii., p. 381, has shown that the word **φερεσθαι** is sometimes used in a forensic sense for what is produced, or proved, or made apparent in a court of judicature. Wherefore the apostle’s meaning is, that it is necessary the death of the appointed sacrifice be brought in, or produced, at the making of the covenant. In the margin of our Bibles this clause is rightly translated, be brought in. See Acts 25:7, where **φεροντες** is used in the forensic sense.

**Verse 17.** A covenant is firm over dead sacrifices; **επι νεκοις, νεκροις** being an adjective, it must have a substantive agreeing with it, either expressed or understood. The substantive understood in this place, I think, is **θυμασι**, sacrifices; for which reason I have supplied it in the translation. Perhaps the word **ζωοις**, animals, may be equally proper; especially as, in the following clause, **διαθεμενος** is in the gender of the animals appointed for the sacrifice. Our translators have supplied the word **ανθρωποις**, men,

and have translated **επι νεκροις**, after men are dead, contrary to the propriety of the phrase.

“It never hath force whilst the appointed liveth; **’οτε ζη ο διαθεμενος**. Supply **μωσχος**, or **τραγος**, or **ταυρος**: whilst the calf, or goat, or bull, appointed for the sacrifice of ratification, liveth. The apostle having, in verse 15, showed that Christ’s death was necessary as **ο μεσιτης**, the Mediator, that is, the procurer, and ratifier of the new covenant, he in the 16th and 17th verses observes that, since God’s covenants with men were all ratified by sacrifice to show that his intercourses with men are founded on the sacrifice of his Son, it was necessary that the new covenant itself should be ratified by his Son’s actually dying as a sacrifice.

“The faultiness of the common translation of the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 20th verses of this chapter having been already shown in the notes, nothing needs be added here, except to call the reader’s attention to the propriety and strength of the apostle’s reasoning, as it appears in the translation of these verses which I have given, compared with his reasoning as represented in the common version.”

2. It is supposed that in verse 28, the apostle, in speaking about Christ’s bearing the sins of many, alludes to the ceremony of the scape goat. This mysterious sacrifice was to be presented to God, Leviticus 16:7, and the sins of the people were to be confessed over the head of it, Leviticus 16:21, and after this the goat was dismissed into a land uninhabited, laden, as the institution implied, with the sins of the people; and this the word **ανενεγκειν**, to bear or carry away, seems to imply. So truly as the goat did metaphorically bear away the sins of the many, so truly did Christ literally bear the punishment due to our sins; and in reference to every believer, has so borne them away that they shall never more rise in judgment against him.

3. In Christ’s coming, or appearing the second time, it is very probable, as Dr. Doddridge and others have conjectured, that there is an allusion to the return of the high priest from the inner tabernacle; for, after appearing there in the presence of God, and making atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest, Leviticus 16:23, 24, he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people, who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. “But there will be this

difference,” says Dr. Macknight, “between the return of Christ to bless his people, and the return of the high priest to bless the congregation. The latter, after coming out of the most holy place, made a new atonement in his pontifical robes for himself and for the people, Leviticus 16:24, which showed that the former atonement was not real but typical. Whereas Jesus, after having made atonement, (ἄνδ πρεσεντεδ ηιμσελφ ιν ηεαζεβ, βεφορε Γοδ;) will not return to the earth for the purpose of making himself a sacrifice the second time; but having procured an eternal redemption for us, by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he will return for the purpose of declaring to them who wait for him that they are accepted, and of bestowing on them the great blessing of eternal life. This reward he, being surrounded with the glory of the Father, Matthew 16:27, will give them in the presence of an assembled universe, both as their King and their Priest. This is the great salvation which Christ came to preach, and which was confirmed to the world by them who heard him: Hebrews 2:3.” Reader, lay this sincerely to heart!

4. The form in which the high priest and the ordinary priests were to bless the people, after burning the incense in the tabernacle, is prescribed, Numbers 6:23-26. Literally translated from the Hebrew it is as follows, and consists of three parts or benedictions:—

1. May Jehovah bless thee, and preserve thee!
2. May Jehovah cause his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee!
3. May Jehovah lift up his faces upon thee, and may he put prosperity unto thee! (See my notes on the place.)

We may therefore say that Christ, our High Priest, came to bless each of us, by turning us away from our iniquity. And let no one ever expect to see him at his second coming with joy, unless he have, in this life, been turned away from his iniquity, and obtained remission of all his sins, and that holiness without which none can see God. Reader, the time of his reappearing is, to thee, at hand! Prepare to meet thy God!

On the word conscience, which occurs so often in this chapter, and in other parts of this epistle, see the observations at the end of chap. 13.

## CHAPTER 10

*The insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, 1-4. The purpose and will of God, as declared by the Psalmist, relative to the salvation of the world by the incarnation of Christ; and our sanctification through that will, 5-10. Comparison between the priesthood of Christ and that of the Jews, 11-14. The new covenant which God promised to make, and the blessings of it, 15-17. The access which genuine believers have to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 18-20. Having a High Priest over the Church of God, we should have faith, walk uprightly, hold fast our profession, exhort and help each other, and maintain Christian communion, 21-25. The danger and awful consequences of final apostasy, 26-31. In order to our perseverance, we should often reflect on past mercies, and the support afforded us in temptations and afflictions; and not cast away our confidence, for we shall receive the promise if we patiently fulfill the will of God, 32-37. The just by faith shall live; but the soul that draws back shall die, 38. The apostle's confidence in the believing Hebrews, 39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

**Verse 1.** *The law, having a shadow of good things to come* A shadow, **σκια**, signifies, 1. Literally, the shade cast from a body of any kind, interposed between the place on which the shadow is projected, and the sun or light; the rays of the light not shining on that place, because intercepted by the opacity of the body, through which they cannot pass. 2. It signifies, technically, a sketch, rude plan, or imperfect draught of a building, landscape, man, beast, etc. 3. It signifies, metaphorically, any faint adumbration, symbolical expression, imperfect or obscure image of a thing; and is opposed to **σωμα**, body, or the thing intended to be thereby defined. 4. It is used catachrestically among the Greek writers, as umbra is among the Latins, to signify any thing vain, empty, light, not solid; thus Philostratus, Vit. Soph., lib. i. cap. 20: **᾽**οτι **σκια** και **ονειρατα** αι **ηδοναι** **πασαι**. All pleasures are but SHADOWS and dreams. And Cicero, in Pison., cap. 24: Omnes umbras falsae gloriae consecrari. "All pursue the



SHADOWS OF FALSE GLORY.” And again, Deuteronomy Offic., lib. iii. cap. 17: Nos veri juris germanaeque justitiae solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra et itnaginibus utimur. “We have no solid and express effigy of true law and genuine justice, but we employ shadows and images to represent them.”

**And not the very image** **εικων**, image, signifies, 1. A simple representation, from **εικω**, I am like. 2. The form or particular fashion of a thing. 3. The model according to which any thing is formed. 4. The perfect image of a thing as opposed to a faint representation. 5. Metaphorically, a similitude, agreement, or conformity.

The law, with all its ceremonies and sacrifices, was only a shadow of spiritual and eternal good. The Gospel is the image or thing itself, as including every spiritual and eternal good.

We may note three things here: 1. The shadow or general outline, limiting the size and proportions of the thing to be represented. 2. The image or likeness completed from this shadow or general outline, whether represented on paper, canvass, or in statuary, 3. The person or thing thus represented in its actual, natural state of existence; or what is called here the very image of the things, **αυτην την εικονα των πραγματος**. Such is the Gospel, when compared with the law; such is Christ, when compared with Aaron; such is his sacrifice, when compared with the Levitical offerings; such is the Gospel remission of sins and purification, when compared with those afforded by the law; such is the Holy Ghost, ministered by the Gospel, when compared with its types and shadows in the Levitical service; such the heavenly rest, when compared with the earthly Canaan. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, The law was only the shadow of good things to come.

**Can never-make the comers thereunto perfect.** Cannot remove guilt from the conscience, or impurity from the heart. I leave preachers to improve these points.

**Verse 2. Would they not have ceased to be offered?** Had they made an effectual reconciliation for the sins of the world, and contained in their once offering a plenitude of permanent merit, they would have ceased to be offered, at least in reference to any individual who had once offered them;

because, in such a case, his conscience would be satisfied that its guilt had been taken away. But no Jew pretended to believe that even the annual atonement cancelled his sin before God; yet he continued to make his offerings, the law of God having so enjoined, because these sacrifices pointed out that which was to come. They were offered, therefore, not in consideration of their own efficacy, but as referring to Christ; See on “Hebrews 9:9”.

**Verse 4. *For it is not possible*** Common sense must have taught them that shedding the blood of bulls and goats could never satisfy Divine justice, nor take away guilt from the conscience; and God intended that they should understand the matter so: and this the following quotation from the Psalmist sufficiently proves.

**Verse 5. *When he (the Messiah) cometh into the world*** Was about to be incarnated, He saith to God the Father, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not — it was never thy will and design that the sacrifices under thy own law should be considered as making atonement for sin, they were only designed to point out my incarnation and consequent sacrificial death, and therefore a body hast thou prepared me, by a miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin, according to thy word, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent.

***A body hast thou prepared me*** The quotation in this and the two following verses is taken from Psalm 40., 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, as they stand now in the Septuagint, with scarcely any variety of reading; but, although the general meaning is the same, they are widely different in verbal expression in the Hebrew. David’s words are, **אזניִם כִּרִית לִי** *oznayim caritha li*, which we translate, My ears hast thou opened; but they might be more properly rendered, My ears hast thou bored, that is, thou hast made me thy servant for ever, to dwell in thine own house; for the allusion is evidently to the custom mentioned, Exodus 21:2, etc.: “If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free; but if the servant shall positively say, I love my master, etc., I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him to the door post, and shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever.”

But how is it possible that the Septuagint and the apostle should take a meaning so totally different from the sense of the Hebrew? Dr. Kennicott

has a very ingenious conjecture here: he supposes that the Septuagint and apostle express the meaning of the words as they stood in the copy from which the Greek translation was made; and that the present Hebrew text is corrupted in the word **אזנים** oznayim, ears, which has been written through carelessness for **אז גוה** az gevah, THEN A BODY. The first syllable **אז**, THEN, is the same in both; and the latter **נים**, which joined to **אז**, makes **אזנים** oznayim, might have been easily mistaken for **גוה** gevah, BODY; נ nun, being very like ג gimel; י yod, like ו vau; and ה he, like final ם mem; especially if the line on which the letters were written in the MS. happened to be blacker than ordinary, which has often been a cause of mistake, it might have been easily taken for the under stroke of the mem, and thus give rise to a corrupt reading: add to this the root **כרה** carah, signifies as well to prepare as to open, bore, etc. On this supposition the ancient copy, translated by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, must have read the text thus: **אז גוה כרית לי** az gevah caritha li, **σωμα δε κατηρτισω μοι**, then a body thou hast prepared me: thus the Hebrew text, the version of the Septuagint, and the apostle, will agree in what is known to be an indisputable fact in Christianity, namely, that Christ was incarnated for the sin of the world.

The AEthiopic has nearly the same reading; the Arabic has both, A body hast thou prepared me, and mine ears thou hast opened. But the Syriac, the Chaldee, and the Vulgate, agree with the present Hebrew text; and none of the MSS. collated by Kennicott and Deuteronomy Rossi have any various reading on the disputed words.

It is remarkable that all the offerings and sacrifices which were considered to be of an atoning or cleansing nature, offered under the law, are here enumerated by the psalmist and the apostle, to show that none of them nor all of them could take away sin, and that the grand sacrifice of Christ was that alone which could do it.

Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and the apostle, viz.: SACRIFICE, **זבח** zebach, **θυσια**· OFFERING, **מנחה** minchah, **προσφορα**· BURNT-OFFERING, **עולה** olah, **ολοκαυτωμα**· SIN-OFFERING, **חטאה** chataah, **περι αμαρτιας**. Of all these we may say, with the apostle, it

was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, etc., should take away sin.

**Verse 6. *Thou hast had no pleasure.*** Thou couldst never be pleased with the victims under the law; thou couldst never consider them as atonements for sin; as they could never satisfy thy justice, nor make thy law honorable.

**Verse 7. *In the volume of the book*** במגלת ספר bimgillath sepher, “in the roll of the book.” Anciently, books were written on skins and rolled up. Among the Romans these were called volumina, from volvo, I roll; and the Pentateuch, in the Jewish synagogues, is still written in this way. There are two wooden rollers; on one they roll on, on the other they roll off, as they proceed in reading. The book mentioned here must be the Pentateuch, or five books of Moses; for in David’s time no other part of Divine revelation had been committed to writing. This whole book speaks about Christ, and his accomplishing the will of God; not only in, The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent, and, In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, but in all the sacrifices and sacrificial rites mentioned in the law.

***To do thy will*** God willed not the sacrifices under the law, but he willed that a human victim of infinite merit should be offered for the redemption of mankind. That there might be such a victim, a body was prepared for the eternal Logos; and in that body he came to do the will of God, that is, to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

**Verse 9. *He taketh away the first*** The offerings, sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin, which were prescribed by the law.

***That he may establish the second.*** The offering of the body of Jesus once for all. It will make little odds in the meaning if we say, he taketh away the first covenant, that he may establish the second covenant; he takes away the first dispensation, that he may establish the second; he takes away the law, that he may establish the Gospel. In all these cases the sense is nearly the same: I prefer the first.

**Verse 10. *By the which will we are sanctified*** Closing in with this so solemnly declared WILL of God, that there is no name given under heaven among men, by which we can be saved, but Jesus the Christ, we believe in

him, find redemption in his blood, and are sanctified unto God through the sacrificial offering of his body.

1. Hence we see that the sovereign WILL of God is, that Jesus should be incarnated; that he should suffer and die, or, in the apostle's words, taste death for every man; that all should believe on him, and be saved from their sins: for this is the WILL of God, our sanctification.

2. And as the apostle grounds this on the words of the psalm, we see that it is the WILL of God that that system shall end; for as the essence of it is contained in its sacrifices, and God says he will not have these, and has prepared the Messiah to do his will, i.e. to die for men, hence it necessarily follows, from the psalmist himself, that the introduction of the Messiah into the world is the abolition of the law, and that his sacrifice is that which shall last for ever.

**Verse 11. *Every priest standeth*** The office of the Jewish priest is here compared with the office of our High Priest. The Jewish priest stands daily at the altar, like a servant ministering, repeating the same sacrifices; our High Priest offered himself once for all, and sat down at the right hand of God, as the only-begotten Son and Heir of all things, ver. 12. This continual offering argued the imperfection of the sacrifices. Our Lord's once offering, proves his was complete.

**Verse 13. *Till his enemies be made his footstool.*** Till all that oppose his high priesthood and sacrificial offering shall be defeated, routed, and confounded; and acknowledge, in their punishment, the supremacy of his power as universal and eternal King, who refused to receive him as their atoning and sanctifying Priest. There is also an oblique reference here to the destruction of the Jews, which was then at hand; for Christ was about to take away the second with an overwhelming flood of desolations.

**Verse 14. *For by one offering His death upon the cross. He hath perfected for ever.*** He has procured remission of sins and holiness; for it is well observed here, and in several parts of this epistle, that **τελειωω**, to make perfect, is the same as **αφεσιν αμαρτιων ποιω**, to procure remission of sins.

***Them that are sanctified.*** **τους αγιαζομενους**. Them that have received the sprinkling of the blood of this offering. These, therefore, receiving

redemption through that blood, have no need of any other offering; as this was a complete atonement, purification, and title to eternal glory.

**Verse 15. *The Holy Ghost-is a witness to us*** The words are quoted from Jeremiah 31:33, 34, and here we are assured that Jeremiah spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit of God. Had said before See Hebrews 8:10, 12, and the notes there.

**Verse 18. *Now where remission of these is*** In any case, where sin is once pardoned, there is no farther need of a sin-offering; but every believer on Christ has his sin blotted out, and therefore needs no other offering for that sin.

“If,” says Dr. Macknight, “after remission is granted to the sinner, there is no need of any more sacrifice for sin; and if Christ, by offering himself once, has perfected for ever the sanctified, ver. 14, the sacrifice of the mass, as it is called, about which the Romish clergy employ themselves so incessantly, and to which the papists trust for the pardon of their sins, has no foundation in Scripture. Nay, it is an evident impiety, as it proceeds upon the supposition that the offering of the body of Christ once is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin, but must be frequently repeated. If they reply that their mass is only the representation and commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, they give up the cause, and renounce an article of their faith, established by the council of Trent, which, in session xxii. can. 1, 3, declared the sacrifice of the mass to be a true and propitiatory sacrifice for sin. I say, give up the cause; for the representation and commemoration of a sacrifice is not a sacrifice. Farther, it cannot be affirmed that the body of Christ is offered in the mass, unless it can be said that, as often as it is offered, Christ has suffered death; for the apostle says expressly, Hebrews 9:25, 26, that if Christ offered himself often, he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world.” Let him disprove this who can.

**Verse 19. *Having therefore, brethren, boldness*** The apostle, having now finished the doctrinal part of his epistle, and fully shown the superiority of Christ to all men and angels, and the superiority of his priesthood to that of Aaron and his successors, the absolute inefficacy of the Jewish sacrifices to make atonement for sin, and the absolute efficacy of that of Christ to make reconciliation of man to God, proceeds now to show what

influence these doctrines should have on the hearts and lives of those who believe in his merits and death.

**Boldness to enter** *παρρησιαν εις την εισοδον*. Liberty, full access to the entrance of the holy place, *των αγιων*. This is an allusion to the case of the high priest going into the holy of holies. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the law, he could expect nothing but death. Genuine believers can come even to the throne of God with confidence, as they carry into the Divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the great atonement; and, being justified through that blood, they have a right to all the blessings of the eternal kingdom.

**Verse 20. By a new and living way** It is a new way; no human being had ever before entered into the heaven of heavens; Jesus in human nature was the first, and thus he has opened the way to heaven to mankind, his own resurrection and ascension to glory being the proof and pledge of ours.

The way is called *οδον προσφατον και ζωσαν*, new or fresh, and living. This is evidently an allusion to the blood of the victim newly shed, uncoagulated, and consequently proper to be used for sprinkling. The blood of the Jewish victims was fit for sacrificial purposes only so long as it was warm and fluid, and might be considered as yet possessing its vitality; but when it grew cold, it coagulated, lost its vitality, and was no longer proper to be used sacrificially. Christ is here, in the allusion, represented as newly slain, and yet living; the blood ever considered as flowing and giving life to the world. The way by the old covenant neither gave life, nor removed the liability to death. The way to peace and reconciliation, under the old covenant, was through the dead bodies of the animals slain; but Christ is living, and ever liveth, to make intercession for us; therefore he is a new and living way.

In the Choephorae of AEschylus, ver. 801, there is an expression like this of the apostle:-

*αγετε, των παλαι πεπραγμενων λυσασθ'  
αιμα προσφατοις δικαις.*

*Agite, olim venditorum  
Solvite sanguinem recenti vindicta.*

This way, says Dr. Owen, is new, 1. Because it was but newly made and prepared. 2. Because it belongs unto the new covenant. 3. Because it admits of no decays, but is always new, as to its efficacy and use, as in the day of its first preparation. 4. The way of the tabernacle waxed old, and so was prepared for a removal; but the Gospel way of salvation shall never be altered, nor changed, nor decay; it is always new, and remains for ever.

It is also called ζῶσαν, living, 1. In opposition to the way into the holiest under the tabernacle, which was by death; nothing could be done in it without the blood of a victim. 2. It was the cause of death to any who might use it, except the high priest himself; and he could have access to it only one day in the year. 3. It is called living, because it has a spiritual vital efficacy in our access to God. 4. It is living as to its effects; it leads to life, and infallibly brings those who walk in it unto life eternal.

*Through the veil* As the high priest lifted up or drew aside the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place, in order that he might have access to the Divine Majesty; and as the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom at the crucifixion of Christ, to show that the way to the holiest was then laid open; so we must approach the throne through the mediation of Christ, and through his sacrificial death. His pierced side is the way to the holiest. Here the veil-his humanity, is rent, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

**Verse 21. *A high priest over the house of God*** The house or family of God is the Christian Church, or all true believers in the Lord Jesus. Over this Church, house, or family, Christ is the High Priest-in their behalf he offers his own blood, and their prayers and praises; and as the high priest had the ordering of all things that appertained to the house and worship of God, so has Christ in the government of his Church. This government he never gave into other hands. As none can govern and preserve the world but God, so none can govern and save the Church but the Lord Jesus: He is over the house; He is its President; he instructs, protects, guides, feeds, defends, and saves the flock. Those who have such a President may well have confidence; for with him is the fountain of life, and he has all power in the heavens and in the earth.



**Verse 22. *Let us draw near*** Let us come with the blood of our sacrifice to the throne of God: the expression is sacrificial.

***With a true heart*** Deeply convinced of our need of help, and truly in earnest to obtain it.

***In full assurance of faith*** Being fully persuaded that God will accept us for the sake of his Son, and that the sacrificial death of Christ gives us full authority to expect every blessing we need.

***Having our hearts sprinkled*** Not our bodies, as was the case among the Hebrews, when they had contracted any pollution, for they were to be sprinkled with the water of separation, see Numbers 19:2-10; but our hearts, sprinkled by the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, without which we cannot draw nigh to God.

***From an evil conscience*** Having that deep sense of guilt which our conscience felt taken all away, and the peace and love of God shed abroad ill our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

***Our bodies washed with pure water.*** The high priest, before he entered into the inner tabernacle, or put on his holy garments, was to wash his flesh in water, Leviticus 16:4, and the Levites were to be cleansed the same way, Numbers 8:7. The apostle probably alludes to this in what he says here, though it appears that he refers principally to baptisms, the washing by which was an emblem of the purification of the soul by the grace and Spirit of Christ; but it is most likely that it is to the Jewish baptisms, and not the Christian, that the apostle alludes.

**Verse 23. *Let us hold fast the profession of our faith*** The word **ομολογια**, from **ομου**, together, and **λογος**, a word, implies that general consent that was among Christians on all the important articles of their faith and practice; particularly their acknowledgment of the truth of the Gospel, and of Jesus Christ, as the only victim for sin, and the only Savior from it. If the word washed above refer to Christian baptism in the case of adults, then the profession is that which the baptized then made of their faith in the Gospel; and of their determination to live and die in that faith.

The various readings on this clause are many in the MSS., etc. **της ελπιδος την ομολογιαν**, the confession of our HOPE; D\*, two of the

Itala, Vulgate, Erpen's Arabic, and the AEthiopic. ὁμολογίαν της πίστεως, the confession of FAITH; one of the Barberini MSS. and two others. This is the reading which our translators have followed; but it is of very little authority. την επαγγελίαν της ελπίδος, the promise of HOPE; St. Chrysostom. την ελπίδα της ομολογίας, the HOPE of our PROFESSION; one of Petavius's MSS. But among all these, the confession or profession of HOPE is undoubtedly the genuine reading. Now, among the primitive Christians, the hope which they professed was the resurrection of the body, and everlasting life; every thing among these Christians was done and believed in reference to a future state; and for the joy that this set before them, they, like their Master, endured every cross, and despised all shame: they expected to be with God, through Christ; this hope they professed to have; and they confessed boldly and publicly the faith on which this hope was built. The apostle exhorts them to hold fast this confession without wavering — never to doubt the declarations made to them by their Redeemer, but having the full assurance of faith that their hearts were sprinkled from an evil conscience, that they had found redemption in the blood of the lamb, they might expect to be glorified with their living Head in the kingdom of their Father.

***He is faithful that promised*** The eternal life, which is the object of your hope, is promised to you by him who cannot lie; as he then is faithful who has given you this promise, hold fast the profession of your hope.

**Verse 24. *And let us consider one another*** κατανοωμεν. Let us diligently and attentively consider each other's trials, difficulties, and weaknesses; feel for each other, and excite each other to an increase of love to God and man; and, as the proof of it, to be fruitful in good works. The words εις παροξυσμον, to the provocation, are often taken in a good sense, and signify excitement, stirring up, to do any thing laudable, useful, honorable, or necessary. Xenophon, Cyrop., lib. vi., page 108, speaking of the conduct of Cyrus towards his officers, says: και τουτους επαινων τε, παρωξυνε, και χαριζομενος αυτοις ο τι δυναιτο. "He by praises and gifts excited them as much as possible." See the note on "Acts 15:39", where the subject is farther considered.

**Verse 25. *Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves*** επισυναγωγην εαυτων. Whether this means public or private worship is hard to say; but

as the word is but once more used in the New Testament, (2 Thessalonians 2:1,) and there means the gathering together of the redeemed of the Lord at the day of judgment, it is as likely that it means here private religious meetings, for the purpose of mutual exhortation: and this sense appears the more natural here, because it is evident that the Church was now in a state of persecution, and therefore their meetings were most probably held in private. For fear of persecution, it seems as if some had deserted these meetings, *καθως εθος τισιν*, as the custom of certain persons is. They had given up these strengthening and instructive means, and the others were in danger of following their example.

***The day approaching.*** *θην ημεραν*. That day — the time in which God would come and pour out his judgments on the Jewish nation. We may also apply it to the day of death and the day of judgment. Both of these are approaching to every human being. He who wishes to be found ready will carefully use every means of grace, and particularly the communion of saints, if there be even but two or three in the place where he lives, who stately meet together in the name of Christ. Those who relinquish Christian communion are in a backsliding state; those who backslide are in danger of apostasy. To prevent this latter, the apostle speaks the awful words following. See at the end of this chapter. {See “Hebrews 10:39”}

**Verse 26.** ***For if we sin wilfully*** If we deliberately, for fear of persecution or from any other motive, renounce the profession of the Gospel and the Author of that Gospel, after having received the knowledge of the truth so as to be convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that he had sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience; for such there remaineth no sacrifice for sins; for as the Jewish sacrifices are abolished, as appears by the declaration of God himself in the fortieth Psalm, and Jesus being now the only sacrifice which God will accept, those who reject him have none other; therefore their case must be utterly without remedy. This is the meaning of the apostle, and the case is that of a deliberate apostate — one who has utterly rejected Jesus Christ and his atonement, and renounced the whole Gospel system. It has nothing to do with backsliders in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the Gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not hopeless; no case is hopeless but that of the deliberate apostate, who

rejects the whole Gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the Gospel. To him there remaineth no more sacrifice for sin; for there was but the ONE, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected.

**Verse 27. *A certain fearful looking for of judgment*** From this it is evident that God will pardon no man without a sacrifice for sin; for otherwise, as Dr. Macknight argues, it would not follow, from there remaining to apostates no more sacrifice for sin, that there must remain to them a dreadful expectation of judgment.

***And fiery indignation*** και πυρος ζηλος· A zeal, or fervor of fire; something similar to the fire that came down from heaven and destroyed Korah and his company; Numbers 16:35.

Probably the apostle here refers to the case of the unbelieving Jews in general, as in chap. 6: to the dreadful judgment that was coming upon them, and the burning up their temple and city with fire. These people had, by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, received the knowledge of the truth. It was impossible that they could have witnessed his miracles and heard his doctrine without being convinced that he was the Messiah, and that their own system was at an end; but they rejected this only sacrifice at a time when God abolished their own: to that nation, therefore, there remained no other sacrifice for sin; therefore the dreadful judgment came, the fiery indignation was poured out, and they, as adversaries, were devoured by it.

**Verse 28. *He that despised Moses' law*** αθετησας· He that rejected it, threw it aside, and denied its Divine authority by presumptuous sinning, died without mercy — without any extenuation or mitigation of punishment; Numbers 15:30.

***Under two or three witnesses*** That is, when convicted by the testimony of two or three respectable witnesses. See Deuteronomy 17:6.

**Verse 29. *Of how much sorer punishment*** Such offenses were trifling in comparison of this, and in justice the punishment should be proportioned to the offense.

***Trodden under foot the Son of God*** Treated him with the utmost contempt and blasphemy.

***The blood of the covenant-an unholy thing*** The blood of the covenant means here the sacrificial death of Christ, by which the new covenant between God and man was ratified, sealed, and confirmed. And counting this unholy, or common, **κοινον**, intimates that they expected nothing from it in a sacrificial or atoning way. How near to those persons, and how near to their destruction, do they come in the present day who reject the atoning blood, and say, “that they expect no more benefit from the blood of Christ than they do from that of a cow or a sheep!” Is not this precisely the crime of which the apostle speaks here, and to which he tells us God would show no mercy?

***Despite unto the Spirit of grace?*** Hath insulted the Spirit of grace. The apostle means the Holy Spirit, whose gifts were bestowed in the first age on believers for the confirmation of the Gospel. See chap. 6:4-6. Wherefore, if one apostatized in the first age, after having been witness to these miraculous gifts, much more after having possessed them himself, he must, like the scribes and Pharisees, have ascribed them to evil spirits; than which a greater indignity could not be done to the Spirit of God. Macknight. This is properly the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness.

**Verse 30. *Vengeance belongeth unto me*** This is the saying of God, Deuteronomy 32:35, in reference to the idolatrous Gentiles, who were the enemies of his people; and is here with propriety applied to the above apostates, who, being enemies to God’s ordinances, and Christ’s ministry and merits, must also be enemies to Christ’s people; and labor for the destruction of them, and the cause in which they are engaged.

***The Lord shall judge his people.*** That is, he shall execute judgment for them; for this is evidently the sense in which the word is used in the place from which the apostle quotes, Deuteronomy 32:36: For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone. So God will avenge and vindicate the cause of Christianity by destroying its enemies, as he did in the case of the Jewish people, whom he destroyed from being a nation, and made them a proverb of reproach and monuments of his wrathful indignation to the present day.

**Verse 31. *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.***

To fall into the hands of God is to fall under his displeasure; and he who lives for ever can punish for ever. How dreadful to have the displeasure of an eternal, almighty Being to rest on the soul for ever! Apostates, and all the persecutors and enemies of God's cause and people, may expect the heaviest judgments of an incensed Deity: and these, not for a time, but through eternity.

**Verse 32. *But call to remembrance*** It appears from this, and indeed from some parts of the Gospel history, that the first believers in Judea were greatly persecuted; our Lord's crucifixion, Stephen's martyrdom, the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, Acts 8:1, Herod's persecution, Acts 12:1, in which James was killed, and the various persecutions of St. Paul, sufficiently show that this disposition was predominant among that bad people.

***A great fight of afflictions*** πολλήν ἀθλήσιν παθημάτων· A great combat or contention of sufferings. Here we have an allusion to the combats at the Grecian games, or to exhibitions of gladiators at the public spectacles; and an intimation how honorable it was to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and their own testimony.

**Verse 33. *Ye were made a gazing-stock*** θεατριζόμενοι· Ye were exhibited as wild beasts and other shows at the theatres. See the note on 1 Corinthians 4:9, where all this is illustrated.

***Companions of them that were so used.*** It appears, from 1 Thessalonians 2:14, 15, that the Churches of God in Judea were greatly persecuted, and that they believed with courage and constancy in their persecutions. When any victim of persecuting rage was marked out, the rest were prompt to take his part, and acknowledge themselves believers in the same doctrine for which he suffered. This was a noble spirit; many would have slunk into a corner, and put off the marks of Christ, that they might not be exposed to affliction on this account.

**Verse 34. *Ye had compassion of me in my bonds*** συνεπαθησατε· Ye suffered with me, ye sympathized with me, when bound for the testimony of Jesus. This probably refers to the sympathy they showed towards him,

and the help they afforded him, during his long imprisonment in Caesarea and Jerusalem. But instead of **τοὺς δεσμοὺς μου**, my bonds, **τοὺς δεσμοὺς**, the prisoners, is the reading of AD, and several others, both the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, the Coptic, Armenian, Vulgate, some of the Itala, and several of the Greek fathers. This reading appears to be so well supported, that Griesbach has admitted it into the text. If it be genuine, it shows that there had been, and perhaps were then, several bound for the testimony of Jesus, and that the Church in Judea had shown its attachment to Christ by openly acknowledging these prisoners, and ministering to them.

***Took joyfully the spoiling of your goods*** They were deprived of their inheritances, turned out of their houses, and plundered of their goods; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. To suffer such persecution patiently was great; to endure it without a murmur was greater; to rejoice in it was greatest of all. But how could they do all this? The next clause informs us.

***Knowing in yourselves*** They had the fullest evidence that they were the children of God, the Spirit itself bearing this witness to their spirits; and if children than heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They knew that heaven was their portion, and that to it they had a sure right and indefeasible title by Christ Jesus. This accounts, and this alone can account, for their taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods: they had Christ in their hearts; they knew that they were his children, and that they had a kingdom, but that kingdom was not of this world. They had the support they needed, and they had it in the time in which they needed it most.

**Verse 35. *Cast not away therefore your confidence*** **τὴν παρρησίαν ὑμῶν**. Your liberty of access to God; your title and right to approach his throne; your birthright as his sons and daughters; and the clear evidence you have of his favor, which, if you be not steady and faithful, you must lose. Do not throw it away, **μὴ αποβαλήτε**. neither men nor devils can take it from you, and God will never deprive you of it if you continue faithful. There is a reference here to cowardly soldiers, who throw away their shields, and run away from the battle. This is your shield, your faith

in Christ, which gives you the knowledge of salvation; keep it, and it will keep you.

The Lacedemonian women, when they presented the shields to their sons going to battle, were accustomed to say: **η των, η επι τας**. “Either bring this back, or be brought back upon it;” alluding to the custom of bringing back a slain soldier on his own shield, a proof that he had preserved it to the last, and had been faithful to his country. They were accustomed also to excite their courage by delivering to them their fathers’ shields with the following short address. **ταυρηρ Τχγγγγ**



**Verse 37. *For yet a little while*** *επι γαρ μικρον οσον*. For yet a very little time. In a very short space of time the Messiah will come, and execute judgment upon your rebellious country. This is determined, because they have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and their destruction slumbereth not. The apostle seems to refer to Habakkuk 2:3, 4, and accommodates the words to his own purpose.

**Verse 38. *Now the just shall live by faith*** *ὁ δε δικαιος εκ πιστεως ζησεται*. But the just by faith, i.e. he who is justified by faith, shall live — shall be preserved when this overflowing scourge shall come. See this meaning of the phrase vindicated, Romans 1:17. And it is evident, both from this text, and Galatians 3:11, that it is in this sense that the apostle uses it.

***But if any man draw back*** *και εαν υποστειληται*. But if he draw back; he, the man who is justified by faith; for it is of him, and none other, that the text speaks. The insertion of the words any man, if done to serve the purpose of a particular creed, is a wicked perversion of the words of God. They were evidently intended to turn away the relative from the antecedent, in order to save the doctrine of final and unconditional perseverance; which doctrine this text destroys.

***My soul shall have no pleasure in him***. My very heart shall be opposed to him who makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. The word *υποστελλειν* signifies, not only to draw back, but to slink away and hide through fear. In this sense it is used by the very best Greek writers, as well as by Josephus and Philo. As dastards and cowards are hated by all men, so those that slink away from Christ and his cause, for fear of persecution or secular loss, God must despise; in them he cannot delight; and his Spirit, grieved with their conduct, must desert their hearts, and lead them to darkness and hardness.

**Verse 39. *But we are not of them who draw back*** *ουκ εσμεν υποστολης-, αλλα πιστεως*. “We are not the cowards, but the courageous.” I have no doubt of this being the meaning of the apostle, and the form of speech requires such a translation; it occurs more than once in the New Testament. So, Galatians 3:7: *οι εκ πιστεως*, they who are of the faith, rather the faithful, the believers; Romans 3:26: *ο εκ πιστεως*, the believer; Romans 2:8: *οι εξ επιθειας*, the contentious; in all which

places the learned reader will find that the form of speech is the same. We are not cowards who slink away, and notwithstanding meet destruction; but we are faithful, and have our souls saved alive. The words **περιποιησις ψυχης** signify the preservation of the life. See the note, “Ephesians 1:14”. He intimates that, notwithstanding the persecution was hot, yet they should escape with their lives.

1. IT is very remarkable, and I have more than once called the reader’s attention to it, that not one Christian life was lost in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Every Jew perished, or was taken captive; all those who had apostatized, and slunk away from Christianity, perished with them: all the genuine Christians escaped with their lives. This very important information, which casts light on many passages in the New Testament, and manifests the grace and providence of God in a very conspicuous way, is given both by Eusebius and Epiphanius. I shall adduce their words: “When the whole congregation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to an oracle given by revelation to the approved persons among them before the war, **κατα τινα χρησμον τοις αυτοθι δοκιμοις δι’ αποκαλυψεως δοθεντα προ του πολεμου, μετανασθηναι της πολεως, και τινα της περαιας πολιν οικειν κεκελευσμενου, πελλαν αυτην ονομαζουσιν**, were commanded to depart from the city, and inhabit a certain city which they call Pella, beyond Jordan, to which, when all those who believed in Christ had removed from Jerusalem, and when the saints had totally abandoned the royal city which is the metropolis of the Jews; then the Divine vengeance seized them who had dealt so wickedly with Christ and his apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable generation.” EUSEB. Hist. Eccles, l. iii. c. v. vol. i. p. 93. Edit. a Reading.

St. Epiphanius, in Haeres. Nazaren, c. 7, says: “The Christians who dwelt in Jerusalem, being forewarned by Christ of the approaching siege, removed to Pella.”

The same, in his book Deuteronomy Ponderibus et Mensuris, says: “The disciples of Christ being warned by an angel, removed to Pella; and afterwards, when Adrian rebuilt Jerusalem, and called it after his own name, AElia Colonia, they returned thither.” As those places in Epiphanius are of considerable importance, I shall subjoin the original: **εκειθεν γαρ η αρχη γεγνε μετα την απο των ’ιεροσολυμων**

μεταστασιν, παντων των μαθητων των εν πελλη ωκηκοτων, χριστου φησαντος καταλειψαι τα ἱεροσολυμα, και αναχωρησαι, επειδη ημελλε πασχειν πολιορκιαν. ΕΡΙΠΗ. adverb. Haeres., l. i. c. 7, vol. i. p. 123. Edit. Par. 1622. The other place is as follows: ἦνικα γαρ εμελλεν η πολις αλισκεσθαι υπο των ῥωμαιων, προεχρηματισθησαν υπο αγγελου παντες οι μαθηται μεταστηναι απο της πολεως, μελλουσης αρδην απολλυσθαι. οι τινες και μετανασται γενομενοι ωκησαν εν πελλη-περαν του ιορδανου, η τις εκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται ειναι. Ibid. Deuteronomy Pon. et Mens., vol. ii. p. 171.

These are remarkable testimonies, and should be carefully preserved. Pella, it appears, was a city of Coelesyria, beyond Jordan, in the district of Decapolis. Thus it is evident that these Christians held fast their faith, preserved their shields, and continued to believe to the saving of their lives as well as to the saving of their souls. As the apostle gives several hints of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, it is likely that this is the true sense in which the words above are to be understood.

2. I have already said a little, from verse 25, on the importance of social worship. PUBLIC worship is not of less consequence. Were it not for public, private worship would soon be at an end. To this, under God, the Church of Christ owes its being and its continuance. Where there is no public worship there is no religion. It is by this that God is acknowledged; and he is the universal Being; and by his bounty and providence all live; consequently, it is the duty of every intelligent creature publicly to acknowledge him, and offer him that worship which himself has prescribed in his word. The ancient Jews have some good maxims on this subject which may be seen in Schoettgen. I shall quote a few.

In Berachoth, fol. 8, it is written: “Rabbi Levi said, He who has a synagogue in his city, and does not go thither to pray, shall be esteemed a bad citizen,” or a bad neighbor. And to this they apply the words of the prophet, Jeremiah 12:14: Thus saith the Lord against all my evil neighbors-behold, I will pluck them out of their land.

In Mechilta, fol. 48: “Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Jacob, said,” speaking as from God, “If thou wilt come to my house, I will go to thy house; but if thou wilt not come to my house, I will not enter thy house. The place that my heart loveth, to that shall my feet go.” We may safely add, that those

who do not frequent the house of God can never expect his presence or blessing in their own.

In Taanith, fol. 11, it is said that “to him who separates himself from the congregation shall two angels come, and lay their hands upon his head and say, This man, who separates himself from the congregation, shall not see the comfort which God grants to his afflicted Church.” The wisest and best of men have always felt it their duty and their interest to worship God in public. As there is nothing more necessary, so there is nothing more reasonable; he who acknowledges God in all his ways may expect all his steps to be directed. The public worship of God is one grand line of distinction between the atheist and the believer. He who uses not public worship has either no God, or has no right notion of his being; and such a person, according to the rabbins, is a bad neighbor; it is dangerous to live near him, for neither he nor his can be under the protection of God. No man should be forced to attend a particular place of worship, but every man should be obliged to attend some place; and he who has any fear of God will not find it difficult to get a place to his mind.

## CHAPTER 11

*A definition of faith, 1, 2. What are its immediate objects, 3. What are its effects, instanced in Abel, 4 In Enoch, 5, 6. In Noah, 7. In Abraham, 8-10. In Sara, 11. In their righteous posterity, 12-16 In Abraham's offering of his son Isaac, 17-19. In Isaac, 20. In Jacob, 21. In Joseph, 22. In Moses, 23-28. In the Israelites in the wilderness, 29. In the fall of Jericho,*

mathematical demonstration, and properly defines it thus: *ελεγχος δε εστις ο μη δυσατος αλλως εξεις, αλλ' ουτως ως ημεις λεγομεν*, “Elenehos, or Demonstration, is that which cannot be otherwise, but is so as we assert.” Rhetor. ad Alexand., cap. 14, *περι ελεγχου*. On this account I have adduced the above theorem from Euclid.

***Things hoped for*** Are the peace and approbation of God, and those blessings by which the soul is prepared for the kingdom of heaven. A penitent hopes for the pardon of his sins and the favor of his God; faith in Christ puts him in possession of this pardon, and thus the thing that was hoped for is enjoyed by faith. When this is received, a man has the fullest conviction of the truth and reality of all these blessings though unseen by the eye, they are felt by the heart; and the man has no more doubt of God’s approbation and his own free pardon, than he has of his being.

In an extended sense the things hoped for are the resurrection of the body, the new heavens and the new earth, the introduction of believers into the heavenly country, and the possession of eternal glory.

The things unseen, as distinguished from the things hoped for, are, in an extended sense, the creation of the world from nothing, the destruction of the world by the deluge, the miraculous conception of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, his mediation at the right hand of God, his government of the universe, etc., etc., all which we as firmly believe on the testimony of God’s word as if we had seen them. See Macknight. But this faith has particular respect to the being, goodness, providence, grace, and mercy of God, as the subsequent verses sufficiently show.

**Verse 2. *For by it the elders obtained a good report.*** By the elders are meant ancestors, forefathers, such as the patriarchs and prophets, several of whom he afterwards particularly names, and produces some fact from the history of their lives.

It is very remarkable that among the whole there is root one word concerning poor Adam and his wife, though both Abraham and Sarah are mentioned. There was no good report concerning them; not a word of their repentance, faith, or holiness. Alas! alas! did ever such bright suns set in so thick a cloud? Had there been any thing praiseworthy in their life after

their fall, any act of faith by which they could have been distinguished, it had surely come out here; the mention of their second son Abel would have suggested it. But God has covered the whole of their spiritual and eternal state with a thick and impenetrable veil. Conjectures relative to their state would be very precarious; little else than hope can be exercised in their favor: but as to them the promise of Jesus was given, so we may believe they found redemption in that blood which was shed from the foundation of the world. Adam's rebellion against his Maker was too great and too glaring to permit his name to be ever after mentioned with honor or respect.

The word **εμαρτυρηθησαν**, which we translate obtained a good report, literally signifies, were witnessed of; and thus leads us naturally to GOD, who by his word, as the succeeding parts of the chapter show, bore testimony to the faith and holiness of his servants. The apostle does not mention one of whom an account is not given in the Old Testament. This, therefore, is God's witness or testimony concerning them.

**Verse 3. *Through faith we understand*** By worlds, **τους αιωνας**, we are to understand the material fabric of the universe; for **αιων** can have no reference here to age or any measurement of time, for he speaks of the things which are SEEN; not being made out of the things which do APPEAR; this therefore must refer to the material creation: and as the word is used in the plural number, it may comprehend, not only the earth and visible heavens, but the whole planetary system; the different worlds which, in our system at least, revolve round the sun. The apostle states that these things were not made out of a pre-existent matter; for if they were, that matter, however extended or modified, must appear in that thing into which it is compounded and modified, consequently it could not be said that the things which are seen are not made of the things that appear; and he shows us also, by these words, that the present mundane fabric was not formed or reformed from one anterior, as some suppose. According to Moses and the apostle we believe that God made all things out of nothing. See the note on "Genesis 1:1", etc.

At present we see trees of different kinds are produced from trees; beasts, birds, and fishes, from others of the same kind; and man, from man: but we are necessarily led to believe that there was a first man, who owed not his

being to man; first there were beasts, etc., which did not derive their being from others of the same kind; and so of all manner of trees, plants, etc. God, therefore, made all these out of nothing; his word tells us so, and we credit that word.

**Verse 4. *By faith Abel offered-a more excellent sacrifice*** *πλειονα θυσιαν*. More sacrifice; as if he had said: Abel, by faith, made more than one offering; and hence it is said, God testified of his GIFTS, *τοις δωροις*. The plain state of the case seems to have been this: Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the altar of God, probably the altar erected for the family worship. As Cain was a husbandman, he brought a mincha, or eucharistic offering, of the fruits of the ground, by which he acknowledged the being and providence of God. Abel, being a shepherd or a feeder of cattle, brought, not only the eucharistic offering, but also of the produce of his flock as a sin-offering to God, by which he acknowledged his own sinfulness, God's justice and mercy, as well as his being and providence. Cain, not at all apprehensive of the demerit of sin, or God's holiness, contented himself with the mincha, or thank-offering: this God could not, consistently with his holiness and justice, receive with complacency; the other, as referring to him who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, God could receive, and did particularly testify his approbation. Though the mincha, or eucharistic offering, was a very proper offering in its place, yet this was not received, because there was no sin-offering. The rest of the history is well known.

Now by this faith, thus exercised, in reference to an atonement, he, Abel, though dead, yet speaketh; i.e. preacheth to mankind the necessity of an atonement, and that God will accept no sacrifice unless connected with this. See this transaction explained at large in my notes on "Genesis 4:3", etc.

**Verse 5. *By faith Enoch was translated*** It is said, in Genesis 5:24, that Enoch walked with God, and he was not, for God took him. Here the apostle explains what God's taking him means, by saying that he was translated that he should not see death; from which we learn that he did not die, and that God took him to a state of blessedness without obliging him to pass through death. See his history explained at large in the above place, in Genesis 5:22-24.



**Verse 6. *He that cometh to God*** The man who professes that it is his duty to worship God, must, if he act rationally, do it on the conviction that there is such a Being infinite, eternal, unoriginated, and self-existent; the cause of all other being; on whom all being depends; and by whose energy, bounty, and providence, all other beings exist, live, and are

i.e. the unbelievers, in the same sense in which every good man's virtues and exhortations condemn such as will not attend to and imitate them." Dodd.

***Became heir of the righteousness*** He became entitled to that justification which is by faith; and his temporal deliverance was a pledge of the salvation of his soul.

**Verse 8. *Abraham, when he was called*** See on Genesis 12:1-4.

***Not knowing whither he went.*** Therefore his obedience was the fullest proof of his faith in God, and his faith was an implicit faith; he obeyed, and went out from his own country, having no prospect of any good or success but what his implicit faith led him to expect from God, as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. In all the preceding cases, and in all that follow, the apostle keeps this maxim fully in view.

**Verse 9. *By faith he sojourned in the land of promise*** It is remarkable that Abraham did not acquire any right in Canaan, except that of a burying place; nor did he build any house in it; his faith showed him that it was only a type and pledge of a better country, and he kept that better country continually in view: he, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs of the same promise, were contented to dwell in tents, without any fixed habitation.

**Verse 10. *For he looked for a city which hath foundations*** He knew that earth could afford no permanent residence for an immortal mind, and he looked for that heavenly building of which God is the architect and owner; in a word, he lost sight of earth, that he might keep heaven in view. And all who are partakers of his faith possess the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

***Whose builder and maker is God.*** The word **τεχνιτης** signifies an architect, one who plans, calculates, and constructs a building. The word **δημιουργος** signifies the governor of a people; one who forms them by institutions and laws; the framer of a political constitution. God is here represented the Maker or Father of all the heavenly inhabitants, and the planner of their citizenship in that heavenly country. See Macknight.

**Verse 11. *Through faith also Sara*** Her history, as far as the event here is concerned, may be seen Genesis 17:19, and Genesis 21:2. Sarah at first

treated the Divine message with ridicule, judging it to be absolutely impossible, not knowing then that it was from God; and this her age and circumstances justified, for, humanly speaking, such an event was impossible: but, when she knew that it was God who said this, it does not appear that she doubted any more, but implicitly believed that what God had promised he was able to perform.

**Verse 12. *Him as good as dead*** According to nature, long past the time of the procreation of children. The birth of Isaac, the circumstances of the father and mother considered, was entirely supernatural; and the people who proceeded from this birth were a supernatural people; and were and are most strikingly singular through every period of their history to the present day.

**Verse 13. *These all died in faith*** That is, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, continued to believe, to the end of their lives, that God would fulfill this promise; but they neither saw the numerous seed, nor did they get the promised rest in Canaan.

***Strangers and pilgrims*** Strangers, ξενοι, persons who are out of their own country, who are in a foreign land: pilgrims, παρεπιδημοι, sojourners only for a time; not intending to take up their abode in that place, nor to get naturalized in that country.

How many use these expressions, professing to be strangers and pilgrims here below, and yet the whole of their conduct, spirit, and attachments, show that they are perfectly at home! How little consideration and weight are in many of our professions, whether they relate to earth or heaven!

**Verse 14. *Declare plainly that they seek a country.*** A man's country is that in which he has constitutional rights and privileges; no stranger or sojourner has any such rights in the country where he sojourns. These, by declaring that they felt themselves strangers and sojourners, professed their faith in a heavenly country and state, and looked beyond the grave for a place of happiness. No intelligent Jew could suppose that Canaan was all the rest which God had promised to his people.

**Verse 15. *If they had been mindful of that country*** They considered their right to the promises of God as dependent on their utter renunciation of Chaldea; and it was this that induced Abraham to cause his steward

Eliezer to swear that he would not carry his son Isaac to Chaldea; see Genesis 24:5-8. There idolatry reigned; and God had called them to be the patriarchs and progenitors of a people among whom the knowledge of the true God, and the worship required by him, should be established and preserved.

**Verse 16. *But now they desire a better*** They all expected spiritual blessings, and a heavenly inheritance; they sought God as their portion, and in such a way and on such principles that he is not ashamed to be called their God; and he shows his affection for them by preparing for them a city, to wit, heaven, as themselves would seek no city on earth; which is certainly what the apostle has here in view. And from this it is evident that the patriarchs had a proper notion of the immortality of the soul, and expected a place of residence widely different from Canaan. Though to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promises were made in which Canaan was so particularly included, yet God did not give them any inheritance in that country, no, not so much as to set a foot on; Acts 7:5. Therefore, if they had not understood the promises to belong to spiritual things, far from enduring, as seeing him who is invisible, they must have considered themselves deceived and mocked. The apostle therefore, with the highest propriety, attributes their whole conduct and expectation to faith.

**Verse 17. *Abraham, when he was tried*** See the history of this whole transaction explained at large in the notes on Genesis 22:1-9.

***Offered up his only-begotten*** Abraham did, in effect, offer up Isaac; he built an altar, bound his son, laid him upon the altar, had ready the incense, took the knife, and would immediately have slain him had he not been prevented by the same authority by which the sacrifice was enjoined. Isaac is here called his only-begotten, as he was the only son he had by his legitimate wife, who was heir to his property, and heir of the promises of God. The man who proved faithful in such a trial, deserved to have his faith and obedience recorded throughout the world.

**Verse 19. *To raise him up, even from the dead*** Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. The resurrection of the dead must have been a doctrine of the patriarchs; they expected a heavenly inheritance, they saw they died as did other men,

and they must have known that they could not enjoy it but in consequence of a resurrection from the dead.

***He received him in a figure.*** εν παραβολη. In my discourse on parabolical writing at the end of Matthew 13., I have shown (signification\_9) that παραβολη sometimes means a daring exploit, a jeoparding of the life; and have referred to this place. I think it should be so understood here, as pointing out the very imminent danger he was in of losing his life. The clause may therefore be thus translated: “Accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence he had received him, he being in the most imminent danger of losing his life.” It is not, therefore, the natural deadness of Abraham and Sarah to which the apostle alludes, but the death to which Isaac on this occasion was exposed, and which he escaped by the immediate interference of God.

**Verse 20. *By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau*** He believed that God would fulfill his promise to his posterity; and God gave him to see what would befall them in their future generations. The apostle does not seem to intimate that one should be an object of the Divine hatred, and the other of Divine love, in reference to their eternal states. This is wholly a discovery of later ages. For an ample consideration of this subject, see the notes on Genesis 27.

**Verse 21. *Blessed both the sons of Joseph*** That is, Ephraim and Manasseh. See the account and the notes. Genesis 48:5, etc.

***Worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff*** This subject is particularly considered in the note, See “Genesis 47:31”.

It appears, that at the time Joseph visited his father he was very weak, and generally confined to his couch, having at hand his staff; either that with which he usually supported his feeble body, or that which was the ensign of his office, as patriarch or chief of a very numerous family. The ancient chiefs, in all countries, had this staff or scepter continually at hand. See Homer throughout. It is said, Genesis 48:2, that when Joseph came to see his father Jacob, who was then in his last sickness, Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed. Still I conceive he had his staff or scepter at hand; and while sitting upon the bed, with his feet on the floor, he supported himself with his staff. When Joseph swore to him that he

should be carried up from Egypt, he bowed himself on his bed's head, still supporting himself with his staff, which probably with this last act he laid aside, gathered up his feet, and reclined wholly on his couch. It was therefore indifferent to say that he worshipped or bowed himself on his staff or on his bed's head. But as שַׁחָהּ shachah signifies, not only to bow, but also to worship, because acts of adoration were performed by bowing and prostration; and as מִטָּהּ mittah, a bed, by the change of the vowel points becomes matteh, a staff, hence the Septuagint have translated the passage *και προσεκυνησεν. ισραηλ επι το ακρον της ραβδου αυτου*. And Israel bowed or worshipped on the head of his staff. This reading the apostle follows here literatim.

Wretched must that cause be which is obliged to have recourse to what, at best, is an equivocal expression, to prove and support a favourite opinion. The Romanists allege this in favor of image worship. This is too contemptible to require confutation. To make it speak this language the Rheims version renders the verse thus: By faith Jacob dying, blessed every one of the sons of Joseph, and adored the top of his rod. A pretty object of adoration, indeed, for a dying patriarch! Here the preposition *επι* upon, answering to the Hebrew *על* al, is wholly suppressed, to make it favor the corrupt reading of the Vulgate. This preposition is found in the Hebrew text, in the Greek version of the Seventy, the printed Greek text of the New Testament, and in every MS. yet discovered of this epistle. It is also found in the Syriac, Aethiopic, Arabic, and Coptic: in which languages the connection necessarily shows that it is not an idle particle: and by no mode of construction can the text be brought to support image worship, any more than it can to support transubstantiation.

**Verse 22. *Joseph, when he died* τελευτων**, When he was dying, gave commandment concerning his bones. On this subject I refer the reader to the notes on See "Genesis 50:25". And I have this to add to the account I have given of the sarcophagus now in the British Museum, vulgarly called Alexander's coffin, that it is more probably the coffin of Joseph himself; and, should the time ever arrive in which the hieroglyphics on it shall be interpreted, this conjecture may appear to have had its foundation in truth.

**Verse 23. *By faith Moses***, etc. See the notes on "Exodus 2:2", and See "Acts 7:20". We know that Moses was bred up at the Egyptian court, and

there was considered to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and probably might have succeeded to the throne of Egypt: but, finding that God had visited his people, and given them a promise of spiritual and eternal blessings, he chose rather to take the lot of this people, i.e. God as his portion for ever, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin, which, however gratifying to the animal senses, could only be **προσκαιρον**, temporary.

After the 23d verse, there is a whole clause added by DE, two copies of the Itala, and some copies of the Vulgate. The clause is the following: **πιστει μεγας γενομενος μωυσης ανειλεν τον αιγυπτιον, κατανοωω την ταπεινωσιν των αδελφων αυτου**. By faith Moses, when he was grown up, slew the Egyptian, considering the oppression of his own brethren. This is a remarkable addition, and one of the largest in the whole New Testament. It seems to have been collected from the history of Moses as given in Exodus, and to have been put originally into the margin of some MS., from which it afterwards crept into the text.

**Verse 26. *The reproach of Christ*** The Christ or Messiah had been revealed to Moses; of him he prophesied, Deuteronomy 18:15; and the reproach which God's people had, in consequence of their decided opposition to idolatry, may be termed the reproach of Christ, for they refused to become one people with the Egyptians, because the promise of the rest was made to them, and in this rest CHRIST and his salvation were included: but, although it does not appear these things were known to the Hebrews at large, yet it is evident that there were sufficient intimations given to Moses concerning the Great Deliverer, (of whom himself was a type,) that determined his conduct in the above respect; as he folly understood that he must renounce his interest in the promises, and in the life eternal to which they led, if he did not obey the Divine call in the present instance. Many have been stumbled by the word **ο χριστος**, Christ, here; because they cannot see how Moses should have any knowledge of him. It may be said that it was just as easy for God Almighty to reveal Christ to Moses, as it was for him to reveal him to Isaiah, or to the shepherds, or to John Baptist; or to manifest him in the flesh. After all there is much reason to believe that, by **του χριστου**, here, of Christ or the anointed, the apostle means the whole body of the Israelitish or Hebrew people; for, as the word signifies the anointed, and anointing was a consecration to God, to serve him in some particular

office, as prophet, priest, king, or the like, all the Hebrew people were considered thus anointed or consecrated; and it is worthy of remark that *χριστος* is used in this very sense by the Septuagint, 1 Samuel 2:35; Psalm 105:15; and Habakkuk 3:13; where the word is necessarily restrained to this meaning.

*He had respect unto the recompense* *απεβλεπε*. He looked attentively to it; his eyes were constantly directed to it. This is the import of the original word; and the whole conduct of Moses was an illustration of it.

**Verse 27. *He forsook Egypt*** He believed that God would fulfill the promise he had made; and he cheerfully changed an earthly for a heavenly portion.

*Not fearing the wrath of the king* The apostle speaks here of the departure of Moses with the Israelites, not of his flight to Midian, Exodus 2:14, 15; for he was then in great fear: but when he went to Pharaoh with God's authority, to demand the dismissal of the Hebrews, he was without fear, and acted in the most noble and dignified manner; he then feared nothing but God.

*As seeing him who is invisible.* He continued to act as one who had the judge of his heart and conduct always before his eyes. By calling the Divine Being the invisible, the apostle distinguishes him from the gods of Egypt, who were visible, corporeal, gross, and worthless. The Israelites were worshippers of the true God, and this worship was not tolerated in Egypt. His pure and spiritual worship could never comport with the adoration of oxen, goats, monkeys, leeks, and onions.

**Verse 28. *He kept the passover*** God told him that he would destroy the first-born of the Egyptians, but would spare all those whose doors were sprinkled with the blood of the paschal lamb. Moses believed this, kept the passover, and sprinkled the blood. See the notes on Exodus 12. One of the Itala adds here, *Fide praedaverunt Aegyptios exeuntes*. "By faith, when they went out, they spoiled the Egyptians." This is any thing but genuine.

**Verse 29. *By faith they passed through the Red Sea*** See the notes on "Exodus 14:22". The Egyptians thought they could walk through the sea as well as the Israelites; they tried, and were drowned; while the former



passed in perfect safety. The one walked by faith, the other by sight; one perished, the other was saved.

**Verse 30. *The walls of Jericho fell down*** This is particularly explained Joshua 6:1, etc. God had promised that the walls of Jericho should fall down, if they compassed them about seven days. They believed, did as they were commanded, and the promise was fulfilled.

**Verse 31. *The harlot Rahab perished not*** See this account Joshua 2:1, 9, 11, and 6:23, where it is rendered exceedingly probable that the word זונה zonah in Hebrew, and πορνη in Greek, which we translate harlot, should be rendered innkeeper or tavernkeeper, as there is no proper evidence that the person in question was such a woman as our translation represents her. As to her having been a harlot before and converted afterwards, it is a figment of an idle fancy. She was afterwards married to Salmon, a Jewish prince; see Matthew 1:5. And it is extremely incredible that, had she been what we represent her, he would have sought for such an alliance.

***Received the spies with peace.*** μετ' ειρηνης· The same as בשלום beshalom, giving them a kind welcome, good fare, and protection. After these words the Slavonic adds: και ετερα οδω εκβαλουσα, and sent them out another way.

**Verse 32. *Time would fail me*** με διηγουμενον ο χρονος. A very usual mode of expression with the best Greek writers, when they wish to intimate that much important intelligence remains to be communicated on the subject already in hand, which must be omitted because of other points which have not yet been handled.

***Gedeon*** Who by faith in God, with 300 men, destroyed a countless multitude of Midianites and Amalekites, and delivered Israel from oppression and slavery. Judges 6., 7., 8.

***Barak*** Who overthrew Jabin, king of Canaan, and delivered Israel from servitude. Jude 4.

***Samson*** Who was appointed by God to deliver Israel from the oppressive yoke of the Philistines; and, by extraordinary assistance, discomfited them on various occasions. Jud. 13. — 16.

***Jephthae*** Who, under the same guidance, defeated the Ammonites, and delivered Israel. Jude 11., 12.

***David*** King of Israel, whose whole life was a life of faith and dependence on God; but whose character will be best seen in those books which contain an account of his reign, and the book of Psalms, to which, and the notes there, the reader must be referred. It is probable he is referred to here for that act of faith and courage which he showed in his combat with Goliath. See 1 Samuel 17.

***Samuel*** The last of the Israelitish judges, to whom succeeded a race of kings, of whom Saul and David were the two first, and were both anointed by this most eminent man. See his history in the first book of Samuel.

All these are said to have performed their various exploits through faith. 1. The faith of Gideon consisted in his throwing down the altar of Baal, and cutting down his grove, in obedience to the command of God. 2. The faith of Barak consisted in his believing the revelation made to Deborah, and the command to go against Jabin's numerous army. 3. Samson's faith consisted in his obeying the various impulses produced by the Spirit of God in his own mind. 4. Jephthae's faith consisted particularly in his believing the promise made to Abraham and his posterity, that they should possess the land of Canaan; and in his resolutely fighting against the Ammonites, that they might not deprive the Israelites of the land between Arnon and Jabbok. It may be observed, here, that the apostle does not produce these in chronological order; for Barak lived before Gideon, and Jephthae before Samson, and Samuel before David. He was not producing facts in their chronological order, but instances of the power of God exerted in the behalf of men who had strong confidence in him.

**Verse 33. *Who through faith subdued kingdoms*** As Joshua, who subdued the seven Canaanitish nations; and David, who subdued the Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and Edomites. 2 Samuel 8., etc.

***Wrought righteousness*** Did a great variety of works indicative of that faith in God without which it is impossible to do any thing that is good.

***Obtained promises*** This is supposed to refer to Joshua and Caleb, who, through their faith in God, obtained the promised land, while all the rest of the Israelites were excluded; to Phineas also, who, for his act of zealous

faith in slaying Zimri and Cosbi, got the promise of an everlasting priesthood; and to David, who, for his faith and obedience, obtained the kingdom of Israel, and had the promise that from his seed the Messiah should spring.

***Stopped the mouths of lions*** Daniel, who, though cast into a den of lions for his fidelity to God, was preserved among them unhurt, and finally came to great honor.

**Verse 34. *Quenched the violence of fire*** As in the case of the three faithful Hebrews, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who, for their steady attachment to God's worship, were cast into a fiery furnace, in which they were preserved, and from which they escaped unhurt. Dan. 3.

***Escaped the edge of the sword*** Moses, who escaped the sword of Pharaoh, Exodus 18:4; Elijah, that of Jezebel; and David, that of Saul: and many others.

***Out of weakness were made strong*** Were miraculously restored from sickness, which seemed to threaten their life; as Hezekiah, Isaiah 38:21.

***Waxed valiant in fight*** Like Gideon, who overthrew the camp of the Midianites, and Jonathan, that of the Philistines, in such a way as must have proved that God was with them.

**Verse 35. *Women received their dead*** As did the widow of Zarephath, 1 Kings 17:21, and the Shunammite, 2 Kings 4:34. What other cases under all the above heads the apostle might have in view, we know not.

***Others were tortured*** *ετυμπανισθησαν*. This is a word concerning the meaning of which the critics are not agreed. *τυμπανον* signifies a stick, or baton, which was used in bastinadoing criminals. And *τυμπανιζω* signifies to beat violently, and is thus explained by the best lexicographers. After considering what others have written on this subject, I am inclined to think that the bastinado on the soles of the feet is what is here designed. That this was a most torturing and dangerous punishment, we learn from the most authentic accounts; and it is practised among the Turks and other Mohammedans to the present day. Mr. Antes, of Fulnek, in Yorkshire, twenty years a resident in Egypt, furnishes the latest account I have met

with; he himself was the unhappy subject of his own description. See at the end of this chapter, article 4. {See “Hebrews 11:40”}

***Not accepting deliverance*** This looks very like a reference to the case of the mother and her seven sons, mentioned 2Mac 7:1, etc.

Verse 36. ***Had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings*** We do not know the cases to which the apostle refers. The mockings here can never mean such as those of Ishmael against Isaac, or the youths of Bethel against Elisha. It is more probable that it refers to public exhibitions of the people of God at idol feasts and the like; and Samson’s case before Dagon, when the Philistines had put out his eyes, is quite in point. As to scourgings, this was a common way of punishing minor culprits: and even those who were to be punished capitally were first scourged. See the case of our Lord.

***Bond’s and imprisonment*** Joseph was cast into prison; Jeremiah was cast into a dungeon full of mire, Jeremiah 37:16, and Jeremiah 38:6; and the Prophet Micaiah was imprisoned by Ahab, 1 Kings 22:27.

Verse 37. ***They were stoned*** As Zechariah, the son of Barachiah or Jehoida, was, between the altar and the temple; see the account, 2 Chronicles 24:21; and See the notes on “Matthew 23:35”. And as Naboth the Jezreelite, who, on refusing to give up his father’s inheritance to a covetous king, because it had respect to the promise of God, was falsely accused and stoned to death; 1 Kings 21:1-14.

***They were sawn asunder*** There is a tradition that the Prophet Isaiah was thus martyred. In Yevamoth, fol. 49, 2, it is thus written: “Manasseh slew Isaiah; for he commanded that he should be slain with a wooden saw. They then brought the saw, and cut him in two; and when the saw reached his mouth, his soul fled forth.” St. Jerome and others mention the same thing; and among the Jews the tradition is indubitable.

***Were tempted*** *πειρασθησαν*. I believe this word has vexed the critics more than any other in the New Testament. How being tempted can be ranked among the heavy sufferings of the primitive martyrs and confessors is not easy to discern, because to be tempted is the common lot of every godly man. This difficulty has induced learned men to mend the text by conjecture: Beza proposes *επυρωθησαν*, they were branded. Junius, Piscator, and others, propose *επυρασθησαν*, they were burnt alive.

Gataker thinks **επρησθησαν**, a word of the same import, should be preferred. Tanaquil Faber gives the preference to **επηρωθησαν**, they were mutilated — had different parts of their bodies lopped off. Sir Norton Knatchbull contends for **επαρτησαν**, they were transfixed, or pierced through. Alberti thinks the original reading was **εσπειρασθησαν**, they were strangled. About as many more differences have been proposed by learned men, all hearing a very clear resemblance to the words now found in the Greek text. By three MSS. the word is entirely omitted; as also by

***Being destitute*** ὑστερουμενοι· In want of all the comforts and conveniences of life, and often of its necessities.

***Afflicted*** In consequence of enduring such privations.

***Tormented*** κακουχομενοι· Maltreated, harassed, variously persecuted by those to whom they brought the message of salvation.

**Verse 38.**

There are a great variety of meanings put on this place, but the above seems the most simple and consistent. See Revelation 6:11. “White robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled.” This time, and its blessings, are now upon the wing.

## **OBSERVATIONS ON THE BEING OF A GOD.**

DEDUCED FROM A CONSIDERATION of Hebrews 11:6: He that cometh unto God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

I. METAPHYSICIANS and philosophers, in order to prove the existence of God, have used two modes of argumentation:—

1. A priori, proofs drawn from the necessity that such a being as God is, must exist: arguments of this kind do not produce any thing in evidence which is derived from his works.

2. A posteriori, proofs of the being and perfections of God, drawn from his own works.

PROPOSITIONS A PRIORI.

PROP I. If there be no one being in the universe but such as might possibly not have existed, it would follow that there might possibly have been no existence at all; and if that could be so, it would be also possible that the present existence might have arisen from total nonexistence, which is absurd: therefore it is not possible that there might have been no existence at all. Consequently, an impossibility of not existing must be found somewhere; there must have been a being whose nonexistence is impossible.

II. The whole nature of an unoriginated being, or aggregate of his attributes, must be unoriginated, and necessarily what it is. A being cannot produce its own attributes; for this would suppose it acted before it existed. There is nothing in the nature of this being that is contingent, or could have been

otherwise than it is; for whatever is contingent, must have a cause to determine its mode of existence.

III. The attributes of an unoriginated being must be possessed by it unlimitedly; for to possess an attribute imperfectly, or only in a certain degree, must suppose some cause to have modified this being so as to make him incapable of having that attribute in any other than an imperfect degree. But no cause can be admitted in this case, because this is the First of all beings, and the Cause of all things. Farther, an imperfect attribute, or any one that is not in its highest degree, must be capable of improvement by exercise and experience; which would imply that the unoriginated being must be originally imperfect, and that he was deriving farther degrees of perfection from the exercise of his own powers, and acquaintance with his own works.

IV. The unoriginated being must exist everywhere, in the same manner he does anywhere; for if he did not, it would suppose some cause by which his presence was limited; but there can be no cause to limit that presence. See above.

V. This unoriginated being must be a simple uncompounded substance, identically the same everywhere; not consisting of parts, for these must be distinct and independent; nor of whole, for this is the aggregate of parts; nor of magnitude or quantity, for these signify a composition of parts. This being must be as truly one and omnipresent, as the present moment of time is indivisibly one in all places at once; and can no more be limited or measured by time, than the present moment can by duration.

Hence this being cannot be matter or body, because to these belong extension, divisibility, figurability, and mobility, which imply limitation. God and matter have essentially contrary properties.

God is not material. It has already been shown that there necessarily must exist one infinite, unoriginated, and eternal being. Now this being must be a thinking being; for it is as impossible to conceive that unthinking matter could produce a thinking intelligent being, as it is to conceive that nothing could produce matter.

Let us suppose any parcel of matter to be eternal, we shall find it, in itself, unable to produce any thing. Let us suppose its parts firmly at rest



together; if there were no other being in the world, must it not eternally remain so, a dead, inactive lump? Is it possible to conceive that it can add motion to itself, or produce it in other portions of matter? Matter, therefore, by its own strength, cannot produce in itself so much as motion. The motion it has must also be from eternity, or else added to matter by some other being more powerful than itself.

But let us suppose motion eternal too; yet matter, unthinking matter, and motion, could never produce thought. Knowledge will still be as far beyond the power of motion and matter to produce, as matter is beyond the power of nothing to produce. Divide matter into as minute parts as you will, vary the figure and motion of it as much as you please, it will operate no other ways upon other bodies of proportionate bulk than it did before this division. The minutest particles of matter strike, impel, and resist one another, just as the greater do; and that is all that they can do. So that if we will suppose nothing eternal, matter can never begin to be. If we suppose bare matter, without motion, eternal, then motion can never begin to be. If we suppose only matter and motion eternal, then thought can never begin to be. For it is impossible to conceive that matter, either with or without motion, could have originally, in and from itself, sense, perception, and knowledge, as is evident from hence, that sense, perception, and knowledge, must be properties eternally separate from matter, and every particle of it.

Since, therefore, whatsoever is the first eternal being must necessarily be a

VII. There cannot be in the universe more than one unoriginated being; for as this being is possessed of infinite attributes, let us suppose a second unoriginated being; he must possess the same: for both these beings are eternal, and necessarily the same, every where alike present, without any possible difference or distinction, and therefore one and the same. Two such cannot subsist; and the supposition of a second such being is only a mental repetition of the being and attributes of the first.

VIII. All things owe their existence to their first cause, operating according to its own free will. Absolute power does not act of necessity, but freely: the power may exist without exertion; if it did not, then it acts by necessity; and if so, necessity is the agent, and not the free power, of the independent God. He can do what he will, but he will do only what is right, etc.

The like may be said of his omniscience. He knows himself, and what he has formed, and what he can do; but is not necessitated to know as certain what himself has made contingent. If God must continually act because he is omnipotent, and know because he is omniscient, then he must be constantly employed in doing or undoing whatever is possible to be done or undone, and knowing all that is, and all that can be, and what cannot be; which is absurd.

IX. God is a being of infinite goodness, wisdom, mercy, justice, and truth, and all other perfections which become the Framer and Governor of the universe.

GOODNESS consists in being pleased with communicating happiness to others.

WISDOM, in making a right or beneficent use of knowledge or power; for no being, howsoever intelligent or powerful, is said to act wisely, but that which makes a good or beneficent use of knowledge and power. Hence wisdom and goodness must be ever conjoined to make any act of power perfect. As he is wise, he knows what is best to be done; powerful, he can do it; good, he will do it. Justice, mercy, truth, or faithfulness, are not distinct attributes, but denominations given to his power and wisdom, in their various operations on different occasions, in reference to his creatures.

God's liberty of acting. His power and wisdom being infinite, he cannot be prevented by any outward cause; his nature being essentially good, he can have no opposition from within. His power and all his other attributes, being infinite, eternal, and consequently unlimited, can have no opposition from without. And his liberty consists in his being free to act or not act, or infinitely or limitedly to vary his operations according to his own wisdom, goodness, and truth. See also the late bishop of Ossory, Chevalier Ramsay, Dr. S. Clarke, and others, on this subject.

## **SKETCHES OF PROOFS A POSTERIORI.**

Recapitulation of the preceding Propositions

II. In the argument a priori, in order to demonstrate the being of a GOD, it was attempted to prove that there must have been a being whose nonexistence is impossible. In arguing on this subject it has been shown:—

1. That this being was unoriginated.
2. That all his attributes must also be unoriginated.
3. That these attributes must be unlimited and absolutely perfect.
4. That this being must exist everywhere in the same manner he does anywhere.
5. That he is simple and uncompounded, not consisting of parts, nor of whole, nor of magnitude, nor of quantity.
6. That he must possess intelligence and power unlimited, and all other attributes that are in themselves absolute perfections.
7. That there cannot be in the universe any more than one such unoriginated, simple, and infinite being.
8. That all things owe their existence to this first cause, operating, not according to any kind of necessity, but according to its own free will.
9. That as, in all his operations, all his attributes must concur and combine, so all the works of his hands must bear the impress of wisdom and goodness; of that wisdom which consists in making a right use of

knowledge and power, i.e. using both beneficially; of that goodness which consists in being pleased with communicating happiness to others.

Hence may be deduced CREATION, the plan of which proceeded from his wisdom, the execution from his power, and the result a proof of his goodness.

From these data we might proceed to prove the being of a God, and his beneficence and moral government of the world, a posteriori, i.e. arguing from the effects to the cause.

And first, a being of infinite wisdom must be expected to form his works so as to evidence that wisdom in their multiplicity, variety, internal structure, arrangement, connections, and dependencies; and, consequently, that these works must be in many respects inscrutable to man. And this, as they are his works, must be one of their characteristics.

Whether there be any other kind of beings than spiritual and material, and such as are of a mixed nature, we cannot tell; but we have no ideas of any other kinds, nor can we conceive the possibility of the existence of any other; as we have no ideas of any figure that is not formed of straight or curved lines, or a mixture of both.

God, the uncreated Spirit, manifests himself by material substances. Created spirits must be manifested in the same way; and though matter may exist without spirit, and spirit without matter, yet without the latter, spirit cannot become manifest. Hence matter appears to have been created for the use of spirit or intellectual beings.

Creation in general demonstrates the being of a God.

The SOLAR SYSTEM and plurality of worlds, magnitude, distances, velocity and gravity, of the celestial bodies, projectile and centripetal forces, center of gravity, ellipsis, double and treble motion, attraction, all demonstrate the wisdom, power, and goodness of God.

VEGETATION. Plants, trees, circulation of nutritious juices, composition of ligneous fibres, dissolution and regeneration of terrestrial productions.

PRESERVATION of genera and species, demonstrations of infinite skill, and of the wisest and most beneficent providence

MAN. Life, nutrition, sleep, the senses, particularly vision and muscular motion; each furnishes a series of irresistible arguments.

The HEART and the circulation of the blood afford the most striking proofs; and on this point let the reader particularly fix his attention.

In a healthy state the heart makes eighty pulsations in a minute, and it is calculated that from two ounces to two ounces and a half of blood are expelled into the aorta at each pulsation; consequently at least nine thousand six hundred ounces will be thrown into the aorta in an hour, which would amount to one thousand four hundred and forty pounds in one day!

At each pulsation this quantum of blood is propelled eight inches, which amounts to fifty feet in a minute! The quantity of blood in a human body is, on an average, about thirty pounds, and passes through the heart about twenty-three times in the space of one hour!

A weight of fifty pounds hung to the foot, the leg laid across the opposite knee, was raised by the action of the popliteal artery. Allowing for the distance from the center of motion, this proves that the heart must possess a power of at least four hundred pounds!

The blood circulates by pressure from behind, occasioned by the action of the heart, which pressure having propelled it, according to the laws of gravity to the extremities, reconducts it, contrary to those laws, back to the heart. How is this effected? It has been supposed that the ARTERIES contribute much to the circulation of the blood; were it even so, it would be comparatively useless, as they cease where such an auxiliary power is most wanting, at the extremities, where their anastomosis with the veins takes place, and the veins are not supposed to possess any such propelling power.

But that the arteries possess no such power Bichat has proved by the following experiment: he took the arm of a dead man, placed it in warm water, inserted one end of a tube in the brachial artery, and the other end in the carotid artery of a living dog; the blood circulated in the dead arm, the pulse of which beat regularly by the action of the heart of the living animal. Is there not a wondrous and especial providence of God by which this is effected?

Others have attributed the pulsation of the heart itself to the stimulating nature of the blood. Bichat has disproved this by the following experiments:—

1. Expose the heart of an animal and empty it, apply a stimulus to its muscles, and it will dilate, and contract, as if it were full.
2. Puncture all the large vessels connected with the heart, so as to empty it entirely, and the alternate contractions and dilations will continue for some time, notwithstanding the total absence of the blood.
3. Remove two hearts of equal bulk from two living animals, place the fingers in the ventricles of the one, and grasp the other in the opposite hand, and it will be found that the effort of the latter in its dilation is as forcible as the other in its contraction.

Incessant action of the heart. Its unweariedness. What exhausts all other muscles appears to increase its action and its force! Can any person conceive how it is possible that a muscle can be in incessant action for threescore, fourscore, or a hundred years, without any kind of weariness? There is nothing in nature that can well explain this. Over its motion the mind has no power. This is wisely ordered, as many, in momentary fits of caprice, despair, and passion, would suspend the circulation, and thus put an end to their lives.

Providence, or the economical government of GOD in the provision for men and animals. Never too much, never too little; the produce of the earth being ever in proportion to the consumers, and the consumers to that produce.

Redemption. 1. As all things are intimately known to God, he must know wherein their happiness consists, and may from his goodness be expected to make every provision for that happiness.

2. Every sentient creature is capable of happiness or misery.
3. No creature can choose a state of misery for itself, because no creature can desire to be unhappy.
4. If any being could choose that state for another, he must be led to it by some motive which may make it eligible or desirable; and this must spring

from his envy, jealousy, fear, or a conviction that the wretchedness of the other will contribute to his own happiness. None of these can exist in God the Creator, consequently he must be supposed to have made man for happiness. His counsels never change, and therefore when man had fallen he provided him a Savior; this might be naturally expected from his infinite benevolence.

The moral changes made in sinners, proofs of the being, agency, goodness, and presence of God.

Man's existence is a proof of the being of God; he feels himself to be the effect of a cause, and that cause to be wise, powerful, and good. There is evidently no cause in nature capable of producing such an effect, for no operation of nature can produce mind or intellect; the wonderful structure of the body, and the astonishing powers of the mind, equally prove that God is our Maker, and that in him we live, move, and have our being.

III. Astronomical phenomena very difficult to be accounted for upon natural principles, which are strong evidences of the being and continual agency of God.

### **PHENOMENON I.**

The motion of a planet in an elliptic orbit is truly wonderful, and incapable of a physical demonstration in all its particulars. From its aphelion, or greatest distance from the sun or body round which it revolves, to its perihelion or least distance, its motion is continually accelerated; and from its perihelion to its aphelion is constantly retarded. From what source has the planet derived that power which it opposes to the solar attraction, in such a manner that, when passing from aphelion to perihelion by a continued acceleration, it is prevented from making a nearer approach to the sun? And on the other hand, what prevents the planet, after it has passed by a continued retardation from perihelion to aphelion, from going altogether out of the solar attraction, and causes it to return again to perihelion? In Sir Isaac Newton's demonstration that this phenomenon is a necessary result of the laws of gravity and projectile forces, it is worthy of observation that, to account for a planet's moving in an elliptic orbit, little differing from a circle, and having the sun in the lower focus, the projectile

force of the planet, or the power by which it would move for ever in a straight line if not acted upon from without, is assumed to be nearly sufficient to counterbalance the planet's gravitating power, or, which is the same thing, the attraction of the central body; for the demonstration, the particulars of which are too complicated to be here detailed, puts us in possession of the following facts: If a planet be projected in a direction exactly perpendicular to that of the central body, with a velocity equal to what it would acquire by falling half way to the center by attraction alone, it will describe a circle round the central body. If the velocity of projection be greater than this, but not equal to what the planet would acquire in falling to the center, it will move in an elliptical orbit more or less eccentric according to the greater or less degree of projectile force. If the velocity of projection be equal to that which the planet would acquire in falling to the central body, it will move in a parabola; if greater than this, in a hyperbola. Now it cannot be demonstrated, upon physical principles, that a planet should have a certain projectile force and no other, or that it should have any at all; for it is a law of nature, ably demonstrated by Newton in his *Principia*, that all bodies have such an indifference to rest or motion that, if once at rest, they must remain eternally so, unless acted upon by some power sufficient to move them; and that a body once put in motion will proceed of itself ever after in a straight line, if not diverted out of this rectilinear course by some influence. Every planetary body has a certain projectile force, therefore some previously existing cause must have communicated it. The planets have not only a projectile force, but this power is at the same time nearly a counterbalance to its gravitation, or the attraction of the central body; so that, by virtue of these powers thus harmoniously united, the planets perform their revolutions in orbits nearly circular with the greatest regularity. It hence follows that the cause, which has communicated just so much projectile force as to produce so near an equilibrium in the centrifugal and centripetal powers, is infinitely intelligent; therefore this cause must be God.

As all the planets move in orbits more or less elliptical, when they could have been made to move in circles by a particular adjustment of the attractive and projectile forces, the Divine purpose must be best answered by the eccentric orbit. The habitable earth evidently derives very great advantage from the elliptical orbit; for, in consequence of it, the sun is



seven or eight days of every year longer on the northern side of the equator than he is on the southern; i.e. from the 21st of March, when he crosses the equator north ward, to the 23d of September, when he again returns to the equator, there are 186 days; but from the 23d of September, or autumnal equinox, to the 21st of March, or vernal equinox, there are only 179 days. From this circumstance the northern hemisphere, which it has pleased God should contain by far the greatest portion of land, is considerably warmer towards the polar regions than in similar latitudes towards the south pole, where an equal degree of temperature is not needed. Circumnavigators have not yet been able, because of the great cold of the south polar regions, to proceed beyond seventy-two or seventy-three degrees of south latitude, or, which is the same thing, to approach the south pole nearer than about 1200 miles; but the northern frigid zone, possessing a greater temperature, has been explored to within about 600 miles of the pole, i.e. to nearly eighty-two degrees of north latitude.

## **PHENOMENON II.**

The double motion of a primary planet, namely, its annual revolution and diurnal rotation, is one of the greatest wonders the science of astronomy presents to our view. The laws which regulate the latter of these motions are so completely hid from man, notwithstanding his present great extension of philosophic research, that the times which the planets employ in their rotations can only be determined by observation. How is it that two motions, so essentially different from each other, should be in the same body at the same time, without one interfering at all with the other? The astonishing accuracy with which celestial observations have been conducted within the last one hundred years, has enabled astronomers to demonstrate that the neighboring planets very sensibly affect the figure of the earth's orbit, and consequently its motion in its orbit. Of this every one may be convinced who examines the calculus employed in ascertaining for any particular point of time the sun's place in the heavens; or, which is the same thing, the point of the earth's orbit which is exactly opposed to the place of the earth in this orbit. Thus the maximum that the earth is affected by Venus is nine seconds and seven-tenths of a degree; by Mars, six seconds and seven-tenths; and by Jupiter, eight seconds, two-thirds, etc. But no

astronomer, since the foundation of the world, has been able to demonstrate that the earth's motion in the heavens is at all accelerated or retarded by the diurnal rotation; or, on the other hand, that the earth's motion on its axis experiences the least irregularity from the annual revolution. How wonderful is this contrivance! and what incalculable benefits result from it! The uninterrupted and equable diurnal rotation of the earth gives us day and night in their succession, and the annual revolution causes all the varied scenery of the year. If one motion interfered with the other, the return of day and night would be irregular, and the change of seasons attended with uncertainty to the husbandman. These two motions are therefore harmoniously impressed upon the earth, that the gracious promise of the great Creator might be fulfilled: "While the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease." The double motion of a secondary planet is still more singular than that of its primary; for, (taking the moon for an example,) besides its particular revolution round the earth, which is performed in twenty-seven days, seven hours, forty-three minutes, four seconds and a half; it is carried round the sun with the earth once every year. Of all the planetary motions with which we have a tolerable acquaintance, that of the moon is the most intricate: upwards of twenty equations are necessary, in the great majority of cases, to reduce her mean to her true place; yet not one of them is derivable from the circumstance that she accompanies the earth in its revolution round the sun. They depend on the different distances of the earth from the sun in its annual revolution, the position of the lunar nodes, and various other causes, and not on the annual revolution itself; a motion which of all others might be expected to cause greater irregularities in her revolution round the earth, than could be produced in that of the latter by the planetary attractions. Who can form an adequate conception of that influence of the earth which thus draws the moon with it round the sun, precisely in the same manner as if it were a part of the earth's surface, notwithstanding the intervening distance of about two hundred and forty thousand miles; and at the same time leaves undisturbed the moon's proper motion round the earth? And what beneficent purposes are subserved by this harmony! In consequence of it we have the periodical returns of new and full moon; and the ebbing and flowing of the sea, which depend on the various lunar phases with respect to the sun and earth, (as is demonstrable from each of

these phases being continually contemporaneous with a particular phenomenon of the tides,) always succeed each other with a regularity necessarily equal to that of the causes which produce them.

### PHENOMENON III.

The impression of an inconceivably rapid motion upon the earth, without disturbing in the smallest degree any thing upon its surface, or in the atmosphere which surrounds it, is another instance of the infinite wisdom of God. That with which God has endued the celestial bodies, in order to accomplish this end, is called gravity or attraction. The existence of this influence is easily demonstrable from the curious law which pervades all the bodies in the solar system, and probably every other body in the whole compass of space. This law, viz. that the squares of the periodic times of the planets are to each other as the cubes of their mean distances from the central body, was first discovered by Kepler, and afterwards demonstrated by Sir Isaac Newton. Thus, if the distance of but one planet from the sun is known, and the periodic revolutions of the whole, the distance of each from the sun is easily ascertained. The mean distance of the earth from the sun has been found, by the transits of Venus in 1761 and 1769, to be about ninety-five and a half millions of English miles; and the periodic times of all the planets are known by direct observation. Thus, to find the distance of Jupiter from the sun, nothing more is necessary than first to square the period of the earth, 365 days, 5 hours, 48  $\frac{3}{4}$  minutes; and that of Jupiter, 11 years, 315 days, 14 hours and a half; and divide the greater product by the less to find the proportion one bears to the other; then to cube the earth's mean distance from the sun, 95  $\frac{1}{2}$  millions, and multiply the cube by the proportion between the periodic times already found, and the cube root of the last product will be the distance required. By this means it was that the distances of the different planets from the sun, and of the satellites from the primaries, (for this law extends to the satellites,) have been calculated. See the Table of the Periodic Revolutions, etc., of the Planets, in the notes on the first chapter of Genesis. From this law it is evident, to every one that deeply considers this subject, that the planets revolve in orbits by an influence emanating from the sun; for the nearer a planet is to the sun, the swifter is its motion

in its orbit, and vice versa. (See the Tables already referred to.) The singular phenomenon of a planet's describing equal areas in equal times results from gravitation combined with the projectile power; or, in other words, from the union of the centripetal and centrifugal forces. Thus, if a planet describe in twenty-four hours any given arc of its orbit, and the area contained between two straight lines, drawn from the extremities of this arc and meeting in the sun, be ascertained, it will be precisely equal to what the planet will describe in any other twenty-four hours, the greater or less quantity of the arc described being continually compensated by the less or greater extent of the straight lines including the respective areas. We also find that, by virtue of these laws, the motion of a planet in its orbit is not decreased in arithmetical proportion to the increase of the distance from the central body; for the hourly orbital motion of the Georgium Sidus, for example, is only about five times slower than that of the earth, though its distance from the sun is full nineteen times greater.

Every man may convince himself of the existence of gravity, by observing the phenomena attending falling bodies. Why is it that the velocity of a falling body is continually accelerated till it arrives on the earth? We answer, that the earth continually attracts it; consequently, its velocity must be continually increasing as it falls. It is also observable, that the nature of the influence on falling bodies is precisely the same with that which retains the planets in their orbits. By numerous experiments it is found that, if the falling body descends towards the earth 16 feet in the first second, (a statement very near the truth,) it will fall through three times this space, or 48 feet, in the next second; five times this space, or 80 feet, in the third second; seven times this space, or 112 feet, in the fourth second; nine times this space, or 144 feet, in the fifth second, etc. Hence the spaces fallen through are as the squares of the times of falling, i.e. in the first second the body falls 16 feet, and in the next second, 48 feet; consequently the body falls as many feet in the two first seconds as is equal to the sum of these two numbers, viz. 64, which is 16 multiplied by 4, the square of 2, the number of seconds it took up in falling through the first 64 feet. See Exley's new theory of physics, page 469.

The above is but a very brief account of the influence of this wonderful principle, which is universally diffused through nature, and capable of attracting every particle of matter under all its possible modifications, and

of imparting to each substance, from the lightest gas to the most ponderous metal, that property which constitutes one body specifically heavier or lighter than another. To detail all the benefits which result from it, would be almost to give a history of the whole material creation. But it may be asked, What is gravity? To the solution of this question natural philosophy is unable to lead us. Suffice it to say, all we know of gravity is its mode of operation and that it is, like its great Creator, an all pervading and continued energy. Therefore, that it is, and not in what it consists, is capable of demonstration.

All these things prove, not only that there is a God infinitely powerful and intelligent, but also kind and merciful, working all according to the counsel of his will, and causing all his operations to result in the benefit of his creatures. They prove, also, that God is continually present, supporting all things by his energy; and that, while his working is manifest, his ways are past finding out. Yet, as far as he may be known, we should endeavor to know him; for, he that cometh unto God must know that he is. Without this it is not likely that any man will serve him; for those alone who know him seek him, and they only who put their trust in him can testify he is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him.

### **A SHORT ACCOUNT OF THE BASTINADO, SUPPOSED TO BE REFERRED TO IN VER. 35.**

IV. On the 15th of Nov. 1779, Mr. Antes, returning from a short country excursion to Grand Cairo, was seized by some of the attendants of Osman Bey, a Mamaluke chief; and after stripping him of his clothes, they demanded money, which he not having about him, they dragged him before the bey, telling him that he was a European, from whom he might get something. In order to extort money from him, the bey ordered him to be bastinadoed. They first threw him down flat on his face, and then bent up his legs, so that the soles of his feet were horizontal; they then brought a strong staff, about six feet long, with an iron chain fixed to it at both ends. This chain they threw round both feet above the ancles, and twisted them together; and two fellows on each side, provided with what they call a corbage, held up the soles of the feet by means of the stick. When thus placed, an officer whispered in his ear, "Do not suffer yourself to be

beaten; give him a thousand dollars, and he will let you go." Mr. Antes, not willing to give up the money which he had received for the goods of other merchants, refused; the two men then began to beat the soles of his feet, at first moderately; but when a second application for money was refused, and then the demand was two thousand dollars, they began to lay on more roughly, and every stroke felt like the application of a red hot poker. Finding they could get no money, supposing he might have some choice goods, a third application was made to him by the officer; he told them he had a fine silver-mounted blunderbuss at his lodging which he would give. The bey asked what he offered; the officer sneered, and said, *bir carabina*, i.e. "one blunderbuss;" on which the bey said, *ettrup il kulp*, "beat the dog." They then began to lay on with all their might. "At first," says Mr. Antes, "the pain was excruciating; but after some time my feeling grew numb, and it was like beating a bag of wool." Finding that nothing was to be got from him, and knowing that he had done nothing to deserve punishment, the bey ordered them to let him go. One of the attendants anointed his feet, and bound them up with some rags, put him on an ass, and conducted him to his house in Cairo, and laid him on his bed, where he was confined for six weeks before he could walk, even with crutches; and for more than three years his feet and ancles were very much swelled; and, though twenty years had elapsed when he published this account, his feet and ancles were so affected that, on any strong exertion, they were accustomed to swell.

He mentions instances of the *bastinado* having been applied for three days successively, and, if the person survived, the feet were rendered useless for life; but in general, he observes, when they have received between five and six hundred strokes, the blood gushes from their mouth and nose, and they die either under or soon after the operation.

How he felt his mind affected on this distressing occasion, he thus piously describes: "I at once gave up myself for lost, well knowing that my life depended on the caprice of a brute in human shape; and, having heard and seen such examples of unrelenting cruelty, I could not expect to fare better than others had done before me; I had therefore nothing left but to cast myself on the mercy of God, commending my soul to him; and indeed I must in gratitude confess, that I experienced his support most powerfully; so that all fear of death was taken from me; and if I could have bought my

life for one halfpenny, I should, I believe, have hesitated to accept the offer.” — Observations on the Manners, etc., of the Egyptians, by J. ANTES, Esq. 12mo., Dublin, 1801, p. 146.

If this be the punishment to which the apostle alludes, it may justly rank with the most severe; and, all circumstances considered, this appears to be what is intended in the original word *ετυμπανισθησαν*, which we, not knowing what was meant by it, render they were tortured. These holy men needed no mercy from man; and they received no justice. The case above is a specimen of Mohammedan justice, and Mamaluke cruelty; and to rescue such wretches from the government of the French we spent torrents of British blood! It would have been a mercy to man to have left them in the hands of any power that might abate their pride, assuage their malice, and confound their devices. As to their being corrupted by French manners, that is impossible; the Mohammedans in general, and the Turks and Mamalukes of Egypt in particular, are too bad for the devil himself to corrupt. Pity, that political considerations rendered it necessary to restore that corrupt and abominable government. Reader, there is an infinite difference between the Bible and the Koran; the one is from heaven, the other from earth and hell. “Thanks be to God for his holy Gospel!”

## CHAPTER 12

*Having so many incitements to holiness, patience, and perseverance, we should lay aside every hinderance, and run with patience the race that is set before us, taking our blessed Lord for our example, 1-4. These sufferings are to be considered as fatherly chastisements from God, and to be patiently submitted to on account of the benefits to be derived from them, 5-11. They should take courage and go forward, 12, 13. Directions to follow peace with all men, and to take heed that they fall not from the grace of God, 14, 15. References to the case of Esau, 16, 17. The privileges of Christians, compared with those of the Jews, by which the superior excellence of Christianity is shown, 18-24. They must take care not to reject Jesus, who now addressed them from heaven, and who was shortly to be their Judge, 25-27. As they were called to receive a kingdom, they should have grace, whereby they might serve God acceptably, 28, 29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

**Verse 1. *Wherefore*** This is an inference drawn from the examples produced in the preceding chapter, and on this account both should be read in connection.

***Compassed about*** Here is another allusion to the Olympic games: the agonistae, or contenders, were often greatly animated by the consideration that the eyes of the principal men of their country were fixed upon them; and by this they were induced to make the most extraordinary exertions.

***Cloud of witnesses*** νεφος μαρτυρων. Both the Greeks and Latins frequently use the term cloud, to express a great number of persons or things; so in Euripides, Phoeniss. ver. 257: νεφος ασπιδων πυκνον, a dense cloud of shields; and Statius, Thebiad., lib. ix., ver. 120: jaculantum nubes, a cloud of spearmen. The same metaphor frequently occurs.

***Let us lay aside every weight*** As those who ran in the Olympic races would throw aside every thing that might impede them in their course; so Christians, professing to go to heaven, must throw aside every thing that



might hinder them in their Christian race. Whatever weighs down our hearts or affections to earth and sense is to be carefully avoided; for no man, with the love of the world in his heart, can ever reach the kingdom of heaven.

***The sin which doth so easily beset*** **ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν**. The well circumstanced sin; that which has every thing in its favor, time, and place, and opportunity; the heart and the object; and a sin in which all these things frequently occur, and consequently the transgression is frequently committed. **ευπεριστατος** is derived from **ευ**, well, **περι**, about, and **ιστημι**, I stand; the sin that stands well, or is favorably situated, ever surrounding the person and solliciting his acquiescence. What we term the easily besetting sin is the sin of our constitution, the sin of our trade, that in which our worldly honor, secular profit, and sensual gratification are most frequently felt and consulted. Some understand it of original sin, as that by which we are enveloped in body, soul, and spirit. Whatever it may be, the word gives us to understand that it is what meets us at every turn; that it is always presenting itself to us; that as a pair of compasses describe a circle by the revolution of one leg, while the other is at rest in the center, so this, springing from that point of corruption within, called the carnal mind, surrounds us in every place; we are bounded by it, and often hemmed in on every side; it is a circular, well fortified wall, over which we must leap, or through which we must break. The man who is addicted to a particular species of sin (for every sinner has his way) is represented as a prisoner in this strong fortress.

In laying aside the weight, there is an allusion to the long garments worn in the eastern countries, which, if not laid aside or tucked up in the girdle, would greatly incommode the traveler, and utterly prevent a man from running a race. The easily besetting sin of the Hebrews was an aptness to be drawn aside from their attachment to the Gospel, for fear of persecution.

***Let us run with patience the race*** **τρεχωμεν τον προκειμενον ημιν αγωνα**: Let us start, run on, and continue running, till we get to the goal. This figure is a favourite among the Greek writers; so Euripides, *Alcest.*, ver. 489: **ου τον δ' αγωνα πρωτον αν δραμοιμ' εγω**. This is not the first race that I shall run. *Id. Iphig. in Aulid.*, ver. 1456: **δεινους αγωνας**

**δια σε κεινον δει δραμειν**· He must run a hard race for thee. This is a race which is of infinite moment to us: the prize is ineffably great; and, if we lose it, it is not a simple loss, for the whole soul perishes.

**Verse 2. *Looking unto Jesus* αφορωντες**· Looking off and on, or from and to; looking off or from the world and all secular concerns to Jesus and all the spiritual and heavenly things connected with him. This is still an allusion to the Grecian games: those who ran were to keep their eyes fixed on the mark of the prize; they must keep the goal in view. The exhortation implies, 1. That they should place all their hope and confidence in Christ, as their sole helper in this race of faith. 2. That they should consider him their leader in this contest and imitate his example.

***The author and finisher of-faith* αρχηγος**, translated here author, signifies, in general, captain or leader, or the first inventor of a thing; see chap. 2:10. But the reference seems to be here to the **βραβευς**, or judge in the games, whose business it was to admit the contenders, and to give the prize to the conqueror. Jesus is here represented as this officer; every Christian is a contender in this race of life, and for eternal life. The heavenly course is begun under Jesus; and under him it is completed. He is the finisher, by awarding the prize to them that are faithful unto death. Thus he is the author or the judge under whom, and by whose permission and direction, according to the rules of the heavenly race, they are permitted to enter the lists, and commence the race, and he is the finisher, **τελειωτης**, the perfecter, by awarding and giving the prize which consummates the combatants at the end of the race.

***Who, for the joy that was set before him*** The joy of fulfilling the will of the Father, Psalm 40:6-8, etc., in tasting death for every man; and having endured the cross and despised the shame of this ignominious death, He is set down at the right hand of God, ever appearing in the presence of God for us, and continuing his exhibition of himself as our Sacrifice, and his intercession as our Mediator. See the notes on “Hebrews 10:5”, etc. There are different other explanations given of this clause, but I think that here offered is the most natural. It never can, in any sense, be said of Jesus that he endured the cross, etc., in the prospect of gaining an everlasting glory; when he had the fullness of that glory with the Father before the world began; John 17:5.

**Verse 3. *For consider him*** αναλογισασθε-ινα μη καμητε, ταις ψυχαις-εκλυμενοι· Attentively observe and analyze every part of his conduct, enter into his spirit, examine his motives and object, and remember that, as he acted, ye are called to act; he will furnish you with the same Spirit, and will support you with the same strength. He bore a continual opposition of sinners against himself; but he conquered by meekness, patience, and perseverance: he has left you an example that ye should follow his steps. If ye trust in him, ye shall receive strength; therefore, howsoever great your opposition may be, ye shall not be weary: if ye confide in and attentively look to him, ye shall have continual courage to go on, and never faint in your minds.

Here is a continued allusion to the contenders in the Grecian games, who, when exhausted in bodily strength and courage, yielded the palm to their opponents, and were said *καμνειν*, to be weary or exhausted; *εκλυεσθαι*, to be dissolved, disheartened, or to have lost all bravery and courage.

**Verse 4. *Ye have not yet resisted unto blood*** Many of those already mentioned were martyrs for the truth; they persevered unto death, and lost their lives in bearing testimony to the truth. Though you have had opposition and persecution, yet you have not been called, in bearing your testimony against sin and sinners, to seal the truth with your blood.

***Striving against sin.*** προς την αμαρτιαν ανταγωνι ζομενοι· An allusion to boxing at the Grecian games. In the former passages the apostle principally refers to the foot races.

**Verse 5. *And ye have forgotten*** Or, have ye forgotten the exhortation? This quotation is made from Proverbs 3:11, 12, and shows that the address there, which at first sight appears to be from Solomon to his son, or from some fatherly man to a person in affliction, is properly from God himself to any person in persecution, affliction, or distress.

***Despise not thou the chastening*** μη ολιγωρει παιδειας κυριου· Do not neglect the correction of the Lord. That man neglects correction, and profits not by it, who does not see the hand of God in it; or, in other words, does not fear the rod and him who hath appointed it, and,

consequently, does not humble himself under the mighty hand of God, deplore his sin, deprecate Divine judgment, and pray for mercy.

**Nor faint** Do not be discouraged nor despair, for the reasons immediately alleged.

**Verse 6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth** Here is the reason why we should neither neglect correction, nor faint under it: it is a proof of the fatherly love of God Almighty, and shows his most gracious designs towards us; from which we may be fully convinced that the affliction will prove the means of good to our souls, if we make a proper use of it.

**And scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.** **Μαστιγοι δε παντα υιον, ον παραδεξεται.** This is a quotation, literatim from the Septuagint, of Proverbs 3:12, of which place our version is: Even as the father the son in whom he delighteth. But, howsoever near this may appear to be the Hebrew, it bears scarcely any affinity to the apostle's words. The Hebrew text is as follows: **וְכַאֲב אֶת־בֶּן יִרְצֶה** uchab eth-ben yirtseh. Now, **וְכַאֲב** may be a noun, compounded of the conjunction **וְ** vau, "and," the comparative particle **כַּ** ke, "as" or "like;" and **אֶב** ab, "a father:" or it may be the third person preterite kal of **כָּאֵב** caab, "he spoiled, wasted, marred, ulcerated," compounded with the conjunction **וְ** vau, "and." And in this sense the Septuagint most evidently understood it; and it is so understood by the Arabic; and both readings seem to be combined by the Syriac and Chaldee versions. And as to **רָצָה** ratsah, one of its prime meanings is to accept, to receive graciously, to take into favor; the translation, therefore, of the Septuagint and apostle is perfectly consonant to the Hebrew text, and our version of Proverbs 3:12 is wrong.

**Verse 7. If ye endure chastening** If ye submit to his authority, humble yourselves under his hand, and pray for his blessing, you will find that he deals with you as beloved children, correcting you that he may make you partakers of his holiness.

**God dealeth with you as with sons** He acknowledges by this that you belong to the family, and that he, as your Father, has you under proper discipline. It is a maxim among the Jewish rabbins that "the love which is not conjoined with reproof is not genuine."

**Verse 8. *Then are ye bastards*** This proceeds on the general fact, that bastards are neglected in their manners and education; the fathers of such, feeling little affection for, or obligation to regard, their spurious issue. But all that are legitimate children are partakers of chastisement or discipline; for the original word **παιδεια** does not imply stripes and punishments, but the whole discipline of a child, both at home and at school.

**Verse 9. *We have had fathers of our flesh*** The fathers of our flesh, i.e. our natural parents, were correctors; and we revered them, notwithstanding their corrections often arose from whim or caprice: but shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits; to him from whom we have received both body and soul; who is our Creator, Preserver, and Supporter; to whom both we and our parents owe our life and our blessings; and who corrects us only for our profit; that we may live and be partakers of his holiness? The apostle in asking, Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live? alludes to the punishment of the stubborn and rebellious son, Deuteronomy 21:18-21: “If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him and bring him to the elders of the city, and they shall say, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice: and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he DIE.” Had he been subject to his earthly parents, he would have lived; because not subject, he dies. If we be subject to our heavenly Father, we shall LIVE, and be partakers of his holiness; if not, we shall DIE, and be treated as bastards and not sons. This is the sum of the apostle’s meaning; and the fact and the law to which he alludes.

**Verse 10. *For-a few days*** The chastisement of our earthly parents lasted only a short time; that of our heavenly Father will also be but a short time, if we submit: and as our parents ceased to correct when we learned obedience; so will our heavenly Father when the end for which he sent the chastisement is accomplished. God delights not in the rod; judgment is his strange work.

**Verse 11. *No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous*** Neither correction, wholesome restraint, domestic regulations, nor gymnastic

discipline, are pleasant to them that are thus exercised; but it is by these means that obedient children, scholars, and great men are made. And it is by God's discipline that Christians are made. He who does not bear the yoke of Christ is good for nothing to others, and never gains rest to his own soul.

***The peaceable fruit of righteousness*** i.e. The joyous, prosperous fruits; those fruits by which we gain much, and through which we are made happy.

***Exercised thereby.*** *γεγυμνασμενοις*. To the trained. There is still an allusion to the Grecian games; and in the word before us to those gymnastic exercises by which the candidates for the prizes were trained to the different kinds of exercises in which they were to contend when the games were publicly opened.

**Verse 12. *Wherefore lift up the hands*** The apostle refers to Isaiah 35:3. The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere.

**Verse 13. *Make straight paths for your feet*** That is, Take the straight path that is before you, do not go in crooked or rough ways, where are stones, briars, and thorns, by which you will be inevitably lamed, and so totally prevented from proceeding in the way; whereas, if you go in the even, proper path, though you have been wounded by getting into a wrong way, that which was wounded will be healed by moderate, equal exercise, all impediments being removed. The application of all this to a correct, holy deportment in religious life, is both natural and easy.

**Verse 14. *Follow peace with all men*** Cultivate, as far as you possibly can, a good understanding, both with Jews and Gentiles. *ειρηνην διωκετε*, pursue peace with the same care, attention, and diligence, as beasts do their game; follow it through all places; trace it through all winding circumstances; and have it with all men, if you can with a safe conscience.

***And holiness*** *τον αγιασμον*. That state of continual sanctification, that life of purity and detachment from the world and all its lusts, without

which detachment and sanctity no man shall see the Lord — shall never enjoy his presence in the world of blessedness. To see God, in the Hebrew phrase, is to enjoy him; and without holiness of heart and life this is impossible. No soul can be fit for heaven that has not suitable dispositions for the place.

**Verse 15. *Looking diligently* επισκοπουντες·** Looking about, over, and upon; being constantly on your guard.

***Lest any man fail of the grace of God* μη τις υστερων απο της χαριτος του θεου·** Lest any person should come behind, or fall off from, this grace or GIFT of God; this state of salvation, viz. the Gospel system or Christianity; for this is most evidently the meaning of the apostle. It is not the falling from a work of grace in their own souls, but from the Gospel, to apostatize from which they had now many temptations; and to guard them against this, the whole epistle was written.

***Lest any root of bitterness springing up*** A root of bitterness signifies a poisonous plant. The Hebrews call every species of poison a bitter, and with considerable propriety, as most plants are poisonous in proportion to the quantum of the bitter principle they possess. The root of bitterness is here used metaphorically for a bad man, or a man holding unsound doctrines, and endeavoring to spread them in the Church.

***Trouble you*** This alludes to the effects of poison taken into the body: the whole animal system is disturbed, sometimes violent retchings, great disturbances through the whole alimentary canal, together with the most fatal changes in the whole sanguineous system, are the consequences of poison taken into the stomach. The blood itself (the principle, under God, of life) becomes putrescent; and probably to this the intelligent apostle alludes when he says, and thereby many be defiled, μιανθωσι, corrupted or contaminated.

Bad example and false teaching have corrupted thousands, and are still making desolation in the world and in the Church.

**Verse 16. *Lest there be any fornicator*** Any licentious person who would turn the Gospel of the grace of God into lasciviousness.

**Or profane person, as Esau** It is not intimated that Esau was a fornicator; and the disjunctive η, or, separates the profane person from the fornicator. And Esau is here termed profane, because he so far disregarded the spiritual advantages connected with his rights of primogeniture, that he alienated the whole for a single mess of pottage. See the note on “Genesis 25:34”. The word βεβηλος, which we translate profane, is compounded of βε, which in composition has a negative signification, and βηλος, the threshold of a temple or sacred edifice; and was applied to those who were not initiated into the sacred mysteries, or who were despisers of sacred things, and consequently were to be denied admittance to the temple, and were not permitted to assist at holy rites. Indeed, among the Greeks βεβηλος signified any thing or person which was not consecrated to the gods. Hence, in the opening of their worship, they were accustomed to proclaim,

*Procul, O procul, este profani! VIRG.*

*“Hence! O hence! ye profane.”*

And,

*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo. HOR.*

*“I abominate the profane vulgar, and drive them from the temple.”*

The Latin profanus, from which we have our word, is compounded of procul a fano, “far from the temple,” properly an irreligious man.

**Sold his birthright.** The first-born, in patriarchal times, 1. Had a right to the priesthood, Exodus 22: 29. 2. And a double portion of all the father’s possessions, Deuteronomy 21:17. 3. And was lord over his brethren, Genesis 27:29, 37; 49:3. 4. And in the family of Abraham the first-born was the very source whence the Messiah as the Redeemer of the world, and the Church of God, were to spring. Farther, 5. The first-born had the right of conveying especial blessings and privileges when he came to die. See the case of Isaac and his two sons, Jacob and Esau, in the history to which the apostle alludes, Genesis 27; and that of Jacob and his twelve sons, Genesis 49; In short, the rights of primogeniture were among the most noble, honorable, and spiritual in the ancient world.



**Verse 17. *When he would have inherited the blessing*** When he wished to have the lordship over the whole family conveyed to him, and sought it earnestly with tears, he found no place for a change in his father's mind and counsel, who now perceived that it was the will of God that Jacob should be made lord of all.

***Repentance*** Here μετανοια is not to be taken in a theological sense, as implying contrition for sin, but merely change of mind or purpose; nor does the word refer here to Esau at all, but to his father, whom Esau could not, with all his tears and entreaties, persuade to reverse what he had done. I have blessed him, said he, yea, and he must be blessed; I cannot reverse it now. See the whole of this transaction largely considered and explained, See the notes on "Genesis 25:29", etc., and See "Genesis 27:1", etc. Nothing spoken here by the apostle, nor in the history in Genesis to which he refers, concerns the eternal state of either of the two brothers. The use made of the transaction by the apostle is of great importance: Take heed lest, by apostatizing from the Gospel, ye forfeit all right and title to the heavenly birthright, and never again be able to retrieve it; because they who reject the Gospel reject the only means of salvation.

**Verse 18. — 21. *For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched*** I believe the words ψηλαφωμενω ορει should be translated to a palpable or material mountain; for that it was not a mountain that on this occasion might be touched, the history, Exodus 19:12, 13, shows; and the apostle himself, in Hebrews 12:20, confirms. It is called here a palpable or material mount, to distinguish it from that spiritual mount Zion, of which the apostle is speaking. Some contend that it should be translated tacto de caelo, thunder-struck; this sense would agree well enough with the scope of the place. The apostle's design is to show that the dispensation of the law engendered terror; that it was most awful and exclusive; that it belonged only to the Jewish people; and that, even to them, it was so terrible that they could not endure that which was commanded, and entreated that God would not communicate with them in his own person, but by the ministry of Moses: and even to Moses, who held the highest intimacy with Jehovah, the revealed glories, the burning fire, the blackness, the darkness, the tempest, the loud-sounding trumpet, and the voice of words, were so terrible that he said, I exceedingly fear and tremble.

These were the things which were exhibited on that material mountain; but the Gospel dispensation is one grand, copious, and interesting display of the infinite love of God. It is all encouragement; breathes nothing but mercy; is not an exclusive system; embraces the whole human race; has Jesus, the sinner's friend, for its mediator; is ratified by his blood; and is suited, most gloriously suited, to all the wants and wishes of every soul of man.

**Verse 22. *But ye are come unto mount Sion*** In order to enter fully into the apostle's meaning, we must observe, 1. That the Church, which is called here the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and mount Sion, is represented under the notion of a CITY. 2. That the great assembly of believers in Christ is here opposed to the congregation of the Israelites assembled at Mount Sinai. 3. That the innumerable company of angels is here opposed to, those angels by whom the law was ushered in, Acts 7:53; Galatians 3:19. 4. That the Gospel first-born, whose names are written in heaven, are here opposed to the enrolled first-born among the Israelites, Exodus 24:5, 19:22. 5. That the mediator of the new covenant, the Lord Jesus, is here opposed to Moses, the mediator of the old. 6. And that the blood of sprinkling, of Christ, our High Priest, refers to the act of Moses, Exodus 24:8: "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

1. The description in these verses does not refer to a heavenly state; for the terrible nature of the Mosaic dispensation is never opposed to heaven or life eternal, but to the economy of the New Testament. 2. In heaven there is no need of a mediator, or sprinkling of blood; but these are mentioned in the state which the apostle describes.

***The heavenly Jerusalem*** This phrase means the Church of the New Testament, as Schoettgen has amply proved in his dissertation on this subject.

***To an innumerable company of angels*** *μυριασιν αγγελων*. To myriads, tens of thousands, of angels. These are represented as the attendants upon God, when he manifests himself in any external manner to mankind. When he gave the law at Mount Sinai, it is intimated that myriads of these holy beings attended him. "The chariots of the Lord are

twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place;" Psalm 68:17. And when he shall come to judge the world, he will be attended with a similar company. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;" Daniel 7:10. In both these cases, as in several others, these seem to be, speaking after the manner of men, the body guard of the Almighty. Though angels make a part of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, yet they belong also to the Church below. Christ has in some sort incorporated them with his followers, for "they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation," and they are all ever considered as making a part of God's subjects.

**Verse 23. *To the general assembly* πανηγυρει.** This word is joined to the preceding by some of the best MSS., and is quoted in connection by several of the fathers: Ye are come-to the general assembly of innumerable angels; and this is probably the true connection.

The word πανηγυρις is compounded of παν, all, and αγωρις, an assembly; and means, particularly, an assembly collected on festive occasions. It is applied to the assembly of the Grecian states at their national games, Olympic, Isthmian, etc.; and hence a speech pronounced in favor of any person at such festive assemblies was called πανηγυρικός λογος, a panegyric discourse; and hence our word panegyric.

***The first-born*** Those who first received the Gospel of Christ, and who are elsewhere termed the first fruits: this is spoken in allusion to the first-born among the Israelites, who were all considered as the Lord's property, and were dedicated to him. The Jews gave the title בכור bechor, first-born, to those who were very eminent or excellent; what we would term the head or top of his kin. The Church of the first-born is the assembly of the most excellent.

***Which are written in heaven*** Who are enrolled as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and are entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Church here, and of heaven above. This is spoken in allusion to the custom of enrolling or writing on tables, etc., the names of all the citizens of a particular city; and all those thus registered were considered as having a right to live there, and to enjoy all its privileges. All genuine believers are denizens of heaven. That is their country, and there they have their rights,

etc. And every member of Christ has a right to, and can demand, every ordinance in the Church of his Redeemer; and wo to him who attempts to prevent them!

**God the Judge of all.** The supreme God is ever present in this general assembly: to him they are all gathered; by him they are admitted to all those rights, etc.; under his inspection they continue to act; and it is he alone who erases from the register those who act unworthily of their citizenship. Judge here is to be taken in the Jewish use of the term, i.e. one who exercises sovereign rule and authority.

**The spirits of just men made perfect** We cannot understand these terms without the assistance of Jewish phraseology. The Jews divide mankind into three classes:—

1. The JUST PERFECT, צדיקים גמורים tsaddikim gemurim. 2. The wicked perfect, רשעים גמורים reshaim gemurim. 3. Those between both, בינוניים beinoniyim.

1. The just perfect are those, 1. Who have conquered all brutal appetites and gross passions. 2. Who have stood in the time of strong temptation. 3. Who give alms with a sincere heart. 4. Who worship the true God only. 5. Who are not invidious. 6. Those from whom God has taken יצר הרע yetser hara, evil concupiscence, and given יצר טוב yetser tob, the good principle.

2. The wicked perfect are those, 1. Who never repent. 2. They receive their portion in this life, because they can have none in the life to come, and are under the influence of יצר הרע yetser hara, the evil principle.

3. The intermediate are those who are influenced partly by the evil principle, and partly by the good. — See Schoettgen.

In several parts of this epistle τελειος, the just man, signifies one who has a full knowledge of the Christian system, who is justified and saved by Christ Jesus; and the τετελειωνεμοι are the adult Christians, who are opposed to the νηπιοι or babes in knowledge and grace. See chap. 5:12-14; 8:11; and Galatians 4: 1-3. The spirits of the just men made perfect, or the righteous perfect, are the full grown Christians; those who

are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Being come to such, implies that spiritual union which the disciples of Christ have with each other, and which they possess how far soever separate; for they are all joined in one spirit, Ephesians 2:18; they are in the unity of the spirit, Ephesians 4:3, 4; and of one soul, Acts 4:32. This is a unity which was never possessed even by the Jews themselves in their best state; it is peculiar to real Christianity: as to nominal Christianity, wars and desolations between man and his fellows are quite consistent with its spirit. See at the end of the chapter. {See “Hebrews 12:29”}

**Verse 24. *And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*** The old covenant and its mediator, Moses, are passed away. See chap. 8:13. The new covenant, i.e. the Gospel, is now in force, and will be to the end of the world; and Jesus, the Son of God, the brightness of the Father’s glory, the Maker and Preserver of all things, the Savior and the Judge of all men, is its mediator. Both the covenant and its mediator are infinitely superior to those of the Jews, and they are very properly set down here among the superior benefits and glories of Christianity.

***To the blood of sprinkling*** This is an allusion, as was before observed, to the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice upon the people, when that covenant was made upon Mount Sinai; to the sprinkling of the blood of the sin-offerings before the mercy-seat; and probably to the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on their houses, to prevent their destruction by the destroying angel. But all these sprinklings were partial and inefficacious, and had no meaning but as they referred to this: the blood of sprinkling under the new covenant is ever ready; all may have it applied; it continues through ages; and is the highest glory of Christianity, because by it we draw nigh to God, and through it get our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, in a word, have an entrance unto the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

***Better things than that of Abel.*** God accepted Abel’s sacrifice, and, was well pleased with it; for Abel was a righteous man, and offered his sacrifice by faith in the great promise. But the blood of Christ’s sacrifice was infinitely more precious than the blood of Abel’s sacrifice, as Jesus is infinitely greater than Abel; and the blood of Christ avails for the sins of

the whole world, whereas the blood of Abel's sacrifice could avail only for himself.

Many have supposed that the blood of Abel means here the blood that was shed by Cain in the murder of this holy man, and that the blood of Jesus speaks better things than it does, because the blood of Abel called for vengeance, but the blood of Christ for pardon; this interpretation reflects little credit on the understanding of the apostle. To say that the blood of Christ spoke better things than that of Abel is saying little indeed; it might speak very little good to any soul of man, and yet speak better things than that blood of Abel which spoke no kind of good to any human creature, and only called for vengeance against him that shed it. The truth is, the sacrifice offered by Abel is that which is intended; that, as we have already seen, was pleasing in the sight of God, and was accepted in behalf of him who offered it: but the blood of Christ is infinitely more acceptable with God; it was shed for the whole human race, and cleanses all who believe from all unrighteousness.

**Verse 25.** *See βλεπετε*. Take heed, that ye refuse not him — the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who now speaketh from heaven, by his Gospel, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, having in his incarnation come down from God.

*Him that spake on earth* Moses, who spoke on the part of God to the Hebrews, every transgression of whose word received a just recompense of reward, none being permitted to escape punishment; consequently, if ye turn away from Christ, who speaks to you from heaven, you may expect a much sorer punishment, the offense against God being so much the more heinous, as the privileges slighted are more important and glorious.

**Verse 26.** *Whose voice then shook the earth* Namely, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and from this it seems that it was the voice of Jesus that then shook the earth, and that it was he who came down on the mount. But others refer this simply to God the Father giving the law.

*Not the earth only, but also heaven.* Probably referring to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews; the one being signified by the earth, the other by heaven; for the Jewish state and worship are

frequently thus termed in the prophetic writings. And this seems to be the apostle's meaning, as he evidently refers to Haggai 2:6, where this event is predicted. It may also remotely refer to the final dissolution of all things.

**Verse 27. *The removing of those things that are shaken*** The whole of the Jewish polity, which had been in a shaken state from the time that Judea had fallen under the power of the Romans.

***As of things that are made*** That is, subjects intended to last only for a time. God never designed that the Jewish religion should become general, nor be permanent.

***Those things which cannot be shaken*** The whole Gospel system, which cannot be moved by the power of man.

***May remain.*** Be permanent; God designing that this shall be the last dispensation of his grace and mercy, and that it shall continue till the earth and the heavens are no more.

**Verse 28. *We receiving a kingdom*** The Gospel dispensation, frequently termed the kingdom of God and the kingdom of heaven, because in it God reigns among men, and he reigns in the hearts of them that believe, and his kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

***Which cannot be moved*** Which never can fail, because it is the last dispensation.

***Let us have grace*** *εξωμεν χαριν*. Let us have, keep, or hold fast, the benefit or gift, that is, the heavenly kingdom which God has given us. This is the meaning of the word, 2 Corinthians 8:4, and is so rendered by our translators; and it is only by this heavenly gift of the Gospel that we can serve God acceptably, for he can be pleased with no service that is not performed according to the Gospel of his Son.

If we prefer the common meaning of the word grace it comes to the same thing; without the grace — the especial succor and influence of Christ, we cannot serve, *λατρευωμεν*, pay religious worship to God; for he receives no burnt-offering that is not kindled by fire from his own altar.

***Acceptably*** *ευαρεστως*. In such a way as to please him well. And the offering, with which he is well pleased, he will graciously accept; and if he

accept our service, his Spirit will testify in our conscience that our ways please him. When Abel sacrifices, God is well pleased; where Cain offers, there is no approbation.

**Reverence** αιδους· With shamefacedness or modesty.

**Godly fear** ευλαβειας· Religious fear. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, but let that boldness be ever tempered with modesty and religious fear; for we should never forget that we have sinned, and that God is a consuming fire. Instead of αιδους και ευλαβειας, modesty and religious fear, ACD\*, several others, with the Slavonic and Chrysostom, have ευλαβειας και δεους, and others have ψοβου και τρομου, fear and trembling; but the sense is nearly the same.

**Verse 29. For our God is a consuming fire.** The apostle quotes Deuteronomy 4:24, and by doing so he teaches us this great truth, that sin under the Gospel is as abominable in God's sight as it was under the law; and that the man who does not labor to serve God with the principle and in the way already prescribed, will find that fire to consume him which would otherwise have consumed his sin.

Additional remarks on verses 22-24.

On the whole, I think the description in these verses refers to the state of the Church here below, and not to any heavenly state. Let us review the particulars: 1. As the law was given on Mount Sinai, so the Gospel was given at Mount Sion. 2. As Jerusalem was the city of the living God while the Jewish dispensation lasted, (for there was the temple, its services, sacrifices, etc.,) the Christian Church is now called the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. In it is the great sacrifice, in it that spiritual worship, which God, the infinite Spirit, requires. 3. The ministry of angels was used under the old covenant, but that was partial, being granted only to particular persons, such as Moses, Joshua, Manoah, etc., and only to a few before the law, as Abraham, Jacob, etc. It is employed under the new covenant in its utmost latitude, not to a few peculiarly favored people, but to all the followers of God in general; so that in this very epistle the apostle asserts that they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation. 4. At the giving of the law, when the Church of the old covenant was formed, there was a general assembly of



the different tribes by their representatives; in the Gospel Church all who believe in Christ, of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, form one grand aggregate body. Believers of all nations, of all languages, of all climates, however differing in their color or local habits, are one in Christ Jesus; one body, of which he is the head, and the Holy Spirit the soul. 5. The first-born under the old dispensation had exclusive privileges; they had authority, emolument, and honor, of which the other children in the same family did not partake: but under the new, all who believe in Christ Jesus, with a heart unto righteousness, are equally children of God, are all entitled to the same privileges; for, says the apostle, ye are all children of God by faith in Christ, and to them that received him he gave authority to become the children of God; so that through the whole of this Divine family all have equal rights and equal privileges, all have GOD for their portion, and heaven for their inheritance. 6. As those who had the rights of citizens were enrolled, and their names entered on tables, etc., so that it might be known who were citizens, and who had the rights of such; so all the faithful under the new covenant are represented as having their names written in heaven, which is another form of speech for, have a right to that glorious state, and all the blessings it possesses; there are their possessions, and there are their rights. 7. Only the high priest, and he but one day in the year, was permitted to approach God under the Old Testament dispensation; but under the New, every believer in Jesus can come even to the throne, each has liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and, to real Christians alone it can be said, Ye are come-to God the Judge of all — to him ye have constant access, and from him ye are continually receiving grace upon grace. We have already seen that the righteous perfect, or the just men made perfect, is a Jewish phrase, and signified those who had made the farthest advances in moral rectitude. The apostle uses it here to point out those in the Church of Christ who had received the highest degrees of grace, possessed most of the mind of Christ, and were doing and suffering most for the glory of God; those who were most deeply acquainted with the things of God and the mysteries of the Gospel, such as the apostles, evangelists, the primitive teachers, and those who presided in and over different Churches. And these are termed the spirits **διακαίων τετελειωμένων**, of the just perfected, because they were a spiritual people, forsaking earth, and living in reference to that spiritual rest that was typified by Canaan. In short, all genuine Christians

had communion with each other, through God's Spirit, and even with those whose faces they had not seen in the flesh. 9. Moses, as the servant of God, and mediator of the old covenant, was of great consequence in the Levitical economy. By his laws and maxims every thing was directed and tried; and to him the whole Hebrew people came for both their civil and religious ordinances: but Christians come to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; he not only stands immediately between God and man, but reconciles and connects both. From him we receive the Divine law, by his maxims our conversation is to be ruled, and he gives both the light and life by which we walk; these things Moses could not do, and for such spirituality and excellence the old covenant made no provision; it was therefore a high privilege to be able to say, Ye are come-to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. 10. The Jews had their blood of sprinkling, but it could not satisfy as touching things which concerned the conscience; it took away no guilt, it made no reconciliation to God: but the blood of sprinkling under the Christian covenant purifies from all unrighteousness; for the blood of the new covenant was shed for the remission of sins, and by its infinite merit it still continues to sprinkle and cleanse the unholy. All these are privileges of infinite consequence to the salvation of man; privileges which should be highly esteemed and most cautiously guarded; and because they are so great, so necessary, and so unattainable in the Levitical economy, therefore we should lay aside every weight, etc., and run with perseverance the race that is set before us. I see nothing therefore in these verses which determines their sense to the heavenly state; all is suited to the state of the Church of Christ militant here on earth; and some of these particulars cannot be applied to the Church triumphant on any rule of construction whatever.

## CHAPTER 13

*Exhortations to hospitality to Strangers, 1, 2. Kindness to those in bonds, 3. Concerning marriage, 4. Against covetousness, 5, 6. How they should imitate their teachers, 7, 8. To avoid strange doctrines, 9. Of the Jewish sin-offerings, 10, 11. Jesus suffered without the gate, and we should openly confess him and bear his reproach, 12, 13. Here we have no permanent residence; and while we live should devote ourselves to God, and live to do good, 14-16. We should obey them that have the rule over us, 17. The apostle exhorts them to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner, 18, 19. Commends them to God in a very solemn prayer, 20, 21. Entreats them to bear the word of exhortation, mentions Timothy, and concludes with the apostolical benediction, 22-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13.

**Verse 1. *Let brotherly love continue.*** Be all of one heart and one soul. Feel for, comfort, and support each other; and remember that he who professes to love God should love his brother also. They had this brotherly love among them; they should take care to retain it. As God is remarkable for his *φιλανθρωπια*, philanthropy, or love to man, so should they be for *φιλαδελφια*, or love to each other. See the note on Titus 3:4.

**Verse 2. *To entertain stranger's*** In those early times, when there were scarcely any public inns or houses of entertainment, it was an office of charity and mercy to receive, lodge, and entertain travelers; and this is what the apostle particularly recommends.

***Entertained angels*** Abraham and Lot are the persons particularly referred to. Their history, the angels whom they entertained, not knowing them to be such, and the good they derived from exercising their hospitality on these occasions, are well known; and have been particularly referred to in the notes on Genesis 18:3; 19:2.

**Verse 3. *Remember them that are in bonds*** He appears to refer to those Christian's who were suffering imprisonment for the testimony of Jesus.

***As bound with them*** Feel for them as you would wish others to feel for you were you in their circumstances, knowing that, being in the body, you are liable to the same evils, and may be called to suffer in the same way for the same cause.

**Verse 4. *Marriage is honorable in all*** Let this state be highly esteemed as one of God's own instituting, and as highly calculated to produce the best interests of mankind. This may have been said against the opinions of the Essenes, called Therapeutae, who held marriage in little repute, and totally abstained from it themselves as a state of comparative imperfection. At the same time it shows the absurdity of the popish tenet, that marriage in the clergy is both dishonorable and sinful; which is, in fact, in opposition to the apostle, who says marriage is honorable in ALL; and to the institution of God, which evidently designed that every male and female should be united in this holy bond; and to nature, which in every part of the habitable world has produced men and women in due proportion to each other.

***The bed undefiled*** Every man cleaving to his own wife, and every wife cleaving to her own husband, because God will judge, i.e. punish, all fornicators and adulterers.

Instead of δε but, γαρ, for, is the reading of AD\*, one other, with the Vulgate, Coptic, and one of the Itala; it more forcibly expresses the reason of the prohibition: Let the bed be undefiled, FOR whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

**Verse 5. *Let your conversation*** That is, the whole tenor of your conduct, τροπος, the manner of your life, or rather the disposition of your hearts in reference to all your secular transactions; for in this sense the original is used by the best Greek writers.

***Be without covetousness*** Desire nothing more than what God has given you; and especially covet nothing which the Divine Providence has given to another man, for this is the very spirit of robbery.

***Content with such things as ye have*** αρκουμενοι τοις παρουσιν· Being satisfied with present things. In one of the sentences of Phocylides we have a sentiment in nearly the same words as that of the apostle: αρκεισθαι παρεουσι, και αλλοτριων απεχεσθαι· Be content with

present things, and abstain from others. The covetous man is ever running out into futurity with insatiable desires after secular good; and, if this disposition be not checked, it increases as the subject of it increases in years. Covetousness is the vice of old age.

***I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.*** These words were, in sum, spoken to Joshua, Joshua 1:5: “As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” They were spoken also by David to Solomon, 1 Chronicles 28:20: “David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.” The apostle, in referring to the same promises, feels authorized to strengthen the expressions, as the Christian dispensation affords more consolation and confidence in matters of this kind than the old covenant did. The words are peculiarly emphatic: **οὐ μὴ σε ἀνω, οὐδ’ οὐ μὴ σε εγκαταλιπῶ.** There are no less than five negatives in this short sentence, and these connected with two verbs and one pronoun twice repeated. To give a literal translation is scarcely possible; it would run in this way: “No, I will not leave thee; no, neither will I not utterly forsake thee.” Those who understand the genius of the Greek language, and look at the manner in which these negatives are placed in the sentence, will perceive at once how much the meaning is strengthened by them, and to what an emphatic and energetic affirmative they amount.

This promise is made to those who are patiently bearing affliction or persecution for Christ’s sake; and may be applied to any faithful soul in affliction, temptation, or adversity of any kind. Trust in the Lord with thy whole heart, and never lean to thy own understanding; for he hath said, “No, I will never leave thee; not I: I will never, never cast thee off.”

**Verse 6. *So that we may boldly say*** We, in such circumstances, while cleaving to the Lord, may confidently apply to ourselves what God spake to Joshua and to Solomon; and what he spake to David, “The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do.” God is omnipotent, man’s power is limited; howsoever strong he may be, he can do nothing against the Almighty.

**Verse 7. *Remember them which have the rule over you*** This clause should be translated, Remember your guides, **τῶν ἡγουμένων,** who have

spoken unto you the doctrine of God. Theodoret's note on this verse is very judicious: "He intends the saints who were dead, Stephen the first martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. 'Consider these, (said he,) and, observing their example, imitate their faith.'" This remembrance of the dead saints, with admiration of their virtues, and a desire to imitate them, is, says Dr. Macknight, the only worship which is due to them from the living.

**Considering the end of their conversation** ὧν αναθεωροῦντες τὴν ἐκβασιν τῆς ἀναστροφῆς· "The issue of whose course of life most carefully consider." They lived to get good and do good; they were faithful to their God and his cause; they suffered persecution; and for the testimony of Jesus died a violent death. God never left them; no, he never forsook them; so that they were happy in their afflictions, and glorious in their death. Carefully consider this; act as they did; keep the faith, and God will keep you.

**Verse 8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday** In all past times there was no way to the holiest but through the blood of Jesus, either actually shed, or significantly typified. To-day — he is the lamb newly slain, and continues to appear in the presence of God for us. For ever — to the conclusion of time, he will be the way, the truth, and the life, none coming to the Father but through him; and throughout eternity, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας, it will appear that all glorified human spirits owe their salvation to his infinite merit. This Jesus was thus witnessed of by your guides, who are already departed to glory. Remember HIM; remember them; and take heed to yourselves.

**Verse 9. Be not carried about** μὴ περιφερεσθε· Be not whirled about. But ABCD, and almost every other MS. of importance, with the Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Vulgate, and several of the Greek fathers, have μὴ παραφερεσθε, be not carried away, which is undoubtedly the true reading, and signifies here, do not apostatize; permit not yourselves to be carried off from Christ and his doctrine.

**Divers and strange doctrines.** διδαχαις, ποικιλαις· Variegated doctrines; those that blended the law and the Gospel, and brought in the

Levitical sacrifices and institutions in order to perfect the Christian system. Remember the old covenant is abolished; the new alone is in force.

Strange doctrines, *διδασκαίαις ξεναίαις*, foreign doctrines; such as have no apostolical authority to recommend them.

***That the heart be established with grace*** It is well to have the heart, the mind, and conscience, fully satisfied with the truth and efficacy of the Gospel; for so the word *χαρις* should be understood here, which is put in opposition to *βρωμασιν*, meats, signifying here the Levitical institutions, and especially its sacrifices, these being emphatically termed meats, because the offerers were permitted to feast upon them after the blood had been poured out before the Lord. See Leviticus 7:15; Deuteronomy 12:6, 7.

***Which have not profited them*** Because they neither took away guilt, cleansed the heart, nor gave power over sin.

**Verse 10. *We have an altar*** The altar is here put for the sacrifice on the altar; the Christian altar is the Christian sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus, with all the benefits of his passion and death. To these privileges they had no right who continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices, and to trust in them for remission of sins.

**Verse 11. *For the bodies of those beasts*** Though in making covenants, and in some victims offered according to the law, the flesh of the sacrifice was eaten by the offerers; yet the flesh of the sin-offering might no man eat: when the blood was sprinkled before the holy place to make an atonement for their souls, the skins, flesh, entrails, etc., were carried without the camp, and there entirely consumed by fire; and this entire consumption, according to the opinion of some, was intended to show that sin was not pardoned by such offerings. For, as eating the other sacrifices intimated they were made partakers of the benefits procured by those sacrifices, so, not being permitted to eat of the sin-offering proved that they had no benefit from it, and that they must look to the Christ, whose sacrifice is pointed out, that they might receive that real pardon of sin which the shedding of his blood could alone procure. While, therefore, they continued offering those sacrifices, and refused to acknowledge the Christ, they had no right to any of the blessings procured by him, and it is evident they could have no benefit from their own.

**Verse 12. *That he might sanctify the people*** That he might consecrate them to God, and make an atonement for their sins, he suffered without the gate at Jerusalem, as the sin-offering was consumed without the camp when the tabernacle abode in the wilderness. Perhaps all this was typical of the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices, and the termination of the whole Levitical system of worship. He left the city, denounced its final destruction, and abandoned it to its fate; and suffered without the gate to bring the Gentiles to God.

**Verse 13. *Let us go forth therefore unto him*** Let us leave this city and system, devoted to destruction, and take refuge in Jesus alone, bearing his reproach-being willing to be accounted the refuse of all things, and the worst of men, for his sake who bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and was put to death as a malefactor.

**Verse 14. *For here have we no continuing city*** Here is an elegant and forcible allusion to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem that was below was about to be burnt with fire, and erased to the ground; the Jerusalem that was from above was that alone which could be considered to be **μεινονσαν**, permanent. The words seem to say: “Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest: it is polluted:” About seven or eight years after this, Jerusalem was wholly destroyed.

**Verse 15. *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise*** He has now fulfilled all vision and prophecy, has offered the last bloody sacrifice which God will ever accept; and as he is the gift of God’s love to the world, let us through him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, this being the substitute for all the Levitical sacrifices.

The Jews allowed that, in the time of the Messiah, all sacrifices, except the sacrifice of praise, should cease. To this maxim the apostle appears to allude; and, understood in this way, his words are much more forcible. In Vayikra Rabba, sect. 9, fol. 153, and Rabbi Tanchum, fol. 55: “Rabbi Phineas, Rabbi Levi, and Rabbi Jochanan, from the authority of Rabbi Menachem of Galilee, said, In the time of the Messiah all sacrifice shall cease, except the sacrifice of praise.” This was, in effect, quoting the authority of one of their own maxims, that now was the time of the



was now abolished; and that no sacrifice would now be accepted of God, except the sacrifice of praise for the gift of his Son.

***That is, the fruit of our lips*** This expression is probably borrowed from Hosea 14:2, in the version of the Septuagint, **καρπον χειλεων** which in the Hebrew text is **פָּרִים שֶׁפִּתִּינוּ** parim sephatheinu, “the heifers of our lips.” This may refer primarily to the sacrifices, heifers, calves, etc., which they had vowed to God; so that the calves of their lips were the sacrifices which they had promised. But how could the Septuagint translate **פָּרִים** parim, calves, by **καρπον**, fruit? Very easily, if they had in their copy **פֶּרִי** peri, the mem being omitted; and thus the word would be literally fruit, and not calves. This reading, however, is not found in any of the MSS. hitherto collated.

**Verse 16. *But to do good and to communicate*** These are continual sacrifices which God requires, and which will spring from a sense of God’s love in Christ Jesus. Praise to God for his unspeakable gift, and acts of kindness to men for God’s sake. No reliance, even on the infinitely meritorious sacrifice of Christ, can be acceptable in the sight of God if a man have not love and charity towards his neighbor. Praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to God, with works of charity and mercy to man, are the sacrifices which every genuine follower of Christ must offer: and they are the proofs that a man belongs to Christ; and he who does not bear these fruits gives full evidence, whatever his creed may be, that he is no Christian.

**Verse 17. *Obey them that have the rule over you*** Obey your leaders, **τοις ηγουμενοις**. He is not fit to rule who is not capable of guiding. See on ver. 7. In the former verse the apostle exhorts them to remember those who had been their leaders, and to imitate their faith; in this he exhorts them to obey the leaders they now had, and to submit to their authority in all matters of doctrine and discipline, on the ground that they watched for their souls, and should have to give an account of their conduct to God. If this conduct were improper, they must give in their report before the great tribunal with grief; but in it must be given: if holy and pure, they would give it in with joy. It is an awful consideration that many pastors, who had loved their flocks as their own souls, shall be obliged to accuse them before God for either having rejected or neglected the great salvation.

**Verse 18. *Pray for us*** Even the success of apostles depended, in a certain way, on the prayers of the Church. Few Christian congregations feel, as they ought, that it is their bounden duty to pray for the success of the Gospel, both among themselves and in the world. The Church is weak, dark, poor, and imperfect, because it prays little.

***We trust we have a good conscience*** We are persuaded that we have a conscience that not only acquits us of all fraud and sinister design, but assures us that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have labored to promote the welfare of you and of all mankind.

***To live honestly.*** εν πασι καλως θελοντες αναστρεφεισθαι. Willing in all things to conduct ourselves well — to behave with decency and propriety.

**Verse 19. *The rather to do this*** That is, pray for us, that, being enabled to complete the work which God has given us here to do, we may be the sooner enabled to visit you. It is evident, from this, that the people to whom this epistle was written knew well who was the author of it; nor does there appear, in any place, any design in the writer to conceal his name, and how the epistle came to lack a name it is impossible to say. I have sometimes thought that a part of the beginning might have been lost, as it not only begins without a name, but begins very abruptly.

**Verse 20. *Now the God of peace*** We have often seen that peace among the Hebrews signifies prosperity of every kind. The God of peace is the same as the God of all blessedness, who has at his disposal all temporal and eternal good; who loves mankind, and has provided them a complete salvation.

***Brought again from the dead our Lord*** As our Lord's sacrificial death is considered as an atonement offered to the Divine justice, God's acceptance of it as an atonement is signified by his raising the human nature of Christ from the dead; and hence this raising of Christ is, with the utmost propriety, attributed to God the Father, as this proves his acceptance of the sacrificial offering.

***That great Shepherd of the sheep*** This is a title of our blessed Lord, given to him by the prophets; so Isaiah 40:11; He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his

bosom, and shall gently lead those which are with young: and Ezekiel 34:23; I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; even my servant David, (i.e. the beloved, viz. Jesus,) and he shall feed them, and be their shepherd: and Zechariah 13:7; Awake, O sword, against my shepherd-smite the shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered. In all these places the term shepherd is allowed to belong to our blessed Lord; and he appropriates it to himself, John 10:11, by calling himself the good Shepherd, who, lays down his life for the sheep.

***Through the blood of the everlasting covenant*** Some understand this in the following way, that “God brought back our Lord from the dead on account of his having shed his blood to procure the everlasting covenant.” Others, that the Lord Jesus became the great Shepherd and Savior of the sheep by shedding his blood to procure and ratify the everlasting covenant.” The sense, however, will appear much plainer if we connect this with the following verse: “Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, perfect in every good work to do his will.” The Christian system is termed the everlasting covenant, to distinguish it from the temporary covenant made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai; and to show that it is the last dispensation of grace to the world, and shall endure to the end of time.

**Verse 21. *Make you perfect* καταρτισια υμας.** Put you completely in joint. See the note on “2 Corinthians 13:9”, where the meaning of the original word is largely considered. From the following terms we see what the apostle meant by the perfection for which he prays. They were to do the will of God in every good work, from God working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight. 1. This necessarily implies a complete change in the whole soul, that God may be well pleased with whatsoever he sees in it; and this supposes its being cleansed from all sin, for God’s sight cannot be pleased with any thing that is unholy. 2. This complete inward purity is to produce an outward conformity to God’s will, so they were to be made perfect in every good work. 3. The perfection within and the perfection without were to be produced by the blood of the everlasting covenant; for although God is love, yet it is not consistent with his justice or holiness to communicate any good to mankind but through his Son, and through him as having died for the offenses of the human race.

*To whom be glory for ever.* As God does all in, by, and through Christ Jesus, to him be the honor of his own work ascribed through time and eternity. Amen.

**Verse 22. *Suffer the word of exhortation*** Bear the word or doctrine of this exhortation. This seems to be an epithet of this whole epistle: and as the apostle had in it shown the insufficiency of the Levitical system to atone for sin and save the soul; and had proved that it was the design of God that it should be abolished; and had proved also that it was now abolished by the coming of Christ, whom he had shown to be a greater priest than Aaron, higher than all the angels, the only Son of God as to his human nature, and the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; and that their city was shortly to be destroyed; he might suppose that they would feel prejudiced against him, and thus lose the benefit of his kind intentions toward them; therefore he entreats them to bear the exhortation which, notwithstanding the great extent of the subject, he had included in a short compass.

*I have written a letter unto you in few words.* Perhaps it would be better to translate **δια βραχεων επεστειλα υμιν**, I have written to you briefly, as **επιστελλειν** often signifies simply to write, and this appears to be its meaning here.

**Verse 23. *Know ye that our brother Timothy*** The word **ημων**, our, which is supplied by our translators, is very probably genuine, as it is found in ACD\*, ten others, the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, the Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Vulgate.

*Is set at liberty απολελυμενον.* Is sent away; for there is no evidence that Timothy had been imprisoned. It is probable that the apostle refers here to his being sent into Macedonia, Philippians 2:19-24, in order that he might bring the apostle an account of the affairs of the Church in that country. In none of St. Paul's epistles, written during his confinement in Rome, does he give any intimation of Timothy's imprisonment, although it appears from Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:1; Philemon 1; that he was with Paul during the greatest part of the time.

*With whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.* Therefore Paul himself, or the writer of this epistle, was now at liberty, as he had the disposal of his

person and time in his own power. Some suppose that Timothy did actually visit Paul about this time, and that both together visited the Churches in Judea.

**Verse 24.** *Salute all them that have the rule over you* Salute all your leaders or guides, *τοὺς ἡγουμένους ὑμῶν*. See on verses 7 and 17.

*And all the saints.* All the Christians; for this is the general meaning of the term in most parts of St. Paul's writings. But a Christian was then a saint, i.e. by profession a holy person; and most of the primitive Christians were actually such. But in process of time the term was applied to all that bore the Christian name; as elect, holy people, sanctified, etc., were to the nation of the Jews, when both their piety and morality were at a very low ebb.

*They of Italy salute you.* Therefore it is most likely that the writer of this epistle was then in some part of Italy, from which he had not as yet removed after his being released from prison. By they of Italy probably the apostle means the Jew's there who had embraced the Christian faith. These salutations show what a brotherly feeling existed in every part of the Christian Church; even those who had not seen each other yet loved one another, and felt deeply interested for each other's welfare.

**Verse 25.** *Grace be with you all.* May the Divine favor ever rest upon you and among you; and may you receive, from that source of all good, whatsoever is calculated to make you wise, holy, useful, and happy! And may you be enabled to persevere in the truth to the end of your lives! Amen. May it be so! May God seal the prayer by giving the blessings!

THE subscriptions to this epistle are, as in other cases, various and contradictory.

The VERSIONS are as follow:—

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written from Roman Italy, and sent by the hand of Timothy. — SYRIAC.

VULGATE nothing, in the present printed copies.

It was written from Italy by Timothy: with the assistance of God, disposing every thing right, the fourteen epistles of the blessed Paul are

completed, according to the copy from which they have been transcribed. May the Lord extend his benedictions to us. Amen. — ARABIC.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is completed. The end. — AETHIOPIC.

Written in Italy, and sent by Timothy. — COPTIC.

The MANUSCRIPTS, and ancient editions taken from MSS., are not more to be relied on.

To the Hebrews, written from Rome. — CODEX ALEXANDRINUS.

The epistles of Saint Paul the apostle are finished. — COLOPHON, at the end of this epistle; in one of the first printed Bibles; and in an ancient MS. of the Vulgate in my own collection.

The end of the Epistle to the Hebrews. — GREEK TEXT of the COMPLUTENSIAN EDITION.

The Epistle of the blessed Paul to the Hebrews is finished. — LATIN TEXT of ditto.

To the Hebrews. — The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews. — The Epistle to the Hebrews, written from Italy. — From Athens. — From Italy by Timothy. — Written in the Hebrew tongue, etc. — Various MSS.

Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy. — Common Greek Text.

That it was neither written from Athens, nor in the Hebrew tongue, is more than probable; and that it was not sent by Timothy, is evident from chap. 13:23. For the author, time, place, and people to whom sent, see the INTRODUCTION.

I. On the term “conscience,” as frequently occurring in this epistle, I beg leave to make a few observations.

Conscience is defined by some to be “that judgment which the rational soul passes on all her actions;” and is said to be a faculty of the soul itself, and consequently natural to it. Others state that it is a ray of Divine light. Milton calls it “God’s umpire;” and Dr. Young calls it a “god in man.” To me it seems to be no other than a faculty capable of receiving light and conviction from the Spirit of God; and answers the end in spiritual matters

to the soul, that the eye does to the body in the process of vision. The eye is not light in itself, nor is it capable of discerning any object, but by the instrumentality of solar or artificial light; but it has organs properly adapted to the reception of the rays of light, and the various images of the objects which they exhibit. When these are present to an eye the organs of which are perfect, then there is a discernment of those objects which are within the sphere of vision; but when the light is absent, there is no perception of the shape, dimensions, size, or color of any object, howsoever entire or perfect the optic nerve and the different humours may be.

In the same manner (comparing spiritual things with natural) the Spirit of God enlightens that eye of the soul which we call conscience; it penetrates it with its effulgence; and (speaking as human language will permit on the subject) it has powers properly adapted to the reception of the Spirit's emanations, which, when received, exhibit a real view of the situation, state, etc., of the soul, as it stands in reference to God and eternity. Thus the Scripture says, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit," etc., i.e. it shines into the conscience, and reflects throughout the soul a conviction, proportioned to the degree of light communicated, of condemnation or acquittance, according to the end of its coming.

The late Mr. J. Wesley's definition of conscience, taken in a Christian sense, is nearly the same with the above: "It is," says he, "that faculty of the soul which, by the assistance of the grace of God, sees at one and the same time, 1. Our own tempers and lives; the real nature and quality of our thoughts, words and actions. 2. The rule whereby we are to be directed. And 3. The agreement or disagreement therewith. To express this a little more largely: Conscience implies, first, the faculty a man has of knowing himself; of discerning, both in general and in particular, his temper, words, thoughts, and actions: but this is not possible for him to do, without the assistance of the Spirit of God; otherwise self-love, and indeed every other irregular passion, would disguise and wholly conceal him from himself. It implies, secondly, a knowledge of the rule whereby he is to be directed in every particular, which is no other than the written word of God. Conscience implies, thirdly, a knowledge that all his thoughts, and words, and actions are conformable to that rule. In all these offices of conscience, the unction of the holy One is indispensably needful. Without this, neither

could we clearly discern our lives and tempers, nor could we judge of the rule whereby we are to walk, nor of our conformity or disconformity to it. A good conscience is a Divine consciousness of walking in all things according to the written word of God. It seems, indeed, that there can be no conscience that has not a regard to God. I doubt whether the words right and wrong, according to the Christian system, do not imply, in the very idea of them, agreement and disagreement to the will and word of God. And if so, there is no such thing as conscience in a Christian, if we leave God out of the question.” Sermon on Conscience, page 332.

Some of the Greek fathers seem to consider it as an especial gift of God; a principle implanted immediately by himself. So Chrysostom, on Psa 7., speaking of conscience, says: *φυσικον γαρ εστι, και παρα του θεου ημιν παρα την αρχην εντεθεν*. It is a natural thing, but is planted in us by our God from our birth, In his homily on Isaiah 6:2, he explains himself more particularly: *θειον γαρ εστι, και παρα, θεου ταις ημετεραις ενιδρυμενον φυχαις*. It is a Divine principle, and is by God himself implanted in our souls. It is allowed on all hands that it is a recorder and judge of human actions, which cannot be corrupted, or be induced to bear a false testimony. Every sense of the body, and every faculty of the mind, may be weakened, obstructed, or impaired, but conscience; all other powers may be deceived or imposed on, but conscience. “No man,” says Chrysostom, “can flee from the judgment of his own conscience, which cannot be shunned. It cannot be corrupted; it cannot be terrified; it cannot be flattered or bribed; nor can its testimony be obscured by any lapse of time.” Epist. ad Olymp. This strongly argues its Divine nature; and, while the Spirit of God strives with man, conscience has its full influence, and is ever alert in the performance of its office. Cicero, in his oration for Milo, describes the power of conscience well in a few words: *Magna est vis conscientiae in utramque partem, ut neque timeant qui nihil commiserint, et poenam semper ante oculos versari putent qui peccarint*. “Great is the power of conscience in both cases; they fear nothing who know they have committed no evil; on the contrary, they who have sinned live in continual dread of punishment.” One of our poets has said, “‘Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all.” And had we been sure that Shakespeare was a scholar, we might have supposed that he had borrowed the thought from Menander.



ὁ συνιστορῶν αὐτῷ τι, καὶ ἡ θρασύτατος,  
ἢ συνεσις αὐτὸν δειλοτάτον εἶναι ποιεῖ.

*If a man be conscious of any crime,  
although he were the most undaunted of mankind,  
His conscience makes him the most timid of mortals.*

*Apud Stobaeum, Serm. xxiv., p. 192.*

Conscience is sometimes said to be good, bad, tender, seared, etc.: good, if it acquit or approve; bad, if it condemn or disapprove; tender, if it be alarmed at the least approach of evil, and severe in scrutinizing the actions of the mind or body; and seared, if it feel little alarm, etc., on the commission of sin. But these epithets can scarcely belong to it if the common definition of it be admitted; for how can it be said there is a “tender light,” a “dark or hardened light,” a “bad god,” etc., etc.? But on the other definition these terms are easily understood, and are exceedingly proper; e. g. “a good conscience” is one to which the Spirit of God has brought intelligence of the pardon of all the sins of the soul, and its reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ; and this good conscience retained, implies God’s continued approbation of such a person’s conduct; see Acts 23:1; 1 Timothy 1:5, 19; and here, Hebrews 13:18. “A bad or evil conscience” supposes a charge of guilt brought against the soul by the Holy Spirit, for the breach of the Divine laws; and which he makes known to it by conscience, as a medium of conveying his own light to the mind; see Hebrews 10:22; 1 Timothy 4:2; Titus 1:3. “A tender conscience” implies one fully irradiated by the light of the Holy Ghost, which enables the soul to view the good as good, and the evil as evil, in every important respect; which leads it to abominate the latter, and cleave to the former; and, if at any time it act in the smallest measure opposite to these views, it is severe in its reprehensions, and bitter in its regret. “A darkened or hardened conscience” means one that has little or none of this Divine light; consequently, the soul feels little or no self-reprehension for acts of transgression, but runs on in sin, and is not aware of the destruction that awaits it, heedless of counsel, and regardless of reproof. This state of the soul St. Paul calls by the name of a “seared conscience,” or one cauterized by repeated applications of sin, and resistings of the Holy Ghost; so that, being grieved and quenched, he has withdrawn his light and influence from it.

The word conscience itself ascertains the above explication with its deductions, being compounded of con, together, or with, and scio, to know, because it knows or convinces by or together with the Spirit of God. The Greek word **συνειδησις**, which is the only word used for conscience through the whole New Testament, has the very same meaning, being compounded of **συν**, together or with, and **ειδω**, to know. This is the same as **συνειδος**, which is the word generally used among ecclesiastical writers.

From the above view of the subject I think we are warranted in drawing the following inferences:—

1. All men have what is called conscience; and conscience plainly supposes the light or Spirit of God. 2. The Spirit of God is given to enlighten, convince, strengthen, and bring men back to God. 3. Therefore all men may be saved who attend to and coincide with the light and convictions communicated; for the God of the Christians does not give men his Spirit to enlighten, etc., merely to leave them without excuse; but that it may direct, strengthen, and lead them to himself, that they may be finally saved. 4. That this spirit comes from the grace of God is demonstrable from hence: it is a “good and perfect gift,” and St. James says all such come from the Father of lights. Again, it cannot be merited, for as it implies the influence of the Holy Spirit, it must be of an infinite value; yet it is GIVEN; that then which is not merited and yet is given must be of grace; not ineffectual grace, there is no such principle in the Godhead.

Thus it appears all men are partakers of the grace of God, for all acknowledge that conscience is common to all; and this is but a recipient faculty, and necessarily implies the spirit of grace given by Jesus Christ, not that the world might be thereby condemned, but that it might be saved. Nevertheless, multitudes, who are partakers of this heavenly gift, sin against it, lose it, and perish everlastingly, not through the deficiency of the gift, but through the abuse of it. I conclude that conscience is not a power of the soul, acting by or of itself; but a recipient faculty, in which that true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world has its especial operation.

II. In this chapter the apostle inculcates the duty of hospitality, particularly in respect to entertaining strangers; i.e. persons of whom we

know nothing, but that they are now in a state of distress, and require the necessaries of life. Some, says the apostle, have entertained angels without knowing them; and some, we may say, have entertained great men, kings, and emperors, without knowing them. By exercising this virtue many have gained; few have ever lost.

God, in many parts of his own word, is represented as the stranger's friend; and there is scarcely a duty in life which he inculcates in stronger terms than that of hospitality to strangers. The heathen highly applauded this virtue; and among them the person of a stranger was sacred, and supposed to be under the particular protection of Jove, Homer gives the sentiment in all its beauty when he puts the following words into the mouth of Eumaeus, when he addressed Ulysses, who appeared a forlorn stranger, and, being kindly received by him, implored in his behalf a Divine blessing:-

Ζεϋς τοι δοιη, ξεινε, και αθανατοι θεοι αλλοι  
 'οτι μαλιστα' εθελεις, οτι με προφρων υπεδεξο.  
 τον δ' απαμειβομενος προσεφης, ευμαιε συβωτα·  
 ξειν', ου μοι θεμις εστ', ουδ' ει κακιων σεθεν ελθοι,  
 ξεινον ατιμησαι· προς θαπ διος εισιν απαντες  
 ξεινοι τε, πτωχοι τε· δοσις δ' αλιγη τε φιλη τε  
 γιγνεται ημετερη. ODYSSEY., lib. xiv., v. 53.

*My gentle host, Jove grant thee, and the gods  
 All grant thee, for this deed thy best desire!  
 To whom the herd Eumaeus thus replied;  
 My guest, it were unjust to treat with scorn  
 The stranger, though a poorer should arrive  
 Than even thou; for all the poor that are,  
 And all the strangers, are the care of Jove.  
 Little, and with good will, is all that lies  
 Within my scope.*

COWPER.

The Scriptures which more particularly recommend this duty are the following: He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; Deuteronomy 10:18, 19. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Come, ye blessed of my Father, Matthew 25:35. Given to hospitality; Romans 12:13. Neglect not to entertain strangers; Hebrews 13:2.

“The entertaining of unknown strangers,” says Dr. Owen, “which was so great a virtue in ancient times, is almost driven out of the world by the wickedness of it. The false practices of some, with wicked designs, under the habit and pretense of strangers, on the one hand, and pretences for sordid covetousness on the other, have banished it from the earth. And there are enough who are called Christians who never once thought it to be their duty.” But it is vain to inculcate the duty where the spirit of it is not found; and we shall never find the spirit of it in any heart where the love of God and man does not rule.

Benevolent wishes of Be ye warmed and Be ye clothed are frequent enough; these cost nothing, and therefore can be readily used by the most parsimonious.

But to draw out a man’s soul to the hungry, to draw out his warmest affections, while he is drawing out, in order to divide with the destitute, the contents of his purse, belongs to the man of genuine feeling; and this can scarcely be expected where the compassionate mind that was in Christ does not rule. One bountiful meal to the poor may often be a preventive of death; for there are times in which a man may be brought so low for want of proper nourishment that, if he get not a timely supply, after-help comes in vain, nature being too far exhausted ever to recover itself, though the vital spark may linger long. One wholesome meal in time may be the means of enabling nature to contend successfully with after privations; and he who has afforded this meal to the destitute has saved a life. “But most who go about seeking relief are idle persons and impostors, and it would be sinful to relieve them.” When you know the applicant to be such, then refuse his suit; but if you have nothing but suspicion, which suspicion generally arises from an uncharitable and unfeeling heart, then beware how you indulge it. If, through such suspicion, a man should lose his life, God will require his blood at your hand.

Reader, permit me to relate an anecdote which I have heard from that most eminent man of God, the reverend John Wesley; it may put thee in mind to entertain strangers. “At Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where (says he) I was born, a poor woman came to a house in the market-place and begged a morsel of bread, saying, I am very hungry. The master of the house called her a lazy jade, and bade her be gone. She went forward, called at another

house, and asked for a little small-beer, saying, I am very thirsty. Here she was refused, and told to go to the workhouse. She struggled on to a third door and begged a little water, saying, I am faint. The owner drove her away, saying, He would encourage no common beggars. It was winter, and the snow lay upon the ground. The boys, seeing a poor ragged creature driven away from door to door, began to throw snow-balls at her. She went to a little distance, sat down on the ground, lifted up her eyes to heaven, reclined on the earth, and expired!" Here was a stranger; had the first to whom she applied relieved her with a morsel of bread, he would have saved her life, and not been guilty of blood. As the case stood, the woman was murdered; and those three householders will stand arraigned at the bar of God for her death. Reader, fear to send any person empty away. If you know him to be an impostor, why then give him nothing. But if you only suspect it, let not your suspicion be the rule of your conduct; give something, however little; because that little may be sufficient to preserve him, if in real want, from present death. If you know him not to be a knave, to you he may be an angel. God may have sent him to exercise your charity, and try your faith. It can never be a matter of regret to you that you gave an alms for God's sake, though you should afterwards find that the person to whom you gave it was both a hypocrite and impostor. Better to be imposed on by ninety-nine hypocrites out of a hundred applicants, than send one, like the poor Epworth woman, empty away.

Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition,

*Dec. 30, 1831*

— A. C.

## PREFACE

### TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

### JAMES.

THERE have been more doubts, and more diversity of opinion, concerning the author of this epistle, and the time in which it was written, than about most other parts of the New Testament. To enter at large into a discussion of the opinions of ancient and modern writers on this subject would tend but little to the establishment of truth, or to the edification of the reader. Lardner, Michaelis, and Macknight, have entered considerably into the controversy relative to the author, the time, and the canonical authority of this book; and to them the reader who wishes to see the difficulties with which the subject is pressed may have recourse.

This epistle, with those of Peter, John, and Jude, is termed catholic, **καθολικη**, from **κατα**, through, and **ολος**, the whole; for the application of which term OEcumenius, in cap. i. Jacobi, gives the following reason: **καθολικαι λεγονται αυται, οιονει εγκυκλιοι· ου γαρ αφωρισμενωσ εθνει ενι η πολει, αλλα καθολου τοις πιστοις** “These epistles are called catholic, universal, or circular, because they were not written to one nation or city, but to believers everywhere.”

Yet, as these epistles had some difficulty at first to get into general circulation, but at last were everywhere received, it is more likely that they obtained the term catholic from the circumstance of their being at last universally acknowledged as canonical; so that the word catholic is to be understood here in the same sense as canonical.

Who the writer of the epistle in question was, is difficult to say; all that we know certainly is, from his own words, that his name was James, and that he was a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus. Two persons of this

name are mentioned in the New Testament; James the son of Zebedee, called also James the elder; and James **του μικρου**, the less or the little one, called the son of Alpheus, and brother of our Lord: but whether one of these, or if one of them, which, or whether one of the same name different from both, are points that cannot be satisfactorily determined. Michaelis, who has examined the subject with his usual ability, leaves the matter in doubt; but leans to the opinion that James the son of Zebedee was the author, and that this epistle was written before any of those in the New Testament. Other great authorities ascribe it to James, called the brother of our Lord, who was president, or bishop, of the Church in Jerusalem. Even allowing this opinion to be correct, it is not agreed in what sense James is called our Lord's brother, there being four or five different opinions concerning the meaning of this term. From Matthew 13:55, 56, we learn that there were four persons called brethren of our Lord: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Now, it is generally allowed that the James here is the author of this epistle, and the Jude or Judas, mentioned with him, the author of that which stands last in this collection. But with respect to the meaning of the term brother, as here used, it will be necessary to state the opinions of learned men:—

1. It is supposed that these were children of Joseph, by a former marriage; this is a very ancient opinion; as there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Joseph was a widower when he married the blessed virgin.
2. They are supposed to have been children of Joseph and his wife Mary; all born after the birth of our Lord. This is an opinion extremely probable: see some reasons for it in the note on Matthew 13:56; see also on Matthew 1:25.
3. That they were called our Lord's brethren, because children of Joseph by the wife of one of his brothers, who had died childless, and whose widow Joseph took, according to the Mosaic law, to raise up seed to his deceased brother. This is very unlikely, because, in this case, it would have been only requisite for Joseph to have had one male by his brother's wife; but here we find four, besides several sisters.

4. That Cleophas, called also Alpheus, married a sister of the blessed virgin, called also Mary, by whom he had the above issue; and that these were called brethren of our Lord, from the common custom among the Hebrews, to term all the more immediately cognate branches of the same family, brothers' and sisters' children, i.e. cousins-german, brethren. These, therefore, being aunt's children of our Lord, are, according to this usage, called his brethren. The first and second of these opinions appear to me the most probable; though most modern writers are of the latter opinion.

That of the two James's, James the less was the author of this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks, following Lardner and others, is incontestable: I shall quote his abridgment of Lardner's arguments; but the point in question is not, in my opinion, made out by any of these writers.

“In the catalogue of the apostles, Matthew 10:2; Mark 3:17; Luke 6:14; Acts 1:13; we find two persons of the name of James; the first was the son of Zebedee, Matthew 10:2; the second in all the catalogues is called the son of Alpheus: one of these apostles is called, Galatians 1:19, the Lord's brother. Wherefore, as there were only twelve apostles, and as James the son of Zebedee, so far as we know, was in no respect related to our Lord, the apostle called James, the Lord's brother, must have been James the son of Alpheus, called also James the less or younger, whose relation to Christ will appear by comparing Mark 15:40, with John 19:25. In the former passage, Mark, speaking of the women who were present at the crucifixion, says: ‘There were also women looking on afar off, among whom were Mary Magdalen, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome.’ In the latter passage, John, speaking of the same women, says: ‘There stood by the cross of Jesus, his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary, the wife of Cleophas, and Mary Magdalen:’ wherefore, our Lord's mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas, mentioned by John, is in all probability the person whom Mark calls Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses; consequently, her sons, James and Joses, were our Lord's cousins-german by his mother. And as the Hebrews called all near relations brethren, it is more than probable that James the son of Alpheus, who was our Lord's cousin-german, is James the Lord's brother, mentioned Galatians 1:19. Three circumstances confirm this opinion: 1. James and Joses, the sons of Mary, our Lord's mother's



sister, are expressly called the brethren of Jesus, Matthew 13:55; Mark 6:3. 2. James, the son of our Lord's mother's sister, being distinguished from another James by the appellation of the less, Mark 15:40, there is good reason to suppose that he is the James whom Mark, in his catalogue, distinguishes from James the son of Zebedee, by the appellation of the son of Alphaeus. It is true, Mary the mother of James and of Joses, is called the wife of Cleophas, John 19:25: but Cleophas and Alphaeus are the same name differently pronounced; the one according to the Hebrew, and the other according to the Greek, orthography. 3. Of the persons called the brethren of Jesus, Matthew 13:55, there are three mentioned in the catalogue as APOSTLES: James, and Simon, and Judas. They, I suppose, are the brethren of the Lord, who are said, as apostles, to have had a right to lead about a sister or a wife, etc.; 1 Corinthians 9:5. Jerome likewise thought James the Lord's brother was so called because he was the son of Mary, our Lord's mother's sister; Art. Jacobus. Lardner, Canon., vol. iii. p. 63, says: 'Jerome seems to have been the first who said our Lord's brethren were the sons of his mother's sister; and this opinion was at length embraced by Augustine, and has prevailed very much of late, being the opinion of the Romanists in general, and of Lightfoot, Witsius, Lampe, and many of the Protestants. On the other hand, Origen, Epiphanius, and other ancient writers, both Greeks and Latins, were of opinion that James, the Lord's brother, was not the son of the virgin's sister, but of Joseph, our Lord's reputed father, by a former wife, who died before he espoused the virgin. Of the same opinion were Vossius, Basnage, and Cave, among the Protestants; and Valesius among the Romanists. Epiphanius and Theophylact supposed that Joseph's first wife was the widow of Alphaeus, who, being Joseph's brother, Joseph married her to raise up seed to him; and therefore James, the issue of that marriage, was fitly called the son of Alphaeus, and brother of our Lord.' But these suppositions might have been spared, if the ancients and moderns had recollected that near relations were called brethren by the Hebrews, and that Alphaeus and Cleophas are the same names differently written; James the less, the son of Alphaeus, being not only the Lord's near relation, but an apostle, whom, as is generally supposed, he honored in a particular manner, by appearing to him alone, after his resurrection; 1 Corinthians 15:7. These circumstances, together with his own personal merit, rendered him of such note among the apostles that they appointed him to reside at Jerusalem, and to

superintend the Church there. This appointment, Lardner says, was made soon after the martyrdom of Stephen; and, in support of this opinion, observes, ‘that Peter always speaks first, as president among the apostles, until after the choice of the seven deacons. Every thing said of St. James, after that, implies his presiding in the Church at Jerusalem.’ Canon., vol. iii. p. 28. For example, when the apostles and elders at Jerusalem came together to consider whether it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, after there had been much disputing, Peter spake, Acts 15:7, then Barnabas and Paul, Acts 15:12. And when they had ended, James summed up the whole, and proposed the terms on which the Gentiles were to be received into the Church, Acts 15:19-21; to which the whole assembly agreed, and wrote letters to the Gentiles, conformably to the opinion of James, Acts 15:22-29. From this it is inferred, that James presided in the council of Jerusalem, because he was president of the Church in that city.

“Chrysostom, in his Homily on Acts 15, says: ‘James was bishop of Jerusalem, and therefore spoke last.’ In the time of this council, Paul communicated the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles to three of the apostles, whom he calls pillars; and tells us that, when they perceived the inspiration and miraculous powers which he possessed, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, mentioning James first, Galatians 2:9: ‘And knowing the grace that was bestowed on me, James, Cephas, and John, who were pillars, gave to me and Barnabas the right hand of fellowship.’ This implies that James, whom, in the first chapter, he had called the Lord’s brother, was not only an apostle, but the presiding apostle in the Church at Jerusalem. In the same chapter, Paul, giving an account of what happened after the council, says, Galatians 2:11: ‘When Peter was come to Antioch, before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew, and separated himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision.’ This shows that James resided at Jerusalem, and presided in the Church there, and was greatly respected by the Jewish believers. The same circumstance appears from Acts 21:17, where, giving an account of Paul’s journey to Jerusalem, with the collections from the saints in Judea, Luke says, Acts 21:18: ‘Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.’ Farther, the respect in which James was held by the apostles appears from two facts recorded by Luke: the first is, when Paul came to Jerusalem, three years

after his conversion, Barnabas took him, and brought him Peter and James, as the chief apostles. Compare Acts 9:27 with Galatians 1:19. The second fact is, after Peter was miraculously delivered out of prison, about the time of the passover, in the year 44, 'he came to the house of Mary-where many were gathered together praying; (Acts 12:12;) and when he had declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, he said, Go, show these things to James, and to the brethren;' Acts 12:17. These particulars are mentioned by Lardner, and before him by Whitby and Cave, to show that James, the Lord's brother, was really an apostle, in the strict acceptance of the word; consequently, that Eusebius was mistaken when he placed him among the seventy disciples; E. H., lib. vii. c. 12.

“That the Epistle of James was early esteemed an inspired writing, is evident from the following fact: that while the Second Epistle of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation, are omitted in the first Syriac translation of the New Testament, (the Peshito,) which was made in the beginning of the second century for the use of the converted Jews; the Epistle of James has found a place in it, equally with the books which were never called in question. This is an argument of great weight; for certainly the Jewish believers, to whom that epistle was addressed and delivered, were much better judges of its authenticity than the converted Gentiles, to whom it was not sent, and who perhaps had no opportunity of being acquainted with it till long after it was written. Wherefore its being received by the Jewish believers is an undeniable proof that they knew it to be written by James the apostle; whereas the ignorance of the Gentile believers, concerning this epistle, is not even a presumption against its authenticity.

“That the converted Gentiles had little knowledge of the Epistle of James in the first ages, may have been owing to various causes; such as, that it was addressed to the Jews, and that the matters contained in it were personal to the Jews. For on these accounts the Jewish believers may have thought it not necessary to communicate it to the Gentiles. And when it was made known to them, they may have scrupled to receive it as an inspired writing for the following reasons: 1. The writer does not, in the inscription, take the title of an apostle, but calls himself simply James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ. 2. Many of the ancients, by calling the writer of this epistle James the Just, have rendered his

apostleship doubtful. 3. As they have done, likewise, by speaking of him commonly as bishop of Jerusalem, and not as an apostle of Christ. It is little wonder, therefore, that this epistle was not received generally by the converted Gentiles; consequently that it was not often quoted by them in their writings. But afterwards, when it was considered that this epistle was from the beginning received by the Jewish believers, and that it was translated into the Syriac language for their use; and that Paul, though an apostle, sometimes contented himself with the appellation of a servant of Christ, Philippians 1:1; Philemon 1; and sometimes took no appellation but his own name; 1 Thessalonians 1:1; 2 Thessalonians 1:1; and that the apostle John did not, in any of his epistles, call himself an apostle; the title which the author of the Epistle of James had to be an apostle was no longer doubted, but he was generally acknowledged to be James, the son of Alphaeus, and the Lord's brother; and his epistle, after an accurate examination, was received as an inspired writing. So Estius tells us, who affirms that after the fourth century no Church nor ecclesiastical writer is found who ever doubted of the authority of this epistle; but, on the contrary; all the catalogues of the books of Scripture published, whether by general or provincial councils, or by Roman bishops, or other orthodox writers, since the fourth century, constantly number it among the canonical Scriptures.

“With respect to what is remarked by Eusebius, that there are not many ancient writers who have quoted the Epistle of James, learned men have observed that Clement of Rome has quoted it four several times; and so does Ignatius in his genuine Epistle to the Ephesians, sec. 10, 12, 17, 30; and Origen in his thirteenth Homily on Genesis, sec. 5. That it was not more generally quoted by the ancients, besides the things already mentioned, may have been owing to the following reasons: 1. Being written to the whole Jewish nation to correct the errors and vices which prevailed among them, the Gentiles may have thought themselves little concerned with it, and may have been at no pains to procure copies of it; by which means it was not so generally known among them as some other books of Scripture. 2. The seeming opposition of the doctrine of this epistle to the doctrine of Paul, concerning justification by faith without the works of the law, may have occasioned it to be less regarded by the most ancient writers; just as it was in later times, on the same account, rejected by

Luther, who, to show his contempt of it, called it (*epistola straminea*) a strawy or chaffy epistle.

“To conclude, the authority of the Epistle of James, as an inspired writing, is abundantly established, in Mill’s opinion, by the Apostles Paul and Peter, who have in their writings many sentiments and expressions similar to those contained in this epistle; for example:-

1 Peter 1:3: Who hath begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ. James 1:18: Having willed it, he hath begotten us by the word.

Romans 5:3, 4: Knowing that affliction worketh out patience; and patience experience. James 1:3: Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh out patience.

Romans 2:13: That the hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. James 1:22: And be ye doers of the law, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves by false reasoning.

Romans 7:23: I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind. 1 Peter 2:11: Lusts which war against the soul. James 4:1: Come they not hence, even from your lusts, which war in your members?

1 Peter 5:8, 9: Your adversary the devil; whom resist, steadfast in the faith. James 4:7: Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

1 Peter 5:6: Be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you. James 4:10: Be humbled in the presence of God, and he will lift you up.

Romans 14:4: Who art thou that condemnest another man’s household servant? James 4:12: Thou, who art thou that condemnest another?

1 Peter 4:8: Love covereth a multitude of sins. James 5:20: Will cover a

decisive nor satisfactory evidence on this subject; and that it is arguing in a circle to deduce the evidence of its authenticity from the apostleship of James the less, because this person is not proved to be its author. The chief and proper evidence of its being canonical must be taken from the fact that it was universally received by the Church of Christ, and without scruple incorporated with those writings, which were, on all hands, allowed to have been given by the inspiration of God.

Before I conclude, I shall mention the opinion of Michaelis relative to the author of this epistle. "All things considered," says he, "I see no ground for the assertion that James, the son of Zebedee, was not the author of this epistle. One circumstance affords, at least, a presumptive argument in favor of the opinion that it was really written by the elder James, and at a time when the Gospel had not been propagated among the Gentiles; namely, that it contains no exhortations to harmony between the Jewish and Gentile converts, which, after the time that the Gentiles were admitted into the Church, became absolutely necessary. Had it been written after the apostolic council of Jerusalem, mentioned Acts 15, and by the younger James, we might have expected that, at least, some allusion would be made in it to the decree of that council, which was propounded by the younger James in favor of the Gentile converts; and that the epistle would contain an admonition to the Jewish converts, to consider the Gentile converts as their brethren." — Introduction to the New Testament.

The epistle itself is entirely different in its complexion from all those in the sacred canon; the style and manner are more that of a Jewish prophet than a Christian apostle. It scarcely touches on any subject purely Christian. Our blessed Lord is only mentioned twice in it, James 1:1; 2:1; but it has nothing of his miracles or teaching, of his death or resurrection, nor of any redemption by him. It begins without any apostolical salutation, and ends without any apostolical benediction. In short, had it not been for the two slight notices of our blessed Lord, we had not known it was the work of any Christian writer. It may be considered a sort of connecting link between Judaism and Christianity, as the ministry of John Baptist was between the old covenant and the new. There is neither plan nor arrangement in it; but it contains many invaluable lessons which no serious person can read without profit.

James the less was martyred at Jerusalem about A. D. 62: and the epistle is supposed to have been written a short time before his death. Though I believe it to be the work of an unknown author, not long after the ascension of our Lord, I shall follow the usual chronology, and date it in the year 61; not because I think that to be the true date, but because it is what is generally adopted.

# THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

## JAMES.

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5569.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5563.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5553.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4065.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4289.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3821.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4420.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2409.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3163.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1001.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 808.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 813.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 814.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 373.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 109.
- Year of the Julian era, 106.
- Year of the Spanish era, 99.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 65.



- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 61.
- Year of Porcius Festus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 12.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 2.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 62.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 5; or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 2, or the year before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 14.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, D.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the XIth of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the twenty-second of March, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the IVth of the Calends of April, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 29th of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 14.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 22.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 22, 24, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 28, 0, 0.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 1.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Caesar, properly the first Roman emperor, 8.
- Roman Consuls, C. Caesonius Paetus and C. Petronius Turpilianus.

## CHAPTER 1

*He addresses the dispersed of the twelve tribes, 1. Shows that they should rejoice under the cross, because of the spiritual good which they may derive from it, especially in the increase and perfecting of their patience, 2-4. They are exhorted to ask wisdom of God, who gives liberally to all, 5. But they must ask in faith, and not with a doubting mind, 6-8. Directions to the rich and the poor, 9-11. The blessedness of the man that endures trials, 12. How men are tempted and drawn away from God, 13-15. God is the Father of lights, and all good proceeds from him, 16-18. Cautions against hasty words and wrong tempers, 19-21. We should be doers of the word, and not hearers merely, lest we resemble those who, beholding their natural face in a glass, when it is removed forget what manner of persons they were, 22-24. We should look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, 25. The nature and properties of pure religion, 26, 27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *James, a servant of God*** For an account of this person, or rather for the conjectures concerning him, see the preface. He neither calls himself an apostle, nor does he say that he was the brother of Christ, or bishop of Jerusalem; whether he was James the elder, son of Zebedee, or James the less, called our Lord's brother, or some other person of the same name, we know not. The assertions of writers concerning these points are worthy of no regard. The Church has always received him as an apostle of Christ.

***To the twelve tribes-scattered abroad*** To the Jews, whether converted to Christianity or not, who lived out of Judea, and sojourned among the Gentiles for the purpose of trade or commerce. At this time there were Jews partly traveling, partly sojourning, and partly resident in most parts of the civilized world; particularly in Asia, Greece, Egypt, and Italy. I see no reason for restricting it to Jewish believers only; it was sent to all whom it might concern, but particularly to those who had received the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; much less must we confine it to those who

were scattered abroad at the persecution raised concerning Stephen, Acts 8:1, etc.; Acts 11:19, etc. That the twelve tribes were in actual existence when James wrote this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks evident from the following facts: “1. Notwithstanding Cyrus allowed all the Jews in his dominions to return to their own land, many of them did not return. This happened agreeably to God’s purpose, in permitting them to be carried captive into Assyria and Babylonia; for he intended to make himself known among the heathens, by means of the knowledge of his being and perfections, which the Jews, in their dispersion, would communicate to them. This also was the reason that God determined that the ten tribes should never return to their own land, Hosea 1:6; 8:8; 9:3, 15-17. 2. That, comparatively speaking, few of the twelve tribes returned in consequence of Cyrus’s decree, but continued to live among the Gentiles, appears from this: that in the days of Ahasuerus, one of the successors of Cyrus, who reigned from India to Aethiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, Esther 3:8, The Jews were dispersed among the people in all the provinces of his kingdom, and their laws were diverse from the laws of all other people, and they did not keep the king’s laws; so that, by adhering to their own usages, they kept themselves distinct from all the nations among whom they lived. 3. On the day of pentecost, which happened next after our Lord’s ascension, Acts 2:5, 9, There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, etc.; so numerous were the Jews, and so widely dispersed through all the countries of the world. 4. When Paul traveled through Asia and Europe, he found the Jews so numerous, that in all the noted cities of the Gentiles they had synagogues in which they assembled for the worship of God, and were joined by multitudes of proselytes from among the heathens, to whom likewise he preached the Gospel. 6. The same apostle, in his speech to King Agrippa, affirmed that the twelve tribes were then existing, and that they served God day and night, in expectation of the promise made to the fathers, Acts 26:6. 6. Josephus, Ant. i. 14, cap. 12, tells us that one region could not contain the Jews, but they dwelt in most of the flourishing cities of Asia and Europe, in the islands and continent, not much less in number than the heathen inhabitants. From all this it is evident that the Jews of the dispersion were more numerous than even the Jews in Judea, and that James very properly inscribed this letter to the twelve tribes which were in the dispersion,

seeing the twelve tribes really existed then, and do still exist, although not distinguished by separate habitations, as they were anciently in their own land.

**Greeting.** χαρειν· Health; a mere expression of benevolence, a wish for their prosperity; a common form of salutation; see Acts 15:23; 23:26; 2 John 11.

**Verse 2. *Count it all joy*** The word πειρασμος, which we translate temptation, signifies affliction, persecution, or trial of any kind; and in this sense it is used here, not intending diabolic suggestion, or what is generally understood by the word temptation.

**Verse 3. *The trying of your faith*** Trials put religion, and all the graces of which it is composed to proof; the man that stands in such trials gives proof that his religion is sound, and the evidence afforded to his own mind induces him to take courage, bear patiently, and persevere.

**Verse 4. *Let patience have her perfect work*** That is, Continue faithful, and your patience will be crowned with its full reward; for in this sense is εργον, which we translate work, to be understood. It is any effect produced by a cause, as interest from money, fruit from tillage, gain from labor, a reward for services performed; the perfect work is the full reward. See many examples in Kypke.

***That ye may be perfect and entire*** τελειοι, Fully instructed, in every part of the doctrine of God, and in his whole will concerning you. ὀλοκληροι, having all your parts, members, and portions; that ye may have every grace which constitutes the mind that was in Christ, so that your knowledge and holiness may be complete, and bear a proper proportion to each other. These expressions in their present application are by some thought to be borrowed from the Grecian games: the man was τελειος, perfect, who in any of the athletic exercises had got the victory; he was ολοκληρος, entire, having every thing complete, who had the victory in the pentathlon, in each of the five exercises. Of this use in the last term I do not recollect an example, and therefore think the expressions are borrowed from the sacrifices under the law. A victim was τελειος, perfect, that was perfectly sound, having no disease; it was ολοκληρος, entire, if it had all its members, having nothing redundant, nothing

deficient. Be then to the Lord what he required his sacrifices to be; let your whole heart, your body, soul, and spirit, be sanctified to the Lord of hosts, that he may fill you with all his fullness.

**Verse 5. *If any of you lack wisdom*** Wisdom signifies in general knowledge of the best end, and the best means of attaining it; but in Scripture it signifies the same as true religion, the thorough practical knowledge of God, of one's self, and of a Savior.

***Let him ask of God*** Because God is the only teacher of this wisdom.

***That giveth to all men liberally*** Who has all good, and gives all necessary good to every one that asks fervently. He who does not ask thus does not feel his need of Divine teaching. The ancient Greek maxim appears at first view strange, but it is literally true:-

αρχη γνωσεως της αγνοιας η γνωσις.

*“The knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge.”*

In knowledge we may distinguish these four things:—

1. INTELLIGENCE, the object of which is intuitive truths.
2. WISDOM, which is employed in finding out the best end.
3. PRUDENCE, which regulates the whole conduct through life.
4. ART, which provides infallible rules to reason by.

**Verse 6. *Let him ask in faith*** Believing that God IS; that he has all good; and that he is ever ready to impart to his creatures whatever they need.

***Nothing wavering.*** μηδεν διακρινομενος· Not judging otherwise; having no doubt concerning the truth of these grand and fundamental principles, never supposing that God will permit him to ask in vain, when he asks sincerely and fervently. Let him not hesitate, let him not be irresolute; no man can believe too much good of God.

***Is like a wave of the sea*** The man who is not thoroughly persuaded that if he ask of God he shall receive, resembles a wave of the sea; he is in a state

of continual agitation; driven by the wind, and tossed: now rising by hope, then sinking by despair.

**Verse 7. *Let not that man think*** The man whose mind is divided, who is not properly persuaded either of his own wants or God's sufficiency. Such persons may pray, but having no faith, they can get no answer.

**Verse 8. *A double-minded man*** ἀνὴρ διψυχός· The man of two souls, who has one for earth, and another for heaven; who wishes to secure both worlds; he will not give up earth, and he is loth to let heaven go. This was a usual term among the Jews, to express the man who attempted to worship God, and yet retained the love of the creature. Rabbi Tanchum, fol. 84, on Deuteronomy 26:17, said: "Behold, the Scripture exhorts the Israelites, and tells them when they pray, לֹא יִהְיֶה לָהֶם שְׂתֵי לִבָּבוֹת, lo yiyeh lahem shetey lebaboth, that they should not have two hearts, one for the holy blessed God, and one for something else." A man of this character is continually distracted; he will neither let earth nor heaven go, and yet he can have but one. Perhaps St. James refers to those Jews who were endeavoring to incorporate the law with the Gospel, who were divided in their minds and affections, not willing to give up the Levitical rites, and yet unwilling to renounce the Gospel. Such persons could make no progress in Divine things.

**Verse 9. *Let the brother of low degree*** The poor, destitute Christian may glory in the cross of Christ, and the blessed hope laid up for him in heaven; for, being a child of God, he is an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

**Verse 10. *But the rich, in that he is made low*** ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει· In his humiliation — in his being brought to the foot of the cross to receive, as a poor and miserable sinner, redemption through the blood of the cross: and especially let him rejoice in this, because all outward glory is only as the flower of the field, and, like that, will wither and perish.

**Verse 11. *For the sun is no sooner risen*** We need not pursue this metaphor, as St. James' meaning is sufficiently clear: All human things are transitory; rise and fall, or increase and decay, belong to all the productions of the earth, and to all its inhabitants. This is unavoidable, for in many cases the very cause of their growth becomes the cause of their decay and destruction. The sun by its genial heat nourishes and supports all plants

and animals; but when it arises with a burning heat, the atmosphere not being tempered with a sufficiency of moist vapours, the juices are exhaled from the plants; the earth, for lack of moisture, cannot afford a sufficient supply; vegetation becomes checked; and the plants soon wither and die. Earthly possessions are subject to similar mutations. God gives and resumes them at his pleasure, and for reasons which he seldom explains to man. He shows them to be uncertain, that they may never become an object of confidence to his followers, and that they may put their whole trust in God. If for righteousness' sake any of those who were in affluence suffer loss, or spoiling of their goods, they should consider that, while they have gained that of infinite worth, they have lost what is but of little value, and which in the nature of things they must soon part with, though they should suffer nothing on account of religion.

**Verse 12. *Blessed is the man that endureth temptation*** This is a mere Jewish sentiment, and on it the Jews speak some excellent things. In Shemoth Rabba, sec. 31, fol. 129, and in Rab. Tanchum, fol. 29, 4, we have these words: “Blessed is the man **שְׂהַיָּה עוֹמֵד בְּנִסְיוֹנוֹ** shehayah omed benisyono who stands in his temptation; for there is no man whom God does not try. He tries the rich, to see if they will open their hands to the poor. He tries the poor, to see if they will receive affliction and not murmur. If, therefore, the rich stand in his temptation, and give alms to the poor, he shall enjoy his riches in this world, and his horn shall be exalted in the world to come, and the holy blessed God shall deliver him from the punishment of hell. If the poor stand in his temptation, and do not repine, (kick back,) he shall have double in the world to come.” This is exactly the sentiment of James. Every man is in this life in a state of temptation or trial, and in this state he is a candidate for another and a better world; he that stands in his trial shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. It is only love to God that can enable a man to endure the trials of life. Love feels no loads; all practicable things are possible to him who loveth.

There may be an allusion here to the contests in the Grecian games. He is crowned who conquers; and none else.

**Verse 13. *Let no man say*** Lest the former sentiment should be misapplied, as the word temptation has two grand meanings, solicitation to

sin, and trial from providential situation or circumstances, James, taking up the word in the former sense, after having used it in the latter, says: Let no man say, when he is tempted, (solicited to sin,) I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he (thus) any man. Thus the author has explained and guarded his meaning.

**Verse 14. *But every man is tempted*** Successfully solicited to sin, when he is drawn away of his own lust — when, giving way to the evil propensity of his own heart, he does that to which he is solicited by the enemy of his soul.

Among the rabbins we find some fine sayings on this subject. In Midrash hanaalam, fol. 20, and Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 17, it is said: “This is the custom of evil concupiscence, **צַר הָרַע** yetser hara: To-day it saith, Do this; to-morrow, Worship an idol. The man goes and worships. Again it saith, Be angry.”

“Evil concupiscence is, at the beginning, like the thread of a spider’s web; afterwards it is like a cart rope.” Sanhedrim, fol. 99.

In the words, drawn away by his own lust and enticed, **υπο της ιδιας επιθυμιας εξελκομενος και δελεαζομενος**, there is a double metaphor; the first referring to the dragging a fish out of the water by a hook which it had swallowed, because concealed by a bait; the second, to the enticements of impure women, who draw away the unwary into their snares, and involve them in their ruin. Illicit connections of this kind the writer has clearly in view; and every word that he uses refers to something of this nature, as the following verse shows.

**Verse 15. *When lust hath conceived*** When the evil propensity works unchecked, it bringeth forth sin — the evil act between the parties is perpetrated.

***And sin, when it is finished*** When this breach of the law of God and of innocence has been a sufficient time completed, it bringeth forth death — the spurious offspring is the fruit of the criminal connection, and the evidence of that death or punishment due to the transgressors.

Any person acquainted with the import of the verbs **συλλαμβανειν**, **τικτειν**, and **αποκυειν**, will see that this is the metaphor, and that I have



not exhausted it. **συλλαμβανω** signifies concipio sobolem, quae comprehenditur utero; concipio foetum;- **τικτω**, pario, genero, efficio;-**αποκυεω** ex **απο** et **κυω**, praegnans sum, in utero gero. Verbum proprium praegnantium, quae foetum maturum emittunt. Interdum etiam gignendi notionem habet. — MAIUS, Obser. Sacr., vol. ii., page 184. Kypke and Schleusner.

Sin is a small matter in its commencement; but by indulgence it grows great, and multiplies itself beyond all calculation. To use the rabbinical metaphor lately adduced, it is, in the commencement, like the thread of a spider's web — almost imperceptible through its extreme tenuity or fineness, and as easily broken, for it is as yet but a simple irregular imagination; afterwards it becomes like a cart rope — it has, by being indulged produced strong desire and delight; next consent; then, time, place, and opportunity serving, that which was conceived in the mind, and finished in that purpose, is consummated by act.

“The soul, which the Greek philosophers considered as the seat of the appetites and passions, is called by Philo **το θηλυ**, the female part of our nature; and the spirit **το αρρεν**, the male part. In allusion to this notion, James represents men's lust as a harlot; which entices their understanding and will into its impure embraces, and from that conjunction conceives sin. Sin, being brought forth, immediately acts, and is nourished by frequent repetition, till at length it gains such strength that in its turn it begets death. This is the true genealogy of sin and death. Lust is the mother of sin, and sin the mother of death, and the sinner the parent of both.” See Macknight.

**Verse 16. *Do not err*** By supposing that God is the author of sin, or that he impels any man to commit it.

**Verse 17. *Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above*** Whatever is good is from God; whatever is evil is from man himself. As from the sun, which is the father or fountain of light, all light comes; so from GOD, who is the infinite Fountain, Father, and Source of good, all good comes. And whatever can be called good, or pure, or light, or excellence of any kind, must necessarily spring from him, as he is the only source of all goodness and perfection.

***With whom is no variableness*** The sun, the fountain of light to the whole of our system, may be obscured by clouds; or the different bodies which revolve round him, and particularly the earth, may from time to time suffer a diminution of his light by the intervention of other bodies eclipsing his splendor; and his apparent tropical variation, shadow of turning; when, for instance, in our winter, he has declined to the southern tropic, the tropic of Capricorn, so that our days are greatly shortened, and we suffer in consequence a great diminution both of light and heat. But there is nothing of this kind with God; he is never affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. He occupies no one place in the universe; he fills the heavens and the earth, is everywhere present, sees all, pervades all, and shines upon all; dispenses his blessings equally to the universe; hates nothing that he has made; is loving to every man; and his tender mercies are over all his works: therefore he is not affected with evil, nor does he tempt, or influence to sin, any man. The sun, the source of light, rises and sets with a continual variety as to the times of both, and the length of the time in which, in the course of three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-eight seconds, it has its revolution through the ecliptic, or rather the earth has its revolution round the sun; and by which its light and heat are, to the inhabitants of the earth, either constantly increasing or decreasing: but God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, is eternally the same, dispensing his good and perfect gifts — his earthly and heavenly blessings, to all his creatures, ever unclouded in himself, and ever nilling EVIL and willing GOOD. Men may hide themselves from his light by the works of darkness, as owls and bats hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth during the prevalency of the solar light: but his good will to his creatures is permanent; he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may come unto him and live; and no man walks in wretchedness or misery but he who will not come unto God that he may have life. See diagram and notes at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 18. *Of his own will begat he us*** God's will here is opposed to the lust of man, James 1:15; his truth, the means of human salvation, to the sinful means referred to in the above verse; and the new creatures, to the sin conceived and brought forth, as above. As the will of God is essentially good, all its productions must be good also; as it is infinitely pure, all its productions must be holy. The word or doctrine of truth, what St. Paul

calls the word of the truth of the Gospel, Colossians 1:5, is the means which God uses to convert souls.

**A kind of first fruits** By creatures we are here to understand the Gentiles, and by first fruits the Jews, to whom the Gospel was first sent; and those of them that believed were the first fruits of that astonishing harvest which God has since reaped over the whole Gentile world. See the notes on Romans 8:19, etc. There is a remarkable saying in Philo on this subject, Deuteronomy Allegoris, lib. ii. p. 101: God begat Isaac, for he is the father of the perfect nature, *σπειρων εν ταις ψυχαις*, sowing seed in souls, and begetting happiness.

**Verse 19. Swift to hear** Talk little and work much, is a rabbinical adage. — Pirkey Aboth, cap. i. 15.

The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing. — Bava Metzia, fol. 87.

The son of Sirach says, cap. v. 11: *γινου ταχυς εν τη ακροσει σου, και εν μακροθυμια φθεγγου αποκρισιν*. “Be swift to hear, and with deep consideration give answer.”

**Slow to wrath** “There are four kinds of dispositions,” says the Midrash hanaalam, cap. v. 11: “First, Those who are easily incensed, and easily pacified; these gain on one hand, and lose on the other. Secondly, Those who are not easily incensed, but are difficult to be appeased; these lose on the one hand, and gain on the other. Thirdly, Those who are difficult to be incensed, and are easily appeased; these are the good. Fourthly, Those who are easily angered, and difficult to be appeased; these are the wicked.”

Those who are hasty in speech are generally of a peevish or angry disposition. A person who is careful to consider what he says, is not likely to be soon angry.

**Verse 20. The wrath of man** A furious zeal in matters of religion is detestable in the sight of God; he will have no sacrifice that is not consumed by fire from his own altar. The zeal that made the Papists persecute and burn the Protestants, was kindled in hell. This was the wrath of man, and did not work any righteous act for God; nor was it the means of working righteousness in others; the bad fruit of a bad tree. And

do they still vindicate these cruelties? Yes: for still they maintain that no faith is to be kept with heretics, and they acknowledge the inquisition.

**Verse 21. *All filthiness* πασαν ροπαριαν.** This word signifies any impurity that cleaves to the body; but applied to the mind, it implies all impure and unholy affections, such as those spoken of James 1:15, which pollute the soul; in this sense it is used by the best Greek writers.

***Superfluity of naughtiness* περισσειαν κακιας;** The overflowing of wickedness. Perhaps there is an allusion here to the part cut off in circumcision, which was the emblem of impure desire; and to lessen that propensity, God, in his mercy, enacted this rite. Put all these evil dispositions aside, for they blind the soul, and render it incapable of receiving any good, even from that ingrafted word of God which otherwise would have saved their souls.

***The ingrafted word*** That doctrine which has already been planted among you, which has brought forth fruit in all them that have meekly and humbly received it, and is as powerful to save your souls as the souls of those who have already believed. I think this to be the meaning of **εμφυτον λογον**, the ingrafted word or doctrine. The seed of life had been sown in the land; many of them had received it to their salvation; others had partially credited it, but not so as to produce in them any saving effects. Besides, they appear to have taken up with other doctrines, from which they had got no salvation; he therefore exhorts them to receive the doctrine of Christ, which would be the means of saving them unto eternal life. And when those who were Jews, and who had been originally planted by God as altogether a right vine, received the faith of the Gospel, it is represented as being ingrafted on that right stock, the pure knowledge of the true God and his holy moral law. This indeed was a good stock on which to implant Christianity. This appears to be what the apostle means by the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul.

**Verse 22. *But be ye doers of the word*** They had heard this doctrine; they had believed it; but they had put it to no practical use. They were downright Antinomians, who put a sort of stupid, inactive faith in the place of all moral righteousness. This is sufficiently evident from the second chapter.

**Deceiving your own selves.** παραλογιζομενοι εαυτους· Imposing on your own selves by sophistical arguments; this is the meaning of the words. They had reasoned themselves into a state of carnal security, and the object of St. James is, to awake them out of their sleep.

**Verse 23. Beholding his natural face in a glass** This metaphor is very simple, but very expressive. A man wishes to see his own face, and how, in its natural state, it appears; for this purpose he looks into a mirror, by which his real face, with all its blemishes and imperfections, is exhibited. He is affected with his own appearance; he sees deformities that might be remedied; spots, superfluities, and impurities, that might be removed. While he continues to look into the mirror he is affected, and wishes himself different to what he appears, and forms purposes of doing what he can to render his countenance agreeable. On going away he soon forgets what manner of person he was, because the mirror is now removed, and his face is no longer reflected to himself; and he no longer recollects how disagreeable he appeared, and his own resolutions of improving his countenance. The doctrines of God, faithfully preached, are such a mirror; he who hears cannot help discovering his own character, and being affected with his own deformity; he sorrows, and purposes amendment; but when the preaching is over, the mirror is removed, and not being careful to examine the records of his salvation, the perfect law of liberty, James 1:25, or not continuing to look therein, he soon forgets what manner of man he was; or, reposing some unscriptural trust in God's mercy, he reasons himself out of the necessity of repentance and amendment of life, and thus deceives his soul.

**Verse 25. But whoso looketh into the perfect law** The word παρακυψας, which we translate looketh into, is very emphatic, and signifies that deep and attentive consideration given to a thing or subject which a man cannot bring up to his eyes, and therefore must bend his back and neck, stooping down, that he may see it to the greater advantage. The law of liberty must mean the Gospel; it is a law, for it imposes obligations from God, and prescribes a rule of life; and it punishes transgressors, and rewards the obedient. It is, nevertheless, a law that gives liberty from the guilt, power, dominion, and influence of sin; and it is perfect, providing a fullness of salvation for the soul: and it may be called perfect here, in opposition to the law, which was a system of types and representations

of which the Gospel is the sum and substance. Some think that the word **τελειον**, perfect, is added here to signify that the whole of the Gospel must be considered and received, not a part; all its threatenings with its promises, all its precepts with its privileges.

**And continueth παραμεινας** Takes time to see and examine the state of his soul, the grace of his God, the extent of his duty, and the height of the promised glory. The metaphor here is taken from those females who spend much time at their glass, in order that they may decorate themselves to the greatest advantage, and not leave one hair, or the smallest ornament, out of its place.

**He being not a forgetful hearer** This seems to be a reference to Deuteronomy 4:9: “Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life.” He who studies and forgets is like to a woman who brings forth children, and immediately buries them. Aboth R. Nathan, cap. 23.

**Shall be blessed in his deed.** In Pirkey Aboth, cap. v. 14, it is said: “There are four kinds of men who visit the synagogues, 1. He who enters but does not work; 2. He who works but does not enter. 3. He who enters and works. 4. He who neither enters nor works. The first two are indifferent characters; the third is the righteous man; the fourth is wholly evil.”

As the path of duty is the way of safety, so it is the way of happiness; he who obeys God from a loving heart and pure conscience, will infallibly find continual blessedness.

**Verse 26. Seem to be religious** The words **θρησκος** and **θρησκεια**, which we translate religious and religion, (see the next verse,) are of very uncertain etymology. Suidas, under the word **θρησκευει**, which he translates **θεοσεβει, υπηρετει τοις θεοις**, he worships or serves the gods, accounts for the derivation thus: “It is said that Orpheus, a Thracian,

signify true religion, and superstition or heterodoxy. See Hesychius, and see on James 1:27.

***Bridleth not his tongue*** He who speaks not according to the oracles of God, whatever pretences he makes to religion, only shows, by his want of scriptural knowledge, that his religion is false, **ματαιος**, or empty of solid truth, profit to others, and good to himself. Such a person should bridle his tongue, put the bit in his mouth; and particularly if he be a professed teacher of religion; ho matter where he has studied, or what else he has learned, if he have not learned religion, he can never teach it. And religion is of such a nature that no man can learn it but by experience; he who does not feel the doctrine of God to be the power of God to the salvation of his soul, can neither teach religion, nor act according to its dictates, because he is an unconverted, unrenewed man. If he be old, let him retire to the desert, and pray to God for light; if he be in the prime of life, let him turn his attention to some honest calling; if he be young, let him tarry at Jericho till his beard grows.

**Verse 27. *Pure religion, and undefiled*** Having seen something of the etymology of the word **θρησκεια**, which we translate religion, it will be well to consider the etymology of the word religion itself.

In the 28th chapter of the 4th book of his Divine Instructions, LACTANTIUS, who flourished about A. D. 300, treats of hope, true religion, and superstition; of the two latter he gives Cicero's definition from his book Deuteronomy Natura Deorum, lib. ii. c. 28, which with his own definition will lead us to a correct view, not only of the etymology, but of the thing itself.

“Superstition,” according to that philosopher, “had its name from the custom of those who offered daily prayers and sacrifices, that their children might SURVIVE THEM; ut sui sibi liberi superstites essent. Hence they were called superstitiosi, superstitious. On the other hand, religion, religio, had its name from those who, not satisfied with what was commonly spoken concerning the nature and worship of the gods, searched into the whole matter, and perused the writings of past times; hence they were called religiosi, from re, again, and lego, I read.”

This definition Lactantius ridicules, and shows that religion has its name from re, intensive, and ligo, I bind, because of that bond of piety by which it binds us to God, and this he shows was the notion conceived of it by Lucretius, who labored to dissolve this bond, and make men atheists.

*Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, et ARCTIS  
RELIGIONUM animos NODIS EXSOLVERE pergo.*

*For first I teach great things in lofty strains,  
And loose men from religion's grievous chains.  
Lucret., lib. i., ver. 930, 931*

As to superstition, he says it derived its name from those who paid religious veneration to the memory of the dead, (qui superstitem memoriam defunctorem colunt,) or from those who, surviving their parents, worshipped their images at home, as household gods; aut qui, parentibus suis superstites, colebant imagines eorum domi, tanquam deos penates. Superstition, according to others, refers to novel rites and ceremonies in religion, or to the worship of new gods. But by religion are meant the ancient forms of worship belonging to those gods, which had long been received. Hence that saying of Virgil:-

*Vana superstitio veterumque ignara deorum.*

*“Vain superstition not knowing the ancient gods.”*

Here Lactantius observes, that as the ancient gods were consecrated precisely in the same way with these new ones, that therefore it was nothing but superstition from the beginning. Hence he asserts, the superstitious are those who worship many and false gods, and the Christians alone are religious, who worship and supplicate the one true God only. St. James' definition rather refers to the effects of pure religion than to its nature. The life of God in the soul of man, producing love to God and man, will show itself in the acts which St. James mentions here. It is pure in the principle, for it is Divine truth and Divine love. It is undefiled in all its operations: it can produce nothing unholy, because it ever acts in the sight of God; and it can produce no ungentle word nor unkind act, because it comes from the Father.

The words καθαρα και αμιαντος, pure and undefiled, are supposed to have reference to a diamond or precious stone, whose perfection consists



in its being free from flaws; not cloudy, but of a pure water. True religion is the ornament of the soul, and its effects, the ornament of the life.

***To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction*** Works of charity and mercy are the proper fruits of religion; and none are more especially the objects of charity and mercy than the orphans and widows. False religion may perform acts of mercy and charity; but its motives not being pure, and its principle being defiled, the flesh, self, and hypocrisy, spot the man, and spot his acts. True religion does not merely give something for the relief of the distressed, but it visits them, it takes the oversight of them, it takes them under its care; so *επισκεπτεσθαι* means. It goes to their houses, and speaks to their hearts; it relieves their wants, sympathizes with them in their distresses, instructs them in Divine things and recommends them to God. And all this it does for the Lord's sake. This is the religion of Christ. The religion that does not prove itself by works of charity and mercy is not of God. Reader, what religion hast thou? Has thine ever led thee to cellars, garrets, cottages, and houses, to find out the distressed? Hast thou ever fed, clothed, and visited a destitute representative of Christ?

The subject in James 1:11 suggests several reflections on the mutability of human affairs, and the end of all things.

1. Nature herself is subject to mutability, though by her secret and inscrutable exertions she effects her renovation from her decay, and thus change is prevented from terminating in destruction. Yet nature herself is tending, by continual mutations, to a final destruction; or rather to a fixed state, when time, the place and sphere of mutability, shall be absorbed in eternity. Time and nature are coeval; they began and must terminate together. All changes are efforts to arrive at destruction or renovation; and destruction must be the term or bound of all created things, had not the Creator purposed that his works should endure for ever. According to his promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth; a fixed, permanent, and endless state of things; an everlasting sabbath to all the works of God.

I shall confirm these observations with the last verses of that incomparable poem, the Faery Queene, of our much neglected but unrivalled poet, Edmund Spenser:-

*“When I bethink me on that speech whylear,  
 Of mutability, and well it weigh;  
 Me seems, that though she all unworthy were  
 Of the heaven’s rule; yet very sooth to say,  
 In all things else she bears the greatest sway;  
 Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,  
 And love of things so vain to cast away;  
 Whose flow’ring pride, so fading and so fickle,  
 Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.  
 Then gin I think on that which Nature sayd,  
 Of that same time when no more change shall be,  
 But stedfast rest of all things, firmly stayd  
 Upon the pillours of eternity,  
 That is contrayr to mutability:  
 For all that moveth, doth in change delight:  
 But thenceforth all shall rest eternally  
 With him that is the God of Sabaoth hight:  
 O that great Sabaoth God, grant me that Sabaoth’s sight!”*

When this is to be the glorious issue, who can regret the speedy lapse of time? Mutability shall end in permanent perfection, when time, the destroyer of all things, shall be absorbed in eternity. And what has a righteous man to fear from that “wreck of matter and that crush of worlds,” which to him shall usher in the glories of an eternal day? A moralist has said, “Though heaven shall vanish like a vapour, and this firm globe of earth shall crumble into dust, the righteous man shall stand unmoved amidst the shocked depredations of a crushed world; for he who hath appointed the heavens and the earth to fail, hath said unto the virtuous soul, Fear not! for thou shalt neither perish nor be wretched.”

Dr. Young has written most nervously, in the spirit of the highest order of poetry, and with the knowledge and feeling of a sound divine, on this subject, in his Night Thoughts. Night vi. in fine.

*Of man immortal hear the lofty style:—*

*“If so decreed, th’ Almighty will be done.  
 Let earth dissolve, yon ponderous orbs descend  
 And grind us into dust: the soul is safe;  
 The man emerges; mounts above the wreck,  
 As towering flame from nature’s funeral pyre;  
 O’er desolation, as a gainer, smiles;  
 His charter, his inviolable rights,  
 Well pleased to learn from thunder’s impotence,  
 Death’s pointless darts, and hell’s defeated storms.”*

After him, and borrowing his imagery and ideas, another of our poets, in canticis sacris facile princeps, has expounded and improved the whole in the following hymn on the Judgment.

*“Stand the Omnipotent decree,  
Jehovah’s will be done!  
Nature’s end we wait to see,  
And hear her final groan.  
Let this earth dissolve, and blend  
In death the wicked and the just;  
Let those ponderous orbs descend  
And grind us into dust.*

*Rests secure the righteous man;  
At his Redeemer’s beck,  
Sure to emerge, and rise again,  
And mount above the wreck.  
Lo! the heavenly spirit towers  
Like flames o’er nature’s funeral pyre;*

There has never been a translation of this, worthy of the poet; and to such a piece I cannot persuade myself to append the hobbling verses of Mr. Dryden.

2. Taken in every point of view, James 1:17 is one of the most curious and singular in the New Testament. It has been well observed, that the first words make a regular Greek hexameter verse, supposed to be quoted from some Greek poet not now extant; and the last clause of the verse, with a very little change, makes another hexameter:-

πασα δοσις αγαθη, και παν δωρημα τελειον,  
εστ' απο των φωτων πατρος καταβαινον ανωθεν.

*“Every goodly gift, and every perfect donation,  
Is from the Father of lights, and from above it descendeth.”*

The first line, which is incontestably a perfect hexameter, may have been designed by St. James, or in the course of composition may have originated from accident, a thing which often occurs to all good writers; but the sentiment itself is immediately from heaven. I know not that we can be justified by sound criticism in making any particular distinction between **δοσις** and **δωρημα**: our translators have used the same word in rendering both. They are often synonymous; but sometimes we may observe a shade of difference, **δοσις** signifying a gift of any kind, here probably meaning earthly blessings of all sorts, **δωρημα** signifying a free gift — one that comes without constraint, from the mere benevolence of the giver; and here it may signify all spiritual and eternal blessings. Now all these come from above; God is as much the AUTHOR of our earthly good, as he is of our eternal salvation. Earthly blessings are simply good; but they are imperfect, they perish in the using. The blessings of grace and glory are supreme goods, they are permanent and perfect; and to the gift that includes these the term **τελειον**, perfect, is here properly added by St. James. There is a sentiment very similar to this in the ninth Olympic Ode of Pindar, l. 41:-

αγαθοι δε και σοφοι κατα δαιμον' ανδρες.

*Man, boast of naught: whate'er thou hast is given;  
Wisdom and virtue are the gifts of Heaven.*

But how tame is even Pindar's verse when compared with the energy of James!

3. In the latter part of the verse, **παρ ὧ οὐκ ἐνὶ παραλλαγῇ, ἡ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα**, which we translate, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, there is an allusion to some of the most abstruse principles in astronomy. This is not accidental, for every word in the whole verse is astronomical. In his **πατὴρ τῶν φωτῶν**, Father of lights, there is the most evident allusion to the SUN, who is the father, author, or source of all the lights or luminaries proper to our system. It is not only his light which we enjoy by day, but it is his light also which is reflected to us, from the moon's surface, by night. And it is demonstrable that all the planets-Mercury, Venus, the Earth, the Moon, Mars, Ceres, Pallas, Juno, Vesta, Jupiter, Saturn, Saturn's Rings, and Herschel, or the Georgium Sidus, with the four satellites of Jupiter, the seven satellites of Saturn, and the six satellites of the Georgium Sidus, thirty-one bodies in all, besides the comets, all derive their light from the sun, being perfectly opaque or dark in themselves; the sun being the only luminous body in our system; all the rest being illumined by him.

The word **παραλλαγή**, which we translate variableness, from **παραλλαττω**, to change alternately, to pass from one change to another, evidently refers to parallax in astronomy. To give a proper idea of what astronomers mean by this term, it must be premised that all the diurnal motions of the heavenly bodies from east to west are only apparent, being occasioned by the rotation of the earth upon its axis in an opposite direction in about twenty-four hours. These diurnal motions are therefore performed uniformly round the axis or polar diameter of the earth, and not round the place of the spectator, who is upon the earth's surface. Hence every one who observes the apparent motion of the heavens from this surface will find that this motion is not even, equal arches being described in unequal times; for if a globular body, such as the earth, describe equally the circumference of a circle by its rotatory motion, it is evident the equality of this motion can be seen in no other points than those in the axis of the circle, and therefore any object viewed from the center of the earth will appear in a different place from what it does when observed from the

surface. This difference of place of the same object, seen at the same time from the earth's center and surface, is called its parallax.

As I shall make some farther use of this point, in order to make it plain to those who are not much acquainted with the subject, to which I am satisfied St. James alludes, I shall introduce the following diagram:

Let the circle OKNS. in the annexed figure, represent the earth, E its center, O the place of an observer on its surface, whose visible or sensible horizon is OH, and the line EST, parallel to OH, the rational, true, or mathematical horizon. Let ZDFT be considered a portion of a great circle in the heavens, and A the place of an object in the visible horizon. Join EA by a line produced to C: then C is the true place of the object, and H is its apparent place; and the angle CAH is its parallax; and, because the object is in the horizon, it is called its horizontal parallax. As OAE, the angle which the earth's radius or semidiameter subtends to the object, is necessarily equal to its opposite angle CAH, hence the horizontal parallax of an object is defined to be the angle which the earth's semidiameter subtends at that object.

The whole effect of parallax is in a vertical direction; for the parallactic angle is in the plane passing through the observer and the earth's center, which plane is necessarily perpendicular to the horizon, the earth being considered as a sphere. The more elevated an object is above the horizon, the less the parallax, the distance from the earth's center continuing the same. To make this sufficiently clear, let B represent an object at any given altitude above the visible horizon OAH; then the angle DBF, formed by the straight lines OB and EB produced to F and D, will be the parallax of the object at the given altitude, and is less than the parallax of the same object when in the visible horizon OAH, for the angle DBF is less than the angle CAH. Hence the horizontal parallax is the greatest of all diurnal parallaxes; and when the object is in the zenith, it has no parallax, the visual ray passing perpendicularly from the object through the observer to the earth's center, as in the line ZOE.

The quantity of the horizontal parallax of any object is in proportion to its distance from the place of observation, being greater or less as the object is nearer to or farther removed from the spectator. In illustration of this point, let I be the place of an object in the sensible horizon; then will LIH

be its horizontal parallax, which is a smaller angle than CAH, the horizontal parallax of the nearer object A.

The horizontal parallax being given, the distance of the object from the earth's center, EA or EI, may be readily found in semidiameters of the earth by the resolution of the right-angled triangle OEA, in which we have given the angle OAE, the horizontal parallax, the side OE, the semidiameter of the earth, considered as unity, and the right angle AOE, to find the side EA, the distance of the object from the earth's center. The proportion to be used in this case is: The sine of the horizontal parallax is to unity, the semidiameter of the earth, as radius, i.e. the right angle AOE, the sine of ninety degrees being the radius of a circle, is to the side EA. This proportion is very compendiously wrought by logarithms as follows: Subtract the logarithmic sine of the horizontal parallax from 10, the radius, and the remainder will be the logarithm of the answer.

Example. When the moon's horizontal parallax is a degree, what is her distance from the earth's center in semidiameters of the earth?

From the radius, — - — - 10 0000000  
 Subtract the sine of 1 degree 8 2418553  
 Remainder the logarithm of 57 2987 1 7581447

Which is the distance of the moon in semidiameters of the earth, when her horizontal parallax amounts to a degree. If 57 2987 be multiplied by 3977, the English miles contained in the earth's semidiameter, the product, 227876 9, will be the moon's distance from the earth's center in English miles.

The sun's horizontal parallax is about eight seconds and three-fifths, as is evident from the phenomena attending the transits of Venus, of 1761 and 1769, as observed in different parts of the world: a method of obtaining the solar parallax abundantly less liable to be materially affected by error of observation than that of Hipparchus, who lived between the 154th and 163d Olympiad, from lunar eclipses; or than that of Aristarchus the Samian, from the moon's dichotomy; or even than that of modern astronomers from the parallax of Mars when in opposition, and, at the same time, in or near his perihelion. The sun's horizontal parallax being scarcely the four hundred and eighteenth part of that of the moon given in

the preceding example, if 227876 9, the distance of the moon as found above, be multiplied by 418 6, (for the horizontal parallax decreases nearly in proportion as the distance increases,) the product will be the distance of the sun from the earth's center, which will be found to be upwards of ninety-five millions of English miles.

When we know the horizontal parallax of any object, its magnitude is easily determined. The apparent diameter of the sun, for example, at his mean distance from the earth, is somewhat more than thirty-two minutes of a degree, which is at least a hundred and eleven times greater than the double of the sun's horizontal parallax, or the apparent diameter of the earth as seen from the sun; therefore, the real solar diameter must be at least a hundred and eleven times greater than that of the earth; i.e. upwards of 880, 000 English miles. And as spherical bodies are to each other as the cubes of their diameters, if 111 be cubed, we shall find that the magnitude of the sun is more than thirteen hundred thousand times greater than that of the earth.

The whole effect of parallax being in a vertical circle, and the circles of the sphere not being in this direction, the parallax of a star will evidently change its true place with respect to these different circles; whence there are five kinds of diurnal parallaxes, viz. the parallax of longitude, parallax of latitude, parallax of ascension or descension, parallax: of declination, and parallax of altitude, the last of which has been already largely explained; and the meaning of the first four, simply, is the difference between the true and visible longitude, latitude, right ascension, and declination of an object. Besides these, there is another kind of parallax, called by modern astronomers the parallax of the earth's ANNUAL ORBIT, by which is meant the difference between the places of a planet as seen from the sun and the earth at the same time, the former being its true or heliocentric place, and the latter its apparent or geocentric place. The ancient astronomers gave the term parallax only to the diurnal apparent inequalities of motion in the moon and planets; Ptolemy, who lived in the second century, calling *prosaphaeresis orbis* what is now named the parallax of the great or annual orbit. This parallax is more considerable than the diurnal parallax, as the earth's annual orbit is more considerable than the earth's semidiameter. This parallax, when greatest, amounts in Mars, the nearest superior planet, to upwards of forty-seven degrees; in Jupiter to near twelve degrees; in



Saturn to more than six degrees, etc. In the region of the nearest fixed stars, i.e. those new ones of 1572 and 1604, double the radius of the earth's orbit does not subtend an angle of a single minute of a degree; whence it is evident the nearest fixed stars are at least hundreds of times more distant from us than the Georgium Sidus is, whose greatest annual parallax amounts to upwards of three degrees. The annual parallaxes of the fixed stars are, in general, too minute to be measured; hence their distances from the earth must be inconceivably great.

Any farther description of parallax would be useless in reference to the subject to be illustrated.

The words τροπης αποσκιασμα, shadow of turning, either refer to the darkness in which the earth is involved in consequence of its turning round its axis once in every twenty-four hours, by means of which one hemisphere, or half of its surface, is involved in darkness, being hidden from the sun by the opposite hemisphere; or to the different portions of the earth which come gradually into the solar light by its revolution round its orbit, which, in consequence of the pole of the earth being inclined nearly twenty-three degrees and a half to the plane of its orbit, and keeping its parallelism through every part of its revolution, causes all the vicissitudes of season, with all the increasing and decreasing proportions of light and darkness, and of cold and heat.

Every person who understands the images will see with what propriety St. James has introduced them; and through this his great object is at once discernible. It is evident from this chapter that there were persons, among those to whom he wrote, that held very erroneous opinions concerning the Divine nature; viz. that God tempted or influenced men to sin, and, consequently, that he was the author of all the evil that is in the world; and that he withholds his light and influence when necessary to convey truth and to correct vice. To destroy this error he shows that though the sun, for its splendor, genial heat, and general utility to the globe and its inhabitants, may be a fit emblem of God, yet in several respects the metaphor is very imperfect; for the sun himself is liable to repeated obscurations; and although, as to his mass, he is the focus of the system, giving light and heat to all, yet he is not everywhere present, and both his light and heat may be intercepted by a great variety of opposing bodies, and other causes. St.

James refers particularly to the Divine ubiquity or omnipresence. Wherever his light and energy are, there is he himself; neither his word nor his Spirit gives false or inconsistent views of his nature and gracious purposes. He has no parallax, because he is equally present everywhere, and intimately near to all his creatures; HE is never seen where he is not, or not seen where he is. He is the God and Father of all; who is ABOVE all, and THROUGH all, and IN all; “in the wide waste, as in the city full;” nor can any thing be hidden from his light and heat. There can be no opposing bodies to prevent him from sending forth his light and truth, because he is everywhere essentially present. He suffers no eclipses; he changes not in his nature; he varies not in his designs; he is ever a full, free, and eternal fountain of mercy, goodness, truth, and good will, to all his intelligent offspring. Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen.

IN concluding these observations, I think it necessary to refer to Mr. Wakefield’s translation of this text, and his vindication of that translation: Every good gift, and every perfect kindness, cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no parallax, nor tropical shadow. “Some have affected,” says he, “to ridicule my translation of this verse, if it be obscure, the author must answer for that, and not the translator. Why should we impoverish the sacred writers, by robbing them of the learning and science they display? Why should we conceal in them what we should ostentatiously point out in profane authors? And if any of these wise, learned, and judicious critics think they understand the phrase shadow of turning, I wish they would condescend to explain it.” Yes, if such a sentiment were found in Aratus, or in any other ancient astronomical writer, whole pages of commentary would be written on it, and the subtle doctrine of the parallactic angle proved to be well known in itself, and its use in determining the distances and magnitudes of the heavenly bodies, to the ancients some hundreds of years before the Christian era.

The sentiment is as elegant as it is just, and forcibly points out the unchangeableness and beneficence of God. He is the Sun, not of a system, but of all worlds; the great Fountain and Dispenser of light and heat, of power and life, of order, harmony, and perfection. In him all live and move, and from him they have their being. There are no spots on his disk; all is unclouded splendor. Can he who dwells in this unsufferable and unapproachable light, in his own eternal self-sufficiency, concern himself

with the affairs of mortals? Yes, for we are his offspring; and it is one part of his perfection to delight in the welfare of his intelligent creatures. He is loving to every man: he hates nothing that he has made; and his praise endureth for ever!

## CHAPTER 2

*We should not prefer the rich to the poor, nor show any partiality inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, 1-4. God has chosen the poor, rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom, even those whom some among their brethren despised and oppressed, 5, 6. They should love their neighbor as themselves, and have no respect of persons, 7-9. He who breaks one command of God is guilty of the whole, 10, 11. They should act as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty; and he shall have judgment without mercy, who shows no mercy, 12, 13. Faith without works of charity and mercy is dead; nor can it exist where there are no good works, 14-20. Abraham proved his faith by his works, 21-24. And so did Rahab, 25. As the body without the soul is dead, so is faith without good works, 26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1.** *My brethren, have not* This verse should be read interrogatively: My brethren, do ye not make profession of the faith or religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with acceptance of persons? That is, preferring the rich to the poor merely because of their riches, and not on account of any moral excellence, personal piety, or public usefulness. **πιστις**, faith, is put here for religion; and **της δοξης**, of glory, should, according to some critics, be construed with it as the Syriac and Coptic have done. Some connect it with our Lord Jesus Christ-the religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ. Others translate thus, the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus. There are many various readings in the MSS. and versions on this verse: the meaning is clear enough, though the connection be rather obscure.

**Verse 2.** *If there come unto your assembly* **εις την συναγωγην**. Into the synagogue. It appears from this that the apostle is addressing Jews who frequented their synagogues, and carried on their worship there and judicial proceedings, as the Jews were accustomed to do. Our word assembly does not express the original; and we cannot suppose that these synagogues

were at this time occupied with Christian worship, but that the Christian Jews continued to frequent them for the purpose of hearing the law and the prophets read, as they had formerly done, previously to their conversion to the Christian faith. But St. James may refer here to proceedings in a court of justice.

***With a gold ring, in goodly apparel*** The ring on the finger and the splendid garb were proofs of the man's opulence; and his ring and his coat, not his worth, moral good qualities, or the righteousness of his cause, procured him the respect of which St. James speaks.

***There come in also a poor man*** In ancient times petty courts of judicature were held in the synagogues, as Vitringa has sufficiently proved, Deuteronomy Vet. Syn. l. 3, p. 1, c. 11; and it is probable that the case here adduced was one of a judicial kind, where, of the two parties, one was rich and the other poor; and the master or ruler of the synagogue, or he who presided in this court, paid particular deference to the rich man, and neglected the poor man; though, as plaintiff and defendant, they were equal in the eye of justice, and should have been considered so by an impartial judge.

**Verse 3. *Sit here under my footstool*** Thus evidently prejudging the cause, and giving the poor man to see that he was to expect no impartial administration of justice in his cause.

**Verse 4. *Are ye not then partial*** οὐ διεκριθητε· Do ye not make a distinction, though the case has not been heard, and the law has not decided?

***Judges of evil thoughts?*** κριται διαλογισμων πονηρων· Judges of evil reasonings; that is, judges who reason wickedly; who, in effect, say in your hearts, we will espouse the cause of the rich, because they can befriend us; we will neglect that of the poor, because they cannot help us, nor have they power to hurt us.

**Verse 5. *Hath not God chosen the poor of this world*** This seems to refer to Matthew 11:5: And the poor have the Gospel preached to them. These believed on the Lord Jesus, and found his salvation; while the rich despised, neglected, and persecuted him. These had that faith in Christ which put them in possession of the choicest spiritual blessings, and gave

them a right to the kingdom of heaven. While, therefore, they were despised of men, they were highly prized of God.

**Verse 6. *Do not rich men oppress you*** The administration of justice was at this time in a miserable state of corruption among the Jews; but a Christian was one who was to expect no justice any where but from his God. The words *καταδυναστευουσιν*, exceedingly oppress, and *ελκουσιν εις κριτηρια*, drag you to courts of justice, show how grievously oppressed and maltreated the Christians were by their countrymen the Jews, who made law a pretext to afflict their bodies, and spoil them of their property.

**Verse 7. *Blaspheme that worthy name*** They took every occasion to asperse the Christian name and the Christian faith, and have been, from the beginning to the present day, famous for their blasphemies against Christ and his religion. It is evident that these were Jews of whom St. James speaks; no Christians in these early times could have acted the part here mentioned.

**Verse 8. *The royal law νομον βασιλικον***. This epithet, of all the New Testament writers, is peculiar to James; but it is frequent among the Greek writers in the sense in which it appears St. James uses it. *βασιλικος*, royal, is used to signify any thing that is of general concern, is suitable to all, and necessary for all, as brotherly love is. This commandment; Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, is a royal law, not only because it is ordained of God, and proceeds from his kingly authority over men, but because it is so useful, suitable, and necessary to the present state of man; and as it was given us particularly by Christ himself, John 13:34; 15:12, who is our King, as well as Prophet and Priest, it should ever put us in mind of his authority over us, and our subjection to him. As the regal state is the most excellent for secular dignity and civil utility that exists among men, hence we give the epithet royal to whatever is excellent, noble, grand, or useful.

**Verse 9. *But if ye have respect to persons*** In judgment, or in any other way; ye commit sin against God, and against your brethren, and are convinced, *ελεγχομενοι*, and are convicted, by the law; by this royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself; as transgressors, having shown

this sinful acceptance of persons, which has led you to refuse justice to the poor man, and uphold the rich in his oppressive conduct.

**Verse 10.** *For whosoever shall keep the whole law, etc.* This is a rabbinical form of speech. In the tract Shabbath, fol. 70, where they dispute concerning the thirty-nine works commanded by Moses, Rabbi Yochanan says: But if a man do the whole, with the omission of one, he is guilty of the whole, and of every one. In Bammidar rabba, sec. 9, fol. 200, and in Tanchum, fol. 60, there is a copious example given, how an adulteress, by that one crime, breaks all the ten commandments, and by the same mode of proof any one sin may be shown to be a breach of the whole decalogue. The truth is, any sin is against the Divine authority; and he who has committed one transgression is guilty of death; and by his one deliberate act dissolves, as far as he can, the sacred connection that subsists between all the Divine precepts and the obligation which he is under to obey, and thus casts off in effect his allegiance to God. For, if God should be obeyed in any one instance, he should be obeyed in all, as the authority and reason of obedience are the same in every case; he therefore who breaks one of these laws is, in effect, if not in fact, guilty of the whole. But there is scarcely a more common form of speech among the rabbins than this, for they consider that any one sin has the seeds of all others in it. See a multitude of examples in Schoettgen.

**Verse 11.** *For he that said* That is, the authority that gave one commandment gave also the rest; and he who breaks one resists this authority; so that the breach of any one commandment may be justly considered a breach of the whole law. It was a maxim also among the Jewish doctors that, if a man kept any one commandment carefully, though he broke all the rest, he might assure himself of the favor of God; for while they taught that “He who transgresses all the precepts of the law has broken the yoke, dissolved the covenant, and exposed the law to contempt, and so has he done who has broken even one precept,” (Mechilta, fol. 5, Yalcut Simeoni, part 1, fol. 59,) they also taught, “that he who observed any principal command was equal to him who kept the whole law;” (Kiddushin, fol. 39;) and they give for example, “If a man abandon idolatry, it is the same as if he had fulfilled the whole law,” (Ibid., fol. 40.) To correct this false doctrine James lays down that in the 11th verse. {James 2:11} Thus they did and undid.

**Verse 12. *So speak ye, and so do*** Have respect to every commandment of God, for this the law of liberty — the Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly requires; and this is the law by which all mankind, who have had the opportunity of knowing it, shall be judged. But all along St. James particularly refers to the precept, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.

**Verse 13. *For he shall have judgment*** He who shows no mercy to man, or, in other words, he who does not exercise himself in works of charity and mercy to his needy fellow creatures, shall receive no mercy at the hand of God; for he hath said, Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy. The unmerciful therefore are cursed, and they shall obtain no mercy.

***Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.*** These words are variously understood. 1. Mercy, the merciful man, the abstract for the concrete, exults over judgment, that is, he is not afraid of it, having acted according to the law of liberty, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 2. Ye shall be exalted by mercy above judgment. 3. For he (God) exalts mercy above judgment. 4. A merciful man rejoices rather in opportunities of showing mercy, than in acting according to strict justice. 5. In the great day, though justice might condemn every man according to the rigour of the law, yet God will cause mercy to triumph over justice in bringing those into his glory who, for his sake, had fed the hungry, clothed the naked, ministered to the sick, and visited the prisoners. See what our Lord says, Matthew 25:31-46.

In the MSS. and versions there is a considerable variety of readings on this verse, and some of the senses given above are derived from those readings. The spirit of the saying may be found in another scripture, I will have mercy and not sacrifice — I prefer works of charity and mercy to every thing else, and especially to all acts of worship. The ROYAL LAW, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, should particularly prevail among men, because of the miserable state to which all are reduced by sin, so that each particularly needs the help of his brother.

**Verse 14. *What doth it profit-though a man say he hath faith*** We now come to a part of this epistle which has appeared to some eminent men to contradict other portions of the Divine records. In short, it has been thought that James teaches the doctrine of justification by the merit of good works, while Paul asserts this to be insufficient, and that man is justified by faith. Luther, supposing that James did actually teach the



doctrine of justification by works, which his good sense showed him to be absolutely insufficient for salvation, was led to condemn the epistle in toto, as a production unauthenticated by the Holy Spirit, and consequently worthy of no regard; he therefore termed it *epistola straminea*, a chaffy epistle, an epistle of straw, fit only to be burnt. Learned men have spent much time in striving to reconcile these two writers, and to show that St. Paul and St. James perfectly accord; one teaching the pure doctrine, the other guarding men against the abuse of it. Mr. Wesley sums the whole up in the following words, with his usual accuracy and precision: “From James 1:22 the apostle has been enforcing Christian practice. He now applies to those who neglect this under the pretense of faith. St. Paul had taught that a man is justified by faith without the works of the law. This some already began to wrest to their own destruction. Wherefore St. James, purposely repeating, James 1:21, 23, 25, the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul had used, Romans 4:3; Hebrews 11:17, 31, refutes not the doctrine of St. Paul, but the error of those who abused it. There is therefore no contradiction between the apostles; they both delivered the truth of God, but in a different manner, as having to do with different kinds of men. This verse is a summary of what follows: What profiteth it, is enlarged on, James 2:15-17; though a man say, James 2:18, 19; can that faith save him? James 2:20. It is not though he have faith, but though he say, I have faith. Here therefore true living faith is meant. But in other parts of the argument the apostle speaks of a dead imaginary faith. He does not therefore teach that true faith can, but that it cannot, subsist without works. Nor does he oppose faith to works, but that empty name of faith to real faith working by love. Can that faith which is without works save him? No more than it can profit his neighbor.” — Explanatory notes.

That St James quotes the same scriptures, and uses the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul has done, is fully evident; but it does not follow that he wrote after St. Paul. It is possible that one had seen the epistle of the other; but if so, it is strange that neither of them should quote the other. That St. Paul might write to correct the abuses of St. James’ doctrine is as possible as that James wrote to prevent St. Paul’s doctrine from being abused; for there were Antinomians in the Church in the time of St. James, as there were Pharisaic persons in it at the time of

St. Paul. I am inclined to think that James is the elder writer, and rather suppose that neither of them had ever seen the other's epistle. Allowing them both to be inspired, God could teach each what was necessary for the benefit of the Church, without their having any knowledge of each other. See the preface to this epistle.

As the Jews in general were very strenuous in maintaining the necessity of good works or righteousness in order to justification, wholly neglecting the doctrine of faith, it is not to be wondered at that those who were converted, and saw the absolute necessity of faith in order to their justification, should have gone into the contrary extreme.

***Can faith save him?*** That is, his profession of faith; for it is not said that he has faith, but that he says, I have faith. St. James probably refers to that faith which simply took in the being and unity of God. See on James 2:19, 24, 25.

**Verse 15. *If a brother or sister be naked*** That is, ill-clothed; for *γυμνος*, naked, has this meaning in several parts of the New Testament, signifying bad clothing, or the want of some particular article of dress. See Matthew 25:36, 38, 43, 44, and John 21:7. It has the same comparative signification in most languages.

**Verse 16. *Be ye warmed and filled*** Your saying so to them, while you give them nothing, will just profit them as much as your professed faith, without those works which are the genuine fruits of true faith, will profit you in the day when God comes to sit in judgment upon your soul.

**Verse 17. *If it hath not works, is dead*** The faith that does not produce works of charity and mercy is without the living principle which animates all true faith, that is, love to God and love to man. They had faith, such as a man has who credits a well-circumstanced relation because it has all the appearance of truth; but they had nothing of that faith that a sinner, convinced of his sinfulness, God's purity, and the strictness of the Divine laws, is obliged to exert in the Lord Jesus, in order to be saved from his sins.

**Verse 18. *Show me thy faith without thy works*** Your pretending to have faith, while you have no works of charity or mercy, is utterly vain: for as faith, which is a principle in the mind, cannot be discerned but by the

effects, that is, good works; he who has no good works has, presumptively, no faith.

***I will show thee my faith by my works.*** My works of charity and mercy will show that I have faith; and that it is the living tree, whose root is love to God and man, and whose fruit is the good works here contended for.

**Verse 19. *Thou believest that there is one God*** This is the faith in which these persons put their hope of pleasing God, and of obtaining eternal life. Believing in the being and unity of God distinguished them from all the nations of the world; and having been circumcised, and thus brought into the covenant, they thought themselves secure of salvation. The insufficiency of this St. James immediately shows.

***The devils also believe, and tremble.*** It is well to believe there is one only true God; this truth universal nature proclaims. Even the devils believe it; but far from justifying or saving them, it leaves them in their damned state, and every act of it only increases their torment; **φρισσουσι**, they shudder with horror, they believe and tremble, are increasingly tormented; but they can neither love nor obey.

**Verse 20. *But wilt thou know*** Art thou willing to be instructed in the nature of true saving faith? Then attend to the following examples.

**Verse 21. *Was not Abraham our father*** Did not the conduct of Abraham, in offering up his son Isaac on the altar, sufficiently prove that he believed in God, and that it was his faith in him that led him to this extraordinary act of obedience?

**Verse 22. *Seest thou how faith wrought*** Here is a proof that faith cannot exist without being active in works of righteousness. His faith in God would have been of no avail to him, had it not been manifested by works; for by works — by his obedience to the commands of God, his faith was made perfect — it dictated obedience, he obeyed; and thus faith **ετελειωθη**, had its consummation. Even true faith will soon die, if its possessor do not live in the spirit of obedience.

**Verse 23. *The scripture was fulfilled*** He believed God; this faith was never inactive, it was accounted to him for righteousness: and being justified by thus believing, his life of obedience showed that he had not

received the grace of God in vain. See the notes on Genesis 15:6; Romans 4:3; Galatians 3:6; where this subject is largely explained.

***The friend of God.*** The highest character ever given to man. As among friends every thing is in common; so God took Abraham into intimate communion with himself, and poured out upon him the choicest of his blessings: for as God can never be in want, because he possesses all things; so Abraham his friend could never be destitute, because God was his friend.

**Verse 24. *Ye see then how*** It is evident from this example that Abraham's faith was not merely believing that there is a God; but a principle that led him to credit God's promises relative to the future Redeemer, and to implore God's mercy: this he received, and was justified by faith. His faith now began to work by love, and therefore he was found ever obedient to the will of his Maker. He brought forth the fruits of righteousness; and his works justified — proved the genuineness of his faith; and he continued to enjoy the Divine approbation, which he could not have done had he not been thus obedient; for the Spirit of God would have been grieved, and his principle of faith would have perished. Obedience to God is essentially requisite to maintain faith. Faith lives, under God, by works; and works have their being and excellence from faith. Neither can subsist without the other, and this is the point which St. James labors to prove, in order to convince the Antinomians of his time that their faith was a delusion, and that the hopes built on it must needs perish.

**Verse 25. *Rahab the harlot*** See the notes on Joshua 2:1, etc., and Hebrews 11:31, etc. Rahab had the approbation due to genuine faith, which she actually possessed, and gave the fullest proof that she did so by her conduct. As justification signifies, not only the pardon of sin, but receiving the Divine approbation, James seems to use the word in this latter sense. God approved of them, because of their obedience to his will; and he approves of no man who is not obedient.

**Verse 26. *For as the body without the spirit is dead*** There can be no more a genuine faith without good works, than there can be a living human body without a soul.

WE shall never find a series of disinterested godly living without true faith. And we shall never find true faith without such a life. We may see works of apparent benevolence without faith; their principle is ostentation; and, as long as they can have the reward (human applause) which they seek, they may be continued. And yet the experience of all mankind shows how short-lived such works are; they want both principle and spring; they endure for a time, but soon wither away. Where true faith is, there is God; his Spirit gives life, and his love affords motives to righteous actions. The use of any Divine principle leads to its increase. The more a man exercises faith in Christ, the more he is enabled to believe; the more he believes, the more he receives; and the more he receives, the more able he is to work for God. Obedience is his delight, because love to God and man is the element in which his soul lives. Reader, thou professest to believe; show thy faith, both to God and man, by a life conformed to the royal law, which ever gives liberty and confers dignity.

“Some persons, known to St. James, must have taught that men are justified by merely believing in the one true God; or he would not have taken such pains to confute it. Crediting the unity of the Godhead, and the doctrine of a future state, was that faith through which both the Jews in St. James’ time and the Mohammedans of the present day expect justification. St. James, in denying this faith to be of avail, if unaccompanied with good works, has said nothing more than what St. Paul has said, in other words, Romans 2, where he combats the same Jewish error, and asserts that not the hearers but the doers of the law will be justified, and that a knowledge of God’s will, without the performance of it, serves only to increase our condemnation.” — Michaelis.

## CHAPTER 3

*They are exhorted not to be many masters, 1. And to bridle the tongue, which is often an instrument of much evil, 2-12. The character and fruits of true and false wisdom, 13-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *Be not many masters*** Do not affect the teacher's office, for many wish to be teachers who have more need to learn. There were many teachers or rabbins among the Jews, each affecting to have THE truth, and to draw disciples after him. We find a caution against such persons, and of the same nature with that of St. James, in Pirkey Aboth, c. i. 10: Love labor, and hate the rabbin's office.

This caution is still necessary; there are multitudes, whom God has never called, and never can call, because he has never qualified them for the work, who earnestly wish to get into the priest's office. And of this kind, in opposition to St. James, we have many masters — persons who undertake to show us the way of salvation, who know nothing of that ways and are unsaved themselves. These are found among all descriptions of Christians, and have been the means of bringing the ministerial office into contempt. Their case is awful; they shall receive greater condemnation than common sinners; they have not only sinned in thrusting themselves into that office to which God has never called them, but through their insufficiency the flocks over whom they have assumed the mastery perish for lack of knowledge, and their blood will God require at the watchman's hand. A man may have this mastery according to the law of the land, and yet not have it according to the Gospel; another may affect to have it according to the Gospel, because he dissents from the religion of the state, and not have it according to Christ. Blockheads are common, and knaves and hypocrites may be found everywhere.

**Verse 2. *In many things we offend all.*** πταιομεν απαντες We all stumble or trip. Dr. Barrow very properly observes: "As the general course of life is called a way, and particular actions steps, so going on in a

regular course of right action is walking uprightly; and acting amiss, tripping or stumbling.” There are very few who walk so closely with God, and inoffensively with men, as never to stumble; and although it is the privilege of every follower of God to be sincere and without offense to the day of Christ, yet few of them are so. Were this unavoidable, it would be useless to make it a subject of regret; but as every man may receive grace from his God to enable him to walk in every respect uprightly, it is to be deplored that so few live up to their privileges. Some have produced these words as a proof that “no man can live without sinning against God; for James himself, a holy apostle speaking of himself, all the apostles, and the whole Church of Christ, says, In many things we offend all.” This is a very bad and dangerous doctrine; and, pushed to its consequences, would greatly affect the credibility of the whole Gospel system. Besides, were the doctrine as true as it is dangerous and false, it is foolish to ground it upon such a text; because St. James, after the common mode of all teachers, includes himself in his addresses to his hearers. And were we to suppose that where he appears by the use of the plural pronoun to include himself, he means to be thus understood, we must then grant that himself was one of those many teachers who were to receive a great condemnation, James 3:1; that he was a horse-breaker, because he says, “we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us,” James 3:3; that his tongue was a world of iniquity, and set on fire of hell, for he says, “so is the tongue among our members,” James 3:6; that he cursed men, “wherewith curse we men, James 3:9. No man possessing common sense could imagine that James, or any man of even tolerable morals, could be guilty of those things. But some of those were thus guilty to whom he wrote; and to soften his reproofs, and to cause them to enter the more deeply into their hearts, he appears to include himself in his own censure; and yet not one of his readers would understand him as being a brother delinquent.

*Offend not in word, the same is a perfect man* To understand this properly we must refer to the caution St. James gives in the preceding verse: Be not many masters or teachers — do not affect that for which you are not qualified, because in your teaching, not knowing the heavenly doctrine, ye may sin against the analogy of faith. But, says he, if any man offend not, *ου πταιει*, trip not, *εν λογω*, in doctrine, teaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the same is *τελειος ανηρ*, a

man fully instructed in Divine things: How often the term *λογος*, which we render word, is used to express doctrine, and the doctrine of the Gospel, we have seen in many parts of the preceding comment. And how often the word *τελειος*, which we translate perfect, is used to signify an adult Christian, one thoroughly instructed in the doctrines of the Gospel, may be seen in various parts of St. Paul's writings. See among others, 1 Corinthians 2:6; 14:20; Ephesians 4:13; Philippians 3:15; Colossians 4:12; Hebrews 5:14. The man, therefore, who advanced no false doctrine, and gave no imperfect view of any of the great truths of Christianity; that man proved himself thereby to be thoroughly instructed in Divine things; to be no novice, and consequently, among the many teachers, to be a perfect master, and worthy of the sacred vocation.

*Able also to bridle the whole body.* Grotius, by body, believed that the Church of Christ was intended; and this the view we have taken of the preceding clauses renders very probable. But some think the passions and appetites are intended; yet these persons understand not offending in word as referring simply to well guarded speech. Now how a man's cautiousness in what he says can be a proof that he has every passion and appetite under control, I cannot see. Indeed, I have seen so many examples of a contrary kind, that I can have no doubt of the impropriety of this exposition. But it is objected "that *χαλιναγωγεω* signifies to check, turn, or rule with a bridle; and is never applied to the government of the Church of Christ." Probably not: but St. James is a very peculiar writer; his phraseology, metaphors, and diction in general, are different from all the rest of the New Testament writers, so as to have scarcely any thing in common with them, but only that he writes in Greek. The sixth verse {James 3:6} is supposed to be a proof against the opinion of Grotius; but I conceive that verse to belong to a different subject, which commences James 3:3.

**Verse 3. Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths** In order to show the necessity of regulating the tongue, to which St. James was led by his exhortation to them who wished to thrust themselves into the teacher's office, supposing, because they had the gift of a ready flow of speech, that therefore they might commence teachers of Divine things; he proceeds to show that the tongue must be bridled as the horse, and governed as the



ships; because, though it is small, it is capable of ruling the whole man; and of irritating and offending others.

**Verse 5. *Boasteth great things.*** That is, can do great things, whether of a good or evil kind. He seems to refer here to the powerful and all commanding eloquence of the Greek orators: they could carry the great mob whithersoever they wished; calm them to peaceableness and submission, or excite them to furious sedition.

***Behold, how great a matter*** See what a flame of discord and insubordination one man, merely by his persuasive tongue, may kindle among the common people.

**Verse 6. *The tongue is a fire*** It is often the instrument of producing the most desperate contentions and insurrections.

***A world of iniquity*** This is an unusual form of speech, but the meaning is plain enough; WORLD signifies here a mass, a great collection, an abundance. We use the term in the same sense—a world of troubles, a world of toil, a world of anxiety; for great troubles, oppressive toil, most distressing anxiety. And one of our lexicographers calls his work a world of words; i.e. a vast collection of words: so we also say, a deluge of wickedness, a sea of troubles; and the Latins, oceanus malorum, an ocean of evils. I do not recollect an example of this use of the word among the Greek writers; but in this sense it appears to be used by the Septuagint, Proverbs 17:6: **του πιστου ολος ο κοσμος των χρηματων, του δε απιστου ουδε οβολος**, which may be translated, “The faithful has a world of riches, but the unfaithful not a penny.” This clause has nothing answering to it in the Hebrew text. Some think that the word is thus used, 2 Peter 2:5: And brought the flood, **κοσμω ασεβων**, on the multitude of the ungodly. Mr. Wakefield translates the clause thus: The tongue is the varnisher of injustice. We have seen that **κοσμος** signifies adorned, elegant, beautiful, etc., but I can scarcely think that this is its sense in this place. The Syriac gives a curious turn to the expression: And the tongue is a fire; and the world of iniquity is like a wood. Above, the same version has: A little fire burns great woods. So the world of iniquity is represented as inflamed by the wicked tongues of men; the world being fuel, and the tongue a fire.

*So is the tongue among our members* I think St. James refers here to those well known speeches of the rabbins, Vayikra Rabba, sec. 16, fol. 159. “Rabbi Eleazar said, Man has one hundred and forty-eight members, some confined, others free. The tongue is placed between the jaws; and from under it proceeds a fountain of water, (the great sublingual salivary gland,) and it is folded with various foldings. Come and see what a flame the tongue kindles! Were it one of the unconfined members, what would it not do?” The same sentiment, with a little variation, may be found in Midrash, Yalcut Simeoni, par. 2, fol. 107; and in Erachin, fol. xv. 2, on Psalm 120:3: What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue? “The holy blessed God said to the tongue: All the rest of the members of the body are erect, but thou liest down; all the rest are external, but thou art internal. Nor is this enough: I have built two walls about thee; the one bone, the other flesh: What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done unto thee, O thou false tongue?”

*Setteth on fire the course of nature* φλογιζουσα τον τροχον της γενεσεως· And setteth on fire the wheel of life. I question much whether this verse be in general well understood. There are three different interpretations of it: 1. St. James does not intend to express the whole circle of human affairs, so much affected by the tongue of man; but rather the penal wheel of the Greeks, and not unknown to the Jews, on which they were accustomed to extend criminals, to induce them to confess, or to punish them for crimes; under which wheels, fire was often placed to add to their torments. In the book, Deuteronomy Maccabaeis, attributed to Josephus, and found in Haverkamp’s edition, vol. ii., p. 497-520, where we have the account of the martyrdom of seven Hebrew brothers, in chap. ix, speaking of the death of the eldest, it is said: ανεβαλον αυτον επι τον τροχου-περι ον κατατεινομενος· “They cast him on the wheel, over which they extended him; πυρ υπεστρωσαν και διηρεθισαν τον τροχον προσεπικατατεινοντες· they put coals under it, and strongly agitated the wheel.” And of the martyrdom of the sixth brother it is said, cap. 11: παρηγον επι τον τροχον, εφ’ ου κατατεινομενος εκμελωσ και εκσφονδυλιζομενος υπεκαιετο. και οβελισκους δε οξεισ πυρωσαντες, τοις νοτοις προσεφερον, και τα πλευρα διαπειραντες αυτου, και τα σπλαγχνα διεκαιον· They brought him to the wheel, on which, having distended his limbs, and broken his joints,

they scorched him with the fire placed underneath; and with sharp spits heated in the fire, they pierced his sides, and burned his bowels.

The fire and the wheel are mentioned by Achilles Tatius, lib. 7, p. 449. “Having stripped me of my garments, I was carried aloft, **των μεν μαστιγας κομιζοντων, των δε πυρ και τροχον**, some bringing scourges, others the fire and the wheel.” Now as **γενεσις** often signifies life, then the wheel of life will signify the miseries and torments of life. To set on fire the wheel of life is to increase a man’s torments; and to be set on fire from hell implies having these miseries rendered more active by diabolic agency; or, in other words, bad men, instigated by the devil, through their lies and calumnies, make life burdensome to the objects of their malicious tongues. The wheel and the fire, so pointedly mentioned by St. James, make it probable that this sort of punishment might have suggested the idea to him. See more in Kypke.

2. But is it not possible that by the wheel of life St. James may have the circulation of the blood in view? Angry or irritating language has an astonishing influence on the circulation of the blood: the heart beats high and frequent; the blood is hurried through the arteries to the veins, through the veins to the heart, and through the heart to the arteries again, and so on; an extraordinary degree of heat is at the same time engendered; the eyes become more prominent in their sockets; the capillary vessels suffused with blood; the face flushed; and, in short, the whole wheel of nature is set on fire of hell. No description can be more natural than this: but it may be objected that this intimates that the circulation of the blood was known to St. James. Now supposing it does, is the thing impossible? It is allowed by some of the most judicious medical writers, that Solomon refers to this in his celebrated portraiture of old age, particularly in Ecclesiastes 12:6: “Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern.” Here is the very wheel of life from which St. James might have borrowed the idea; and the different times evidently refer to the circulation of the blood, which might be as well known to St. James as the doctrine of the parallax of the sun. See on James 1:17.

3. It is true, however, that the rabbins use the term **גלגל תולדות** gilgal toledoth, “the wheel of generations,” to mark the successive generations of

men: and it is possible that St. James might refer to this; as if he had said: “The tongue has been the instrument of confusion and misery through all the ages of the world.” But the other interpretations are more likely.

**Verse 7. *Every kind of beasts*** That is, every species of wild beasts, **πασα φυσις θηριων**, is tamed, i.e. brought under man’s power and dominion. Beasts, birds, serpents, and some kinds of fishes have been tamed so as to be domesticated; but every kind, particularly **των εναλιων**, of sea monsters, has not been thus tamed; but all have been subjected to the power of man; both the shark and whale become an easy prey to the skill

the common swearers, whose mouths are generally full of direful imprecations against those with whom they are offended.

The consideration that man is made after the image of God should restrain the tongue of the swearer; but there are many who, while they pretend to sing the high praises of God, are ready to wish the direst imprecations either on those who offend them, or with whom they choose to be offended.

**Verse 10. *Out of the same mouth*** This saying is something like that, Proverbs 18:21: Death and life are in the power of the tongue; and on this, for an illustration of St. James' words, hear Vayikra Rabba, sec. 33: "Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, said to his servant Tobias, Go and bring me some good food from the market: the servant went, and he bought tongues. At another time he said to the same servant, Go and buy me some bad food: the servant went, and bought tongues. The master said, What is the reason that when I ordered thee to buy me good and bad food, thou didst bring tongues? The servant answered, From the tongue both good and evil come to man: if it be good, there is nothing better; if bad, there is nothing worse."

A saying very like that of St. James as found in Rabbi Tanchum, fol. 10, 4: "The mouth desires to study in the law, and to speak good words; to praise God, to glorify him, and to celebrate him with hymns: but it can also slander, blaspheme, reproach, and swear falsely." See Schoettgen.

To find a man who officiates in sacred things to be a common swearer, a slanderer, etc., is truly monstrous; but there have been many cases of this kind, and I have known several. Let me say to all such, My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

**Verse 11. *Doth a fountain send forth-sweet water and bitter?*** In many things nature is a sure guide to man; but no such inconsistency is found in the natural world as this blessing and cursing in man. No fountain, at the same opening, sends forth sweet water and bitter; no fig tree can bear olive berries; no vine can bear figs; nor can the sea produce salt water and fresh from the same place. These are all contradictions, and indeed impossibilities, in nature. And it is depraved man alone that can act the monstrous part already referred to.

**Verse 12. *So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.*** For the reading of the common text, which is *οὕτως οὐδεμία πηγή αλυκον και γλυκυ ποιησαι υδωρ*, so no fountain can produce salt water and sweet, there are various other readings in the MSS. and versions. The word *οὕτως*, so, which makes this a continuation of the comparison in James 3:11, is wanting in ABC, one other, with the Armenian and ancient Syriac; the later Syriac has it in the margin with an asterisk. ABC, five others, with the Coptic, Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, and Cyril, have *ουτε αλυκον γλυκυ ποιησαι υδωρ*, neither can salt water produce sweet. In the Syriac and the Arabic of Erpen, it is, So, likewise, sweet water cannot become bitter; and bitter water cannot become sweet. The true reading appears to be, Neither can salt water produce sweet, or, Neither can the sea produce fresh water; and this is a new comparison, and not an inference from that in James 3:11. This reading Griesbach has admitted into the text; and of it Professor White, in his *Crisews*, says, *Lectio indubie genuina*, “a reading undoubtedly genuine.” There are therefore, four distinct comparisons here: 1. A fountain cannot produce sweet water and bitter. 2. A fig tree cannot produce olive berries. 3. A vine cannot produce figs. 4. Salt water cannot be made sweet. That is, according to the ordinary operations of nature, these things are impossible. Chemical analysis is out of the question.

**Verse 13. *Who is a wise man*** One truly religious; who, although he can neither bridle nor tame other men’s tongues, can restrain his own.

***And endued with knowledge*** *και επιστημων*· And qualified to teach others.

***Let him show*** Let him by a holy life and chaste conversation show, through meekness and gentleness, joined to his Divine information, that he is a Christian indeed; his works and his spirit proving that God is in him of a truth; and that, from the fullness of a holy heart, his feet walk, his hands work; and his tongue speaks. We may learn from this that genuine wisdom is ever accompanied with meekness and gentleness. Those proud, overbearing, and disdainful men, who pass for great scholars and eminent critics, may have learning, but they have not wisdom. Their learning implies their correct knowledge of the structure of language, and of composition in general; but wisdom they have none, nor any

self-government. They are like the blind man who carried a lantern in daylight to keep others from jostling him in the street. That learning is not only little worth, but despicable, that does not teach a man to govern his own spirit, and to be humble in his conduct towards others.

**Verse 14.** *If ye have bitter envying and strife* If ye be under the influence of an unkind, fierce, and contemptuous spirit, even while attempting or pretending to defend true religion, do not boast either of your exertions or success in silencing an adversary; ye have no religion, and no true wisdom, and to profess either is to lie against the truth. Let all writers on what is called polemic (fighting, warring) divinity lay this to heart. The pious Mr. Herbert gives excellent advice on this subject:-

*“Be calm in arguing, for fierceness makes  
Error a fault, and truth discourtesy;  
Why should I feel another man’s mistakes  
More than his sickness or his poverty?  
In love I should; but anger is not love,  
Nor wisdom neither; therefore g-e-n-t-l-y m-o-v-e.”*

**Verse 15.** *This wisdom descendeth not from above* God is not the author of it, because it is bitter — not meek. See at the end of this chapter.

*Is earthly* Having this life only in view.

*Sensual* ψυχικη· Animal — having for its object the gratification of the passions and animal propensities.

*Devilish* δαιμονιωδης· Demoniacal — inspired by demons, and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence.

**Verse 16.** *For where envying and strife is* ζηλος και εριθεια· Zeal — fiery, inflammatory passion, and contention — altercations about the different points of the law, of no use for edification, such as those mentioned, Titus 3:9. The Jews were the most intolerant of all mankind; it was a maxim with them to kill those who would not conform to their law; and their salvation they believed to be impossible. This has been the spirit of Popery, and of the Romish Church at large; in vain do they attempt to deny it; they have written it in characters of blood and fire even in this country, (England,) when they were possessed of political power. With them it is still an established maxim, that out of their Church there is no

redemption; and fire and faggot have been in that Church legal means of conversion or extinction. In the short popish reign of Mary in this country, besides multitudes who suffered by fine, imprisonment, confiscation, etc., two hundred and seventy-seven were burnt alive, among whom were one archbishop, four bishops, twenty-one clergymen, eight lay gentlemen, eighty-four tradesmen, one hundred husbandmen, fifty-five women, and four children! O earth! thou hast not drunk their blood; but their ashes have been strewed on the face of the field.

**Verse 17. *The wisdom that is from above*** The pure religion of the Lord Jesus, bought by his blood, and infused by his Spirit. See the rabbinical meaning of this phrase at the end of this chapter.

***Is first pure*** ἁγνή· Chaste, holy, and clean.

***Peaceable*** εἰρηνική· Living in peace with others, and promoting peace among men.

***Gentle*** ἐπιεικής· Meek, modest, of an equal mind, taking every thing in good part, and putting the best construction upon all the actions of others.

***Easy to be entreated*** εὐπειθής· Not stubborn nor obstinate; of a yielding disposition in all indifferent things; obsequious, docile.

***Full of mercy*** Ready to pass by a transgression, and to grant forgiveness to those who offend, and performing every possible act of kindness.

***Good fruits*** Each temper and disposition producing fruits suited to and descriptive of its nature.

***Without partiality*** ἀδιακρίτος· Without making a difference — rendering to every man his due; and being never swayed by self-interest, worldly honor, or the fear of man; knowing no man after the flesh. One of the Itala has it irreprehensible.

***Without hypocrisy*** ἀνυποκριτος· Without dissimulation; without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask. Seeking nothing but God's glory, and using no other means to attain it than those of his own prescribing.



**Verse 18. *And the fruit of righteousness is sown*** The whole is the principle of righteousness in the soul, and all the above virtues are the fruits of that righteousness.

***Is sown in peace*** When the peace of God rules the heart, all these virtues and graces grow and flourish abundantly.

***Of them that make peace.*** The peace-makers are continually recommending this wisdom to others, and their own conduct is represented as a sowing of heavenly seed, which brings forth Divine fruit. Perhaps sowing in peace signifies sowing prosperously — being very successful. This is not only the proper disposition for every teacher of the Gospel, but for every professed follower of the Lord Jesus.

Some render this verse, which is confessedly obscure, thus: And the peaceable fruits of righteousness are sown for the practisers of peace. He who labors to live peaceably shall have peace for his reward.

1. ALMOST the whole of the preceding chapter is founded on maxims highly accredited in the rabbinical writings, and without a reference to those writings it would have been impossible, in some cases, to have understood St. James' meaning. There is one phrase, the rabbinical meaning and use of which I have reserved for this place, viz.. The wisdom that is from above. This is greatly celebrated among them by the terms עליונה חכמה *chocmah elyonah*, the supernal wisdom. This they seem to understand to be a peculiar inspiration of the Almighty, or a teaching communicated immediately by the angels of God. In Sohar, Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 19, Rabbi Chiya said: "The wisdom from above was in Adam more than in the supreme angels, and he knew all things."

In Sohar Chadash, fol. 35, it is said concerning Enoch, "That the angels were sent from heaven, and taught him the wisdom that is from above." Ibid. fol. 42, 4: "Solomon came, and he was perfect in all things, and strongly set forth the praises of the wisdom that is from above." See more in Schoettgen. St. James gives us the properties of this wisdom, which are not to be found in such detail in any of the rabbinical writers. It is another word for the life of God in the soul of man, or true religion; it is the teaching of God in the human heart, and he who has this not is not a child of God; for it is written, All thy children shall be taught of the Lord.

2. To enjoy the peace of God in the conscience, and to live to promote peace among men, is to answer the end of our creation, and to enjoy as much happiness ourselves as the present state of things can afford. They who are in continual broils live a wretched life; and they who love the life of the salamander must share no small portion of the demoniacal nature. In domestic society such persons are an evil disease; therefore a canker in the Church, and a pest in the state.

## CHAPTER 4

The origin of wars and contentions, and the wretched lot of those who are engaged in them, 1, 2. Why so little heavenly good is obtained, 3. The friendship of the world is enmity with God, 4, 5. God resists the proud, 6. Men should submit to God, and pray, 7, 8. Should humble themselves, 9, 10. And not speak evil of each other, 11, 12. The impiety of those who consult not the will of God, and depend not on his providence, 13-15. The sin of him who knows the will of God, and does not do it, 16, 17.

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. *From whence come wars and fightings*** About the time in which St. James wrote, whether we follow the earlier or the later date of this epistle, we find, according to the accounts given by Josephus, Bell. Jud. lib. ii. c. 17, etc., that the Jews, under pretense of defending their religion, and procuring that liberty to which they believed themselves entitled, made various insurrections in Judea against the Romans, which occasioned much bloodshed and misery to their nation. The factions also, into which the Jews were split, had violent contentions among themselves, in which they massacred and plundered each other. In the provinces, likewise, the Jews became very turbulent; particularly in Alexandria, and different other parts of Egypt, of Syria, and other places, where they made war against the heathens, killing many, and being massacred in their turn. They were led to these outrages by the opinion that they were bound by their law to extirpate idolatry, and to kill all those who would not become proselytes to Judaism. These are probably the wars and fightings to which St. James alludes; and which they undertook rather from a principle of covetousness than from any sincere desire to convert the heathen. See Macknight.

***Come they not hence-of your lusts*** This was the principle from which these Jewish contentions and predatory wars proceeded, and the principle from which all the wars that have afflicted and desolated the world have proceeded. One nation or king covets another's territory or property; and, as conquest is supposed to give right to all the possessions gained by it,

they kill, slay, burn, and destroy, till one is overcome or exhausted, and then the other makes his own terms; or, several neighboring potentates fall upon one that is weak; and, after murdering one half of the people, partition among themselves the fallen king's territory; just as the Austrians, Prussians, and Russians have done with the kingdom of Poland! — a stain upon their justice and policy which no lapse of time can ever wash out.

independent; the motive and the object were the same, and the prayers were such as God could not hear.

**Verse 4.** *Ye adulterers and*

acknowledges him in all his ways, he will direct all his steps. The covetous man grasps at the shadow, and loses the substance.

**Verse 7. *Submit-to God*** Continue to bow to all his decisions, and to all his dispensations.

***Resist the devil*** He cannot conquer you if you continue to resist. Strong as he is, God never permits him to conquer the man who continues to resist him; he cannot force the human will. He who, in the terrible name of JESUS, opposes even the devil himself, is sure to have a speedy and glorious conquest. He flees from that name, and from his conquering blood.

**Verse 8. *Draw nigh to God*** Approach HIM, in the name of Jesus, by faith and prayer, and he will draw nigh to you — he will meet you at your coming. When a soul sets out to seek God, God sets out to meet that soul; so that while we are drawing near to him, he is drawing near to us. The delicacy and beauty of these expressions are, I think, but seldom noted.

***Cleanse your hands, ye sinners*** This I think to be the beginning of a new address, and to different persons; and should have formed the commencement of a new verse. Let your whole conduct be changed; cease to do evil learn to do well. Washing or cleansing the hands was a token of innocence and purity.

***Purify your hearts*** Separate yourselves from the world, and consecrate yourselves to God: this is the true notion of sanctification. We have often seen that to sanctify signifies to separate a thing or person from profane or common use, and consecrate it or him to God. This is the true notion of קדש kadash, in Hebrew, and αγιαζω in Greek. The person or thing thus consecrated or separated is considered to be holy, and to be God's property; and then God hallows it to himself. There are, therefore, two things implied in a man's sanctification: 1. That he separates himself from evil ways and evil companions, and devotes himself to God. 2. That God separates guilt from his conscience, and sin from his soul, and thus makes him internally and externally holy.

This double sanctification is well expressed in Sohar, Levit. fol. 33, col. 132, on the words, be ye holy, for I the Lord am holy: מלמטה מקישי מלמעלה ארם מקדש עצמו, a man sanctifies himself on the earth,

and then he is sanctified from heaven. As a man is a sinner, he must have his hands cleansed from wicked works; as he is double-minded, he must have his heart sanctified. Sanctification belongs to the heart, because of pollution of mind; cleansing belongs to the hands, because of sinful acts. See the note on James 1:8, for the signification of double-minded.

**Verse 9. *Be afflicted, and mourn*** Without true and deep repentance ye cannot expect the mercy of God.

***Let your laughter be turned to mourning*** It appears most evidently that many of those to whom St. James addressed this epistle had lived a very irregular and dissolute life. He had already spoken of their lust, and pleasures, and he had called them adulterers and adulteresses; and perhaps they were so in the grossest sense of the words. He speaks here of their laughter and their joy; and all the terms taken together show that a dissolute life is intended. What a strange view must he have of the nature of primitive Christianity, who can suppose that these words can possibly have been addressed to people professing the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who were few in number, without wealth or consequence, and were persecuted and oppressed both by their brethren the Jews and by the Romans!

**Verse 10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord*** In James 4:7 they were exhorted to submit to God; here they are exhorted to humble themselves in his sight. Submission to God's authority will precede humiliation of soul, and genuine repentance is performed as in the sight of God; for when a sinner is truly awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, he seems to see, whithersoever he turns, the face of a justly incensed God turned against him.

***He shall lift you up.*** Mourners and penitents lay on the ground, and rolled themselves in the dust. When comforted and pardoned, they arose from the earth, shook themselves from the dust, and clothed themselves in their better garments. God promises to raise these from the dust, when sufficiently humbled.

**Verse 11. *Speak not evil one of another*** Perhaps this exhortation refers to evil speaking, slander, and backbiting in general, the writer having no particular persons in view. It may, however, refer to the contentions among the zealots, and different factions then prevailing among this

wretched people, or to their calumnies against those of their brethren who had embraced the Christian faith.

***He that speaketh evil of his brother*** It was an avowed and very general maxim among the rabbins, that “no one could speak evil of his brother without denying God, and becoming an atheist.” They consider detraction as the devil’s crime originally: he calumniated God Almighty in the words, “He doth know that in the day in which ye eat of it, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be like God, knowing good and evil;” and therefore insinuated that it was through envy God had prohibited the tree of knowledge.

***Speaketh evil of the law*** The law condemns all evil speaking and detraction. He who is guilty of these, and allows himself in these vices, in effect judges and condemns the law; i.e. he considers it unworthy to be kept, and that it is no sin to break it.

***Thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.*** Thou rejectest the law of God, and settest up thy own mischievous conduct as a rule of life; or, by allowing this evil speaking and detraction, dost intimate that the law that condemns them is improper, imperfect, or unjust.

**Verse 12. *There is one lawgiver* και κριτης,** And judge, is added here by AB, about thirty others, with both the Syriac, Erpen’s Arabic, the Coptic, Armenian, Aethiopic, Slavonic, Vulgate, two copies of the Itala, Cyril of Antioch, Euthalius, Theophylact, and Cassiodorus. On this evidence Griesbach has received it into the text.

The man who breaks the law, and teaches others so to do, thus in effect set himself up as a lawgiver and judge. But there is only one such lawgiver and judge—God Almighty, who is able to save all those who obey him, and able to destroy all those who trample under feet his testimonies.

***Who art thou that judgest another?*** Who art thou who darest to usurp the office and prerogative of the supreme Judge? But what is that law of which St. James speaks? and who is this lawgiver and judge? Most critics think that the law mentioned here is the same as that which he elsewhere calls the royal law and the law of liberty, thereby meaning the Gospel; and that Christ is the person who is called the lawgiver and judge. This, however, is not clear to me. I believe James means the Jewish law; and by the lawgiver



and judge, God Almighty, as acknowledged by the Jewish people. I find, or think I find, from the closest examination of this epistle, but few references to Jesus Christ or his Gospel. His Jewish creed, forms, and maxims, this writer keeps constantly in view; and it is proper he should, considering the persons to whom he wrote. Some of them were, doubtless, Christians; some of them certainly no Christians; and some of them half Christians and half Jews. The two latter descriptions are those most frequently addressed.

**Verse 13.** *Go to now* αγε νυν. Come now, the same in meaning as the Hebrew הבה habah, come, Genesis 11:3, 4, 7. Come, and hear what I have to say, ye that say, etc.

*To-day, or to-morrow, we will go* This presumption on a precarious life is here well reproved; and the ancient Jewish rabbins have some things on the subject which probably St. James had in view. In Debarim Rabba, sec. 9, fol. 261, 1, we have the following little story; “Our rabbins tell us a story which happened in the days of Rabbi Simeon, the son of Chelpatha. He was present at the circumcision of a child, and stayed with its father to the entertainment. The father brought out wine for his guests that was seven years old, saying, With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son. They continued supper till midnight. At that time Rabbi Simeon arose and went out, that he might return to the city in which he dwelt. On the way he saw the angel of death walking up and down. He said to him, Who art thou? He answered, I am the messenger of God. The rabbin said, Why wanderest thou about thus? He answered, I slay those persons who say, We will do this, or that, and think not how soon death may overpower them: that man with whom thou hast supped, and who said to his guests, With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son, behold the end of his life is at hand, for he shall die within thirty days.” By this parable they teach the necessity of considering the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and that God is particularly displeased with those ...

*“Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,  
Are quite unfurnished for a world to come.”*

*And continue there a year, and buy and sell* This was the custom of those ancient times; they traded from city to city, carrying their goods on

the backs of camels. The Jews traded thus to Tyre, Sidon, Caesarea, Crete, Ephesus, Philippi, Thessalonica, Corinth, Rome, etc. And it is to this kind of itinerant mercantile life that St. James alludes. See at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 14. *Whereas ye know not*** This verse should be read in a parenthesis. It is not only impious, but grossly absurd, to speak thus concerning futurity, when ye know not what a day may bring forth. Life is utterly precarious; and God has not put it within the power of all the creatures he has made to command one moment of what is future.

***It is even a vapour*** αμις γαρ εστιν· It is a smoke, always fleeting, uncertain, evanescent, and obscured with various trials and afflictions. This is a frequent metaphor with the Hebrews; see Psalm 102:11; My days are like a shadow: Job 8:9; Our days upon earth are a shadow: 1 Chronicles 29:15; Our days on the earth are a shadow, and there is no abiding. Quid tam circumcisum, tam breve, quam hominis vita longissima? Plin. l. iii., Ep. 7. “What is so circumscribed, or so short, as the longest life of man?” “All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is like grass.” St. James had produced the same figure, James 1:10, 11. But there is a very remarkable saying in the book of Ecclesiasticus, which should be quoted: “As of the green leaves of a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood: one cometh to an end, and another is born.” Eccclus. xiv. 18.

We find precisely the same image in Homer as that quoted above. Did the apocryphal writer borrow it from the Greek poet?

οιη περ φυλλων γενεη, τοιηδε και ανδρων·  
φυλλα τα μεν τ' ανεμος χαμαδις χρει, αλλα δε θ' υλη  
τηλεθοωσα φυει, εσρος δ' επιγιγνεται ωρη·  
ως ανδρων γενεη, μεν φυει, η δ' αποληγει.

Il. l. vi., ver. 146.

*Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground  
Another race the following spring supplies;  
They fall successive, and successive rise.  
So generations in their course decay;  
So flourish these, when those are pass'd away. POPE.*

**Verse 15. *For that ye ought to say*** *αντι τοι λεγειν υμας*: Instead of saying, or instead of which ye should say,

***If the Lord will, we shall live*** I think St. James had another example from the rabbins in view, which is produced by Drusius, Gregory, Cartwright, and Schoettgen, on this clause: “The bride went up to her chamber, not knowing what was to befall her there.” On which there is this comment: “No man should ever say that he will do this or that, without the condition IF GOD WILL. A certain man said, ‘To-morrow shall I sit with my bride in my chamber, and there shall rejoice with her.’ To which some standing by said, *אם גוזר השם* im gozer hashshem, ‘If the Lord will.’ To which he answered, ‘Whether the Lord will or not, to-morrow will I sit with my bride in my chamber.’ He did so; he went with his bride into his chamber, and at night they lay down; but they both died, *antequam illam cognosceret.*” It is not improbable that St. James refers to this case, as he uses the same phraseology.

On this subject I shall quote another passage which I read when a schoolboy, and which even then taught me a lesson of caution and of respect for the providence of God. It may be found in Lucian, in the piece entitled, *χαρων, η επισκοπουντες*, c. 6: *επι δειπνον, οιμαι, κληθεις υπο τινος των φιλων ες την υστεραιαν, μαλιστα ηξω, εφη και μεταξυ λεγοντος, απο του τεγους κεραμις επιπεσουσα, ουκ οιδ’ οτου κινησαντος, απεκτεινεν αυτον· εγελασα ουν, ουκ επιτελεσαντος την υποσχεσιν.* “A man was invited by one of his friends to come the next day to supper. I will certainly come, said he. In the mean time a tile fell from a house, I knew not who threw it, and killed him. I therefore laughed at him for not fulfilling his engagement.” It is often said *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*, “we should learn even from our enemies.” Take heed, Christian, that this heathen buffoon laugh thee not out of countenance.

**Verse 16. *But now ye rejoice in your boastings*** Ye glory in your proud and self-sufficient conduct, exulting that ye are free from the trammels of superstition, and that ye can live independently of God Almighty. All such boasting is wicked, *πονηρα εστιν*, is impious. In an old English work, entitled, *The godly man’s picture drawn by a Scripture pencil*, there are these words: “Some of those who despise religion say, Thank God we

are not of this holy number! They who thank God for their unholiness had best go ring the bells for joy that they shall never see God.”

**Verse 17. *To him that knoweth to do good*** As if he had said: After this warning none of you can plead ignorance; if, therefore, any of you shall be found to act their ungodly part, not acknowledging the Divine providence, the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of standing every moment prepared to meet God—as you will have the greater sin, you will infallibly get the greater punishment. This may be applied to all who know better than they act. He who does not the Master’s will because he does not know it, will be beaten with few stripes; but he who knows it and does not do it, shall be beaten with many; Luke 12:47, 48. St. James may have the Christians in view who were converted from Judaism to Christianity. They had much more light and religious knowledge than the Jews had; and God would require a proportionable improvement from them.

1. SAADY, a celebrated Persian poet, in his *Gulistan*, gives us a remarkable example of this going from city to city to buy and sell, and get gain. “I knew,” says he, “a merchant who used to travel with a hundred camels laden with merchandise, and who had forty slaves in his employ. This person took me one day to his warehouse, and entertained me a long time with conversation good for nothing. ‘I have,’ said he, ‘such a partner in Turquestan; such and such property in India; a bond for so much cash in such a province; a security for such another sum.’ Then, changing the subject, he said, ‘I purpose to go and settle at Alexandria, because the air of that city is salubrious.’ Correcting himself, he said, ‘No, I will not go to Alexandria; the African sea (the Mediterranean) is too dangerous. But I will make another voyage; and after that I will retire into some quiet corner of the world, and give up a mercantile life.’ I asked him (says Saady) what voyage he intended to make. He answered, ‘I intend to take brimstone to Persia and China, where I am informed it brings a good price; from China I shall take porcelain to Greece; from Greece I shall take gold tissue to India; from India I shall carry steel to Haleb (Aleppo;); from Haleb I shall carry glass to Yemen (Arabia Felix;); and from Yemen I shall carry printed goods to Persia. When this is accomplished I shall bid farewell to the mercantile life, which requires so many troublesome journeys, and spend the rest of my life in a shop.’ He said so much on this subject, till at last he wearied himself with talking; then turning to me he said, ‘I entreat thee, Saady, to

relate to me something of what thou hast seen and heard in thy travels.' I answered, Hast thou never heard what a traveler said, who fell from his camel in the desert of Joor? Two things only can fill the eye of a covetous man-contentment, or the earth that is cast on him when laid in his grave."

This is an instructive story, and is taken from real life. In this very way, to those same places and with the above specified goods, trade is carried on to this day in the Levant. And often the same person takes all these journeys, and even more. We learn also from it that a covetous man is restless and unhappy, and that to avarice there are no bounds. This account properly illustrates that to which St. James refers: To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.

2. Providence is God's government of the world; he who properly trusts in Divine providence trusts in God; and he who expects God's direction and help must walk uprightly before him; for it is absurd to expect God to be our friend if we continue to be his enemy.

3. That man walks most safely who has the least confidence in himself. True magnanimity keeps God continually in view. He appoints it its work, and furnishes discretion and power; and its chief excellence consists in being a resolute worker together with him. Pride ever sinks where humility swims; for that man who abases himself God will exalt. To know that we are dependent creatures is well; to feel it, and to act suitably, is still better.

## CHAPTER 5

*The profligate rich are in danger of God's judgments, because of their pride, fraudulent dealings, riotous living, and cruelty, 1-6. The oppressed followers of God should be patient, for the Lord's coming is nigh; and should not grudge against each other, 7-9. They should take encouragement from the example of the prophets, and of Job, 10, 11. Swearing forbidden, 12. Directions to the afflicted, 13-16. They should confess their faults to each other, 16. The great prevalence of prayer instanced in Elijah, 17, 18. The blessedness of converting a sinner from the error of his way, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1.** *Go to now* See on James 4:13.

*Weep and howl for your miseries* St. James seems to refer here, in the spirit of prophecy, to the destruction that was coming upon the Jews, not only in Judea, but in all the provinces where they sojourned. He seems here to assume the very air and character of a prophet; and in the most dignified language and peculiarly expressive and energetic images, foretells the desolations that were coming upon this bad people.

**Verse 2.** *Your riches are corrupted* *οσσηπε*. Are putrefied. The term *πλουτος*, riches, is to be taken here, not for gold, silver, or precious stones, (for these could not putrefy,) but for the produce of the fields and flocks, the different stores of grain, wine, and oil, which they had laid up in their granaries, and the various changes of raiment which they had amassed in their wardrobes.

**Verse 3.** *Your gold and silver is cankered* Instead of helping the poor, and thus honoring God with your substance, ye have, through the principle of covetousness, kept all to yourselves.

*The rust of them shall be a witness against you* Your putrefied stores, your moth-eaten garments, and your tarnished coin, are so many proofs

that it was not for want of property that you assisted not the poor, but through a principle of avarice; loving money, not for the sake of what it could procure, but for its own sake, which is the genuine principle of the miser. This was the very character given to this people by our Lord himself; he called them **φιλαργυροι**, lovers of money. Against this despicable and abominable disposition, the whole of the 12th chapter of St. Luke is levelled; but it was their easily besetting sin, and is so to the present day.

***Shall eat your flesh as it were fire.*** This is a very bold and sublime figure. He represents the rust of their coin as becoming a canker that should produce gangrenes and phagedenous ulcers in their flesh, till it should be eaten away from their bones.

***Ye have heaped treasure together*** This verse is variously pointed. The word **ως**, like as, in the preceding clause, is left out by the Syriac, and some others; and **πυρ**, fire, is added here from that clause; so that the whole verse reads thus: “Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall consume your flesh. Ye have treasured up FIRE against the last days.” This is a bold and fine image: instead of the treasures of corn, wine, and oil, rich stuffs, with silver and gold, which ye have been laying up, ye shall find a treasure, a magazine of fire, that shall burn up your city, and consume even your temple. This was literally true; and these solemn denunciations of Divine wrath were most completely fulfilled. See the notes on Matt. 24, where all the circumstances of this tremendous and final destruction are particularly noted.

By the last days we are not to understand the day of judgment, but the last days of the Jewish commonwealth, which were not long distant from the date of this epistle, whether we follow the earlier or later computation, of which enough has been spoken in the preface.

**Verse 4. *The hire of the laborers*** The law, Leviticus 19:13, had ordered: The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning, every day’s labor being paid for as soon as ended. This is more clearly stated in another law, Deuteronomy 24:15: At his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it;—lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee. And that God particularly

resented this defrauding of the hireling we see from Malachi 3:5: I will come near to you in judgment, and will be a swift witness against those who oppress the hireling in his wages. And on these laws and threatenings is built what we read in Synopsis Sohar, p. 100, l. 45: “When a poor man does any work in a house, the vapor proceeding from him, through the severity of his work, ascends towards heaven. Wo to his employer if he delay to pay him his wages.” To this James seems particularly to allude, when he says: The cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts; and the rabbins say, “The vapor arising from the sweat of the hard-worked laborer ascends up before God.” Both images are sufficiently expressive.

***The Lord of sabaoth.*** St. James often conceives in Hebrew though he writes in Greek. It is well known that יהוה צבאות Yehovah tsebaoth, Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies, is a frequent appellation of God in the Old Testament; and signifies his uncontrollable power, and the infinitely numerous means he has for governing the world, and defending his followers, and punishing the wicked.

**Verse 5. *Ye have lived in pleasure*** ετρυφησατε. Ye have lived luxuriously; feeding yourselves without fear, pampering the flesh.

***And been wanton*** εσπαταλησατε· Ye have lived lasciviously. Ye have indulged all your sinful and sensual appetites to the uttermost; and your lives have been scandalous.

***Ye have nourished your hearts*** εθρεψατε· Ye have fattened your hearts, and have rendered them incapable of feeling, as in a day of slaughter, ημερα αφαγης, a day of sacrifice, where many victims are offered at once, and where the people feast upon the sacrifices; many, no doubt, turning, on that occasion, a holy ordinance into a riotous festival.

**Verse 6. *Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.*** Several by τον δικαιον, the just one, understand Jesus Christ, who is so called, Acts 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; but the structure of the sentence, and the connection in which it stands, seem to require that we should consider this as applying to the just or righteous in general, who were persecuted and murdered by those oppressive rich men; and their death was the consequence of their dragging them before the judgment seats, James 2:6,



where, having no influence, and none to plead their cause, they were unjustly condemned and executed.

And he doth not resist you. — In this, as in **τον δικαιον**, the just, there is an enallage of the singular for the plural number. And in the word **ουκ αντιτασσειται**, he doth not resist, the idea is included of defense in a court of justice. These poor righteous people had none to plead their cause; and if they had it would have been useless, as their oppressors had all power and all influence, and those who sat on these judgment seats were lost to all sense of justice and right. Some think that he doth not resist you should be referred to GOD; as if he had said, God permits you to go on in this way at present, but he will shortly awake to judgment, and destroy you as enemies of truth and righteousness.

**Verse 7. *Be patient, therefore*** Because God is coming to execute judgment on this wicked people, therefore be patient till he comes. He seems here to refer to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment on the Jewish nation, which shortly afterwards took place.

***The husbandman waiteth*** The seed of your deliverance is already sown, and by and by the harvest of your salvation will take place. God's counsels will ripen in due time.

***The early and latter rain.*** The rain of seed time; and the rain of ripening before harvest: the first fell in Judea, about the beginning of November, after the seed was sown; and the second towards the end of April, when the ears were filling, and this prepared for a full harvest. Without these two rains, the earth would have been unfruitful. These God had promised: I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil, Deuteronomy 11:14. But for these they were not only to wait patiently, but also to pray, Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field; Zechariah 10:1.

**Verse 8. *Be ye also patient*** Wait for God's deliverance, as ye wait for his bounty in providence.

***Stablish your hearts*** Take courage; do not sink under your trials.

***The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.*** ηγγικε· Is at hand. He is already on his way to destroy this wicked people, to raze their city and temple, and to destroy their polity for ever; and this judgment will soon take place.

**Verse 9. *Grudge not*** μη στεναζετε· Groan not; grumble not; do not murmur through impatience; and let not any ill treatment which you receive, induce you to vent your feelings in imprecations against your oppressors. Leave all this in the hands of God.

***Lest ye be condemned*** By giving way to a spirit of this kind, you will get under the condemnation of the wicked.

***The judge standeth before the door.*** His eye is upon every thing that is wrong in you, and every wrong that is done to you; and he is now entering into judgment with your oppressors.

**Verse 10. *Take-the prophets*** The prophets who had spoken to their forefathers by the authority of God, were persecuted by the very people to whom they delivered the Divine message; but they suffered affliction and persecution with patience, commending their cause to him who judgeth righteously; therefore, imitate their example.

**Verse 11. *We count them happy which endure.*** According to that saying of our blessed Lord, Blessed are ye when men shall persecute and revile you-for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you. Matthew 5:11, 12, etc.

***Ye have heard of the patience of Job*** Stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived at a stroke of all his children, tortured in body with sore disease, tempted by the devil, harassed by his wife, and calumniated by his friends, he nevertheless held fast his integrity, resigned himself to the Divine dispensations, and charged not God foolishly.

***And have seen the end of the Lord*** The issue to which God brought all his afflictions and trials, giving him children, increasing his property, lengthening out his life, and multiplying to him every kind of spiritual and secular good. This was God's end with respect to him; but the devil's end was to drive him to despair, and to cause him to blaspheme his Maker. This mention of Job shows him to have been a real person; for a fictitious person would not have been produced as an example of any virtue so

highly important as that of patience and perseverance. The end of the Lord is a Hebraism for the issue to which God brings any thing or business.

***The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.*** Instead of **πολυσπλαγγνος**, which we translate very pitiful, and which might be rendered of much sympathy, from **πολυς**, much, and **σπλαγγνον**, a bowel, (because any thing that affects us with commiseration causes us to feel an indescribable emotion of the bowels,) several MSS. have **πολυενσπλαγγνος**, from **παλυσ**, much, **ευ**, easily, and **σπλαγγνον**, a bowel, a word not easy to be translated; but it signifies one whose commiseration is easily excited, and whose commiseration is great or abundant.

**Verse 12. *Above all things-swear not*** What relation this exhortation can have to the subject in question, I confess I cannot see. It may not have been designed to stand in any connection, but to be a separate piece of advice, as in the several cases which immediately follow. That the Jews were notoriously guilty of common swearing is allowed on all hands; and that swearing by heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar, different parts of the body, was not considered by them as binding oaths, has been sufficiently proved. Rabbi Akiba taught that “a man might swear with his lips, and annul it in his heart; and then the oath was not binding.” See the notes on Matthew 5:33, etc., where the subject is considered in great detail.

***Let your yea be yea, etc.*** Do not pretend to say yea with your lips, and annul it in your heart; let the yea or the nay which you express be bona fide such. Do not imagine that any mental reservation can cancel any such expressions of obligation in the sight of God.

***Lest ye fall into condemnation.*** ἵνα μη υπο κρισιν πεσητε· Lest ye fall under judgment. Several MSS. join **υπο** and **κρισιν** together, **υποκρισιν**, and prefix **εις**, into, which makes a widely different reading: Lest ye fall into hypocrisy. Now, as it is a fact, that the Jews did teach that there might be mental reservation, that would annul the oath, how solemnly soever it was taken; the object of St. James, if the last reading be genuine, and it is supported by a great number of excellent MSS., some versions, and some of the most eminent of the fathers, was to guard against

that hypocritical method of taking an oath, which is subversive of all moral feeling, and must make conscience itself callous.

**Verse 13. *Is any among you afflicted? let him pray*** The Jews taught that the meaning of the ordinance, Leviticus 13:45, which required the leper to cry, Unclean! unclean! was, “that thus making known his calamity, the people might be led to offer up prayers to God in his behalf,” Sota, page 685, ed. Wagens. They taught also, that when any sickness or affliction entered a family, they should go to the wise men, and implore their prayers. Bava bathra, fol. 116, 1.

In Nedarim, fol. 40, 1, we have this relation: “Rabba, as often as he fell sick, forbade his domestics to mention it for the first day; if he did not then begin to get well, he told his family to go and publish it in the highways, that they who hated him might rejoice, and they that loved him might intercede with God for him.”

***Is any merry? let him sing psalms.*** These are all general but very useful directions. It is natural for a man to sing when he is cheerful and happy. Now no subject can be more noble than that which is Divine: and as God alone is the author of all that good which makes a man happy, then his praise should be the subject of the song of him who is merry. But where persons rejoice in iniquity, and not in the truth, God and sacred things can never be the subject of their song.

**Verse 14. *Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders*** This was also a Jewish maxim. Rabbi Simeon, in Sepher Hachaiyim, said: “What should a man do who goes to visit the sick? Ans. He who studies to restore the health of the body, should first lay the foundation in the health of the soul. The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the word of God and prayer. Rabbi Phineas, the son of Chamma, hath said, ‘When sickness or disease enters into a man’s family, let him apply to a wise man, who will implore mercy in his behalf.’” See Schoettgen.

St. James very properly sends all such to the elders of the Church, who had power with God through the great Mediator, that they might pray for them.

*Anointing him with oil* That St. James neither means any kind of incantation, any kind of miracle, or such extreme unction as the Romish Church prescribes, will be sufficiently evident from these considerations: 1. Be was a holy man, and could prescribe nothing but what was holy. 2. If a miracle was intended, it could have been as well wrought without the oil, as with it. 3. It is not intimated that even this unction is to save the sick man, but the prayer of faith, James 5:15. 4. What is here recommended was to be done as a natural means of restoring health, which, while they used prayer and supplication to God, they were not to neglect. 5. Oil in Judea was celebrated for its sanative qualities; so that they scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them, (see in the case of the Samaritan,) with which they anointed their bodies, healed their wounds, bruises, etc. 6. Oil was and is frequently used in the east as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of the plague. Even in Europe it has been tried with great success in the cure of dropsy. And pure olive oil is excellent for recent wounds and bruises; and I have seen it tried in this way with the best effects. 7. But that it was the custom of the Jews to apply it as a means of healing, and that St. James refers to this custom, is not only evident from the case of the wounded man ministered to by the good Samaritan, Luke 10:34, but from the practice of the Jewish rabbins. In Midrash Koheleth, fol. 73, 1, it is said: "Chanina, son of the brother of the Rabbi Joshua, went to visit his uncle at Capernaum; he was taken ill; and Rabbi Joshua went to him and anointed him with oil, and he was restored." They had, therefore, recourse to this as a natural remedy; and we find that the disciples used it also in this way to heal the sick, not exerting the miraculous power but in cases where natural means were ineffectual. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them; Mark 6:13. On this latter place I have supposed that it might have been done symbolically, in order to prepare the way for a miraculous cure: this is the opinion of many commentators; but I am led, on more mature consideration, to doubt its propriety, yet dare not decide. In short, anointing the sick with oil, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews. See Lightfoot and Wetstein on Mark 6:13. And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a natural means of restoring health; and that St. James desires them to use natural means while looking to God for an especial blessing. And no wise man would direct

otherwise. 8. That the anointing recommended here by St. James cannot be such as the Romish Church prescribes, and it is on this passage principally that they found their sacrament of extreme unction, is evident from these considerations: 1. St. James orders the sick person to be anointed in reference to his cure; but they anoint the sick in the agonies of death, when there is no prospect of his recovery; and never administer that sacrament, as it is called, while there is any hope of life. 2. St James orders this anointing for the cure of the body, but they apply it for the cure of the soul; in reference to which use of it St. James gives no directions: and what is said of the forgiveness of sins, in James 5:15, is rather to be referred to faith and prayer, which are often the means of restoring lost health, and preventing premature death, when natural means, the most skillfully used, have been useless. 3. The anointing with oil, if ever used as a means or symbol in working miraculous cures, was only applied in some cases, perhaps very few, if any; but the Romish Church uses it in every case; and makes it necessary to the salvation of every departing soul. Therefore, St. James' unction, and the extreme unction of the Romish Church, are essentially different. See below.

**Verse 15. *And the prayer of faith; shall save the sick*** That is, God will often make these the means of a sick man's recovery; but there often are cases where faith and prayer are both ineffectual, because God sees it will be prejudicial to the patient's salvation to be restored; and therefore all faith and prayer on such occasions should be exerted on this ground: "If it be most for thy glory, and the eternal good of this man's soul, let him be restored; if otherwise, Lord, pardon, purify him, and take him to thy glory."

***The Lord shall raise him up*** Not the elders, how faithfully and fervently soever they have prayed.

***And if he have committed sins*** So as to have occasioned his present malady, they shall be forgiven him; for being the cause of the affliction it is natural to conclude that, if the effect be to cease, the cause must be removed. We find that in the miraculous restoration to health, under the powerful hand of Christ, the sin of the party is generally said to be forgiven, and this also before the miracle was wrought on the body: hence there was a maxim among the Jews, and it seems to be founded in common

sense and reason, that God never restores a man miraculously to health till he has pardoned his sins; because it would be incongruous for God to exert his miraculous power in saving a body, the soul of which was in a state of condemnation to eternal death, because of the crimes it had committed against its Maker and Judge. Here then it is GOD that remits the sin, not in reference to the unction, but in reference to the cure of the body, which he is miraculously to effect.

**Verse 16. *Confess your faults one to another*** This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavor to maintain among themselves the communion of saints. This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and to make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offenses which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offenses before God, or be obliged any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren.

It is not said, Confess your faults to the ELDERS that they may forgive them, or prescribe penance in order to forgive them. No; the members of the Church were to confess their faults to each other; therefore auricular confession to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here it would prove more than they wish, for it would require the priest to confess his sins to the people, as well as the people to confess theirs to the priest.

***And pray one for another*** There is no instance in auricular confession where the penitent and the priest pray together for pardon; but here the people are commanded to pray for each other that they may be healed.

***The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.*** The words **δησις ενεργουμενη** signify energetic supplication, or such a prayer as is suggested to the soul and wrought in it by a Divine energy. When God designs to do some particular work in his Church he pours out on his followers the spirit of grace and supplication; and this he does sometimes when he is about to do some especial work for an individual. When such a power of prayer is granted, faith should be immediately

called into exercise, that the blessing may be given: the spirit of prayer is the proof that the power of God is present to heal. Long prayers give no particular evidence of Divine inspiration: the following was a maxim among the ancient Jews, שתפלת צדיקים קצרה, the prayers of the righteous are short. This is exemplified in almost every instance in the Old Testament.

**Verse 17. *Elias was a man subject to like passions*** This was Elijah, and a consistency between the names of the same persons as expressed in the Old and the New Testaments should be kept up.

The word **ομοιοπαθης** signifies of the same constitution, a human being just as ourselves are. See the same phrase and its explanation in Acts 14:15, and the note there. There was some reason to apprehend that because Elijah was translated, that therefore he was more than human, and if so, his example could be no pattern for us; and as the design of St. James was to excite men to pray, expecting the Divine interference whenever that should be necessary, therefore he tells them that Elijah was a man like themselves, of the same constitution, liable to the same accidents, and needing the same supports.

***And he prayed earnestly*** **προσευχη προσηυξατο**. He prayed with prayer; a Hebraism for, he prayed fervently.

***That it might not rain*** See this history, 1 Kings 17:1, etc.

***And it rained not on the earth*** **επι της γης**. On that land, viz. the land of Judea; for this drought did not extend elsewhere.

***Three years and six months.*** This is the term mentioned by our Lord, Luke 4:25; but this is not specified in the original history. In 1 Kings 18:1, it is said, In the third year the word of the Lord came to Elijah, that is, concerning the rain; but this third year is to be computed from the time of his going to live at Zarephath, which happened many days after the drought began, as is plain from this, that he remained at the brook Cherith till it was dried up, and then went to Zarephath, in the country of Zidon; 1 Kings 17:7-9. Therefore the three years and six months must be computed from his denouncing the drought, at which time that judgment commenced. Macknight.



**Verse 18. *And he prayed again*** This second prayer is not mentioned in the history in express words, but as in 1 Kings 18:42, it is said, He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees; that was probably the time of the second praying, namely, that rain might come, as this was the proper posture of prayer.

**Verse 19. *Err from the truth*** Stray away from the Gospel of Christ; and one convert him — reclaim him from his error, and bring him back to the fold of Christ.

**Verse 20. *Let him know*** Let him duly consider, for his encouragement, that he who is the instrument of converting a sinner shall save a soul from eternal death, and a body from ruin, and shall hide a multitude of sins; for in being the means of his conversion we bring him back to God, who, in his infinite mercy, hides or blots out the numerous sins which he had committed during the time of his backsliding. It is not the man's sins who is the means of his conversion, but the sins of the backslider, which are here said to be hidden. See more below.

1. MANY are of opinion that the hiding a multitude of sins is here to be understood of the person who converts the backslider: this is a dangerous doctrine, and what the Holy Spirit never taught to man. Were this true it would lead many a sinner to endeavor the reformation of his neighbor, that himself might continue under the influence of his own beloved sins and conversion to a particular creed would be put in the place of conversion to God, and thus the substance be lost in the shadow. Bishop Atterbury, (Ser. vol. i. p. 46,) and Scott, (Christian Life, vol. i. p. 368,) contend "that the covering a multitude of sins includes also, that the pious action of which the apostle speaks engages God to look with greater indulgence on the character of the person that performs it, and to be less severe in marking what he has done amiss." See Macknight. This from such authorities may be considered doubly dangerous; it argues however great ignorance of God, of the nature of Divine justice, and of the sinfulness of sin. It is besides completely antievangelical; it teaches in effect that something besides the blood of the covenant will render God propitious to man, and that the performance of a pious action will induce God's justice to show greater indulgence to the person who performs it, and to be less severe in marking what he has done amiss. On the ground of this doctrine

we might confide that, had he a certain quantum of pious acts, we might have all the sins of our lives forgiven, independently of the sacrifice of Christ; for if one pious act can procure pardon for a multitude of sins, what may not be expected from many?

2. The Jewish doctrine, to which it is possible St. James may allude, was certainly more sound than that taught by these Christian divines. They allowed that the man who was the means of converting another had done a work highly pleasing to God, and which should be rewarded; but they never insinuate that this would atone for sin. I shall produce a few examples:—

In Synopsis Sohzar, p. 47, n. 17, it is said: Great is his excellence who persuades a sick person to turn from his sins.

Ibid, p. 92, n. 18: Great is his reward who brings back the pious into the way of the blessed Lord.

Yoma, fol. 87, 1: By his hands iniquity is not committed, who turns many to righteousness; i.e. God does not permit him to fall into sin. What is the reason? Ans. Lest those should be found in paradise, while their instructor is found in hell.

This doctrine is both innocent and godly in comparison of the other. It holds out a motive to diligence and zeal, but nothing farther. In short, if we allow any thing to cover our sins beside the mercy of God in Christ Jesus, WE shall err most dangerously from the truth, and add this moreover to the multitude of OUR sins, that we maintained that the gift of God could be purchased by our puny acts of comparative righteousness.

3. As one immortal soul is of more worth than all the material creation of God, every man who knows the worth of his own should labor for the salvation of others. To be the means of depriving hell of her expectation, and adding even one soul to the Church triumphant, is a matter of infinite moment; and he who is such an instrument has much reason to thank God that ever he was born. He who lays out his accounts to do good to the souls of men, will ever have the blessing of God in his own. Besides, God will not suffer him to labor in vain, or spend his strength for naught. At first he may see little fruit; but the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days: and if he should never see it in this life, he may

take for granted that whatsoever he has done for God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, has been less or more effectual.

After the last word of this epistle **αμαρτιων**, of sins, some versions add his, others theirs; and one MS. and the later Syriac have Amen. But these additions are of no authority.

The subscriptions to this epistle, in the VERSIONS, are the following: The end of the Epistle of James the apostle. — SYRIAC. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle is ended. — SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN. The end. — AETHIOPIC. Praise be to God for ever and ever; and may his mercy be upon us. Amen. — ARABIC. The Epistle of James the son of Zebedee, is ended. — ITALA, one copy. Nothing. — COPTIC. Nothing. — Printed VULGATE. The Epistle of James is ended. — Bib. VULG. Edit. Eggestein. The Epistle of St. James the apostle is ended. — Complutensian.

In the MANUSCRIPTS: Of James. — Codex Vaticanus, B. The Epistle of James. — Codex Alexandrinus. The end of the catholic Epistle of James. — Codex Vaticanus, 1210. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle. — A Vienna MS. The catholic Epistle of the holy Apostle James. — An ancient MS. in the library of the Augustins, at Rome. The end of the Epistle of the holy Apostle James, the brother of God. — One of Petavius's MSS., written in the thirteenth century. The same is found in a Vatican MS. of the eleventh century. The most ancient MSS. have little or no subscription.

Two opinions relative to the author are expressed in these MSS. One copy of the Itala, the Codex Corbejensis, at Paris, which contains this epistle only, attributes it to James, the son of Zebedee; and two, comparatively recent, attribute it to James, our Lord's brother. The former testimony, taken in conjunction with some internal evidences, led Michaelis, and some others, to suppose it probable that James the elder, or the son of Zebedee, was the author. I should give it to this apostle, in preference to the other, had I not reason to believe that a James, different from either; was the author. But who or what he was, at this distance of time, it is impossible to say. Having now done with all comments on the text, I shall conclude with some particulars relative to James, our Lord's brother, and some general observations on the structure and importance of this epistle.

I have entered but little into the history of this James, because I was not satisfied that he is the author of this epistle: however, observing that the current of modern authors are decided in their opinion that he was the author, I perceive I may be blamed unless I be more particular concerning his life; as some of the ancients have related several circumstances relative to him that are very remarkable, and, indeed, singular. Dr. Lardner has collected the whole; and, although the same authors from whom he has taken his accounts are before me, yet, not supposing that I can at all mend either his selections or arrangement, I shall take the accounts as he states them.

“I should now proceed,” says this learned man, “to write the history of this person (James) from ancient authors; but that is a difficult task, as I have found, after trying more than once, and at distant spaces of time. I shall therefore take *DIVERS* passages of Eusebius and others, and make such reflections as offer for finding out as much truth as we can.

“Eusebius, in his chapter concerning our Saviour’s disciples, (*Eccl. Hist. lib. i., cap. 12.*) speaks of James, to whom our Lord showed himself after his resurrection, *1 Corinthians 15:7*, as being one of the seventy disciples.

“The same author has another chapter, (*Hist. Eccl., lib. ii., cap. 1.*) entitled, *Of Things constituted by the Apostles after our Saviour’s Ascension*, which is to this purpose:—

“The first is the choice of Matthias, one of Christ’s disciples, into the apostleship, in the room of Judas; then the appointment of the seven deacons, one of whom was Stephen, who, soon after his being ordained, was stoned by those who had killed the Lord, and was the first martyr for Christ; then James, called the Lord’s brother, because he was the son of Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused. This James, called by the ancients the just, on account of his eminent virtue, is said to have been appointed the first bishop of Jerusalem; and Clement, in the sixth book of his *Institutions*, writes after this manner: That after our Lord’s ascension, Peter, and James, and John, though they had been favored by the Lord above the rest, did not contend for honor, but chose James the just to be bishop of Jerusalem; and in the seventh book of the same work he says, that after his resurrection the Lord gave to James the just, and Peter, and John, the gift of knowledge; and they gave it to the other apostles, and the

other apostles gave it to the seventy, one of whom was Barnabas: for there were two named James, one the just, who was thrown down from the battlement of the temple and killed by a fuller's staff; the other is he who was beheaded. Of him who was called the just, Paul also makes mention, saying, Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

"I would now take a passage from Origen, in the tenth vol. of his Commentaries upon Matthew 13:55, 56: Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? They thought, says Origen, that he was the son of Joseph and Mary. The brethren of Jesus, some say, upon the ground of tradition, and particularly of what is said in the gospel according to Peter, or the book of James, were the sons of Joseph by a former wife, who cohabited with him before Mary. They who say this are desirous of maintaining the honor of Mary's virginity to the last, (or her perpetual virginity,) that the body chosen to fulfill what is said, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee, Luke 1:35, might not know man after that: and I think it very reasonable that, as Jesus was the first fruits of virginity among men, Mary should be the same among women; for it would be very improper to give that honor to any besides her. This James is he whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Galatians, saying, Other of the apostles, saw I none, save James the Lord's brother. This James was in so great repute with the people for his virtue, that Josephus, who wrote twenty books of the Jewish antiquities, desirous to assign the reason of their suffering such things, so that even their temple was destroyed, says that those things were owing to the anger of God for what they did to James, the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ. And it is wonderful that he, who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to James. He also says that the people thought they suffered those things on account of James. Jude, who wrote an epistle, of a few lines indeed, but filled with the powerful word of the heavenly grace, says, at the beginning, Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James. Of Joses and Simon we know nothing.

"Origen, in his books against Celsus, quotes Josephus again as speaking of James; to the like purpose; but there are not now any such passages in Josephus, though they are quoted as from him by Eusebius also. As the

death of James has been mentioned, I shall now immediately take the accounts of it which are in Eusebius, and I will transcribe a large part of the twenty-third chapter of the second book of his Ecclesiastical History: ‘But when Paul had appealed to Caesar, and Festus had sent him to Rome, the Jews being disappointed in their design against him, turned their rage against James, the Lord’s brother, to whom the apostles had consigned the episcopal chair of Jerusalem, and in this manner they proceeded against him: having laid hold of him, they required him, in the presence of all the people, to renounce his faith in Christ; but he, with freedom and boldness beyond expectation, before all the multitude declared our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They, not enduring the testimony of a man who was in high esteem for his piety, laid hold of the opportunity when the country was without a governor to put him to death; for Festus having died about that time in Judea, the province had in it no procurator. The manner of the death of James was shown before in the words of Clement, who said that he was thrown off the battlement of the temple, and then beat to death with a club. But no one has so accurately related this transaction as Hegesippus, a man in the first succession of the apostles, in the fifth book of his Commentaries, whose words are to this purpose: James, the brother of our Lord, undertook together with the apostles, the government of the Church. He has been called the just by all, from the time of our Savior to ours: for many have been named James; but he was holy from his mother’s womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat any animal food; there never came a razor upon his head; he neither anointed himself with oil, nor did he use a bath. To him alone was it lawful to enter the holy place. He wore no woollen, but only linen garments. He entered into the temple alone, where he prayed upon his knees; insomuch that his knees were become like the knees of a camel by means of his being continually upon them, worshipping God, and praying for the forgiveness of the people. Upon account of his virtue he was called the just, and Oblias, that is, the defense of the people, and righteousness. Some, therefore, of the seven sects which were among the Jews, of whom I spoke in the former part of these Commentaries, asked him, Which is the gate of Jesus? or, What is the gate of salvation? and he said, Jesus is the Savior, or the way of salvation. Some of them therefore believed that Jesus is the Christ. And many of the chief men also believing, there was a disturbance among the Jews and among the scribes and

Pharisees, who said there was danger lest all the people should think Jesus to be the Christ. Coming therefore to James they said, We beseech thee to restrain the error of this people; we entreat thee to persuade all who come hither at the time of passover to think rightly concerning Jesus, for all the people and all of us put confidence in thee. Stand therefore on the battlement of the temple, that being placed on high thou mayest be conspicuous, and thy words may be easily heard by all the people; for because of the passover all the tribes are come hither, and many Gentiles. Therefore the scribes and Pharisees before named placed James upon the battlement of the temple, and cried out to him and said, O Justus, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are in an error, following Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus. And he answered with a loud voice, Why do you ask me concerning the Son of man? He even sitteth in the heaven, at the right hand of the great Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven. And many were fully satisfied and well pleased with the testimony of James, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! But the same scribes and Pharisees said one to another, We have done wrong in procuring such a testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, that the people may be terrified from giving credit to him. And they went up presently, and cast him down, and said, Let us stone James the just: and they began to stone him because he was not killed by the fall. But he turning himself, kneeled, saying, I entreat thee, O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. As they were stoning him, one said, Give over. What do ye? The just man prays for you. And one of them, a fuller, took a pole, which was used to beat clothes with, and struck him on the head. Thus his martyrdom was completed. And they buried him in that place; and his monument still remains near the temple. This James was a true witness, both to Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ. Soon after Judea was invaded by Vespasian, and the people were carried captive.' So writes Hegesippus at large, agreeably to Clement. For certain, James was an excellent man, and much esteemed by many for his virtue; insomuch that the most thoughtful men among the Jews were of opinion that his death was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem, which followed soon after his martyrdom: and that it was owing to nothing else but the wickedness committed against him. And Josephus says the same in these words: 'These things befell the Jews in vindication of James the just,

who was brother of Jesus, called the Christ. For the Jews killed him; who was a most righteous man.’

“The time of the death of James may be determined without much difficulty; he was alive when Paul came to Jerusalem at the pentecost, in the year of Christ 58, and it is likely that he was dead when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews at the beginning of the year 63. Theodoret, upon Hebrews 13:7 supposes the apostle there to refer to the martyrdoms of Stephen, James the brother of John, and James the just. According to Hegesippus, the death of James happened about the time of passover, which might be that of the year 62; and if Festus was then dead, and Albinus not arrived, the province was without a governor. Such a season left the Jews at liberty to gratify their licentious and turbulent disposition, and they were very likely to embrace it.”

I have said but little relative to the controversy concerning the apostleship of James, our Lord’s brother; for, as I am still in doubt whether he was the author of this epistle, I do not judge it necessary to enter into the question. I proceed now to some general observations on the epistle itself, and the evidence it affords of the learning and science of its author.

1. I have already conjectured that this epistle ranks among the most ancient of the Christian writings; its total want of reference to the great facts which distinguish the early history of the Church, viz., the calling of the Gentiles, the disputes between them and the Jews, the questions concerning circumcision, and the obligation of the law in connection with the Gospel etc., etc., shows that it must have been written before those things took place, or that they must have been wholly unknown to the author; which is incredible, allowing him to have been a Christian writer.

2. The style of this epistle is much more elevated than most other parts of the New Testament. It abounds with figures and metaphors, at once bold, dignified, just, and impressive. Many parts of it are in the genuine prophetic style, and much after the manner of the Prophet Zephaniah, to whom there is a near resemblance in several passages.

3. An attentive reader of this epistle will perceive the author to be a man of deep thought and considerable learning. He had studied the Jewish prophets closely, and imitated their style; but he appears also to have read



the Greek poets: his language is such as we might expect from one who had made them his study, but who avoided to quote them. We find a perfect Greek hexameter in James 1:17, and another may be perceived in James 4:4; but these are probably not borrowed, but are the spontaneous, undesigned effort of his own well cultivated mind. His science may be noted in several places, but particularly in James 1:17, on which see the note and the diagram, and its explanation at the end of the chapter. Images from natural history are not unfrequent; and that in James 1:14, 15 is exceedingly correct and appropriate, but will not bear a closely literal translation.

4. His constant attention and reference to the writings and maxims of his own countrymen is peculiarly observable. Several of his remarks tend to confirm the antiquity of the Talmud; and the parallel passages in the different tracts of that work cast much light on the allusions of St. James. Without constant reference to the ancient Jewish rabbins, we should have sought for the meaning of several passages in vain.

5. St. James is in many places obscure; this may arise partly from his own deep and strong conceptions, and partly from allusions to arts or maxims which are not come down to us, or which lie yet undiscovered in the

sincerity of that faith which professes to have put its possessor in the enjoyment of the peace and favor of God.

7. This epistle ends abruptly, and scarcely appears to be a finished work. The author probably intended to have added more, but may have been prevented by death. James, our Lord's brother, was murdered by the Jews, as we have already seen. James, the son Zebedee, had probably a short race; but whether either of these were its author we know not. The work was probably posthumous, not appearing till after the author's death; and this may have been one reason why it was so little known in the earliest ages of the primitive Church.

8. The spirit of Antinomianism is as dangerous in the Church as the spirit of Pharisaism; to the former the Epistle of James is a most powerful antidote; and the Christian minister who wishes to improve and guard the morals of his flock will bring its important doctrines, in due proportion, into his public ministry. It is no proof of the improved state of public morals that many, who call themselves evangelical teachers, scarcely ever attempt to instruct the public by texts selected from this epistle.

For other particulars, relative to the time of writing this epistle, the author, his inspiration, apostleship, etc., I must refer to Michaelis and Lardner, and to the preface.

Millbrook, Dec. 9, 1816 Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 31, 1831.

**PREFACE**  
**TO**  
**THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES**  
**OF**  
**PETER.**

DR. LARDNER and Professor Michaelis have done much to remove several difficulties connected with the person of St. Peter, the people to whom he wrote, the places of their dispersion, and the time of writing. I shall extract what makes more immediately for my purpose.

“The land of Palestine, says Cave, at and before the coming of our blessed Savior, was distinguished into three several provinces, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. In the upper, called also Galilee of the Gentiles, within the division belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, stood Bethsaida, formerly an obscure and inconsiderable village, till lately re-edified and enlarged by Philip the Tetrarch; and, in honor of Julia, daughter of Augustus, called by him Julias. It was situated upon the banks of the sea of Galilee, called also the lake of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesareth, which was about forty furlongs in breadth, and a hundred in length; and had a wilderness on the other side called the desert of Bethsaida, whither our Savior used often to retire.

“At this place was born Simon, surnamed Cephas, or Petros, Petrus, Peter, signifying a stone, or fragment of a rock. He was a fisherman upon the forementioned lake or sea, as was also in all probability his father Jonas, Jonah, or John. He had a brother named Andrew: which was the eldest of the two is not certain; for, concerning this, there were different opinions among the ancients. Epiphanius supposed Andrew to be the elder; but, according to Chrysostom, Peter was the first-born. So likewise Bede and Cassian, who even make Peter’s age the ground of his precedence among the apostles; and Jerome himself has expressed himself in like manner,

saying, 'that the keys were given to all the apostles alike, and the Church was built upon all of them equally; but, for preventing dissension, precedency was given to one. John might have been the person, but he was too young; and Peter was preferred on account of his age.'

"The call of Andrew and Peter to a stated attendance on Jesus is recorded in three evangelists. Their father Jonas seems to have been dead; for there is no mention of him, as there is of Zebedee, when his two sons were called. It is only said of Andrew and Peter that, when Jesus called them, they left their nets and followed him. Follow me, said he, and, I will make you fishers of men.

"Simon Peter was married when called by our Lord to attend upon him; and upon occasion of that alliance, it seems, had removed from Bethsaida to Capernaum, where was his wife's family. Upon her mother our Savior wrought a great miracle of healing. And, I suppose, that when our Lord left Nazareth, and came and dwelled at Capernaum, he made Peter's house the place of his usual abode when he was in those parts. I think we have a proof of it in the history just noticed. When Jesus came out of the synagogue at Capernaum, he entered into Simon's house, Luke 4:38. Compare Mark 1:29, which is well paraphrased by Dr. Clarke: 'Now when Jesus came out of the synagogue, he went home to Peter's house;' and there it was that the people resorted unto him.

"Some time after this, when our Lord had an opportunity of private conversation with the disciples, he inquired of them what men said of him; and then whom they thought him to be. 'Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' Matthew 16:13-16. So far likewise in Mark 8:27-29, and Luke 9:18-20. Then follows, in Matthew 16:17-19: 'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven:' that is, 'it is not a partial affection for me, thy Master, nor a fond and inconsiderate regard for the judgments of others for whom thou hast a respect, that has induced thee to think thus of me; but it is a just persuasion formed in thy mind by observing the great works thou hast seen me do by the power of God in the confirmation of my mission and doctrine.' 'And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church-and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of

heaven.’ By which many of our interpreters suppose that our Lord promised to Peter that he should have the honor of beginning to preach the Gospel after his resurrection to Jews and Gentiles, and of receiving them into the Church; if so that is personal. Nevertheless, what follows, ‘And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;’ this, I say, must have been the privilege of all the apostles, for the like things are expressly said to them, Luke 22:29, 30, John 20:21-23. Moreover, all the apostles concurred with Peter in the first preaching both to Jews and Gentiles. As he was president in the college of the apostles, it was very fit, and a thing of course, that he should be primarily concerned in the first opening of things. The confession now particularly before us was made by him; but it was in answer to a question that had been put to all; and he spoke the sense of all the apostles, and in their name. I suppose this to be as true in this instance, as in the other before mentioned, which is in John 6:68, 69. In the account which St. John has given us of our Savior’s washing the disciples’ feet, Peter’s modesty and fervor are conspicuous. When the Jewish officers were about to apprehend our Lord, ‘Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.’ Our Lord having checked Peter, touched the servant’s ear, and healed him. So great is Jesus everywhere! They that laid hold of Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas; the rest of the disciples now forsook him and fled; ‘but Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest’s palace; and went in and sat with the servants to see the end.’ Here Peter thrice disowned his Lord, peremptorily denying that he was one of the disciples, or had any knowledge of him, as related by all the evangelists; for which he soon after humbled himself, and wept bitterly. We do not perceive that Peter followed our Lord any farther; or that he at all attended the crucifixion. It is likely that he was under too much concern of mind to appear in public; and that he chose retirement, as most suitable to his present temper and circumstances.

“On the first day of the week, early in the morning, when Mary Magdalene and other women came to the sepulcher, bringing sweet spices which they had prepared, ‘they saw an angel, who said unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, for he is risen: Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.’ As in

Matthew, ‘Tell his disciples and Peter.’ As in Mark, ‘Behold he goeth before you into Galilee.’ That was a most gracious disposal of Providence to support the disciples, Peter in particular, in their great affliction.

“Our Lord first showed himself to Mary Magdalene, and afterwards to some other women. On the same day likewise on which he arose from the dead, he showed himself to Peter, though the circumstances of this appearance are nowhere related. And it has been observed, that as Mary Magdalene was the first woman, so Peter was the first man, to whom Jesus showed himself after he was risen from the dead.

“We have nowhere any distinct account of this apostle’s travels: he might return to Judea, and stay there a good while after having been at Antioch, at the time spoken of by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians. However, it appears from Epiphanius that Peter was often in the countries of Pontus and Bithynia; and by Eusebius we are assured that Origen, in the third tome of his Exposition of the Book of Genesis, writes to this purpose: ‘Peter is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia; who, at length coming to Rome, was crucified with his head downwards, himself having desired it might be in that manner.’ For the time of Peter’s coming to Rome, no ancient writer is now more regarded by learned moderns than Lactantius, or whoever is the author of the book of the Deaths of Persecutors; who says that Peter came thither in the time of Nero. However, it appears to me very probable that St. Peter did not come to Rome before the year of Christ 63 or 64, nor till after St. Paul’s departure thence at the end of his two years’ imprisonment in that city. The books of the New Testament afford a very plausible, if not certain, argument for it. After our Lord’s ascension we find Peter, with the rest of the apostles, at Jerusalem. He and John were sent by the apostles from Jerusalem to Samaria, whence they returned to Jerusalem. When Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, he found Peter there. Upon occasion of the tranquility of the Churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, near the end of the reign of Caligula, Peter left Jerusalem, and visited the Churches in several parts of that country, particularly at Lydda and Joppa, where he tarried many days. Thence he went to Caesarea, by the seaside, where he preached to Cornelius and his company. Thence he returned to Jerusalem, and sometime afterwards was imprisoned there by Herod Agrippa. This brings

down the history of our apostle to the year 44. A few years after this he was present at the council of Jerusalem; nor is there any evidence that he came there merely on that occasion. It is more probable that he had not yet been out of Judea: soon after that council he was at Antioch, where he was reproved by St. Paul.

“The books of the New Testament afford no light for determining where Peter was for several years after that. But to me it appears not unlikely that he returned after a short time to Judea from Antioch, and that he stayed in Judea a good while before he went thence any more; and it seems to me that, when he left Judea, he went again to Antioch, the chief city of Syria. Thence he might go to other parts of the continent, particularly Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, which are expressly mentioned in the beginning of his first epistle. In those countries he might stay a good while; and it is very likely that he did so; and that he was well acquainted with the Christians there, to whom he afterwards wrote two epistles. When he left those parts, I think he went to Rome, but not till after Paul had been in that city and was gone from it. Several of St. Paul’s epistles furnish out a cogent argument of Peter’s absence from Rome for a considerable space of time. St. Paul, in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, written, as we suppose, in the beginning of the year 58, salutes many by name, without mentioning Peter; and the whole tenor of the epistle makes it reasonable to think that the Christians there had not yet had the benefit of the apostle’s presence and instructions. During his two years’ confinement at Rome, which ended, as we suppose, in the spring of the year 63, St. Paul wrote four or five epistles; those to the Ephesians, the Second Epistle to Timothy, to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon; in none of which is any mention of Peter, nor is any thing said or hinted whence it can be concluded that he had ever been there. I think, therefore, that Peter did not come to Rome before the year 63, or perhaps 64. And, as I suppose, obtained the crown of martyrdom in the year 64 or 65; consequently, St. Peter could not reside very long at Rome before his death.

“Cave likewise, in his life of St. Peter, written in English in 1676, places his death in 64 or 65; nor was his mind much altered when he published his *Historia Literaria* in 1688; for there also he supposes that St. Peter died a martyr at Rome, in the year of Christ 64, at the beginning of Nero’s

persecution; and indeed he expresses himself with a great deal of assurance and positiveness. Jerome concludes his article of St. Peter saying, 'He was buried at Rome, in the Vatican, near the triumphal way; and is in veneration all over the world.'

"It is not needful to make any remarks upon this tradition; but it is easy to observe it is the general, uncontradicted, disinterested testimony of ancient writers, in the several parts of the world, Greeks, Latins, and Syrians. As our Lord's prediction concerning the death of Peter is recorded in one of the four gospels, it is very likely that Christians would observe the accomplishment of it, which must have been in some place, and about this place there is no difference among Christian writers of ancient times; never any other place was named besides Rome; nor did any other city ever glory in the martyrdom of Peter. There were, in the second and third centuries, disputes between the bishop of Rome and other bishops and Churches about the time of keeping Easter, and about the baptism of heretics; yet none denied the bishop of Rome what they called the chair of Peter. It is not for our honor or interest, either as Christians or Protestants, to deny the truth of events ascertained by early and well attested tradition. If any make an ill use of such facts, we are not accountable for it. We are not, from the dread of such abuses, to overthrow the credit of all history, the consequences of which would be fatal. Fables and fictions have been mixed with the account of Peter's being at Rome; but they are not in the most early writers, but have been added since: and it is well known that fictions have been joined with histories of the most certain and important facts. (1)

(1) I commend Dr. Lardner for his candor, and thank him for his advice; but I must think, on the evidence before me, that there is as much danger in believing too much as in believing too little. To me there is not the slightest evidence that St. Peter ever saw Rome; much less that he was first or indeed any bishop of that city. Those who mention his having been there, give us no evidence that they had any fact or history to vouch for their belief, but a sort of uncertain report that never attempts to show its origin or vouch for its truth. The New Testament, by direct inference, is totally against the tradition.



“Having written the history of the Apostle Peter, I now proceed to his epistles; concerning which three or four things are to be considered by us; their genuineness, the persons to whom they were sent, the place where, and the time when, they were written.

“The first epistle was all along considered, by catholic Christians, as authentic and genuine; this we learn from Eusebius, who says: ‘Of the controverted books of the New Testament; yet well known and approved by many, are that called the Epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the second and third of John.’ And in another place, ‘One epistle of Peter, called the first, is universally received. This the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings as undoubtedly genuine; but that called his second, we have been informed, (by tradition,) has not been received as a part of the New Testament; nevertheless, appearing to many to be useful, it has been carefully studied with other scriptures.’ By which, I think, we may be assured that a great regard was shown to this epistle by many Christians in the time of our learned ecclesiastical historian. Jerome says, ‘Peter wrote two epistles called catholic, the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of the difference of the style from the former.’ And Origen before them, in his commentaries upon the gospel of St. Matthew, as cited by Eusebius, says, ‘Peter, on whom the Church is built, has left one epistle universally acknowledged: let it be granted that he also wrote a second, for this has been doubted.’

“What those learned writers of the third and fourth centuries say of those two epistles, we have found agreeable to the testimony of more ancient writers, whom we have consulted: for the first epistle seems to be referred to by Clement of Rome; it is plainly referred to by Polycarp several times; it is also referred to by the martyrs at Lyons; it was received by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch; it was quoted by Papias; it is quoted in the remaining writings of Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian: consequently it was all along received. But we do not perceive the second epistle to be quoted by Papias, nor by Irenaeus, (though in Grabe’s edition this epistle is twice quoted,) nor Tertullian, nor Cyprian. However, both these epistles were generally received in the fourth and following centuries by all Christians, except the Syrians: for they were received by Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the council of Laodicea, Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, and others.

“The first epistle being allowed to be St. Peter’s, we can argue in favor of the other also, in this manner: It bears in the inscription the name of the same apostle; for so it begins, ‘Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.’ And in 2 Peter 1:14 are these words: ‘Knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me.’

“The writer of this epistle may have had a particular revelation concerning the time of his death, not long before writing this. But it is probable that here is a reference to our Lord’s prediction concerning St. Peter’s death, and the manner of it, which are recorded in John 21:18, 19. From 2 Peter 1:16-18, it appears that the writer was one of the disciples who were with Jesus in the mount, when he was transfigured in a glorious manner. This certainly leads us to Peter, who was there, and whose name the epistle bears in the inscription, 2 Peter 3:1: ‘This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance;’ plainly referring to the former epistle, which has been always acknowledged to be Peter’s. These words are express. But it might have been argued, with some degree of probability, from 2 Peter 1:12, 15, that he had before written to the same persons. Once more, 2 Peter 3:15, 16, he calls Paul brother, and otherwise so speaks of him and his epistles as must needs be reckoned most suitable to an apostle. The writer, therefore, is the Apostle Peter, whose name the epistle bears in the inscription. We are led here to the observation which Wall placed at the head of his notes upon this second epistle: ‘It is,’ says he, ‘a good proof of the cautiousness of the ancient Christians in receiving any book for canonical, that they not only rejected all those pieces forged by heretics under the name of apostles; but also if any good book, affirmed by some men or some Churches to have been written and sent by some apostle, were offered to them, they would not, till fully satisfied of the fact, receive it into their canon.’ He adds: ‘There is more hazard in denying this to be Peter’s, than in denying some other books to be of that author to whom they are by tradition ascribed. For they, if they be not of that apostle to whom they are imputed, yet may be of some other apostle, or apostolical man; but this author is either the apostle, or else by setting his name, and by other circumstances, he does designedly personate him, which no man of piety and truth would do.’ And then he concludes: ‘This epistle being

written by him but a little before his death, 2 Peter 1:14, and perhaps no more than one copy sent, it might be a good while before a number of copies, well attested, came abroad to the generality of the Christian Churches.’

“Certainly these epistles, and the discourses of Peter, recorded in the Acts, together with the effects of them, are monuments of Divine inspiration, and of the fulfillment of the promise which Christ made to him, when he saw him and his brother Andrew employed in their trade, and casting a net into the sea; Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men, Matthew 4:19.

“Concerning the persons to whom these epistles were sent, there have been different opinions among both ancients and moderns. Mr. Wetstein argues from divers texts that the first epistle was sent to the Gentiles. Mr. Hallett, in his learned introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews, observes, ‘Some go upon the supposition that St. Peter’s epistles were written to the Jews, but it seems to me more natural to suppose that they were written to Gentile Christians, if we consider many passages of the epistles themselves:’ where he proceeds to allege many passages, and in my opinion, very pertinently; some of which will be also alleged by me by and by.

“To me it seems that St. Peter’s epistles were sent to all Christians in general, Jews and Gentiles, living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; the greatest part of whom must have been converted by Paul, and had been before involved in ignorance and sin, as all people in general were till the manifestation of the Gospel of Christ. That St. Peter wrote to all Christians in those countries is apparent, from the valedictory blessing or wish at the end of the epistle, 1 Peter 5:14: Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Lewis Capellus, who thought that St. Peter’s first epistle was written to Jewish believers, allows that the second epistle was written to all Christians in general, and particularly to Gentiles, induced thereto by the comprehensiveness of the address at the beginning of that epistle, To them that have obtained like precious faith with us. He should have concluded as much of the first epistle likewise, for they were both sent to the same people, as is evident from St. Peter’s own words, 2 Peter 3:1. Moreover, the inscription of the first epistle seems to be as

general as that of the second. Let us observe it distinctly: to the elect, **εκλεκτοις**, says Wall upon the place: ‘He uses the word **εκλεκτοι**, choice ones, just as St. Paul does the word **αγιοι**, saints, for the word Christians: and as St. Paul directs almost all his epistles to the saints, that is, the Christians of such a place; so St. Peter here, to the elect or choice ones, that is, Christians, sojourning in the dispersions of Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia. Strangers, **παρεπιδημοις**: good men, though at home, are strangers, especially if they meet with opposition, trouble, and affliction, as those Christians did to whom St. Peter is here writing; for he speaks of their trials and temptations, 1 Peter 1:6, 7, and exhorts them, 1 Peter 2:11, as sojourners and strangers, **ως παροικους και παρεπιδημους**, to abstain from fleshly lusts. Says OEcumenius upon 1 Peter 1:1, 2: ‘He calls them strangers, either on account of their dispersion, or because all that live religiously are called strangers on this earth; as David also says, ‘I am a sojourner with thee, and a stranger, as all my fathers were,’ Psalm 39:12. Scattered throughout Pontus, or of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia; so he calls them, not because they had been driven out from their native country, but because he writes to the Christians of divers countries, who also were but a few or a small number in every place where they dwelt. I shall now show that these Christians were, for the most part, of the Gentile stock and original. 1 Peter 1:14: ‘As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.’ This might be very pertinently said to men converted from Gentilism to Christianity; but no such thing is ever said by the apostle concerning the Jewish people, who had been favored with Divine revelation, and had the knowledge of the true God. And 1 Peter 1:20, 21, he says, that ‘through Christ they did now believe in God;’ therefore they were not worshippers till they were acquainted with the Christian revelation. In like manner, 1 Peter 2:9, St. Peter speaks of those to whom he writes as having been ‘called out of darkness into God’s marvelous light.’ Moreover, they were not once God’s people; 1 Peter 2:10: ‘Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.’ Words resembling those of St. Paul, Romans 9:24, 25, where he is unquestionably speaking of Gentile converts. There are also other expressions which plainly show that these persons had been Gentiles, and had lived in the sins of Gentilism; 1 Peter 1:18: ‘Forasmuch as ye know that ye were redeemed from your vain conversation, received

by tradition from your fathers.’ And 1 Peter 4:3: ‘For the time past may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles; when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.’ St. Peter does not charge himself with such things, but they to whom he writes had been guilty in those respects; and, by way of condescension, and for avoiding offense, and for rendering his argument more effectual, he joins himself with them. And more, when St. Peter represents the dignity of those to whom he writes, upon account of their Christian vocation, 1 Peter 2:9, as ‘a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood;’ certainly the expressions are most pertinent and emphatical, if understood of such as had been brought from Gentilism to the faith of the Gospel, as indeed they plainly were. For he there says, ‘they were to show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvelous light.’ To all which might be added, what was hinted before, that the persons to whom Peter writes were for the most part the Apostle Paul’s converts. This must be reckoned probable from the accounts which we have in the Acts of St. Paul’s travels and preaching. Whence we know that he had been in Galatia, and the other countries mentioned by St. Peter at the beginning of his first epistle. Moreover he observes, 2 Peter 3:15, that ‘his beloved brother Paul had written unto them.’ We may reasonably suppose that he thereby intends St. Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, and Colossians, all in those countries, and for the most part Gentile believers. Nor do I see reason to doubt that if Peter had, before now, seen and read St. Paul’s Epistles to Timothy; and if we should add them, as here intended also, it would be no prejudice to our argument. For those epistles likewise were designed for the use and benefit of the Churches in those parts. To me these considerations appear unanswerable; I shall, therefore, take notice of but one objection, which is grounded upon 1 Peter 2:12: ‘Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.’ Upon the first clause in that verse Beza says, that this place alone is sufficient to show that this epistle was sent to Jews. But I think not. From St. Paul may be alleged a text of the like sort, 1 Corinthians 10:32: ‘Give no offense, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, (καὶ ἑλλῆσι,) nor to the Church of God.’ It might be as well argued from that text that the Corinthians were by descent neither

Jews nor Greeks, as from this, that the persons to whom St. Peter wrote were not originally Gentiles. In the text of St. Paul just quoted, by Jews, and Gentiles or Greeks, are intended such as were unbelievers. So it is likewise in the text of St. Peter which we are considering as is apparent from the latter part of the verse above transcribed at large. St. Peter had a right to distinguish those to whom he writes from the Gentile people among whom they lived, as he had at the beginning of the epistle called them elect, or choice ones, and strangers; and they likewise went by the name of Christians, as we perceive from 1 Peter 4:16.

“St. Peter’s two epistles, then, were sent to all Christians in general, living in those countries, the greatest part of whom had been converted from Gentilism or heathenism.

“Our next inquiry is concerning where these epistles were written.

“At the end of the first epistle St. Peter says: ‘The Church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you;’ which text, understood literally, has been thought by some to denote, 1. Babylon in Assyria; or, 2. Babylon in Egypt. 3. By others it is interpreted figuratively, and is supposed to denote Jerusalem; or, 4. Rome. So that there are four opinions concerning the place where this epistle was written.

“If St. Peter had read St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans before he wrote his first epistle, it was written after St. Paul’s journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, described in Acts 20., 21.; for the Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth. How much later than the time of this journey the First Epistle of Peter was written it is very difficult, for want of sufficient data, to determine. The epistle itself has hardly any marks which can guide us in deciding the year of its composition; and we know nothing of the history of St. Peter from the time of the apostolic council at Jerusalem, Acts 15., which is the last place where St. Luke mentions him, till his arrival many years afterwards at Rome, where, according to the accounts of ecclesiastical writers, he suffered martyrdom. However, a comparison of the first with the second epistle of St. Peter will enable us to form at least an opinion on this subject. St. Peter says, in his second epistle, 2 Peter 3:1:

the first, they who received the one were not the same persons as they who received the other; and we might rather expect that in this case St. Peter would have called his first epistle an epistle which he had written to their fathers. It appears, then, that the interval between the dates of the two epistles could not have been very long; and as the second epistle was written shortly before St. Peter's death; we may infer that the first epistle was written either not long before, or not long after, the year 60. On the other hand, Lardner assigns this epistle too late a date; for he is of opinion that it was written between 63 and 65. This reason for supposing that it was not written till after 63 is, that an earlier date cannot be assigned for St. Peter's arrival at Rome; and as he takes the word Babylon, whence St. Peter dates his epistle, not in its proper but in a mystical sense, as denoting Rome, he concludes that the epistle was not written before the time above mentioned. But if we take Babylon in its proper sense, the argument not only proves not what Lardner intended, but the very reverse; for if St. Peter's arrival in Rome is to be dated about the year 63, an epistle written by St. Peter, in Babylon, must have a date prior to that year.

“St. Peter, in the close of his epistle, sends a salutation from the Church in Babylon, which, consequently, is the place where he wrote his epistle. But commentators do not agree in regard to the meaning of the word Babylon, some taking it in its literal and proper sense, others giving it a figurative and mystical interpretation. Among the advocates for the latter sense have been men of such learning and abilities, that I was misled by their authority in the younger part of my life to subscribe to it; but at present, as I have more impartially examined the question, it appears to me very extraordinary that, when an apostle dates his epistle from Babylon, it should ever occur to any commentator to ascribe to this work a mystical meaning, instead of taking it in its literal and proper sense. For, in the first century, the ancient Babylon, on the Euphrates, was still in existence; and there was likewise a city on the Tigris, Seleucia, not far distant from the ancient Babylon, to which the name of modern Babylon was given; but through some mistake it has been supposed that the ancient Babylon, in the time of St. Peter, was no longer in being; and in order to furnish a pretense for a mystical interpretation, it has been denied that Seleucia was ever so called.

“It is true that the ancient Babylon, in comparison of its original splendor, might be called in the first century a desolated city; yet it was not wholly a heap of ruins, nor wholly destitute of inhabitants. This appears from the account which Strabo, who lived in the time of Tiberius, has given of it: for he says that Alexander (who died at Babylon, and who intended, if he had lived, to have made it the place of his residence) proposed to rebuild there a pyramid, which was a stadium in length, in breadth, and in height; but that his successors did not put the design into execution: that the Persians destroyed a part of Babylon, and that the Macedonians neglected it; but that Babylon had suffered the most from the building of Seleucia, by Seleucus Nicator, at the distance of three hundred stadia from it, because Seleucia then became the capital of the country, and Babylon was drained of its inhabitants. Strabo then adds: at present Seleucia is greater than Babylon, which last city has been desolated, so that one may say of it, what the comic poet said of Megalopolis in Arcadia: ‘A great city is become a great desert.’ If this be not sufficient proof that Babylon was still in existence in the first century, the reader may consult Cellarii Geographia, tom. ii., page 747; and Assemani Bibliotheca Orientalis, tom. iii., par. ii., page 7.

“It will be objected, perhaps, that if Babylon still existed in the time of St. Peter, it was yet in such a state of decay that an apostle would hardly have gone to preach the Gospel there. But I can see no reason why he should not; especially as Babylon was at that time so far from being literally destitute of inhabitants that Strabo draws a parallel between this city and Seleucia, saying, at present Babylon is not so great as Seleucia, which was then the capital of the Parthian empire, and, according to Pliny, contained six hundred thousand inhabitants. To conclude therefore that Babylon, whence St. Peter dates this epistle, could not have been the ancient Babylon, because this city was then in a state of decay; and thence to argue that St. Peter used the word mystically to denote Rome, is nearly the same as if, on the receipt of a letter dated from Ghent or Antwerp, in which mention was made of a Christian community there, I concluded that, because these cities are no larger than what they were in the sixteenth century, the writer of the epistle meant a spiritual Ghent or Antwerp, and that the epistle was really written from Amsterdam.



“It is, therefore, at least possible that St. Peter wrote his first epistle in the ancient Babylon, on the Euphrates. But before we conclude that he really did write there, we must first examine whether he did not mean Seleucia on the Tigris, which was sometimes called the modern Babylon. According to Strabo, Seleucia was only three hundred stadia distant from the ancient Babylon; and it was separated by the Tigris from Ctesiphon, the winter residence of the Parthian kings. At present it is not called Bagdad, as some have supposed, which is a very different city; but, in conjunction with Ctesiphon, is named by Syrian and Arabic writers Medinotho, Medain, Madain, under which name it appears in D’Anville’s maps in the latitude of 33° 7’.

“Since then, the name of Babylon was given actually to Seleucia, it is not impossible that St. Peter thus understood the word Babylon, and that his first epistle therefore was written at Seleucia on the Tigris. But I have shown in the preceding part of this section that there is likewise a possibility of its having been written in Babylon, properly so called, or in the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates. The question therefore is, which of these two senses shall we ascribe to the word Babylon? For one of these two we must ascribe to it, unless we give it, without any reason, a mystical interpretation. In the two last editions of this introduction I preferred the former sense; but after a more mature consideration, I think it much more probable, at present, that St. Peter meant the ancient Babylon. It is true that Lucan, Sidonius Apollinaris, and Stephanus Byzantinus, gave the name of Babylon to Seleucia; but the two last of these writers lived so late as the fifth century; and therefore their authority is perhaps not sufficient to prove that Seleucia was called Babylon in the first century. Lucan, indeed, was a contemporary with St. Peter; but then he uses this word in an epic poem, in which a writer is not bound by the same rules as in prose: and it is not improbable that he selected the word Babylon, because, partly, its celebrity added pomp to his diction; and, partly, because neither Ctesiphon nor Seleucia would have suited the verse. The writer of an epistle, on the contrary, can allow himself no such latitude; and perspicuity requires that in the date of his epistle, he should use no other name for the town where he writes than that which properly belongs to it. If, therefore, St. Peter had really written at Seleucia, he would have hardly called this city by the name of Babylon, though this name was

sometimes applied to it: consequently, it is most probable that St. Peter wrote his first epistle in ancient Babylon on the Euphrates.

“Before I conclude this section, I must take notice of a passage in Josephus, which not only confutes all notions of a spiritual or mystical Babylon, but throws a great light on our present inquiry; and this passage is of so much the more importance, because Josephus was a historian who lived in the same age with St. Peter; and the passage itself relates to an event which took place thirty-six years before the Christian era, namely, the delivery of Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest, from imprisonment, by order of Phraates, king of Parthia, with permission to reside in Babylon, where there was a considerable number of Jews. This is recorded by Josephus, *Antiq.* xv. c. 2, in the following words: **δία τουτο δεσμων μεν αφηκεν, εν βαβυλωνι δε καταγεσθαι παρειχεν, ενθα και πληθος ην ιουδαιων.** Josephus then adds, that both the Jews in Babylon, and all who dwelt in that country, as far as the Euphrates, respected Hyrcanus, as high priest and king. Now the word Babylon in this passage of Josephus evidently means a city in the east; and it cannot possibly be interpreted in a mystical manner either of Jerusalem or Rome. The only question is, whether he meant the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates, or Seleucia on the Tigris. The former is the most obvious interpretation; and is warranted by the circumstance that, in other places where Josephus speaks of Seleucia on the Tigris, he calls it by its proper name Seleucia.

“The first argument in favor of a mystical and against a literal interpretation of the word Babylon is, that in the whole country of Babylonia there were no Jews in the time of St. Peter; and thence it is inferred that he could not have gone to preach the Gospel there. Now in this argument both the premises and inference are false. The inference is false, because even if there had been no Jews in the whole country of Babylonia, St. Peter might have gone to preach the Gospel there; for he preached to the uncircumcised at Caesarea, and he himself declared that it was ordained by God that the Gentiles, by his mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. The premises themselves are also totally unfounded; for if we except Palestine, there was no country in the world where the Jews were so numerous and so powerful as in the province of Babylonia, in which they had their two celebrated seats of learning, Nehardea and Susa.

“The second argument in favor of a mystical interpretation of the word Babylon is, that almost all the ancient fathers have explained it in this manner, and have asserted that St. Peter used it to denote Rome. But we must recollect that an assertion of this kind is not testimony to a fact, but a mere matter of opinion, in which the ancients were as liable to mistake as we are. Nor is it true that all the ancient ecclesiastical writers have ascribed to the word Babylon a mystical meaning; for though the Greek and Latin fathers commonly understood Rome, yet the Syriac and Arabic writers understood it literally, as denoting a town in the east; and if we are to be guided by opinion, an oriental writer is surely as good authority, on the present question, as a European.

“The third argument on which Lardner particularly insists is, that, in the accounts which we have on record relative to St. Peter’s history, no mention is made of a journey to Babylon. Now this argument would prove nothing, even if our knowledge of St. Peter’s life and transactions were more perfect than it really is. Let us suppose an instance of some eminent man in modern times, in the history of whose life no mention is made that, during his travels, he paid a visit to Vienna, but that among his letters to his friends, one of them, notwithstanding the silence of his biographer, is dated from Vienna. In this case, unless we had reason to suppose that the whole epistle was a forgery, or that the author had used a false date, we should immediately conclude, on the bare authority of this single epistle, that he had actually been at Vienna; and we should hardly think of a mystical or spiritual Vienna. Lardner himself has argued in this very manner with respect to Paul, though his history is infinitely better known than that of St. Peter, and has inferred from the single passage, Titus 1:5, ‘For this cause left I thee in Crete,’ that St. Paul made a voyage into Crete in the year 56, though this voyage is mentioned neither by St. Luke nor by any other historian. No reason therefore can be assigned why we should refuse to argue in the same manner with respect to St. Peter. In fact, Lardner’s argument could nowhere have been more unfortunately applied than in the present instance.

**“From the time of the apostolic council at Jerusalem, in the year 49, at which St. Peter was present, till the time of his”**(**συμποσεδ**) arrival in Rome, which Lardner acknowledges was not before 63, there is an interval of fourteen years, during which we have no history of him whatsoever.

How then can we form a judgment of his transactions during that period except from his own writings? And how can the silence of history, in respect to his journey to Babylon, afford an argument that he was never there, in contradiction to his own epistle, when the fact is, we have no history at all of St. Peter during this period? We cannot therefore talk of its silence in respect to any one particular transaction, since every transaction of St. Peter, throughout the whole of this interval, is unrecorded. Lardner indeed conjectures, as the epistle is addressed to the inhabitants of Pontus, Galatia, Ac., that St. Peter spent a part of his time in these countries, though he denies that St. Peter ever was in Babylon, whence the epistle is dated. Now this mode of arguing is nearly the same as if I concluded, from a letter dated from Vienna, and addressed to a person in Venice, that the writer of that letter had been in Venice, but that he never was at Vienna. Lardner supposes also that St. Peter spent a part of this time in Jerusalem. Now it is impossible for us to determine what stay St. Peter made in Jerusalem after the holding of the apostolic council, or whether he remained there at all; but this I think is certain, that he was not at Jerusalem when St. Paul returned thither for the last time, since St. Luke makes particular mention of St. James, and describes him as the head of the Christian community at Jerusalem, but says nothing of St. Peter, whom he would hardly have passed over in perfect silence if he had been there. Now St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem happened in the year 60, and since I have shown that the First Epistle of St. Peter was written about this time, it is not at all improbable that St. Peter, who was absent from Jerusalem, was then engaged in preaching the Gospel to the Babylonians.

“The last argument in favor of the opinion that the Babylon where Peter wrote was not Babylon properly so called, is derived from 1 Peter 2:13, where St. Peter commands obedience to the king, and from 1 Peter 2:17, where he says, ‘Honor the king.’ Hence Lardner concludes that St. Peter must have written in a place which was subject to the same king or emperor as the people to whom he sent the epistle. But these were subject to the Roman emperor, whereas Babylon, with its whole territory, was then subject, not to the Romans, but the Parthians, and therefore, according to Lardner, could not have been the place where St. Peter wrote. Now this argument rests on a supposition which is contradicted by the common usage of every language, the expression, ‘the king,’ in a letter from

a person in one country to a person in another country, may, according to circumstances, denote the king to which the reader is subject as well as the king to which the writer is subject.

“It appears, then, that the arguments which have been alleged to show that St. Peter did not write his first epistle in the country of Babylonia are devoid of foundation, and consequently the notion of a mystical Babylon, as denoting either Jerusalem or Rome, loses its whole support. For in itself the notion is highly improbable, and therefore the bare possibility that St. Peter took a journey to Babylon, properly so called, renders it inadmissible. The plain language of epistolary writing does not admit of the figures of poetry, and, though it would be very allowable, in a poem written in honor of Gottingen, to style it another Athens, yet if a professor of this university should, in a letter written from Gottingen, date it Athens, it would be a greater piece of pedantry than ever was laid to the charge of the learned. In like manner, though a figurative use of the word Babylon is not unsuitable to the animated and poetical language of the Apocalypse, yet St. Peter, in a plain and unadorned epistle, would hardly have called the place where he wrote by any other appellation than that which literally and properly belonged to it.”

That many persons both of learning and eminence have been of a different opinion from Professor Michaelis, the intelligent reader is well aware, but Dr. Lardner, of all others, has written most argumentatively in vindication of the mystical Babylon, i.e. Rome, as being the place from which the apostle wrote this epistle. His weightiest arguments however are here answered by Michaelis, and to me it appears that there is a great balance in favor of the opinion that Babylon on the Euphrates is the place intended. The decision of this question, although not an article of faith, is nevertheless of some importance. I am still of opinion that St. Peter did not write from Rome; that he was neither bishop of Rome nor martyred at Rome, in a word, that he never saw Rome.

**THE**

**FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE**

**OF**

**PETER.**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5568.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5562.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5552.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4064.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4288.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3820.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4419.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2408.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3162.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1000.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 809.
- Year of the CCIXth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 807.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 811.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 813.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 372.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 108.
- Year of the Julian era, 105.

- Year of the Spanish era, 98.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 64.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 60.
- Year of Claudius Felix, governor of the Jews, 8.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 11.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 61.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 4; or the second after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 1; or two years before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 13.
- Dominical Letter, it being Bissextile, or Leap Year, FE.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the second of April, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the sixth of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 3.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 19, 21, 21.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 12.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Caesar, properly the first Roman emperor, 7.
- Roman Consuls, the Emperor Nero Augustus, the fourth time, and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus.

## CHAPTER 1

*Of the persons to whom this epistle was directed, and their spiritual state, 1, 2. He describes their privileges, and thanks God for the grace by which they were preserved faithful in trials and difficulties, 3-5. The spiritual benefit they were to receive out of their afflictions, 6, 7. Their love to Christ, 8. And the salvation they received through believing, 9. This salvation was predicted by the prophets, who only saw it afar off and had only a foretaste of it, 10-12. They should take encouragement, and be obedient and holy, 13-16. They should pray, and deeply consider the price at which they were purchased, that their faith and hope might be in God, 17-21. As their souls had been purified by obeying the truth through the Spirit, they should love each other with a pure and fervent love, 22, 23. The frailty of man, and the unchangeableness of God, 24, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1.** *Peter, an apostle* Simon Peter, called also Kephas: he was a fisherman, son of Jonah, brother of Andrew, and born at Bethsaida; and one of the first disciples of our Lord. See the preface.

*The strangers scattered throughout* Jews first, who had believed the Gospel in the different countries here specified; and converted Gentiles also. Though the word strangers may refer to all truly religious people, see Genesis 47:9; Psalm 39:12, in the Septuagint, and Hebrews 11:13, yet the inscription may have a special reference to those who were driven by persecution to seek refuge in those heathen provinces to which the influence of their persecuting brethren did not extend.

*Pontus* An ancient kingdom of Asia Minor, originally a part of Cappadocia; bounded on the east by Colchis, on the west by the river Halys, on the north by the Euxine Sea, and on the south by Armenia Minor. This country probably derived its name from the Pontus Euxinus, on which it was partly situated. In the time of the Roman emperors it was divided into three parts: 1. Pontus Cappadocius; 2. Pontus Galaticus; and, 3. Pontus Polemoniicus. The first extended from the Pontus Polemoniicus



to Colchis, having Armenia Minor and the upper stream of the Euphrates for its southern boundary. The second extended from the river Halys to the river Thermodon. The third extended from the river Thermodon to the borders of the Pontus Cappadocius.

Six kings of the name of Mithridates reigned in this kingdom, some of whom are famous in history. The last king of this country was David Comnenus, who was taken prisoner, with all his family, by Mohammed II. in the year 1462, and carried to Constantinople; since which time this country (then called the empire of Trebizond, from Trapezas, a city founded by the Grecians, on the uttermost confines of Pontus) has continued under the degrading power of the Turks.

***Galatia*** The ancient name of a province of Asia Minor, now called Amasia. It was called also Gallograecia, and Gallia Parva. It was bounded on the east by Cappadocia, on the south by Pamphylia, on the north by the Euxine Sea, and on the west by Bithynia. See the preface to the Epistle to the Galatians.

***Cappadocia*** An ancient kingdom of Asia, comprehending all the country lying between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.

***Asia*** This word is taken in different senses: It signifies, 1. One of the three general divisions of our continent, and one of the four of the whole earth. It is separated from Europe by the Mediterranean Sea, the Archipelago, the Black Sea, the Palus Maeolis, the rivers Don and Dwina; and from Africa by the Arabic Gulf, or Red Sea: it is everywhere else surrounded by water. It is situated between latitude 2° and 77° N., and between longitude 26° E. and 170° W.; and is about 7, 583 miles in length, and 5, 200 miles in breadth.

2. Asia Minor, that part of Turkey in Asia, now called Natolia, which comprehends a great number of province situated between the Euxine, Mediterranean, and Archipelago.

3. That province of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. It appears, says Calmet, that it is in this latter sense that it is used here by St. Peter, because Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia, are comprised in the provinces of Asia Minor. See Calmet.

***Bithynia*** An ancient kingdom of Asia, formerly called Mysia, Mygdonia, Bebrycia, and Bithonia. It was bounded on the west by the Bosphorus, Thracius, and part of the Propontis, on the south by the river Rhyndacus, and Mount Olympus, on the north by the Euxine Sea, and on the east by the river Parthenius. This place is in some sort rendered infamous by the conduct of Prusias, one of its kings, who delivered up Hannibal, who had fled to him for protection, into the hands of the Romans. Nicomedes IV. bequeathed it to the Romans; and it is now in the hands of the Turks.

**Verse 2. *Elect according to the foreknowledge of God*** If the apostle had directed his letter to persons elected to eternal life, no one, as Drs. Lardner and Macknight properly argue, could have received such a letter, because no one could have been sure of his election in this way till he had arrived in heaven. But the persons to whom the apostle wrote were all, with propriety, said to be elect according to the foreknowledge of God; because, agreeably to the original purpose of God, discovered in the prophetic writings, Jews and Gentiles, indiscriminately, were called to be the visible Church, and entitled to all the privileges of the people of God, on their believing the Gospel. In this sense the word elected is used in other places

persons; an unjust regard of one, and an unjust disregard of another: it is mere creature partiality, and not infinite justice. 2. It is not plain Scripture doctrine, (if true,) but rather inconsistent with the express written word that speaks of God's universal offers of grace; his invitations, promises, threatenings, being all general. 3. We are bid to choose life, and reprehended for not doing it. 4. It is inconsistent with a state of probation in those that must be saved, or must be lost. 5. It is of fatal consequence; all men being ready, on very slight grounds, to fancy themselves of the elect number. But the doctrine of predestination is entirely changed from what it formerly was: now it implies neither faith, peace, nor purity; it is something that will do without them all. Faith is no longer, according to the modern predestination scheme, a Divine evidence of things not seen wrought in the soul by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost; not an evidence at all, but a mere notion: neither is faith made any longer a means of holiness, but something that will do without it. Christ is no more a Savior from sin, but a defense and a countenancer of it. He is no more a fountain of spiritual life in the souls of believers, but leaves his elect inwardly dry, and outwardly unfruitful; and is made little more than a refuge from the image of the heavenly, even from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

Through sanctification of the Spirit — through the renewing and purifying influences of his Spirit on their souls, unto obedience — to engage and enable them to yield themselves up to all holy obedience, the foundation of all which is the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ — the atoning blood of Jesus Christ which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the law, in allusion to which it is called the blood of sprinkling.

**Verse 3. *Blessed be the God and Father* εὐλογητός ὁ θεὸς καὶ πατὴρ·** Blessed be God even the Father, or blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. The **καὶ**, and, is omitted by the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, and the AETHiopic. But if we translate **καὶ**, even, a meaning which it frequently has in the New Testament, then we have a very good sense: Let that God have praise who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who deserves the praise of every human being for his infinite mercy to the world, in its redemption by Christ Jesus.

*Begotten us again unto a lively hope* I think the apostle has a reference here to his own case, and that of his fellow apostles, at the time that Christ was taken by the Jews and put to death. Previously to this time they had strong confidence that he was the Messiah, and that it was he who should redeem Israel; but when they found that he actually expired upon the cross, and was buried, they appear to have lost all hope of the great things which before they had in prospect. This is feelingly expressed by the two disciples whom our Lord, after his resurrection, overtook on the road going to Emmaus, see Luke 24:13-24. And the hope, that with them, died with their Master, and seemed to be buried in his grave, was restored by the certainty of his resurrection. From Christ's preaching, miracles, etc., they had a hope of eternal life, and all other blessings promised by him; by his death and burial this hope became nearly, if not altogether, extinct; but by his resurrection the hope was revived. This is very properly expressed here by being begotten again to a living hope, *εις ελπιδα ζωσας*, as some MSS. and versions have it, *εις ελπιδα ζωης*, to the hope of life; which one copy of the Itala, with Augustine, Gildas, Vigilus of Tapsum, and Cassiodorus, have considered as meaning eternal life, agreeably to the context; and therefore they read *vitae aeternae*.

The expressions, however, may include more particulars than what are above specified; as none can inherit eternal life except those who are children in the heavenly family, and none are children but those who are born again: then St. Peter may be considered as laying here the foundation of the hope of eternal life in the regeneration of the soul; for none can legally inherit but the children, and none are children of God till they are spiritually begotten and born again.

It is the Gospel alone that gives the well grounded hope of eternal life; and the ground on which this hope rests is the resurrection of Christ himself. The certainty of our Lord's resurrection is the great seal of the Gospel. Without this what is vision, what is prophecy, what is promise, what are even miracles, to that unbelief which is natural to man on such a subject as this? But the resurrection of the human nature of Christ, the incontestable proofs of this resurrection, and the ascension of our nature to heaven in his person, are such evidences of the possibility and certainty of the thing, as for ever to preclude all doubt from the hearts of those who believe in him.

**Verse 4. *To an inheritance*** Called an inheritance because it belongs to the children of God. Eternal life cannot be a gift to any but these; for, even in heaven, the lot is dealt out according to law: if children, then heirs; if not children, then not heirs.

***Incrruptible*** *αφθαρτον*· It has no principles of dissolution or decay in it; and, therefore, must be totally different from this earth.

***Undefiled*** *αμικαντον*· Nothing impure can enter it; it not only has no principles or seeds of dissolution in itself, but it can never admit any; therefore its deterioration is impossible.

***Fadeth not away*** *αμαραντον*· It cannot wither, it is always in bloom; a metaphor taken from those flowers that never lose their hue nor their fragrance. From the Greek *αμαραντος* we have our flowers called amaranths, because they preserve their hue and odour for a long time.

***Reserved in heaven*** Such a place as that described above is not to be expected on earth; it is that which was typified by the earthly Canaan, and in reference to which the patriarchs endured all trials and difficulties in this life, as seeing Him who is invisible.

**Verse 5. *Who are kept*** *φρουρουμενονς*· Who are defended as in a fortress or castle. There is a remarkable correspondence between the two verbs used in this sentence: the verb *τηρω*, signifies to keep, watch, guard; and *τηρησις*, is a place of custody or prison. And *φρουρω*, from *φρουρος*, a sentinel, signifies to keep as under a military guard. See on Galatians 3:22, 23. The true disciples of Christ are under the continual watchful care of God, and the inheritance is guarded for them. In some countries military posts are constantly kept on the confines, in order to prevent irruptions from a neighboring people; and, in many cases, heirs, while in their minority, are kept in fortified places under military guards.

***By the power of God*** *εν δυναμει θεου*· By the mighty and miracle-working power of God; for nothing less is necessary to keep and preserve, in this state of continual trial, a soul from the contagion that is in the world. But this power of God is interested in the behalf of the soul by faith; to believe is our work, the exertion of the almighty power is of God. No persevering without the power, and no power without faith.

**Ready to be revealed** Or rather, Prepared to be revealed. The inheritance is prepared for you; but its glories will not be revealed till the last time — till ye have done with life, and passed through your probation, having held fast faith and a good conscience. Some by salvation understand the deliverance of the Christians from the sackage of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish polity being called the last time; others suppose it to refer to the day of judgment, and the glorification of the body and soul in heaven.

**Verse 6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice** Some refer wherein, *εν ω*, to the salvation mentioned above; others, to the last time, *καιρω εσχατω*, in 1 Peter 1:5; others think that it applies to the being kept by the power of God through faith; and others, that it refers to all the preceding advantages and privileges. It was in the present salvation of God that they rejoiced or gloried, though not without having an eye to the great recompense of reward.

**Though now for a season** *ολιγον αρτι*. A little while yet — during your pilgrimage here below, which is but a point when compared with eternity.

**If need be** *ει δεον εστι*. If it be necessary — if your situation and circumstances be such that you are exposed to trials and persecutions which you cannot avoid, unless God were to work a miracle for your deliverance, which would not be for your ultimate good, as he purposes to turn all your trials and difficulties to your advantage.

Sometimes there is a kind of necessity that the followers of God should be afflicted; when they have no trials they are apt to get careless, and when they have secular prosperity they are likely to become worldly-minded. “God,” said a good man, “can neither trust me with health nor money; therefore I am both poor and afflicted.” But the disciples of Christ may be very happy in their souls, though grievously afflicted in their bodies and in their estates. Those to whom St. Peter wrote rejoiced greatly, danced for joy, *αγαλλιασθε*, while they were grieved, *λυπηθεντες*, with various trials. The verb *λυπεω* signifies to grieve, to make sorrowful: perhaps heaviness is not the best rendering of the original word, as this can scarcely ever consist with rejoicing; but to be sorrowful on account of something external to ourselves, and yet exulting in God from a sense of his goodness to us, is quite compatible: so that we may say with St. Paul, always sorrowing, yet still rejoicing.

**Verse 7. *That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold*** As by the action of fire gold is separated from all alloy and heterogeneous mixtures, and is proved to be gold by its enduring the action of the fire without losing any thing of its nature, weight, color, or any other property, so genuine faith is proved by adversities, especially such as the primitive Christians were obliged to pass through. For the word was then, “Renounce Jesus and live,” “Cleave to him and die;” for every Christian was in continual danger of losing his life. He then who preferred Christianity to his life gave full proof, not only of his own sincerity, but also of the excellency of the principle by which he was influenced; as his religion put him in possession of greater blessings, and more solid comforts, than any thing the earth could afford.

***Though it be tried with fire*** That is: Though gold will bear the action of the fire for any given time, even millions of years, were they possible, without losing the smallest particle of weight or value, yet even gold, in process of time, will wear away by continual use; and the earth, and all its works, will be burnt up by that supernatural fire whose action nothing can resist. But on that day the faith of Christ’s followers will be found brighter, and more glorious. The earth, and universal nature, shall be dissolved; but he who doeth the will of God shall abide for ever, and his faith shall then be found to the praise of God’s grace, the honor of Christ, and the glory or glorification of his own soul throughout eternity. God himself will praise such faith, angels and men will hold it in honor, and Christ will crown it with glory. For some remarks on the nature and properties of gold see at the end of the chapter.

**Verse 8. *Whom having not seen, ye love*** Those to whom the apostle wrote had never seen Christ in the flesh; and yet, such is the realizing nature of faith, they loved him as strongly as any of his disciples could, to whom he was personally known. For faith in the Lord Jesus brings him into the heart; and by his indwelling all his virtues are proved, and an excellence discovered beyond even that which his disciples beheld, when conversant with him upon earth. In short, there is an equality between believers in the present time, and those who lived in the time of the incarnation; for Christ, to a believing soul, is the same to-day that he was yesterday and will be for ever.

***Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable*** Ye have unutterable happiness through believing; and ye have the fullest, clearest, strongest evidence of eternal glory. Though they did not see him on earth, and men could not see him in glory, yet by that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the subsistence of things hoped for, they had the very highest persuasion of their acceptance with God, their relation to him as their Father, and their sonship with Christ Jesus.

**Verse 9. *Receiving the end of your faith*** Ye are put in possession of the salvation of your souls, which was the thing presented to your faith, when ye were called by the Gospel of Christ. Your faith has had a proper issue, and has been crowned with a proper recompense. The word **τελος**, end, is often used so as to imply the issue or reward of any labor or action.

***Salvation of your souls.*** The object of the Jewish expectations in their Messiah was the salvation or deliverance of their bodies from a foreign yoke; but the true Messiah came to save the soul from the yoke of the devil and sin. This glorious salvation these believers had already received.

**Verse 10. *Of which salvation the prophets have inquired*** The incarnation and suffering of Jesus Christ, and the redemption procured by him for mankind, were made known, in a general way, by the prophets; but they themselves did not know the time when these things were to take place, nor the people among and by whom he was to suffer, etc.; they therefore inquired accurately or earnestly, **εξεζητησαν**, and searched diligently, **εξηρευνησαν**, inquiring of others who were then under the same inspiration, and carefully searching the writings of those who had, before their time, spoken of these things. The prophets plainly saw that the grace which was to come under the Messiah's kingdom was vastly superior to any thing that had ever been exhibited under the law; and in consequence they made all possible inquiry, and searched as after grains of gold, hidden among sand or compacted with ore, (for such is the meaning of the original word,) in order to ascertain the time, and the signs of that time, in which this wondrous display of God's love and mercy to man was to take place; but all that God thought fit to instruct them in was what is mentioned 1 Peter 1:12.

**Verse 11. *The glory that should follow.*** Not only the glory of his resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; but that



grand manifestation of God's infinite love to the world in causing the Gospel of his Son to be everywhere preached, and the glorious moral changes which should take place in the world under that preaching, and the final glorification of all them who had here received the report, and continued faithful unto death. And we may add to this the ineffable glorification of the human nature of Jesus Christ, which, throughout eternity, will be the glorious Head of his glorified body, the Church.

**Verse 12. *Unto whom it was revealed*** We may presume that, in a great variety of cases, the prophets did not understand the meaning of their own predictions. They had a general view of God's designs; but of particular circumstances, connected with those great events, they seem to have known nothing, God reserving the explanation of all particulars to the time of the issue of such prophecies. When they wished to find out the times, the seasons, and the circumstances, God gave them to understand that it was not for themselves, but for us, that they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by the preaching of the Gospel. This was all the satisfaction they received in consequence of their earnest searching; and this was sufficient to repress all needless curiosity, and to induce them to rest satisfied that the Judge of all the earth would do right. If all succeeding interpreters of the prophecies had been contented with the same information relative to the predictions still unaccomplished, we should have had fewer books, and more wisdom.

***Angels desire to took into.*** παρακυνσαι· To stoop down to; the posture of those who are earnestly intent on finding out a thing, especially a writing difficult to be read; they bring it to the light, place it so that the rays may fall on it as collectively as possible, and then stoop down in order to examine all the parts, that they may be able to make out the whole. There is evidently an allusion here to the attitude of the cherubim who stood at the ends of the ark of the covenant, in the inner tabernacle, with their eyes turned towards the mercy-seat or propitiatory in a bending posture, as if looking attentively, or, as we term it, poring upon it. Even the holy angels are struck with astonishment at the plan of human redemption, and justly wonder at the incarnation of that infinite object of their adoration. If then these things be objects of deep consideration to the angels of God, how much more so should they be to us; in them angels can have no such interest as human beings have.

We learn from the above that it was the Spirit of Christ in the Jewish prophets that prophesied of Christ; it was that Spirit which revealed him; and it is the same Spirit which takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. Christ was never known by prophecy, but through his own Spirit; and he never was known, nor can be known, to the salvation of any soul, but by a revelation of the same Spirit. It is he alone that bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

**Verse 13. *Gird up the loins of your mind*** Take courage from this display of God's love now made known to you; and though you must expect trials, yet fortify your minds with the consideration that he who has given you his Son Jesus will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good. The allusion here is to the long robes of the Asiatics, which, when they were about to perform any active service, they tucked in their girdles: this they did also when they waited on their superiors at meals.

***Hope to the end for the grace*** Continue to expect all that God has promised, and particularly that utmost salvation, that glorification of body and soul, which ye shall obtain at the revelation of Christ, when he shall come to judge the world.

But if the apostle alludes here to the approaching revelation of Christ to inflict judgment on the Jews for their final rebellion and obstinacy, then the grace, *χαρις*, benefit, may intend their preservation from the evils that were coming upon that people, and their wonderful escape from Jerusalem at the time that the Roman armies came against it.

**Verse 14. *Not fashioning yourselves*** As the offices of certain persons are known by the garb or livery they wear, so are transgressors: where we see the world's livery we see the world's servants; they fashion or habit themselves according to their lusts, and we may guess that they have a worldly mind by their conformity to worldly fashions.

**Verse 15. *But as he which hath called you*** Heathenism scarcely produced a god whose example was not the most abominable; their greatest gods, especially, were paragons of impurity; none of their philosophers could propose the objects of their adoration as objects of imitation. Here Christianity has an infinite advantage over heathenism. God is holy, and he calls upon all who believe in him to imitate his holiness; and the reason

why they should be holy is, that God who has called them is holy, 1 Peter 1:15.

**Verse 17. *And if ye call on the Father*** Seeing ye invoke the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and your Father through Christ, and profess to be obedient children, and sojourners here below for a short time only, see that ye maintain a godly reverence for this Father, walking in all his testimonies blameless.

***Who without respect of persons*** God is said to be no respecter of persons for this reason among many others, that, being infinitely righteous, he must be infinitely impartial. He cannot prefer one to another, because he has nothing to hope or fear from any of his creatures. All partialities among men spring from one or other of these two principles, hope or fear; God can feel neither of them, and therefore God can be no respecter of persons. He approves or disapproves of men according to their moral character. He pities all, and provides salvation for all, but he loves those who resemble him in his holiness; and he loves them in proportion to that resemblance, i.e. the more of his image he sees in any, the more he loves him; and e contra. And every man's work will be the evidence of his conformity or nonconformity to God, and according to this evidence will God judge him. Here, then, is no respect of persons; God's judgment will be according to a man's work, and a man's work or conduct will be according to the moral state of his mind. No favouritism can prevail in the day of judgment; nothing will pass there but holiness of heart and life. A righteousness imputed, and not possessed and practiced, will not avail where God judgeth according to every man's work. It would be well if those sinners and spurious believers who fancy themselves safe and complete in the righteousness of Christ, while impure and unholy in themselves, would think of this testimony of the apostle.

**Verse 18. *Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things*** To redeem, *λυτροω*, signifies to procure life for a captive or liberty for a slave by paying a price, and the precious blood of Christ is here stated to be the price at which the souls of both Jews and Gentiles were redeemed; it was a price paid down, and a price which God's righteousness required.

Corruptible things mean here any thing that man usually gives in exchange for another; but the term necessarily includes all created things, as all these

are corruptible and perishing. The meaning of the apostle is, evidently, that created things could not purchase the souls of men, else the sacrifice of Christ had not been offered; could any thing less have done, God would not have given up his only-begotten Son. Even silver and gold, the most valuable medium of commerce among men, bear no proportion in their value to the souls of a lost world, for there should be a congruity between the worth of the thing purchased and the valuable consideration which is given for it; and the laws and customs of nations require this: on this ground, perishable things, or things the value of which must be infinitely less than the worth of the souls of men, cannot purchase those souls. Nothing, therefore, but such a ransom price as God provided could be a sufficient ransom, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the world.

***Vain conversation*** Empty, foolish, and unprofitable conduct, full of vain hopes, vain fears, and vain wishes.

***Received by tradition from your fathers*** The Jews had innumerable burdens of empty ceremonies and useless ordinances, which they received by tradition from their fathers, rabbins, or doctors. The Gentiles were not less encumbered with such than the Jews; all were wedded to their vanities, because they received them from their forefathers, as they had done from theirs. And this antiquity and tradition have been the ground work of many a vain ceremony and idle pilgrimage, and of numerous doctrines which have nothing to plead in their behalf but this mere antiquity. But such persons seem not to consider that error and sin are nearly coeval with the world itself.

**Verse 19. *The precious blood of Christ*** τιμιω αιματι· The valuable blood; how valuable neither is nor could be stated.

***As of a lamb*** Such as was required for a sin-offering to God; and THE Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world.

***Without blemish*** In himself, and without spot from the world; being perfectly pure in his soul, and righteous in his life.

**Verse 20. *Who verily was foreordained*** προεγνωσμενου· Foreknown; appointed in the Divine purpose to be sent into the world, because infinitely approved by the Divine justice.

***Before the foundation of the world*** Before the law was given, or any sacrifice prescribed by it. Its whole sacrificial system was appointed in reference to this foreappointed Lamb, and consequently from him derived all its significance and virtue. The phrase *καταβολη κοσμου*, foundation of the world, occurs often in the New Testament, and is supposed by some learned men and good critics to signify the commencement of the Jewish state. Perhaps it may have this meaning in Matthew 13:35; Luke 11:50; Ephesians 1:4; Hebrews 4:3; 9:26. But if we take it here in its common signification, the creation of universal nature, then it shows that God, foreseeing the fall and ruin of man, appointed the remedy that was to cure the disease. It may here have a reference to the opinion of the Jewish doctors, who maintain that seven things existed before the creation of the world, one of which was the Messiah.

***Last times*** The Gospel dispensation, called the last times, as we have often seen, because never to be succeeded by any other.

**Verse 21. *Who by him do believe in God*** This is supposed to refer to the Gentiles, who never knew the true God till they heard the preaching of the Gospel: the Jews had known him long before, but the Gentiles had every thing to learn when the first preachers of the Gospel arrived amongst them.

***Gave him glory*** Raised him to his right hand, where, as a Prince and a Savior, he gives repentance and remission of sins.

***That your faith*** In the fulfillment of all his promises, and your hope of eternal glory, might be in God, who is unchangeable in his counsels, and infinite in his mercies.

**Verse 22. *Seeing ye have purified your souls*** Having purified your souls, in obeying the truth — by believing in Christ Jesus, through the influence and teaching of the Spirit; and giving full proof of it by unfeigned love to the brethren; ye love one another, or ye will love each other, with a pure heart fervently. These persons, First, heard the truth, that is, the Gospel; thus called in a great variety of places in the New Testament, because it contains THE truth without mixture of error, and is the truth and substance of all the preceding dispensations by which it was typified. Secondly, they obeyed that truth, by believing on Him who came into the world to save

sinner. Thirdly, through this believing on the Son of God, their hearts were purified by the word of truth applied to them by the Holy Spirit. Fourthly, the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, they loved the brethren with pure hearts fervently, **εκτενωσ**, intensely or continually; the full proof that their brotherly love was unfeigned, **φιλαδελφιαν ανυποκριτον**, a fraternal affection without hypocrisy.

**Verse 23. *Being born again*** For being born of Abraham's seed will not avail to the entering of the kingdom of heaven.

***Not of corruptible seed*** By no human generation, or earthly means; but of incorruptible — a Divine and heavenly principle which is not liable to decay, nor to be affected by the changes and chances to which all sublunary things are exposed.

***By the word of God*** **δια λογου ζωντος θεου**. By the doctrine of the living God, which remaineth for ever; which doctrine shall never change, any more than the source shall whence it proceeds.

**Verse 24. *For all flesh is as grass*** Earthly seeds, earthly productions, and earthly generations, shall fail and perish like as the grass and flowers of the field; for the grass withereth, and the flower falleth off, though, in the ensuing spring and summer, they may put forth new verdure and bloom.

**Verse 25. *But the word of the Lord*** The doctrine delivered by God concerning Christ endureth for ever, having, at all times and in all seasons, the same excellence and the same efficacy.

***And this is the word*** **το πνμα**, What is spoken, by the Gospel preached unto you. "This is a quotation from Isaiah 40:6-8, where the preaching of the Gospel is foretold; and recommended from the consideration that every thing which is merely human, and, among the rest, the noblest races of mankind, with all their glory and grandeur, their honor, riches, beauty, strength, and eloquence, as also the arts which men have invented, and the works they have executed, shall decay as the flowers of the field. But the Gospel, called by the prophet the word of the Lord, shall be preached while the world standeth." — Macknight. All human schemes of salvation, and plans for the melioration of the moral state of man, shall come to naught; and the doctrine of Christ crucified, though a stumbling block to

the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles, shall be alone the power of God for salvation to every soul that believeth.

As the apostle, on 1 Peter 1:7, mentions gold, and gold chemically examined and tried; and as this figure frequently occurs in the sacred writings; I think it necessary to say something here of the nature and properties of that metal.

Gold is defined by chemists to be the most perfect, the most ductile, the most tenacious, and the most unchangeable of all metals. Its specific gravity is about 19·3. A cubic foot of pure gold, cast and not hammered, weighs 1348lbs. In its native state, without mixture, it is yellow, and has no perceptible smell nor taste. When exposed to the action of the fire it becomes red hot before it melts, but in melting suffers no alteration; but if a strong heat be applied while in fusion, it becomes of a beautiful green color. The continual action of any furnace, howsoever long applied, has no effect on any of its properties. It has been kept in a state of fusion for several months, in the furnace of a glass house, without suffering the smallest change. The electric and galvanic fluids inflame and convert it into a purple oxide, which is volatilized in the form of smoke. In the focus of a very powerful burning glass it becomes volatilized, and partially vitrified; so that we may say with the apostle, that, though gold is tried by the fire — abides the action of all culinary fires, howsoever applied, yet it perisheth by the celestial fire and the solar influence; the rays of the sun collected in the focus of a powerful burning glass, and the application of the electric fluid, destroy its color, and alter and impair all its properties. This is but a late discovery; and previously to it a philosopher would have ridiculed St. Peter for saying, gold that perisheth.

Gold is so very tenacious that a piece of it drawn into wire, one-tenth of an inch in diameter, will sustain a weight of 500lbs. without breaking.

One grain of gold may be so extended, by its great malleability, as to be easily divided into two millions of parts; and a cubic inch of gold into nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three millions, eight hundred and nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three parts; each of which may be distinctly seen by the naked eye!

A grain and a half of gold may be beaten into leaves of one inch square, which, if intersected by parallel lines, drawn at right angles to each other, and distant only the 100th part of an inch; will produce twenty-five millions of little squares, each of which may be distinctly seen without the help of glasses!

The surface of any given quantity of gold, according to Mr. Magellan, may be extended by the hammer 159, 092 times!

Eighty books, or two thousand leaves, of what is called leaf gold, each leaf measuring 3 3 inches square, viz. each leaf containing 10 89 square inches, weigh less than 384 grains; each book, therefore, or twenty-five leaves, is equal to 272 25 inches, and weighs about 4 8 grains; so that each grain of gold will produce 56 718, or nearly fifty-seven square inches!

The thickness of the metal thus extended appears to be no more than the one 282 020th of an inch! One pound, or sixteen ounces of gold, would be sufficient to gild a silver wire, sufficient in length to encompass the whole terraqueous globe, or to extend 25, 000 miles!

Notwithstanding this extreme degree of tenuity, or thinness, which some carry much higher, no pore can be discerned in it by the strongest magnifying powers; nor is it pervious to the particles of light, nor can the most subtile fluids pass through it. Its ductility has never yet been carried to the uttermost pitch, and to human art and ingenuity is probably unlimited.

Sulphur, in the state of a sulphuret, dissolves it; tin and lead greatly impair its tenacity; and zinc hardens and renders it very brittle. Copper heightens its color, and renders it harder, without greatly impairing its ductility. It readily unites with iron, which it hardens in a remarkable manner.

The oxygenated muriatic acid, and the nitro-muriatic acid, dissolve gold. In this state it is capable of being applied with great success to the gilding of steel. The process is very simple, and is instantaneously performed, viz.:—

To a solution of gold in the nitro-muriatic acid add about twice the quantity of sulphuric ether. In order to gild either iron or steel, let the metal be well polished, the higher the better: the ether which has taken up



the gold may be applied by a camel hair pencil, or small brush; the ether then evaporates, and the gold becomes strongly attached to the surface of the metal. I have seen lancets, penknives, etc., gilded in a moment, by being dipped in this solution. In this manner all kinds of figures, letters, mottoes, etc., may be delineated on steel, by employing a pen or fine brush.

The nitro-muriatic acid, formerly called aqua regia, is formed by adding muriatic acid, vulgarly spirit of salt, to the nitric acid, formerly aqua fortis. Two parts of the muriatic acid to one of the nitric constitute this solvent of gold and platina, which is called the nitro-muriatic acid.

Gold was considered the heaviest of all metals till the year 1748, when the knowledge of platina was brought to Europe by Don Antonio Ulloa: this, if it be a real metal, is the hardest and weightiest of all others. The specific gravity of gold is, as we have seen, 19·3; that of platina is from 20·6 to 23: but gold will ever be the most valuable of all metals, not merely from its scarcity, but from its beautiful color and great ductility, by which it is applicable to so many uses, and its power of preserving its hue and polish without suffering the least tarnish or oxidation from the action of the air.

## CHAPTER 2

*We should lay aside all evil dispositions, and desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, 1-3. And come to God to be made living stones, and be built up into a spiritual temple, 4, 5. The prophecy of Christ as chief corner stone, precious to believers, but a stumbling stone to the disobedient, 6-8. True believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, etc., 9, 10. They should abstain from fleshly lusts, 11. Walk uprightly among the Gentiles, 12. Be obedient to civil authority, according to the will of God, 13-15. Make a prudent use of their Christian liberty, 16. Fear God and honor the king, 17. Servants should be subject to their masters, and serve them faithfully, and suffer indignities patiently, after the example of Christ, 18-23. Who bore the punishment due to our sins in his own body upon the tree, 24. They were formerly like sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1. *Wherefore, laying aside*** This is in close connection with the preceding chapter, from which it should not have been separated, and the subject is continued to the end of the 10th verse. {1 Peter 2:10}

***Laying aside all malice*** See the notes on Ephesians 4:22-31. These tempers and dispositions must have been common among the Jews, as they are frequently spoken against: Christianity can never admit of such; they show the mind, not of Christ, but of the old murderer.

**Verse 2. *As new-born babes*** In the preceding chapter, 1 Peter 1:23, the apostle states that they had been born again; and as the new-born infant desires that aliment which nature has provided for it, so they, being born again — born from above, should as earnestly require that heavenly nourishment which is suited to their new nature; and this the apostle calls the sincere milk of the word, *το λογικον αδολον γαλα*, or, as some translate, the rational unadulterated milk; i.e. the pure doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered in the epistles and gospels, and as preached by the

apostles and their successors. The rabbins frequently express learning to know the law, etc., by the term sucking, and their disciples are often denominated those that suck the breast. The figure is very expressive: as a child newly born shows an immediate desire for that nourishment, and that only, which is its most proper food; so they, being just born of God, should show that the incorruptible seed abides in them, and that they will receive nothing that is not suited to that new nature: and, indeed, they can have no spiritual growth but by the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

**That ye may grow thereby** εἰς σωτηριαν, Unto salvation, is added here by ABC, and about forty others; both the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, and several of the ancient fathers. The reading is undoubtedly genuine, and is very important. It shows why they were regenerated, and why they were to desire the unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel; viz.: that they might grow up unto salvation. This was the end they should always have in view; and nothing could so effectually promote this end as continually receiving the pure truth of God, claiming the fulfillment of its promises, and acting under its dictates.

Verse 3. **If so be ye have tasted** εἶπερ ἐγευσασθε. Seeing ye have tasted. There could be no doubt that they had tasted the goodness of Christ who were born again, of incorruptible seed, and whose hearts were purified by the truth, and who had like precious faith with the apostles themselves.

**That the Lord is gracious.** ὅτι χριστος ο κυριος. From the similarity of the letters, many MSS. and several of the fathers have read, χριστος ο κυριος, the Lord is Christ, or Christ is the Lord.

This seems to refer to Psalm 34:8: O taste and see that the Lord is good; γευσασθε και ιδετε οτι χριστος ο κυριος, Sept. And there is still a reference to the sucking child that, having once tasted its mother's milk, ever after desires and longs for it. As they were born of God, and had tasted his goodness, they would naturally desire the same pure unadulterated milk of the word.

**Verse 4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone** This is a reference to Isaiah 28:16: Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation. Jesus Christ is, in both the prophet and apostle, represented as the foundation on which the Christian

Church is built, and on which it must continue to rest: and the stone or foundation is called here living, to intimate that he is the source of life to all his followers, and that it is in union with him that they live, and answer the end of their regeneration; as the stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation.

***Disallowed indeed of men*** That is, rejected by the Jews. This is a plain reference to the prophecy, Psalm 118:22: The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.

***Chosen of God*** To be the Savior of the world, and the Founder of the Church, and the foundation on which it rests; As Christ is the choice of the Father, we need have no doubt of the efficacy and sufficiency of all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of a lost world. God can never be mistaken in his choice; therefore he that chooses Christ for his portion shall never be confounded.

***Precious εντιμον*** Honourable. Howsoever despised and rejected by men, Jesus, as the sacrifice for a lost world, is infinitely honorable in the sight of God; and those who are united by faith to him partake of the same honor, being members of that great and glorious body of which he is the head, and stones in that superb building of which he is the foundation.

**Verse 5. *Ye also, as lively stones* λιθοι ζωντες** Living stones; each being instinct with the principle of life, which proceeds from him who is the foundation, called above **λιθον ζωντα**, a living stone.

The metaphor in this and the following verse is as bold as it is singular; and commentators and critics have found it difficult to hit on any principle of explanation. In all metaphors there is something in the natural image that is illustrative of some chief moral property in the thing to be represented. But what analogy is there between the stones of a building and a multitude of human beings? We shall soon see. The Church of Christ, it is true, is represented under the figure of a house, or rather household; and as a household or family must have a place of residence, hence, by a metonymy, the house itself, or material building, is put for the household or family which occupies it, the container being put for the contained. This point will receive the fullest illustration if we have recourse to the Hebrew: in this language, בית beith signifies both a house and a family; בן ben a son; בת

bath a daughter; and אבן eben a stone. Of all these nouns, בנה banah, he built, is, I believe, the common root. Now as בית beith, a house, is built of אבנים abanim, stones, hence בנה banah, he built, is a proper radix for both stones and building; and as בית beith, a family or household (Psalm 68:6) is constituted or made up of בנים banim, sons, and בנות banoth daughters, hence the same root בנה banah, he built, is common to all; for sons and daughters build up or constitute a family, as stones do a building. Here, then, is the ground of the metaphor: the spiritual house is the holy or Christian family or household, this family or household is composed of the sons and daughters of God Almighty; and hence the propriety of living stones, because this is the living house or spiritual family. As a building rests upon a foundation, and this foundation is its support; so a family or household rests on the father, who is properly considered the foundation or support of the building. But as every father is mortal and transitory, none can be called a living stone, foundation, or support, but He who liveth for ever, and has life independent; so none but Jesus, who hath life in himself, i.e. independently, and who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life, can be a permanent foundation or support to the whole spiritual house. And as all the stones-sons and daughters, that constitute the spiritual building are made partakers of the life of Christ, consequently, they may with great propriety be called living stones, that is, sons and daughters of God, who live by Christ Jesus, because he lives in them. Now, following the metaphor; these various living stones become one grand temple, in which God is worshipped, and in which he manifests himself as he did in the temple of old. Every stone-son and daughter, being a spiritual sacrificer or priest, they all offer up praise and thanksgiving to God through Christ; and such sacrifices, being offered up in the name and through the merit of his Son, are all acceptable in his sight.

This is the true metaphor, and which has not, as far as I know, ever been properly traced out. To talk of “stones being said to be alive as long as they are not cut out of the quarry, but continue to partake of that nourishment which circulates from vein to vein,” is as unsatisfactory as it is unphilosophical; the other is the true metaphor, and explains every thing.

**Verse 6. *Behold, I lay in Sion*** This intimates that the foundation of the Christian Church should be laid at Jerusalem; and there it was laid, for there Christ suffered, and there the preaching of the Gospel commenced.

***A chief corner stone*** This is the same as the foundation stone; and it is called here the chief corner stone because it is laid in the foundation, at an angle of the building where its two sides form the ground work of a side and end wall. And this might probably be designed to show that, in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles were to be united; and this is probably the reason why it was called a stone of stumbling, and rock of offense; for nothing stumbled, nothing offended the Jews so much as the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God, and admitting them to the same privileges which had been before peculiar to the Jews.

***Elect, precious*** Chosen and honorable. See on 1 Peter 2:4.

***Shall not be confounded.*** These words are quoted from Isaiah 28:16; but rather more from the Septuagint than from the Hebrew text. The latter we translate, He that believeth shall not make haste — he who comes to God, through Christ, for salvation, shall never be confounded; he need not haste to flee away, for no enemy shall ever be able to annoy him.

**Verse 7. *Unto you therefore which believe*** You, both Jews and Gentiles.

***He is precious*** ὑμῖν οὖν ἡ τιμὴ τοῖς πιστευουσίν· The honor is to you who believe; i.e. the honor of being in this building, and of having your souls saved through the blood of the Lamb, and becoming sons and daughters of God Almighty.

***Them which be disobedient*** The Jews, who continue to reject the Gospel; that very person whom they reject is head of the corner — is Lord over all, and has all power in the heavens and the earth.

**Verse 8. *A stone of stumbling*** Because in him all Jews and Gentiles who believe are united; and because the latter were admitted into the Church, and called by the Gospel to enjoy the same privileges which the Jews, as the peculiar people of God, had enjoyed for two thousand years before; therefore they rejected the Christian religion, they would have no partakers with themselves in the salvation of God. This was the true cause why the Jews rejected the Gospel; and they rejected Christ because he did not come

as a secular prince. In the one case he was a stone of stumbling — he was poor, and affected no worldly pomp; in the other he was a rock of offense, for his Gospel called the Gentiles to be a peculiar people whom the Jews believed to be everlastingly reprobated, and utterly incapable of any spiritual good.

*Whereunto also they were appointed.* Some good critics read the verse thus, carrying on the sense from the preceding: Also a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offense: The disobedient stumble against the word, (or doctrine,) to which verily they were appointed. — Macknight.

Mr. Wakefield, leaving out, with the Syriac, the clause, The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner, reads 1 Peter 2:7, 8 thus: To you therefore who trust thereon, this stone is honorable; but to those who are not persuaded, (*ἀπειθουσι*.) it is a stone to strike upon and to stumble against, at which they stumble who believe not the word; and unto this indeed they were appointed; that is, they who believe not the word were appointed to stumble and fall by it, not to disbelieve it; for the word of the Lord is either a savor of life unto life, or death unto death, to all them that hear it, according as they receive it by faith, or reject it by unbelief. The phrase *τιθεναι τινα εις τι* is very frequent among the purest Greek writers, and signifies to attribute any thing to another, or to speak a thing of them; of which Kypke gives several examples from Plutarch; and paraphrases the words thus: This stumbling and offense, particularly of the Jews, against Christ, the corner stone, was long ago asserted and predicted by the prophets, by Christ, and by others; compare Isaiah 8:14, 15; Matthew 21:42, 44; Luke 2:34; and Romans 9:32, 33. Now this interpretation of Kypke is the more likely, because it is evident that St. Peter refers to Isaiah 8:14, 15: And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offense to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, etc. The disobedient, therefore, being appointed to stumble against the word, or being prophesied of as persons that should stumble, necessarily means, from the connection in which it stands, and from the passage in the prophet, that their stumbling, falling, and being broken, is the consequence of their disobedience or unbelief; but there is no intimation that they were appointed or decreed to disobey, that they might stumble, and fall, and be

broken. They stumbled and fell through their obstinate unbelief; and thus their stumbling and falling, as well as their unbelief, were of themselves, in consequence of this they were appointed to be broken; this was God's work of judgment. This seems to be the meaning which our Lord attaches to this very prophecy, which he quotes against the chief priests and elders, Matthew 21:44. On the whole of these passages, see the notes on Matthew 21:42-44.

**Verse 9. *Ye are a chosen generation*** The titles formerly given to the whole Jewish Church, i.e. to all the Israelites without exception, all who were in the covenant of God by circumcision, whether they were holy persons or not, are here given to Christians in general in the same way; i.e. to all who believed in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who received baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Israelites were a chosen or elected race, to be a special people unto the Lord their God, above all people that were upon the face of the earth, Deuteronomy 7:6.

They were also a royal priesthood, or what Moses calls a kingdom of priests, Exodus 19:6. For all were called to sacrifice to God; and he is represented to be the King of that people, and Father of those of whom he was king; therefore they were all royal.

They were a holy nation, Exodus 19:6; for they were separated from all the people of the earth, that they might worship the one only true God, and abstain from the abominations that were in the heathen world.

They were also a peculiar people, *λαος εις περιποιησιν*, a purchased people; *סגולה* segullah, a private property, belonging to God Almighty, Deuteronomy 7:6; none other having any right in them, and they being under obligation to God alone. All these things the apostle applies to the Christians, to whom indeed they belong, in their spirit and essence, in such a way as they could not belong to the Hebrews of old. But they were called to this state of salvation out of darkness — idolatry, superstition, and ungodliness, into his marvellous light — the Gospel dispensation, which, in reference to the discoveries it had made of God, his nature, will, and gracious promises towards mankind, differed as much from the preceding dispensation of the Jews, as the light of the meridian sun from



the faint twinkling of a star. And they had these privileges that they might show forth the praises of Him who had thus called them; *αρετας*, the virtues, those perfections of the wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness of God, that shone most illustriously in the Christian dispensation. These they were to exhibit in a holy and useful life, being transformed into the image of God, and walking as Christ himself walked.

**Verse 10. *Which in time past were not a people*** This is a quotation from Hosea 1:9, 10; 2:23, where the calling of the Gentiles, by the preaching of the Gospel, is foretold. From this it is evident, that the people to whom the apostle now addresses himself had been Gentiles, covered with ignorance and superstition, and now had obtained mercy by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

**Verse 11. *As strangers and pilgrims*** See the note on Hebrews 11:13. These were strangers and pilgrims in the most literal sense of the word, see 1 Peter 1:1, for they were strangers scattered through Asia, Pontus, etc.

***Abstain from fleshly lusts*** As ye are strangers and pilgrims, and profess to seek a heavenly country, do not entangle your affections with earthly things. While others spend all their time, and employ all their skill, in acquiring earthly property, and totally neglect the salvation of their souls; they are not strangers, they are here at home; they are not pilgrims, they are seeking an earthly possession: Heaven is your home, seek that; God is your portion, seek him. All kinds of earthly desires, whether those of the flesh or of the eye, or those included in the pride of life, are here comprised in the words fleshly lusts.

***Which war against the soul*** *αιτινες στρατευονται κατα της ψυχης* Which are marshalled and drawn up in battle array, to fight against the soul; either to slay it, or to bring it into captivity. This is the object and operation of every earthly and sensual desire. How little do those who indulge them think of the ruin which they produce!

**Verse 12. *Having your conversation honest*** Living in such a manner among the Gentiles, in whose country ye sojourn, as becomes the Gospel which ye profess.

***That whereas they speak against you as evil doers*** In all the heathen countries, in the first age of the Church, the Christians and the Jews were

confounded together; and as the latter mere everywhere exceedingly troublesome and seditious, the Christians shared in their blame, and suffered no small measure of obloquy and persecution on this very account. It was doubly necessary, therefore, that the Christians should be exceedingly cautious; and that their conduct should prove that, although many of them were of the same nation, yet they who had embraced Christianity differed widely in their spirit and conduct from those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who had not received the faith of Christ.

***In the day of visitation.*** I believe this refers to the time when God should come to execute judgment on the disobedient Jews, in the destruction of their civil polity, and the subversion of their temple and city. God did at that time put a remarkable difference between the Jews and the Christians: all the former were either destroyed or carried into slavery; not one of the latter: nor did they deserve it; for not one of them had joined in the sedition against the Roman government. That the day of visitation means a time in which punishment should be inflicted, is plain from Isaiah 10:3: And what will ye do in the DAY OF VISITATION, and in the desolation which shall come from afar? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory? Some think that by the phrase in this place is meant the time in which they should be brought before the heathen magistrates, who, after an impartial examination, should find them innocent, and declare them as such; by which God would be glorified, the work appearing to be his own. Others think that it signifies the time in which God should make them the offer of mercy by Jesus Christ. The words, however, may refer to the time in which the Christians should be called to suffer for the testimony of Christ; the heathens, seeing them bear their sufferings with unconquerable patience, were constrained to confess that God was with them; and not a few, from being spectators of their sufferings, became converts to Christianity,

**Verse 13.** ***Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man*** In every settled state, and under every form of political government, where the laws are not in opposition to the laws of God, it may be very soundly and rationally said: “Genuine Christians have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them.” Society and civil security are in a most dangerous state when the people take it into their heads that they have a right to remodel and change the laws. See the whole of this subject fully handled in the notes on

Romans 13:1, etc., to which I beg every reader, who may wish to know the political sentiments of this work, to have recourse.

The words *παση ανθρωπινη κτισει* literally signify, not every ordinance of man, but every human creature; yet *κτιζειν* signifies sometimes to arrange, order, as well as to create, and therefore our translation may do: but as the apostle is evidently speaking here of magistracy, or legislative authority, and as the appointment of magistrates was termed a creating of them, it is better to understand the words thus, All the constituted authorities. So, *Decem tribunos plebis per pontificem creaverunt*; Cor. Nep. “They created ten tribunes of the plebeians, by the high priest.” *Carthagine quotannis annui bini reges creabantur*; Caesar. “They created two kings every year at Carthage.” *Consules creantur Caesar et Servilius*; Sallust. “Caesar and Servilius are created consuls.” *Creare duce[m] gerendo bello*. “To create a general to conduct the war.” The meaning of St. Peter appears to be this: the Jews thought it unlawful to obey any ruler that was not of their own stock; the apostle tells them they should obey the civil magistrate, let him be of what stock he may, whether a Jew or a Gentile, and let him exercise the government in whatsoever form. This is the general proposition: and then he instances emperors and their deputies; and, far from its being unlawful for them to obey a heathen magistrate, they were to do it for the Lord’s sake, *δία τον κυριον*, on account of the Lord, whose will it was, and who commanded it.

**Verse 14. *Or unto governors*** By king as supreme, the Roman emperor is meant; and by governors, *ηγεμοσιν*, are meant, leaders, governors, presidents, proconsuls, and other chief magistrates, sent by him into the provinces dependent on the Roman empire.

***For the punishment of evil doers*** This was the object of their mission; they were to punish delinquents, and encourage and protect the virtuous.

**Verse 15. *For so is the will of God*** God, as their supreme governor, shows them that it is his will that they should act uprightly and obediently at all times, and thus confound the ignorance of foolish men, who were ready enough to assert that their religion made them bad subjects. The word *φιμουν*, which we translate put to silence, signifies to muzzle, i.e., stop their mouths, leave them nothing to say; let them assert, but ever be unable to bring proof to support it.

**Verse 16. *As free*** The Jews pretended that they were a free people, and owed allegiance to God alone; hence they were continually rebelling against the Roman government, to which God had subjected them because of their rebellion against him: thus they used their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness — for a pretext of rebellion, and by it endeavored to vindicate their seditious and rebellious conduct.

***But as the servants of God.*** These were free from sin and Satan, but they were the servants of God-bound to obey him; and, as he had made it their duty to obey the civil magistrate, they served God by submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

**Verse 17. *Honour all men.*** That is, Give honor to whom honor is due, Romans 13:7. Respect every man as a fellow creature, and as one who may be a fellow heir with you of eternal life; and therefore be ready to give him every kind of succor in your power.

***Love the brotherhood.*** All true Christians, who form one great family of which God is the head.

***Fear God.*** Who gives you these commandments, lest he punish you for disobedience.

***Honour the king.*** Pay that respect to the emperor which his high authority requires, knowing that civil power is of God; that the authority with which he, in the course of his providence, has invested him, must be respected in order to its being obeyed; and that if the man be even bad, and as a man be worthy of no reverence, yet he should be respected on account of his office. If respect be banished, subordination will flee with it, and anarchy and ruin will rise up in their place. Truly religious persons are never found in seditions. Hypocrites may join themselves with any class of the workers of iniquity, and say, Hail, brethren!

**Verse 18. *Servants, be subject*** See the notes on Ephesians 6:5; Colossians 3:22; and Titus 2:9.

***With all fear*** With all submission and reverence.

***The good and gentle*** Those who are ever just in their commands, never requiring more work than is necessary or proper, and always allowing sufficient food and sufficient time.

**The froward.** σκολιοις The crooked, perverse, unreasonable morose, and austere. Your time belongs to your master; obey him in every thing that is not sinful; if he employs you about unreasonable or foolish things, let him answer for it. He may waste your time, and thus play the fool with his own property; you can only fill up your time: let him assign the work; it is your duty to obey.

**Verse 19. For this is thankworthy** If, in a conscientious discharge of your duty, you suffer evil, this is in the sight of God thankworthy, pleasing, and proper; it shows that you prefer his authority to your own ease, peace, and emolument; it shows also, as Dr. Macknight has well observed, that they considered their obligation to relative duties not to depend on the character of the person to whom they were to be performed, nor on their performing the duties they owed to their servants, but on the unalterable relations of things established by God.

**Verse 20. For what glory is it** It appears from this that the poor Christians, and especially those who had been converted to Christianity while in a state of slavery, were often grievously abused, they were buffeted because they were Christians, and because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship.

**Verse 21. Hereunto were ye called** Ye were called to a state of suffering when ye were called to be Christians; for the world cannot endure the yoke of Christ, and they that will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution; they will meet with it in one form or other.

**Christ also suffered for us** And left us the example of his meekness and gentleness; for when he was reviled, he reviled not again. Ye cannot expect to fare better than your master; imitate his example, and his Spirit shall comfort and sustain you. Many MSS. and most of the versions, instead of Christ also suffered for Us, leaving Us, etc., read, suffered for YOU, leaving YOU, etc. This reading, which I think is genuine, is noticed in the margin.

**Verse 22. Who did no sin** He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either done or said. In deed and word he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit. It is very likely that the apostle mentions guile, because those

who do wrong generally strive to screen themselves by prevarication and lies. These words appear to be a quotation from Isaiah 53:9.

**Verse 23. *But committed himself*** Though he could have inflicted any kind of punishment on his persecutors, yet to give us, in this respect also, an example that we should follow his steps, he committed his cause to him who is the righteous Judge. To avoid evil tempers, and the uneasiness and danger of avenging ourselves, it is a great advantage in all such cases to be able to refer our cause to God, and to be assured that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

The Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, St. Cyprian, and Fulgentius, read, *Tradebat autem iudicanti se injuste*; “He delivered himself to him who judged unrighteously;” meaning Pontius Pilate. Some critics approve of this reading, but it has not sufficient evidence to recommend it as genuine.

**Verse 24. *Who his own self*** Not another in his place, as some anciently supposed, because they thought it impossible that the Christ should suffer.

***Bare our sins in his own body*** Bore the punishment due to our sins. In no other sense could Christ bear them. To say that they were so imputed to him as if they had been his own, and that the Father beheld him as blackened with imputed sin, is monstrous, if not blasphemous.

***That we, being dead to sins*** ἵνα ταῖς ἁμαρτιαῖς ἀπογενομενοι· That we, being freed from sin — delivered out of its power, and from under its tyranny.

***Should live unto righteousness*** That righteousness should be our master now, as sin was before. He is speaking still to servants who were under an oppressive yoke, and were cruelly used by their masters, scourged, buffeted, and variously maltreated.

***By whose stripes ye were healed.*** The apostle refers here to Isaiah 53:4-6; and he still keeps the case of these persecuted servants in view, and encourages them to suffer patiently by the example of Christ, who was buffeted and scourged, and who bore all this that the deep and inveterate wounds, inflicted on their souls by sin, might be healed.

**Verse 25. *For ye were as sheep going astray*** Formerly ye were not in a better moral condition than your oppressors; ye were like stray sheep, in the wilderness of ignorance and sin, till Christ, the true and merciful Shepherd, called you back from your wanderings, by sending you the Gospel of his grace.

***Bishop of your souls.*** Unless we consider the word bishop as a corruption of the word **ἐπισκοπος** episcopos, and that this literally signifies an overseer, an inspector, or one that has the oversight, it can convey to us no meaning of the original. Jesus Christ is the Overseer of souls; he has them continually under his eye; he knows their wants, wishes, dangers, etc., and provides for them. As their shepherd, he leads them to the best pastures, defends them from their enemies, and guides them by his eye. Jesus is the good Shepherd that laid down his life for his sheep. All human souls are inexpressibly dear to him, as they are the purchase of his blood. He is still supreme Bishop or Overseer in his Church. He alone is Episcopus episcoporum, “the Bishop of bishops;” a title which the Romish pontiffs have blasphemously usurped. But this is not the only attribute of Jesus on which they have laid sacrilegious hands. And besides this, with force and with cruelty have they ruled the sheep: but the Lord is breaking the staff of their pride, and delivering the nations from the bondage of their corruption. Lord, let thy kingdom come!

## CHAPTER 3

*The duty of wives to their husbands, how they are to be adorned, and be in subjection as Sarah was to Abraham, 1-6. The duty of husbands to their wives, 7. How to obtain happiness, and live a long and useful life, 8-11. God loves and succours them that do good; but his face is against the wicked, 12, 13. They should suffer persecution patiently, and be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them; and preserve a good conscience, though they suffered for righteousness, 14-17. Christ suffered for us, and was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, 18. How he preached to the old world, while Noah was preparing the ark, 19, 20. The salvation of Noah and his family a type of baptism, 21. Christ is ascended to heaven, all creatures being subject to him, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *Ye wives, be in subjection*** Consider that your husband is, by God's appointment, the head and ruler of the house; do not, therefore, attempt to usurp his government; for even though he obey not the word — is not a believer in the Christian doctrine, his rule is not thereby impaired; for Christianity never alters civil relations: and your affectionate, obedient conduct will be the most likely means of convincing him of the truth of the doctrine which you have received.

***Without the word*** That your holy conduct may be the means of begetting in them a reverence for Christianity, the preaching of which they will not hear. See the notes on 1 Corinthians 14:34, and the other places referred to in the margin.

**Verse 2. *Chaste conversation-with fear.*** While they see that ye join modesty, chastity, and the purest manners, to the fear of God. Or perhaps fear, *φοβος*, is taken, as in Ephesians 5:33, for the reverence due to the husband.



**Verse 3. *Whose adorning* κοσμος.** See the note on Hebrews 9:1, where the word κοσμος, world or ornament, is defined; and also the note on Genesis 2:1.

***Plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold*** Plaiting the hair, and variously folding it about the head, was the most ancient and most simple mode of disposing of this chief ornament of the female head. It was practised anciently in every part of the east, and is so to the present day in India, in China, and also in Barbary. It was also prevalent among the Greeks and Romans, as ancient gems, busts, and statues, still remaining, sufficiently declare. We have a remarkable instance of the plaiting of the hair in a statue of Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, an exact representation of which may be seen in a work of Andre Lens, entitled *Leviticus Costume de Peuple de l' Antiquite*, pl. 33. Many plates in the same work show the different modes of dressing the hair which obtained among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, and other nations. Thin plates of gold were often mixed with the hair, to make it appear more ornamental by the reflection of light and of the solar rays. Small golden buckles were also used in different parts; and among the Roman ladies, pearls and precious stones of different colors. Pliny assures us, *Hist. Nat.*, l. ix. c. 35, that these latter ornaments were not introduced among the Roman women till the time of Sylla, about 110 years before the Christian era. But it is evident, from many remaining monuments, that in numerous cases the hair differently plaited and curled was the only ornament of the head. Often a simple pin, sometimes of ivory, pointed with gold, seemed to connect the plaits. In monuments of antiquity the heads of the married and single women may be known, the former by the hair being parted from the forehead over the middle of the top of the head, the latter by being quite close, or being plaited and curled all in a general mass.

There is a remarkable passage in Plutarch, *Conjugalia Præcept.*, c. xxvi., very like that in the text: κοσμος γαρ εστιν, ως ελεγε κρατης, το κοσμου· κοσμει δε το κοσμιωτεραν γυναικα ποιουν· ποιει δε ταυτην ου χρυσοσ, ουτε σμαραγδος, ουτε κοκκος, αλλ' οσα σεμνοτητος, ευταξιασ, αιδουσ εμφασιν περιτιθησιν· Opera a Wyttenb., vol. i., page 390. "An ornament, as Crates said, is that which adorns. The proper ornament of a woman is that which becomes her best. This is neither gold, nor pearls, nor scarlet; but those things which are an

evident proof of gravity, regularity, and modesty.” The wife of Phocion, a celebrated Athenian general, receiving a visit from a lady who was elegantly adorned with gold and jewels, and her hair with pearls, took occasion to call the attention of her guest to the elegance and costliness of her dress, remarking at the same time, “My ornament is my husband, now for the twentieth year general of the Athenians.” Plut., in vit. Phoc. How few Christian women act this part! Women are in general at as much pains and cost in their dress, as if by it they were to be recommended both to God and man. It is, however, in every case, the argument either of a shallow mind, or of a vain and corrupted heart.

**Verse 4. *The hidden man of the heart*** ὁ κρυπτος της καρδιας ανθρωπος. This phrase is of the same import with that of St. Paul, Romans 7:22, ο εσω ανθρωπος, the inner man; that is, the soul, with the whole system of affections and passions. Every part of the Scripture treats man as a compound being: the body is the outward or visible man; the soul, the inward, hidden, or invisible man. The term ανθρωπος, man, is derived, according to the best etymologists, from ανα τρεπων ωπα, turning the face upward. This derivation of the word is beautifully paraphrased by Ovid. The whole passage is beautiful; and, though well known, I shall insert it. After speaking of the creation and formation of all the irrational animals, he proceeds thus:-

*“Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacious altae  
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in caetera posset.  
Natus HOMO est: sive hunc divino semine fecit  
Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo;  
Sive recens tellus, seductaque nuper ab alto  
AËthere, cognati retinebat semina coeli. —  
Pronaque cum spectent animalia caetera terram,  
OS HOMINI SUBLIME DEDIT; COELUMQUE TUERI  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere veltus.”*

*METAM, lib. i. ver. 76.*

*“A creature of a more exalted kind  
Was wanting yet, and then was MAN design’d;  
Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
For empire form’d, and fit to rule the rest.  
Whether with particles of heavenly fire  
The God of nature did his soul inspire,  
Or earth but new divided from the sky,  
Which still retain’d th’ ethereal energy. —*

*Thus, while the mute creation downward bend  
Their sight, and to their earthly mother tend,  
Man looks aloft, and with erected eyes  
Beholds his own hereditary skies."*

DRYDEN.

The word **ανθρωπος**, man, is frequently applied to the soul, but generally with some epithet. Thus **ο εσω ανθρωπος**, the inner man, Romans 7:22, to distinguish it from the body, which is called **ο εξω ανθρωπος**, the outer man, 2 Corinthians 4:16; **ο κρυπτος ανθρωπος**, the hidden man, as in the text; **ο καινος ανθρωπος**, the new man, the soul renewed in righteousness, Ephesians 2:15, to distinguish him from **ο παλαιος ανθρωπος**, the old man, that is, man unregenerate or in a state of sin, Romans 6:6. And the soul is thus distinguished by the Greek philosophers.

**A meek and quiet spirit** That is, a mind that will not give provocation to others, nor receive irritation by the provocation of others. Meekness will prevent the first; quietness will guard against the last.

**Great price.** All the ornaments placed on the head and body of the most illustrious female, are, in the sight of God, of no worth; but a meek and silent spirit are, in his sight, invaluable, because proceeding from and leading to himself, being incorruptible, surviving the ruins of the body and the ruins of time, and enduring eternally.

**Verse 5. For after this manner** Simplicity reigned in primitive times; natural ornaments alone were then in use. Trade and commerce brought in luxuries; and luxury brought pride, and all the excessive nonsense of DRESS. No female head ever looks so well as when adorned with its own hair alone. This is the ornament appointed by God. To cut it off or to cover it is an unnatural practice; and to exchange the hair which God has given for hair of some other color, is an insult to the Creator. How the delicacy of the female character can stoop to the use of false hair, and especially when it is considered that the chief part of this kind of hair was once the natural property of some ruffian soldier, who fell in battle by many a ghastly wound, is more than I can possibly comprehend. See the notes on 1 Corinthians 11:14-16; and 1 Timothy 2:9.

**Who trusted in God** The women who trust NOT in God are fond of dress and frippery; those who trust in God follow nature and common sense.

**Being in subjection unto their own husbands** It will rarely be found that women who are fond of dress, and extravagant in it, have any subjection to their husbands but what comes from mere necessity. Indeed, their dress, which they intend as an attractive to the eyes of others, is a sufficient proof that they have neither love nor respect for their own husbands. Let them who are concerned refute the charge.

**Verse 6. Even as Sara obeyed** Almost the same words are in Rab. Tanchum, fol. 9, 3: “The wife of Abraham revered him, and called him lord, as it is written, Genesis 18:12: And my lord is old.” The words of the apostle imply that she acknowledged his superiority, and her own subjection to him, in the order of God.

**Whose daughters ye are** As Abraham is represented the father of all his male believing descendants, so Sara is represented as the mother of all her believing female posterity. A son of Abraham is a true believer; a daughter of Sarah is the same.

**As long as ye do well** For you cannot maintain your relationship to her longer than ye believe; and ye cannot believe longer than ye continue to obey.

**And are not afraid with any amazement.** It is difficult to extract any sense out of this clause. The original is not very easy; μη φοβουμεναι μηδεμιαν πτοησις may be rendered, And not fearing with any terror. If ye do well, and act conscientiously your part as faithful wives, ye will at no time live under the distressing apprehension of being found out, or terrified at every appearance of the discovery of infidelities, or improper conduct. Being not guilty of these, you will not have occasion to fear detection. On this subject a learned man has quoted these words, which I have produced elsewhere, Ephesians 6:14:-

— *hic murus aheneus esto,*  
*Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.*

“Let this be my brazen wall, to be self-convicted of no private delinquency, nor to change color at being charged with a fault.”

Happy is the wife, and happy is the husband, who can conscientiously adopt the saying.

**Verse 7. *Dwell with them according to knowledge*** Give your wives, by no species of unkind carriage, any excuse for delinquency. How can a man expect his wife to be faithful to him, if he be unfaithful to her? and vice versa.

***Giving honor unto the wife*** Using your superior strength and experience in her behalf, and thus honouring her by becoming her protector and support. But the word τιμη honor, signifies maintenance as well as respect;-maintain, provide for the wife.

***As-the weaker vessel*** Being made delicately, and consequently more slenderly, constructed. Roughness and strength go hand in hand; so likewise do beauty and frailty. The female has what the man wants-beauty and delicacy. The male has what the female wants-courage and strength. The one is as good in its place as the other: and by these things God has made an equality between the man and the woman, so that there is properly very little superiority on either side. See the note on 1 Thessalonians 4:4.

***Being heirs together*** Both the man and woman being equally called to eternal glory: and as prayer is one great means of obtaining a meetness for it, it is necessary that they should live together in such a manner as to prevent all family contentions, that they may not be prevented, by disputes or misunderstandings, from uniting daily in this most important duty-family and social prayer.

**Verse 8. *Be ye all of one mind*** Unity, both in the family and in the Church, being essentially necessary to peace and salvation. See on Romans 12:16; 15:5.

***Having compassion*** συμπαθεις· Being sympathetic; feeling for each other; bearing each other's burdens.

***Love as brethren*** φιλαδελφοι· Be lovers of the brethren.

***Pitiful*** ευσπλαγχοι· Tender-hearted; let your bowels yearn over the distressed and afflicted.

**Courteous** φιλοφρονες· Be friendly-minded; acquire and cultivate a friendly disposition. But instead of this word, ταπεινοφρονες, be humble-minded, is the reading of ABC, more than twenty others, with the Syriac, Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic, and some of the fathers. This is probably the true reading, and Griesbach has admitted it into the text.

**Verse 9. *Not rendering evil for evil*** Purposing, saying, doing nothing but good; and invariably returning good for evil.

***Ye are thereunto called*** This is your calling — your business in life, to do good, and to do good for evil, and to implore God's blessing even on your worst enemies. And this is not only your duty, but your interest; for in so doing you shall obtain God's blessing, even life for evermore.

**Verse 10. *For he that will love life*** This is a quotation from Psalm 34:12-16, as it stands in the Septuagint; only the aorist of the imperative is changed from the second into the third person, etc. He who wishes to live long and prosperously, must act as he is here directed. 1. He must refrain from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering. 2. He must avoid flattery and fair speeches, which cover hypocritical or wicked intentions. 3. He must avoid evil, keep going away εκκλινατω, from evil. 4. He must do good; he must walk in the way of righteousness. 5. He must live peaceably with all men; seek peace where it has been lost; restore it where it has been broken; and pursue it where it seems to be flying away. He who lives thus must live happy in himself. And as excess in action and passion always tends to the shortening of life, and nothing preys on the constitution more than disorderly passions, he must live not only happiest but longest who avoids them. It is an edifying story that is told in the book Mussar, chap. 1., quoted by Rosenmuller: "A certain person, travelling through the city, continued to call out, Who wants the elixir of life? The daughter of Rabbi Joda heard him, and told her father. He said, Call the man in. When he came in, the rabbi said, What is that elixir of life thou sellest? He answered, Is it not written, What man is he that loveth life, and desireth to see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile? This is the elixir of life, and is found in the mouth of man."

**Verse 12. *The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous*** That is, He is continually under God's notice and his care; God continually watches for him and watches over him, and he is under his constant protection.

***And his ears are open unto their prayers*** The original is very emphatic: The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears to their prayers. The righteous man ever attracts the Divine notice, and wherever he is, there is the ear of God; for, as every righteous man is a man of prayer, wherever he prays, there is the ear of God, into which the prayer, as soon as formed, enters.

***But the face of the Lord*** Far from his eye being upon them, or his ear open to their requests, (for prayer they have none,) his face, his approbation, his providence and blessing, are turned away from them; and he only looks upon them to abhor them, and to turn the arm of his justice against them.

**Verse 13. *Who is he that will harm you*** Is it possible that a man can be wretched who has God for his friend? "All the devices which the devil or wicked men work against such must be brought to naught, and by the providence of his goodness be dispersed."

***If ye be followers, etc.*** εαν του αγαθου μιμηται γενησθε· If ye be imitators of the good One, i.e. of God. ὁ αγαθος, the good One, is one of God's prime epithets, see Matthew 19:17, and Satan is distinguished by the reverse, ο πονηρος, the EVIL one, Matthew 13:19, where see the notes. Instead of μιμηται, followers, or rather imitators, ζηλωται, zealous of what is good, is the reading of ABC, fifteen others, both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, the Coptic, AETHiopic, Armenian and Vulgate, with some of the fathers. This is a very probable reading, and Griesbach has placed it in the margin as a candidate for the place of that in the text.

**Verse 14. *But and if ye suffer*** God may permit you to be tried and persecuted for righteousness' sake, but this cannot essentially harm you; he will press even this into your service, and make it work for your good.

***Happy are ye*** This seems to refer to Matthew 5:10, etc. Blessed or happy, are ye when men persecute you, etc. It is a happiness to suffer for Christ; and it is a happiness, because if a man were not holy and righteous

the world would not persecute him, so he is happy in the very cause of his sufferings.

***Be not afraid of their terror*** τον δε φοβον αυτων μη φοβηθητε· Fear not their fear; see Isaiah 8:12. Sometimes fear is put for the object of a man's religious worship; see Genesis 31:42; Proverbs 1:26, and the place



from all that is imperfect, human, evil, capricious, changeable, and unkind. Ever remember that he has wisdom without error, power, without limits, truth without falsity, love without hatred, holiness without evil, and justice without rigour or severity on the one hand, or capricious tenderness on the other. In a word, that he neither can be, say, purpose, or do, any thing that is not infinitely just, holy, wise, true, and gracious; that he hates nothing that he has made; and has so loved the world, the whole human race, as to give his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. Thus sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and you will ever be ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you to every serious and candid inquirer after truth. Most religious systems and creeds are incapable of rational explanation, because founded on some misconception of the Divine nature.

*“They set at odds heaven’s jarring attributes,  
And with one excellence another wound.”*

The system of humanizing God, and making him, by our unjust conceptions of him, to act as ourselves would in certain circumstances, has been the bane of both religion and piety; and on this ground infidels have laughed us to scorn. It is high time that we should no longer know God after the flesh; for even if we have known Jesus Christ after the flesh, we are to know him so no more.

What I have written above is not against any particular creed of religious people, it is against any or all to whom it may justly apply, it may even be against some portions of my own; for even in this respect I am obliged daily to labor to sanctify the Lord God in my heart, to abstract him from every thing earthly and human, and apprehend him as far as possible in his own essential nature and attributes through the light of his Spirit and the medium of his own revelation. To act thus requires no common effort of soul: and just apprehensions of this kind are not acquired without much prayer, much self-reflection, much time, and much of the grace and mercy of God.

Instead of **τον θεον**, GOD, ABC, four others, both the Syriac, Erpen’s Arabic, the Coptic, Vulgate, and Armenian, with Clement and Fulgentius, read **τον χριστον**, CHRIST. Sanctify Christ in your hearts. This reading is

at least equal to the other in the authorities by which it is supported; but which was written by St. Peter we know not.

***A reason of the hope*** An account of your hope of the resurrection of the dead and eternal life in God's glory. This was the great object of their hope, as Christ was the grand object of their faith.

The word **απολογία**, which we translate answer, signifies a defense; from this we have our word apology, which did not originally signify an excuse for an act, but a defense of that act. The defences of Christianity by the primitive fathers are called apologies. See the note on Acts 21:1.

***With meekness and fear*** Several excellent MSS. add the word **αλλα**, but, here, and it improves the sense considerably: Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, BUT with meekness and fear. Do not permit your readiness to answer, nor the confidence you have in the goodness of your cause, to lead you to answer pertly or superciliously to any person; defend the truth with all possible gentleness and fear, lest while you are doing it you should forget his presence whose cause you support, or say any thing unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the religion which you have espoused, or inconsistent with that heavenly temper which the Spirit of your indwelling Lord must infallibly produce.

**Verse 16. *Having a good conscience*** The testimony of God in your own soul, that in simplicity and godly sincerity you have your conversation in the world. See on the term conscience at the end of Hebrews.

***Whereas they speak evil of you*** See the same sentiment in 1 Peter 2:11, and the note there.

**Verse 17. *For it is better*** See on 1 Peter 2:19, 20.

**Verse 18. *Christ also hath once suffered*** See the notes on Romans 5:6; Hebrews 9:28.

***Put to death in the flesh*** In his human nature.

***But quickened by the Spirit*** That very dead body revived by the power of his Divinity. There are various opinions on the meaning of this verse,

with which I need not trouble the reader, as I have produced that which is most likely.

**Verse 19. *By which*** Spirit, his own Divine energy and authority.

***He went and preached*** By the ministry of Noah, one hundred and twenty years.

***Unto the spirits in prison*** The inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who, having been disobedient, and convicted of the most flagrant transgressions against God, were sentenced by his just law to destruction. But their punishment was delayed to see if they would repent; and the long-suffering of God waited one hundred and twenty years, which were granted to them for this purpose; during which time, as criminals tried and convicted, they are represented as being in prison — detained under the arrest of Divine justice, which waited either for their repentance or the expiration of the respite, that the punishment pronounced might be inflicted. This I have long believed to be the sense of this difficult passage, and no other that I have seen is so consistent with the whole scope of the place. That the Spirit of God did strive with, convict, and reprove the antediluvians, is evident from Genesis 6:3: My Spirit shall not always strive with man, forasmuch as he is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years. And it was by this Spirit that Noah became a preacher of righteousness, and condemned that ungodly world, Hebrews 11:7, who would not believe till wrath-Divine punishment, came upon them to the uttermost. The word *πνεύμασι*, spirits, is supposed to render this view of the subject improbable, because this must mean disembodied spirits; but this certainly does not follow, for the spirits of just men made perfect, Hebrews 12:23, certainly means righteous men, and men still in the Church militant; and the Father of spirits, Hebrews 12:9, means men still in the body; and the God of the spirits of all flesh, Numbers 16:22; 27:16, means men not in a disembodied state.

But even on this word there are several various readings; some of the Greek MSS. read *πνεύματι*, in spirit, and one *πνεύματι ἁγίῳ*, in the Holy Spirit. I have before me one of the first, if not the very first edition of the Latin Bible; and in it the verse stands thus: In quo et hiis, qui in carcere erant, SPIRITUALITER veniens praedicavit; “by which he came spiritually, and preached to them that were in prison.”

In two very ancient MSS. of the Vulgate before me, the clause is thus: In quo et his qui in carcere erant SPIRITU venient praedicavit; “in which, coming by the Spirit, he preached to those who were in prison.” This is the reading also in the Complutensian Polyglot.

Another ancient MS. in my possession has the words nearly as in the printed copy: In quo et hiis qui in carcere CONCLUSI erant SPIRITUALITER veniens praedicavit; “in which, coming spiritually, he preached to those who were SHUT UP in prison.”

Another MS., written about A. D. 1370, is the same as the printed copy.

The common printed Vulgate is different from all these, and from all the MSS. of the Vulgate which I have seen in reading spiritibus, “to the spirits.”

In my old MS. Bible, which contains the first translation into English ever made, the clause is the following: In whiche thing and to hem that weren closid togyder in prison, hi commynge in Spirit, prechide. The copy from which this translation was taken evidently read conclusi erdnt, with one of the MSS. quoted above, as closid togyder proves.

I have quoted all these authorities from the most authentic and correct copies of the Vulgate, to show that from them there is no ground to believe that the text speaks of Christ’s going to hell to preach the Gospel to the damned, or of his going to some feigned place where the souls of the patriarchs were detained, to whom he preached, and whom he delivered from that place and took with him to paradise, which the Romish Church holds as an article of faith.

Though the judicious Calmet holds with his Church this opinion, yet he cannot consider the text of St. Peter as a proof of it. I will set down his own words: Leviticus sentiment qui veut que Jesus Christ soit descendu aux enfers, pour annoncer sa venue aux anciens patriarches, et pour les tirer de cette espece de prison, ou ils Pattendoient si long tems, est indubitable; et nous le regardons comme un article de notre foi: mais on peut douter que ce soit le sens de Saint Pierre en cet endroit. “The opinion which states that Jesus Christ descended into hell, to announce his coming to the ancient patriarchs, and to deliver them from that species of prison, where they had so long waited for him, is incontrovertible; and we (the Catholics)

consider it as an article of our faith: but we may doubt whether this be the meaning of St. Peter in this place.”

Some think the whole passage applies to the preaching of the Gospel to the Gentiles; but the interpretation given above appears to me, after the fullest consideration, to be the most consistent and rational, as I have already remarked.

**Verse 20. *When once the long-suffering of God waited*** In Pirkey Aboth, cap. v. 2, we have these words: “There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, that the long-suffering of God might appear; for each of these generations provoked him to anger, and went on in their iniquity, till at last the deluge came.”

***Were saved by water.*** While the ark was preparing, only Noah’s family believed; these amounted to eight persons; and these only were saved from the deluge **δι υοατος**, on the water: all the rest perished in the water; though many of them, while the rains descended, and the waters daily increased, did undoubtedly humble themselves before God, call for mercy, and receive it; but as they had not repented at the preaching of Noah, and the ark was now closed, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, they lost their lives, though God might have extended mercy to their souls.

**Verse 21. *The like figure whereunto, etc.*** Dr. Macknight has translated this verse so as to make the meaning more clear: By which (water) the antitype baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) now saveth us also, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

He remarks that the relative **ω** being in the neuter gender, its antecedent cannot be **κιβωτος**, the ark, which is feminine, but **υδωρ**, water, which is neuter.

There are many difficulties in this verse; but the simple meaning of the place may be easily apprehended. Noah believed in God; walked uprightly before him, and found grace in his sight; he obeyed him in building the ark, and God made it the means of his salvation from the waters of the deluge. Baptism implies a consecration and dedication of the soul and body to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He who is faithful to his baptismal covenant, taking God through Christ, by the eternal Spirit, for his portion,

is saved here from his sins; and through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, has the well-grounded hope of eternal glory. This is all plain; but was it the deluge, itself, or the ark, or the being saved by that ark from the deluge, that was the antitype of which St. Peter speaks? Noah and his family were saved by water; i.e. it was the instrument of their being saved through the good providence of God. So the water of baptism, typifying the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, is the means of salvation to all those who receive this Holy Spirit in its quickening, cleansing efficacy. Now as the waters of the flood could not have saved Noah and his family, had they not made use of the ark; so the water of baptism saves no man, but as it is the means of his getting his heart purified by the Holy Spirit, and typifying to him that purification. The ark was not immersed in the water; had it been so they must all have perished; but it was borne up on the water, and sprinkled with the rain that fell from heaven. This text, as far as I can see, says nothing in behalf of immersion in baptism; but is rather, from the circumstance mentioned above, in favor of sprinkling. In either case, it is not the sprinkling, washing, or cleansing the body, that can be of any avail to the salvation of the soul, but the answer of a good conscience towards God — the internal evidence and external proof that the soul is purified in the laver of regeneration, and the person enabled to walk in newness of life. We are therefore strongly cautioned here, not to rest in the letter, but to look for the substance.

**Verse 22. *Who is gone into heaven*** Having given the fullest proof of his resurrection from the dead, and of his having accomplished the end for which he came into the world.

***On the right hand of God*** In the place of the highest dignity, honor, and influence.

The Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, Augustine, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, and Bede, have the following remarkable addition after the above words: Deglutiens mortem, ut vitae aeternae haeredes efficeremur. “Having abolished (swallowed down) death, that we might be made heirs of eternal life.” But this addition is found in no Greek copy, nor in any other of the ancient versions.

***Angels and authorities and powers*** That is, all creatures and beings, both in the heavens and in the earth, are put under subjection to Jesus Christ.

He has all power in the heavens and in the earth. He alone can save; and he alone can destroy. None need fear who put their trust in him, as he can do whatsoever he will in behalf of his followers, and has good and evil spirits under his absolute command. Well may his enemies tremble, while his friends exult and sing. He can raise the dead, and save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father through him.

If he have all power, if angels and authorities and powers be subject to him, then he can do what he will, and employ whom he will. To raise the dead can be no difficulty to him, because he has power over all things. He created the world; he can destroy it, and he can create it anew. We can conceive nothing too difficult for Omnipotence. This same omnipotent Being is the friend of man. Why then do we not come to him with confidence, and expect the utmost salvation of which our souls and bodies are capable?

## CHAPTER 4

*We should suffer patiently, after the example of Christ, 1. And no longer live according to our former custom, but disregard the scoffs of those who are incensed against us because we have forsaken their evil ways, who are shortly to give account to God for their conduct, 2-5. How the Gospel was preached to Jews and Gentiles, 6. As the end of all things was at hand, they should be sober, watchful, charitable, benevolent, good stewards of the bounty of Providence; and, when called to instruct others, speak as the oracles of God, 7-11. Of the persecutions and trials which were coming upon them, and how they were to suffer so as not to disgrace their Christian character, 12-16. Judgment was about to begin at the house of God, and even the righteous would escape with difficulty from the calamities coming upon the Jews; but they must continue in well-doing, and thus commit the keeping of their souls to their faithful Creator, 17-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. *As Christ hath suffered*** He is your proper pattern; have the same disposition he had; the same forgiving spirit, with meekness, gentleness, and complete self-possession.

***He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin*** This is a general maxim, if understood literally: The man who suffers generally reflects on his ways, is humbled, fears approaching death, loathes himself because of his past iniquities, and ceases from them; for, in a state of suffering, the mind loses its relish for the sins of the flesh, because they are embittered to him through the apprehension which he has of death and judgment; and, on his application to God's mercy, he is delivered from his sin.

Some suppose the words are to be understood thus: "Those who have firmly resolved, if called to it, to suffer death rather than apostatize from Christianity, have consequently ceased from, or are delivered from, the sin of saving their lives at the expense of their faith." Others think that it is a parallel passage to Romans 6:7, and interpret it thus: "He that hath



mortified the flesh, hath ceased from sin.” Dr. Bentley applies the whole to our redemption by Christ: He that hath suffered in the flesh hath died for our sins. But this seems a very constrained sense.

**Verse 2. *That he no longer should live-in the flesh*** Governed by the base principle of giving up his faith to save his life; to the lusts of men — according to the will of his idolatrous persecutors; but to the will of God; which will of God is, that he should retain the truth, and live according to its dictates, though he should suffer for it.

**Verse 3. *The time past of our life*** This is a complete epitome of the Gentile or heathen state, and a proof that those had been Gentiles to whom the apostle wrote.

1. They walked in lasciviousness, **εν ασελγειαις**· every species of lechery, lewdness, and impurity.
2. In lusts, **επιθυμιας**· strong irregular appetites, and desires of all kinds.
3. In excess of wine, **οινοφλυγαις**· wine, and **φλυω**, to be hot, or to boil; to be inflamed with wine; they were in continual debauches.
4. In revellings, **κωμοις**· lascivious feastings, with drunken songs, etc. See the note on Romans 13:13.
5. In banquetings, **ποτοις**· wine feasts, drinking matches, etc.
6. In abominable idolatries, **αθεμιτοις ειδωλολατρειαις**· that is, the abominations practised at their idol feasts, where they not only worshipped the idol, but did it with the most impure, obscene, and abominable rites. This was the general state of the Gentile world; and with this monstrous wickedness Christianity had everywhere to struggle.

**Verse 4. *They think it strange*** **ξενιζονται**· They wonder and are astonished at you, that ye can renounce these gratifications of the flesh for a spiritual something, the good of which they cannot see.

**Excess of riot** **ασωτιας αναχυσιν**· Flood of profligacy; bearing down all rule, order, and restraints before it.

**Speaking evil of you** **βλασφημουντες**· Literally, blaspheming; i.e. speaking impiously against God, and calumniously of you.

**Verse 5. *To judge the quick and the dead.*** They shall give account of these irregularities to Him who is prepared to judge both the Jews and the Gentiles. The Gentiles, previously to the preaching of the Gospel among them, were reckoned to be dead in trespasses and sins, Ephesians 2:1-5; under the sentence of death, because they had sinned. The Jews had at least, by their religious profession, a name to live; and by that profession were bound to give to God.

**Verse 6. *Was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead*** This is a most difficult verse; the best translations I have seen of it are the following:—

“For this indeed was the effect of the preaching of the Gospel to the dead, (the unconverted Gentiles,) that some will be punished as carnal men; but others, (those converted to Christianity,) lead a spiritual life unto God.” —

WAKEFIELD.

“For this purpose hath the Gospel been preached even to the dead, (i.e.

compassion he afforded them a respite, that though they were condemned as men in the flesh, (for this was their character; my Spirit will not always strive with man, forasmuch as he is FLESH, Genesis 6:3,) yet, hearing this Gospel by Noah, they may believe, and live according to God in the Spirit — live a blessed life in eternity according to the mercy of God, who sent his Spirit to strive with them. This appears to me to be the most consistent sense; especially as the apostle seems to refer to what he had said of the Spirit of Christ in Noah preaching to the spirits in prison—the rebellions that lived before the flood. See the notes on 1 Peter 3:19, 20.

**Verse 7. *But the end of all things is at hand*** I think that here also St. Peter keeps the history of the deluge before his eyes, finding a parallel to the state of the Jews in his own time in that of the antediluvians in the days of Noah. In Genesis 6:13, God said unto Noah, The end of all flesh is come before me. This was spoken at a time when God had decreed the destruction of the world by a flood. Peter says, The end of all things is at hand; and this he spoke when God had determined to destroy the Jewish people and their polity by one of the most signal judgments that ever fell upon any nation or people.

In a very few years after St. Peter wrote this epistle, even taking it at the lowest computation, viz., A. D. 60 or 61, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. To this destruction, which was literally then at hand, the apostle alludes when he says, The end of all things is at hand; the end of the temple, the end of the Levitical priesthood, the end of the whole Jewish economy, was then at hand.

If these words could be taken in any general sense, then we might say to every present generation, The end of all things is at hand; the end of all the good which the wicked enjoy, and the end of all the evil which the righteous suffer.

***Be-sober, and watch unto prayer.*** Be sober — make a prudent and moderate use of all you possess; and watch against all occasions of sin; and pray for the supporting hand of God to be upon you for good, that ye may escape the destruction that is coming upon the Jews, and that ye may be saved from among them when the scourge comes.

**Verse 8. *Have fervent charity*** ἀγάπην εκτενῆ· Intense love; for love shall cover a multitude of sins. A loving disposition leads us to pass by the faults of others, to forgive offenses against ourselves, and to excuse and lessen, as far as is consistent with truth, the transgressions of men. It does not mean that our love to others will induce God to pardon our offenses. See the note on James 5:20.

**Verse 9. *Use hospitality*** Be ever ready to divide your bread with the hungry, and to succor the stranger. See on Hebrews 13:2.

***Without grudging.*** ἀνευ γαγγυσμων· Without grumblings. Do nothing merely because it is commanded, but do it from love to God and man; then it will be without grumbling.

**Verse 10. *Hath received the gift*** χαρισμα· A gift; any blessing of providence or grace. I cannot think that the word means here the Holy Ghost, or any of his supernatural gifts or influences; it may include those, but it signifies any thing given by the mere mercy and bounty of God: but perhaps in this place it may signify some or any office in the Church; and this sense, indeed, the connection seems to require.

***Stewards of the manifold grace*** Whatever gifts or endowments any man may possess, they are properly speaking, not his own; they are the Lord's property, and to be employed in his work, and to promote his glory.

**Verse 11. *If any man speak*** In order to explain or enforce God's word, and edify his neighbor, let him do it as those did to whom the living oracles were committed: they spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Those, therefore, at Pontus, etc., who undertook to teach others, should speak by the same influence; or, if not under this immediate influence, should speak as or according to the oracles already delivered, grounding all their exhortations and doctrines on some portion of that revelation already given. This command is sent to every man upon earth in holy orders, in pretended holy orders, or pretending to holy orders. Their teaching should be what the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures, teach and authenticate.

***Of the ability which God giveth*** Perhaps the ministering here may refer to the care of the poor, and the ability is the quantum of means which God may have placed in their hands; and they are to minister this as coming immediately from God, and lead the minds of the poor to consider him as

their benefactor, that he in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus. This is implied in the essence of any charitable act: the actor is not the author, God is the author; and the poor man should be taught to consider him as his immediate benefactor. Those who give any thing as from themselves, rob God; for to him the praise for all good, and the dominion over all men and things, belong for ever and ever.

**Verse 12. *Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial* πυρωσει.** The burning. The metaphor is old, but noble; it represents the Christians at Pontus as having fire cast upon them for the trying of their faith, as gold is tried by fire, 1 Peter 1:7, to which the apostle alludes. — Macknight.

St. Peter returns here to what he had often touched upon in this epistle, namely, to exhort the Christians to behave with patience and integrity under their present severe persecution; to which purpose he uses the following arguments:—

First, He intimates that it was not a strange or unusual thing for the people of God to be persecuted.

Secondly, That if they suffered here as Christ did, they should hereafter be glorified with him.

Thirdly, Besides the prospect of that future glory; they had at present the Spirit of God for their support and comfort.

Fourthly, That it was an honor for any of them to suffer, not as a malefactor, but as a Christian.

Fifthly, Though the afflictions began with the Christians, yet the weight of the storm would fall upon the unbelievers. From these considerations he exhorted them to persevere in their duty, and trust all events with God. See Dodd.

**Verse 14. *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ*** To be reproached for the name of Christ is to be reproached for being a Christian, that is, for being like Christ. This is the highest honor to which any man can arrive in this world, and therefore the apostle says to such? Happy are ye.

***The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*** As this Divine Spirit rested upon Jesus, so does it rest upon his persecuted followers. There is a

various reading here, **και δυναμεως**, and of power, which is found in some of the chief MSS., (the Codex Alexandrinus, and above twenty others,) the later Syriac, all the Arabic, Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, Vulgate, some copies of the Itala, Athanasius, Theophylact, Cyprian, and Cassiodorus; and in them the whole verse reads thus: If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, AND OF POWER, and of God, resteth upon you. This is agreeable to our Lord's words, Matthew 5:11, 12. So that what constituted them unhappy in the sight of the world was their chief happiness in the sight of God; they carried Christ the fountain of blessedness in their heart, and therefore could not be unhappy.

*On their part he is evil spoken of* **κατα μεν αυτους βλασφημειται, κατα δε υμας δοξαζεται**. By them he is blasphemed, by you he is honored.

**Verse 15. *But let none of you suffer-as a busybody in other men's matters*** **αλλοτριοεπισκοπος**; The inspector of another; meddling with other people's concerns, and forgetting their own; such persons are hated of all men. But some think that meddling with those in public office is here intended, as if he had said: Meddle not with the affairs of state, leave public offices and public officers to their own master, strive to live peaceably with all men, and show yourselves to be humble and unassuming.

**Verse 16. *Yet if-as a Christian*** If he be persecuted because he has embraced the Christian faith, let him not be ashamed, but let him rather glorify God on this very account. Christ suffered by the Jews because he was holy; Christians suffer because they resemble him.

The word **χριστιανος**, Christian, is used only here and in Acts 11:26; 26:28. See the note on the former passage.

**Verse 17. *Judgment must begin at the house of God*** Our Lord had predicted that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, his own followers would have to endure various calamities; see Matthew 24:9, 21, 22; Mark 13:12, 13; John 16:2, etc. Here his true disciples are called the house or family of God. That the converted Jews suffered much from their own brethren, the zealots, or factions into which the Jews were at that time divided, needs little proof; and some interpreters think that this was

in conformity to the purpose of God, (Matthew 23:35: That on you may come all the righteous blood shed from the foundation of the world,) “that the Jewish Christians were to be involved in the general punishment; and that it was proper to begin at them as a part of the devoted Jewish nation, notwithstanding they were now become the house of God, because the justice of God would thereby be more illustriously displayed.” See Macknight. But probably the word **κριμα**, which we here translate judgment, may mean no more than affliction and distress; for it was a Jewish maxim that, when God was about to pour down some general judgment, he began with afflicting his own people in order to correct and amend them, that they might be prepared for the overflowing scourge. In Bava Kama, fol. 60, 1, we have the same sentiment, and in nearly the same words, as in Peter, viz.: “God never punishes the world but because of the wicked, but he always begins with the righteous first. The destroyer makes no difference between the just and the unjust, only he begins first with the righteous.” See Ezekiel 9:1-7, where God orders the destroyer to slay both old and young in the city: But, said he, begin at my sanctuary.

***And if it first begin at us*** Jews, who have repented, and believed on the Son of God; what shall the end be of them — the Jews who continue impenitent, and obey not the Gospel of God? Here is the plainest reference to the above Jewish maxim; and this, it appears, was founded upon the text which St. Peter immediately quotes.

**Verse 18. *And if the righteous scarcely be saved*** If it shall be with extreme difficulty that the Christians shall escape from Jerusalem, when the Roman armies shall come against it with the full commission to destroy it, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? Where shall the proud Pharisaic boaster in his own outside holiness, and the profligate transgressor of the laws of God, show themselves, as having escaped the Divine vengeance? The Christians, though with difficulty, did escape, every man; but not one of the Jews escaped, whether found in Jerusalem or elsewhere.

It is rather strange, but it is a fact, that this verse is the Septuagint translation of Proverbs 11:31: Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner. For this the Septuagint and St. Peter have, If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the

ungodly and the sinner appear? Such a latitude of construction can scarcely be accounted for. The original is this: בארץ ישלם אפ כי רשע תחורא hen tsaddik baarets yeshullam, aph ki rasha vechote: “Behold, to the righteous it shall be returned on the earth; and also to the wicked and the transgressor.”

The Chaldee paraphrast has given this a different turn: Behold, the righteous shall be strengthened in the earth; but the ungodly and the sinners shall be consumed from the earth.

The Syriac thus: If the righteous scarcely live, the ungodly and the sinner where shall he stand?

The Arabic is nearly the same as the Septuagint and the apostle; the Vulgate follows the Hebrew.

I have on several occasions shown that, when Cestius Gallus came against Jerusalem, many Christians were shut up in it; when he strangely raised the siege the Christians immediately departed to Pella in Coele-syria, into the dominions of King Agrippa, who was an ally of the Romans, and there they were in safety; and it appears, from the ecclesiastical historians, that they had but barely time to leave the city before the Romans returned under the command of Titus, and never left the place till they had destroyed the temple, razed the city to the ground, slain upwards of a million of those wretched people, and put an end to their civil polity and ecclesiastical state.

**Verse 19. *Suffer according to the will of God*** A man suffers according to the will of God who suffers for righteousness' sake; and who, being reviled, reviles not again.

***Commit the keeping of their souls*** Place their lives confidently in his hand, who, being their Creator, will also be their preserver, and keep that safely which is committed to his trust. God is here represented as faithful, because he will always fulfill his promises, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

But they had no reason to hope that he would care for their lives and souls unless they continued in well-doing. He who is employed in God's work



will have God's protection. The path of duty ever was, and ever will be, the only way of safety.

1. THE apostle recommends fervent charity — unfeigned love both to God and man. It is well said of this grace that it is a universal virtue which ought to precede, accompany, and follow, all others. A charity which has God for its principle, and Jesus Christ for its pattern, never faileth. If our charity be extensive enough to cover all the defects of our neighbor in bearing with them; that of God is sufficient to cover all the sins of a sincere penitent by blotting them out. If we ought to be charitable to all, it is after the example of our heavenly Father, who is loving to every man, and hateth nothing that he has made.

2 The difficulty of escaping the corruption that is in the world is great; and, consequently, the danger of losing our souls. In this great work, watchfulness, prayer; faith, and obedience, are indispensably necessary. He who does not walk with God here cannot see nor enjoy him hereafter.

## CHAPTER 5

*Directions to the elders to feed the flock of God, and not to be lord over God's heritage, that when the chief Shepherd does appear, they may receive a crown of glory, 1-4. The young are to submit themselves to the elder, and to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and cast all their care upon him, 6-7. They should be sober and watchful, because their adversary the devil is continually seeking their destruction, whom they are to resist, steadfast in the faith, 8, 9. They are informed that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, 10- 11. Of Silvanus, by whom this epistle was sent, 12. Salutations from the Church at Babylon, 13. The apostolic benediction, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1. *The elders which are among you*** In this place the term **πρεσβυτεροι**, elders or presbyters is the name of an office. They were as pastors or shepherds of the flock of God, the Christian people among whom they lived. They were the same as bishops, presidents, teachers and deacons, Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 5:17. And that these were the same as bishops the next verse proves.

***Who am also an elder* συμπρεσβυτερος**· A fellow elder; one on a level with yourselves. Had he been what the popes of Rome say he was—the prince of the apostles; and head of the Church, and what they affect to be—mighty secular lords, binding the kings of the earth in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron; could he have spoken of himself as he here does? It is true that the Roman pontiffs, in all their bulls, each style themselves *servus servorum Dei*, servant of the servants of God, while each affects to be *rex regum*, king of kings, and vicar of Jesus Christ. But the popes and the Scriptures never agree.

***A witness of the sufferings of Christ*** He was with Christ in the garden; he was with him when he was apprehended. and he was with him in the high priest's hall. Whether he followed him to the cross we know not; probably he did not, for in the hall of the high priest he had denied him most

shamefully; and, having been deeply convinced of the greatness of his crime, it is likely he withdrew to some private place, to humble himself before God, and to implore mercy. He could, however, with the strictest propriety, say, from the above circumstances, that he was a witness of the sufferings of Christ.

***A partaker of the glory*** He had a right to it through the blood of the Lamb; he had a blessed anticipation of it by the power of the Holy Ghost; and he had the promise from his Lord and Master that he should be with him in heaven, to behold his glory; John 17:21, 24.

**Verse 2. *Feed the flock*** Do not fleece the flock.

***Taking the oversight*** **ΕΠΙΣΚΟΠΟΥΝΤΕΣ**· Discharging the office of bishops or superintendents. This is another proof that bishop and presbyter were the same order in the apostolic times, though afterwards they were made distinct.

***Not by constraint*** The office was laborious and dangerous, especially in these times of persecution; it is no wonder then that even those who were best qualified for the office should strive to excuse themselves with a genuine *Nolo episcopari*, “I am unwilling to be a bishop.”

***Not for filthy lucre*** Could the office of a bishop, in those early days, and in the time of persecution, be a lucrative office? Does not the Spirit of God lead the apostle to speak these things rather for posterity than for that time? See the notes on 1 Timothy 3:3.

***But of a ready mind*** Doing all for Christ’s sake, and through love to immortal souls.

**Verse 3. *Neither as being lords over God’s heritage*** This is the voice of St. Peter in his catholic epistle to the catholic Church! According to him there are to be no lords over God’s heritage, the bishops and presbyters who are appointed by the head of the Church are to feed the flock, to guide and to defend it, not to fleece and waste it; and they are to look for their reward in another world, and in the approbation of God in their consciences. And in humility, self-abasement, self-renunciation, and heavenly-mindedness, they are to be ensamples, **τυποι**, types, to the flock, moulds of a heavenly form, into which the spirits and lives of the

flock may be cast, that they may come out after a perfect pattern. We need not ask, Does the Church that arrogates to itself the exclusive title of Catholic, and do its supreme pastors, who affect to be the successors of Peter and the vicars of Jesus Christ, act in this way? They are in every sense the reverse of this. But we may ask, Do the other Churches, which profess to be reformed from the abominations of the above, keep the advice of the apostle in their eye? Have they pastors according to God's own heart, who feed them with knowledge and understanding? Jeremiah 3:15. Do they feed themselves, and not the flock? Are they lords over the heritage of Christ, ruling with a high ecclesiastico-secular hand, disputing with their flocks about penny-farthing tithes and stipends, rather than contending for the faith once delivered to the saints? Are they heavenly moulds, into which the spirits and conduct of their flocks may be cast? I leave those who are concerned to answer these questions; but I put them, in the name of God, to all the preachers in the land. How many among them properly care for the flock? Even among those reputed evangelical teachers, are there not some who, on their first coming to a parish or a congregation, make it their first business to raise the tithes and the stipends, where, in all good conscience, there was before enough, and more than enough, to provide them and their families with not only the necessaries, but all the conveniences and comforts of life? conveniences and comforts which neither Jesus Christ nor his servant Peter ever enjoyed. And is not the great concern among ministers to seek for those places, parishes, and congregations, where the provision is the most ample, and the work the smallest? Preacher or minister, whosoever thou art, who readest this, apply not the word to thy neighbor, whether he be state-appointed, congregation-appointed, or self-appointed; take all to thyself; *mutato nomine de TE fabula narratur*. See that thy own heart, views, and conduct be right with God; and then proceed to the next verse.

**Verse 4.** *When the chief Shepherd* That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose is the flock, and who provides the pasture, and from whom, if ye are legally called to the most awful work of preaching the Gospel, ye have received your commission; when he shall appear to judge the world in righteousness, ye who have fed his flock, who have taken the superintendency of it, not by constraint, nor for filthy lucre's sake, not as lords over the heritage, but with a ready mind, employing body, soul,

spirit, time and talents, in endeavoring to pluck sinners as brands from eternal burnings, and build up the Church of Christ on its most holy faith; YE shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, an eternal nearness and intimacy with the ineffably glorious God; so that ye who have turned many to righteousness shall shine, not merely as stars, but as suns in the kingdom of your Father! O ye heavenly-minded, diligent, self-denying pastors after God's own heart, whether ye be in the Church established by the state, or in those divisions widely separated from, or nearly connected with it, take courage; preach Jesus; press through all difficulties in the faith of your God; fear no evil while meditating nothing but good. Ye are stars in the right hand of Jesus, who walks among your golden candlesticks, and has lighted that lamp of life which ye are appointed to trim; fear not, your labor in the Lord cannot be in vain! Never, never can ye preach one sermon in the spirit of your office, which the God of all grace shall permit to be unfruitful; ye carry and sow the seed of the kingdom by the command and on the authority of your God; ye sow it, and the heavens shall drop down dew upon it. Ye may go forth weeping, though bearing this precious seed; but ye shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. Amen, even so, Lord Jesus!

**Verse 5.** *Likewise, ye younger νεωτεροι* probably means here inferiors, or those not in sacred offices; and may be understood as referring to the people at large who are called to obey them that have the rule over them in the Lord. In this sense our Lord, it appears, uses the word, Luke 22:26.

***Be subject one to another*** Strive all to serve each other; let the pastors strive to serve the people, and the people the pastors; and let there be no contention, but who shall do most to oblige and profit all the rest.

***Be clothed with humility*** To be clothed with a thing or person is a Greek mode of speech for being that thing or person with which a man is said to be clothed. Be ye truly humble; and let your outward garb and conduct be a proof of the humility of your hearts. *εγκομβωμα*, from the original word *εγκομβωσασθε*, signifies often an outward ornamental garment, tied in different places with knots or bows, probably ornamented all over with bows or knots of different coloured ribands, silk twist, etc. But it also signifies the outward garment worn by servants, slaves, girls, and shepherds, which was rather intended to be the guard of the other garments

than an ornament to those thus dressed: and I am rather inclined to take it in this sense than in the former; for as the apostle calls upon them to be subject to each other, he desires them to put on humility, as the encomboma or servant's dress, that they may appear to be such as were ready to serve; and that he cannot refer to this article of clothing as an ornament the next words sufficiently prove: God resisteth the PROUD, and giveth grace to the HUMBLE—the proud, with all their ornaments, God resists; while those who are clothed with the humble garment he adorns.

**Verse 6. *Humble yourselves*** Those who submit patiently to the dispensations of God's providence he lifts up; those who lift themselves up, God thrusts down.

If we humble not ourselves under God's grace, he will humble us under his judgments. Those who patiently submit to him, he exalts in due time; if his hand be mighty to depress, it is also mighty to exalt.

**Verse 7.  *Casting all your care*** *την μεριμναν*· Your anxiety, your distracting care, on him, for he careth for you, *οτι αυτω μελει περι υμων*, for he meddles or concerns himself, with the things that interest you. Whatever things concern a follower of God, whether they be spiritual or temporal, or whether in themselves great or small, God concerns himself with them; what affects them affects him; in all their afflictions he is afflicted. He who knows that God cares for him, need have no anxious cares about himself. This is a plain reference to Psalm 55:22: Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee. He will bear both thee and thy burden.

**Verse 8. *Be sober*** Avoid drunkenness of your senses, and drunkenness in your souls; be not overcharged with the concerns of the world.

***Be vigilant*** Awake, and keep awake; be always watchful; never be off your guard; your enemies are alert, they are never off theirs.

***Your adversary the devil*** This is the reason why ye should be sober and vigilant; ye have an ever active, implacable, subtle enemy to contend with. He walketh about — he has access to you everywhere; he knows your feelings and your propensities, and informs himself of all your circumstances; only God can know more and do more than he, therefore your care must be cast upon God.

**As a roaring lion** Satan tempts under three forms: 1. The subtle serpent; to beguile our senses, pervert our judgment, and enchant our imagination. 2. As an angel of light; to deceive us with false views of spiritual things, refinements in religion, and presumption on the providence and grace of God. 3. As a roaring lion; to bear us down, and destroy us by violent opposition, persecution, and death. Thus he was acting towards the followers of God at Pontus, etc., who were now suffering a grievous persecution.

**Walketh about** Traversing the earth; a plain reference to Job 2:2, which see.

**Seeking whom he may devour** **τινψ καταπιη** Whom he may gulp down. It is not every one that he can swallow down: those who are sober and vigilant are proof against him, these he MAY NOT swallow down; those who are drunken with the cares of this world, etc., and are unwatchful, these he MAY swallow down. There is a beauty in this verse, and a striking apposition between the first and last words, which I think have not been noticed: Be sober, **νηψατε** from **νη**, not, and **πειν** to drink; do not drink, do not swallow down: and the word **καταπιη**, from **κατα**, down, and **πειν**, to drink. If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, toppers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name you are known in society, or among your fellow sinners. Strong drink is not only the way to the devil, but the devil's way into you; and YE are such as the devil particularly MAY swallow down.

**Verse 9. Whom resist** Stand against him, **αντιστητε**. Though invulnerable, he is not unconquerable: the weakest follower of God can confound and overpower him, if he continue steadfast in the faith — believing on the Son of God, and walking uprightly before him. To a soul thus engaged he can do no damage.

**The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren** It is the lot of all the disciples of Christ to suffer persecution. The brotherhood, **αδελφοτης**, the Christian Church, everywhere is exposed to the assaults of men and devils; you are persecuted by the heathen among whom ye live, and from among whom ye are gathered into the fold of Christ: but even those who profess the same faith with you, and who are resident among the Jews, (for so I think **εν κοσμω**, in the world, is here to be

understood,) are also persecuted, both heathens and Jews being equally opposed to the pure and holy doctrines of the Gospel. Any man who has read the Greek Testament with any attention must have observed a vast number of places in which the word **κοσμος**, which we translate world, means the Jewish people and the Jewish state, and nothing else.

**Verse 10. *But the God of all grace*** The Fountain of infinite compassion, mercy, and goodness. Mohammed has conveyed this fine description of the Divine Being in the words with which he commences every surat or chapter of his Koran, two excepted; viz.;

“(Α ρ α β ι χ’)

Bismillahi arrahmani arraheemi.

Of which the best translation that can be given is that of the apostle, In the name of the God of all grace; the God who is the most merciful and the most compassionate, who is an exuberant Fountain of love and compassion to all his intelligent offspring.

***Who hath called us*** By the preaching of the Gospel.

***Unto his eternal glory*** To the infinite felicity of the heavenly state.

***By Christ Jesus*** Through the merit of his passion and death, by the influence of his Holy Spirit, by the precepts of his Gospel, and by the splendor of his own example.

***After that ye have suffered a while*** **ολιγον παθοντας**; Having suffered a little time; that is, while ye are enduring these persecutions, God will cause all to work together for your good.

***Make you perfect*** **καταρτισει, στηριξει, σθενωσει, θεμελιωσει**. All these words are read in the future tense by the best MSS. and versions.

He will make you perfect. — **καταρτισει**. Put you in complete joint as the timbers of a building.

***Stablish*** **στηριξει**. Make you firm in every part; adapt you strongly to each other, so that you may be mutual supports, the whole building being one in the Lord.

***Strengthen*** **σθενωσει**. Cramp and bind every part, so that there shall be no danger of warping, splitting, or falling.



**Settle** θεμελιωσει· Cause all to rest so evenly and firmly upon the best and surest foundation, that ye may grow together to a holy temple in the Lord: in a word, that ye may be complete in all the mind that was in Christ; supported in all your trials and difficulties; strengthened to resist and overcome all your enemies; and after all abide, firmly founded, in the truth of grace. All these phrases are architectural; and the apostle has again in view the fine image which he produced 1 Peter 2:5, where see the notes.

**Verse 11. To him** The God of all grace, be glory — all honor and praise be ascribed, and dominion — the government of heaven, earth, and hell, for ever — through time, and ever — through eternity. Amen — so be it, so let it be, and so it shall be. Amen and Amen!

**Verse 12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose** To say the least of this translation, it is extremely obscure, and not put together with that elegance which is usual to our translators. I see no reason why the clause may not be thus translated: I have written to you, as I consider, briefly, by Silvanus, the faithful brother. On all hands it is allowed that this Silvanus was the same as Silas, Paul's faithful companion in travel, mentioned Acts 15:40; 16:19; and, if he were the same, Peter could never say as I suppose to his faith and piety: but he might well say this to the shortness of his epistle, notwithstanding the many and important subjects which it embraced. See the Syriac, Vulgate, etc. If the words be applied to Silvanus, they must be taken in a sense in which they are often used: "I conclude him to be a trustworthy person; one by whom I may safely send this letter; who will take care to travel through the different regions in Asia, Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia; read it in every Church; and leave a copy for the encouragement and instruction of Christ's flock." And in such a state of the Church, in such countries, no ordinary person could have been intrusted with such a message.

**Exhorting** Calling upon you to be faithful, humble, and steady.

**And testifying** επιμαρτυρων, Earnestly witnessing, that it is the true grace — the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ, in which ye stand, and in which ye should persevere to the end.

**Verse 13. The Church that is at Babylon** After considering all that has been said by learned men and critics on this place, I am quite of opinion

that the apostle does not mean Babylon in Egypt, nor Jerusalem, nor Rome as figurative Babylon, but the ancient celebrated Babylon in Assyria, which was, as Dr. Benson observes, the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews; but as I have said so much on this subject in the preface, I beg leave to refer the reader to that place.

Instead of Babylon, some MSS. mentioned by Syncellus in his Chronicon have **ιοπη**, Joppa; and one has **ῥωμη**, Rome, in the margin, probably as the meaning, according to the writer, of the word Babylon.

**Elected together with you** **συνεκλεκτη**. Fellow elect, or elected jointly with you. Probably meaning that they, and the believers at Babylon, received the Gospel about the same time. On the election of those to whom St. Peter wrote, see the notes on 1 Peter 1:2.

**And-Marcus my son.** This is supposed to be the same person who is mentioned Acts 12:12, and who is known by the name of John Mark; he was sister's son to Barnabas, Colossians 4:10, his mother's name was Mary, and he is the same who wrote the gospel that goes under his name. He is called here Peter's son, i.e. according to the faith, Peter having been probably the means of his conversion. This is very likely, as Peter seems to have been intimate at his mother's house. See the account, Acts 12:6-17.

**Verse 14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.** See the notes on Romans 16:16, and on 1 Corinthians 16:20. In the above places the kiss is called a holy kiss; here, **φιληματι αγαπης**, a kiss of LOVE; i.e. as a mark of their love to each other, in order that misunderstandings might be prevented. But ten or twelve MSS., with the Syriac, Arabic, Armenian, and Vulgate, have **αγιω**, holy; salute one another with a HOLY kiss. The difference is not great.

**Peace be with you all** May all prosperity, spiritual and temporal, be with all that are in Christ Jesus — that are truly converted to him, and live in his Spirit obedient to his will.

**Amen.** Is wanting, as usual, in some of the principal MSS. and versions.

The subscriptions are, as in other cases, various.

In the VERSIONS:

The end of the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter. — SYRIAC.

The First Catholic Epistle of Peter the apostle is ended. — SYRIAC  
PHILOXENIAN.

The end of the Epistle of St. Peter; may his supplication preserve us!  
Amen. Praise be to the Lord of never ending and eternal glory! Amen. —  
ARABIC.

The First Epistle of Peter is completed; may his intercession be with us!  
Amen, and Amen. — AETHIOPIC,

Nothing in the COPTIC.

Nothing in the printed VULGATE.

The end of the First Epistle of St. Peter. — COMPLUTENSIAN Polyglott.

The First Epistle of St. Peter is ended. — BIB. VULGAT. Edit. Princ.

In the MANUSCRIPTS:

The First of Peter. — Codex Alexand. and Codex Vatican.

Written from Rome. — A MS. of the twelfth century,

The end of the First Catholic Epistle of Peter, written from Rome. — A  
MS. of the thirteenth century.

These later subscriptions are of little value, nor do any of them help to ascertain the place where the epistle was written. The word Rome is only the supposed interpretation of the word Babylon, as in 1 Peter 5:13, which see.

As the true Church of Christ has generally been in a state of suffering, the epistles of St. Peter have ever been most highly prized by all believers. That which we have just finished is an admirable letter, containing some of the most important maxims and consolations for the Church in the wilderness. No Christian can read it without deriving from it both light and life. Ministers, especially, should study it well, that they may know how to comfort their flocks when in persecution or adversity. He never speaks to good effect in any spiritual case who is not furnished out of the Divine treasury. God's words invite, solicit, and command assent; on them a man

may confidently rely. The words of man may be true, but they are not infallible, This is the character of God's word alone.

I SHALL sum up the contents of this chapter in the words of a good commentator: "Because the knowledge and good behavior of the people depend, in a great measure, upon the kind of instruction which they receive from their teachers, the apostle in this chapter addressed the elders, that is, the bishops, pastors, rulers, and deacons among the brethren of Pontus, etc., 1 Peter 5:1, exhorting the bishops in particular to feed the flock of God committed to their care faithfully, and to exercise their episcopal office, not as by constraint, but willingly; not from the love of gain, but from love to their Master and to the flock, 1 Peter 5:2; and not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be patterns of humility and disinterestedness to the people, 1 Peter 5:3. This exhortation to bishops to feed Christ's flock was given with much propriety by Peter, who had himself been appointed by Christ to feed his lambs and his sheep. Next, because the faithful performance of the bishop's office was, in that age, attended with great difficulty and danger, the apostle, to encourage the bishops, assured them that; when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, 1 Peter 5:4. The distinguished reward which Christ is to bestow on those who have suffered for his sake being a favourite topic with our apostle, he introduces it often in this epistle.

"Having thus exhorted the pastors, the apostle turned his discourse to the people, charging them to be subject to their elders, and to one another; that is, to be of a teachable disposition, and to receive instruction from every one capable of giving it, and to do all the duties which they could to each other, according to their different stations and relations, 1 Peter 5:5. But especially to be subject to God, by humbly submitting themselves to the judgments which were coming upon them, that God might exalt them in due time, 1 Peter 5:6. Casting all their anxious care on God, because he cared for them, 1 Peter 5:7. And to watch against the devil, who went about as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy them by instigating the wicked to persecute them, and drive them into apostasy, 1 Peter 5:8. But they were to resist that terrible enemy by steadfastness in the faith, and not to think themselves hardly dealt with when persecuted, knowing that their brethren everywhere were exposed to the same temptations of the devil, 1 Peter 5:9. In the meantime, to give them all the assistance in his power, the

apostle prayed earnestly to God to stablish and strengthen them, 1 Peter 5:10. And ended his prayer with a doxology to God, expressive of his supreme dominion over the universe, and all the things it contains.

“The apostle informed the brethren of Pontus that he had sent this letter to them by Silvanus, whom he praised for his fidelity to Christ, 1 Peter 5:12. Then, giving them the salutation of the Church in Babylon, where it seems he was when he wrote this letter, he added the salutation of Mark, whom he called his son, either because he had converted him, or on account of the great attachment which Mark bore to him, 1 Peter 5:13. And having desired them to salute one another, he concluded with giving them his apostolical benediction, 1 Peter 5:14.” See Dr. Macknight.

Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 31, 1831,-A. C.

## INTRODUCTION

### TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF

### PETER

As the preface to the preceding epistle embraces the question of the authenticity of both epistles, and also considers several matters common to both, I need not take up the subject here afresh; but simply consider those matters which are peculiar to the epistle before me, and which have not been examined in the foregoing preface.

“This epistle, as appears from 2 Peter 3:1, (says Michaelis,) was written to the same communities as the first epistle; and the author gives us thus to understand, that he was the person who wrote the first epistle; that is, the Apostle Peter. He calls himself likewise, 2 Peter 1:1, **συμεων πετρος, δοσλος και αποστολος ιησου χριστου**, Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ; and 2 Peter 1:16-18 says that he was present at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount. The notion therefore entertained by Grotius, that this epistle was written by a bishop of Jerusalem of the name of Simeon, is absolutely inadmissible; and we have no other alternative than this: either it was written by the apostle St. Peter, or it is a forgery in his name.

“The ancients entertained very great doubts whether St. Peter was really the author. Eusebius, in his chapter where he speaks of the books of the New Testament in general, reckons it among the **αντιλεγόμενα**, those not canonical. He says that tradition does not reckon, as a part of the New Testament, the second epistle ascribed to Peter; but that, as in the opinion of most men, it is useful, it is therefore much read. Origen had said, long before, that Peter had left behind him one epistle universally received, and perhaps a second, though doubts are entertained about it.

“The old Syriac version, though it contains the Epistle of St. James, which Eusebius likewise reckons among the *αντιλεγόμενα*, does not contain the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Now it cannot be said that the other books of the New Testament were translated into Syriac before St. Peter’s second epistle was written; for St. Paul’s Second Epistle to Timothy was written certainly as late, and yet is contained in this very version. And if an epistle, addressed only to an individual, was known to the Syriac translator, it may be thought that a circular epistle addressed to communities dispersed in several countries in Asia, would hardly have escaped his notice. The circumstance, therefore, that the old Syriac translator did not translate the Second Epistle of St. Peter as well as the first, may be used as an argument against its antiquity, and of course against its authenticity.

“It appears then that, if the authenticity of this epistle were determined by external evidence, it would have less in its favor than it would have against it. But, on the other hand, the internal evidence is greatly in its favor; and indeed so much so, that the epistle gains in this respect more than it loses in the former. Wetstein, indeed, says that since the ancients themselves were in doubt, the moderns cannot expect to arrive at certainty, because we cannot obtain more information on the subject in the eighteenth, than ecclesiastical writers were able to obtain in the third and fourth, centuries. Now this is perfectly true as far as relates to historical knowledge, or to the testimony of others in regard to the matter of fact, whether St. Peter was the author or not. But when this question is to be decided by an examination of the epistle itself, it is surely possible that the critical skill and penetration of the moderns may discover in it proofs of its having been written by St. Peter, though these proofs escaped the notice of the ancients. After a diligent comparison of the First Epistle of St. Peter with that which is ascribed to him as his second, the agreement between them appears to me to be such, that, if the second was not written by St. Peter as well as the first, the person who forged it not only possessed the power of imitation in a very unusual degree, but understood likewise the design of the first epistle, with which the ancients do not appear to have been acquainted. Now, if this be true, the supposition that the second epistle was not written by St. Peter himself, involves a contradiction. Nor is incredible that a pious impostor of the first or second century should have

imitated St. Peter so successfully as to betray no marks of a forgery; for the spurious productions of those ages, which were sent into the world in the name of the apostles, are for the most part very unhappy imitations, and discover very evident marks that they were not written by the persons to whom they were ascribed. Other productions of this kind betray their origin by the poverty of their materials, or by the circumstance that, instead of containing original thoughts, they are nothing more than a rhapsody of sentiments collected from various parts of the Bible, and put together without plan or order.

“This charge cannot possibly be laid to the Second Epistle of Peter, which is so far from containing materials derived from other parts of the Bible, that the third chapter exhibits the discussion of a totally new subject. Its resemblance to the Epistle of Jude will hardly be urged as an argument against it; for no doubt can be made that the Second Epistle of St. Peter was, in respect to the Epistle of St. Jude, the original, and not the copy. Lastly, it is extremely difficult, even for a man of the greatest talents, to forge a writing in the name of another, without sometimes inserting what the pretended author either would not or could not have said; and support the imposture in so complete a manner as to militate, in not a single instance, either against his character or against the age in which he lived. Now, in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, though it has been a subject of examination full seventeen hundred years, nothing has hitherto been discovered which is unsuitable either to the apostle or the apostolic age. Objections, indeed, have been made on account of its style; but the style of the second epistle, when compared with that of the first, warrants rather the conclusion that both were written by the same person. We have no reason, therefore, to believe that the Second Epistle of St. Peter is spurious, especially as it is difficult to comprehend what motive could have induced a Christian, whether orthodox or heretic, to attempt the fabrication of such an epistle, and then falsely ascribe it to St. Peter.

“Having shown that the supposition that this epistle is spurious is without foundation, I have, in the next place, to show that there are positive grounds for believing it to be genuine. The arguments in favor of its genuineness are of two kinds, being founded on the similarity of the two epistles, either in respect to their materials, or in respect to their style. The arguments of the former kind are as follow:—



“The design of the first epistle was to assure the uncircumcised Christians that they stood in the grace of God. Now it was not generally known that this was the design of it; and therefore we cannot suppose that any person whose object was to forge an epistle in St. Peter’s name should have observed it. But the design of the second epistle was certainly the same as that of the first, as appears from the address, 2 Peter 1:1: **τοις ισοτιμον ημιν λαχουσι πισθιν εν δικαιοσυνη του θεου**. To them who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God. If we explain **ημιν**, as denoting ‘us apostles,’ the address will imply what was wholly unnecessary, since no one could doubt that the faith of other Christians might be as good as the faith of the apostles; and it will sound likewise rather haughty and assuming; but if we explain **ημιν** as denoting ‘us who were born Jews,’ and consider that the second epistle, as well as the first, was directed to persons who were born heathens, the address becomes clear and consistent: **δικαιοσυνη του θεου**, will then signify the impartiality of God in estimating the faith of native heathens as highly as the faith of native Jews, which St. Peter has extolled in other places. We shall likewise be able to explain 2 Peter 1:8-10, which appears to contain the tautology that those who are diligent in good works are not idle; whereas, if this epistle be explained from the design of the first, we shall perceive the meaning of the passage to be this, that they who are diligent in good works need not fear the reproach that they observe not the Levitical law, since their good works, which are the fruit of their religious knowledge, will be the means of making their calling and election sure. (See the note on this place.)

“The deluge, which is not a common subject in the apostolic epistles, is mentioned both in 1 Peter 3:20, and in 2 Peter 2:5; and in both places the circumstance is noted, that eight persons only were saved; though in neither place does the subject require that the number should be particularly specified. Now it is true that St. Peter was not the only apostle who knew how many persons were saved in the ark; but he only, who by habit had acquired a familiarity with the subject, would ascertain the precise number, where his argument did not depend upon it. The author of the first epistle had read St. Paul’s Epistle to the Romans; and the author of the second epistle speaks in express terms, 2 Peter 3:15, 16, of the epistles of St. Paul. Now, no other writer of the New Testament has

quoted from the New Testament; consequently, we have in these epistles a criterion from which we may judge that they were written by the same author.

“Before I consider the arguments which are derived from the style of these epistles, I must observe that several commentators have on the contrary contended that the style is very different; and hence have inferred that they were written by different authors; but it is extremely difficult to form from a single epistle so complete a judgment of the author’s style and manner as to enable us to pronounce with certainty that he was not the author of another epistle ascribed to him. The style of the same writer is not always the same at every period of his life, especially when he composes not in his native, but in a foreign, language.

“From what has been said in the course of this section, it appears that even the second chapter of the second epistle has some resemblance both in style and contents to the first epistle. This is to be particularly noted, because even the advocates for the second epistle have in general granted that the style of this chapter is not the usual style of St. Peter. Bishop Sherlock, for instance, acknowledges it; nor, though I contend that there is some similarity, as in 2 Peter 2:5-7, will I assert that there is no difference. But it will not therefore follow that the whole epistle was not written by St. Peter: and if it is allowable to draw a conclusion from one or two passages, it will be no other than this, that the second chapter is spurious, because the style of it is said to be as different from the first and third chapters as it is from the first epistle. This conclusion, however, no one will draw who has examined the connection of the whole epistle; in fact the difference in question is rather of a negative kind; for though I am unable to discover any remarkable agreement in style between the first epistle and the second chapter of the second epistle, I do not perceive any remarkable difference. This second chapter has indeed several words which are unusual in other parts of the New Testament, but the same may be said of the first epistle: and some of the expressions which to us appear extraordinary were borrowed perhaps from the Gnostics, whose doctrines are here confuted; for it is not unusual in combatting the opinions of a particular sect to adopt their peculiar terms. Thus in 2 Peter 2:17, the Gnostics are called ‘clouds, agitated by a tempest;’ and we know that the Manicheans, who had many doctrines in common with the Gnostics,

taught that there were five good and five bad elements, and that one of the latter was called 'tempest.' In like manner they frequently speak of darkness under the name of ζοφος, which occurs more than once in this chapter. The Epistle of St. Jude has a still greater number of unusual figurative expressions; and it is not impossible that these also were borrowed from the Gnostics. The Second Epistle of St. Peter must have been written only a short time before his death; for he says, 2 Peter 1:14, 'shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.' St. Peter here alludes to his conversation with Christ after the resurrection, recorded in John 21:18-22, where Christ had foretold his death in the following manner: 'When thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' Hence St. Peter might very easily conclude that he would not survive the coming of Christ to judge Jerusalem. But Christ has declared that Jerusalem would be destroyed before one generation passed away. St. Peter, therefore, after a lapse of thirty years, that is, in the year 64, necessarily considered his death as an event not far distant. As to the design of this epistle, it appears that St. Peter wrote against certain persons who, though members of the Church, denied the doctrine of a general judgment and a dissolution of the world. They inferred that this event, because it had been long delayed, would never take place; to which objection St. Peter replies by saying, That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day: that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering, not willing that any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Farther, St. Peter argues, that as the earth has already undergone a great revolution at the deluge, another revolution equally great is not incredible; and that since the former event was at the time when it happened as unexpected as the latter will be, we ought to believe in God's declaration, that the world will one day be totally destroyed. This destruction, St. Peter says, will be effected, not by water, as at the deluge, but by fire. 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.' Now, a general conflagration will be more easily admitted by those who are unacquainted with the state of the earth, than a universal deluge; for though it may be difficult to comprehend whence a sufficient quantity of water could be brought to cover the whole earth, yet no one can deny that the bowels of

the earth abound with inflammable matter, and that fiery eruptions may spread themselves throughout the surface of the globe. (See the notes on 2 Peter 3:9-11.)

“It must be observed that St. Peter’s appeal to the deluge in the time of Noah implies that the adversaries whom he combats admitted that the Mosaic account of it was true, since it would have been useless to have argued from a fact which they denied. This must be kept in view, because it will assist us in determining who these adversaries were.

“St. Peter describes these false teachers, 2 Peter 2:10-12, as calumniators of the angels; which the apostle highly censures, even though the calumny should be directed against the fallen angels, since some respect is due to their former greatness and power. St. Peter says, ‘angels themselves, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord; but these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things which they understand not.’ Here we have a description of these false teachers, which points them out more distinctly than any of the preceding accounts, and shows they were Gnostics. For the ecclesiastical history furnishes many examples of improper adoration paid to the angels. I know of no sect which calumniated them, except that of the Gnostics. Now the Gnostics calumniated the angels by their doctrine in respect to the creation of the world. They raised certain angels to the rank of creators; but described the creation as very imperfect, and the authors of it as wicked and rebellious against the supreme Being.

“Having thus shown that St. Peter in his second epistle combats the opinion of a Gnostic sect, I will now venture to go a step farther, and attempt to determine the name which the orthodox gave to this particular sect in the first century. St. Peter describes them, 2 Peter 2:15, as following the way of Balaam, that is, as following the religious doctrine of Balaam. The doctrine of Balaam, as St. John says, Revelation 2:14, was to eat things sacrificed to idols, and to commit fornication. And since Nicolaus, in Greek, has the same meaning as Balaam in Hebrew, the followers of Balaam are called by St. John, Revelation 2:15, Nicolaitans. Now it is well known that the Nicolaitans were a sect of the Gnostics; and therefore it was probable that this was the sect against which St. Peter

wrote. To this opinion it has been objected, that if St. Peter had meant the Nicolaitans, he would have called them, not followers of Balaam, but by their proper name, Nicolaitans; first, because in general proper names are retained and not translated; and, secondly, because in the present instance, no one before Cocceius observed the analogy between the Hebrew word Balaam and the Greek word Nicolaus. But neither of these reasons are true. For to say nothing of the general custom which once prevailed among the literati of Germany, of translating their names into Greek or Latin; I could produce examples of such translations amongst the Jews, of which it will be sufficient to mention that which occurs in Acts 9:36. And the derivation of the Nicolaitans from Balaam must have been long known, at least in Asia; for in the Arabic version published by

Erpenius, we find an instance of it in Revelation 2:6, where **τα εργα των νικολαιτων** is rendered (Arabic) that is ‘works of the Shuaibites.’ Now the Arabic word (Arabic) (Shuaib) is equivalent to the Hebrew Balaam. Shuaib is mentioned in the Koran (Surat vii. 86; xxvi. 176, and in other places) as the prophet of the Midianites. Some suppose that by Shuaib is meant Jethro; but in my opinion no other person is meant but Balaam, who was sent for by the Midianites as well as by the Moabites. At least I cannot comprehend how the Nicolaitans, or any other heretics, could be considered as followers of Jethro. The Arabic verb (Arabic) shaaba, signifies he destroyed, and the noun (Arabic) shaabon, the people. It is not improbable, therefore, that the Arabs adopted the word (Arabic) shuaib, as corresponding to the Hebrew word **בלעם** Balaam, which is compounded of **בלע** bala, he swallowed up or destroyed, and **עם** am, the people. So **νικολαος**, Nicolas, is from **νικαω**, to overcome, and **λαος**, the people.” — See Michaelis’s Introduction.

I shall not attempt to dispute the propriety of these derivations and etymologies; but I must make one remark on the Shuaibites. In general, the Arabic writers say that Shuaib was Jethro, the father-in-law of Moses, and that God had sent him, according to the Koran, to preach pure morality to the Midianites; but I do not remember to have met with a sect of idolaters or heretics called Shuaibites. In both the places of the Koran mentioned above, Shuaib is spoken of with respect. But the conjecture that Shuaib and Balaam are the same is exceedingly probable; and this makes the etymology the more likely.

We may safely conclude from all the evidence before us, 1. That St. Peter, the apostle, was the author of this, as well as of the other, epistle. 2. That it was written to the same persons. 3. That they were in a state of persecution, and had also to contend with Gnostics or other heretics in the Church. 4. That it was written a short time after the first epistle, and not long before St. Peter's martyrdom; but the precise year cannot be ascertained.

**THE**

**SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE**

**OF**

**PETER.**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5568.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5562.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5552.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4064.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4288.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3820.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4419.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2408.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3162.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1000.
- Year of the era of Nahonassar, king of Babylon, 809.
- Year of the CCIXth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 807.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 811.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 813.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 372.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 108.
- Year of the Julian era, 105.

- Year of the Spanish era, 98.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 64.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 60.
- Year of Claudius Felix, governor of the Jews, 8.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 11.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 61.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 4; or the second after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 1; or two years before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 13.
- Dominical Letter, it being the Bissextile, or Leap Year, FE.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the second of April, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the sixth of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 3.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 19, 21, 21.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 12.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Caesar, properly the first Roman emperor, 7.
- Roman Consuls, the Emperor Nero Augustus, the fourth time, and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus.

## CHAPTER 1

The apostolical address, and the persons to whom the epistle was sent described by the state into which God had called, and in which he had placed, them, 1-4. What graces they should possess in order to be fruitful



in the knowledge of God, 5-8. The miserable state of those who either have not these graces, or have fallen from them, 9. Believers should give diligence to make their calling and election sure, 10, 11. The apostle's intimations of his speedy dissolution, and his wish to confirm and establish those Churches in the true faith, 12-15. The certainty of the Gospel, and the convincing evidence which the apostle had of its truth from being present at the transfiguration, by which the word of prophecy was made more sure, 16-19. How the prophecies came, and their nature, 20, 21.

## NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *Simon Peter*** Symeon, **συμεων**, is the reading of almost all the versions, and of all the most important MSS. And this is the more remarkable, as the surname of Peter occurs upwards of seventy times in the New Testament, and is invariably read **σιμων**, Simon, except here, and in Acts 15:14, where James gives him the name of Symeon. Of all the versions, only the Armenian and Vulgate have Simon. But the edit. princ., and several of my own MSS. of the Vulgate, write Symon; and Wiclif has Symont.

***A servant*** Employed in his Master's work.

***And an apostle*** Commissioned immediately by Jesus Christ himself to preach to the Gentiles, and to write these epistles for the edification of the Church. As the writer was an apostle, the epistle is therefore necessarily canonical. All the MSS. agree in the title apostle; and of the versions, only the Syriac omits it.

***Precious faith*** **ισοτιμον πιστιν**. Valuable faith; faith worth a great price, and faith which cost a great price. The word precious is used in the low religious phraseology for dear, comfortable, delightful, etc.; but how much is the dignity of the subject let down by expressions and meanings more proper for the nursery than for the noble science of salvation! It is necessary however to state, that the word precious literally signifies valuable, of great price, costly; and was not used in that low sense in which it is now employed when our translation was made. That faith must be of infinite value, the grace of which Christ purchased by his blood; and it must be of infinite value also when it is the very instrument by which the soul is saved unto eternal life.

***With us*** God having given to you — believing Gentiles, the same faith and salvation which he had given to us — believing Jews.

***Through the righteousness of God*** Through his method of bringing a lost world, both Jews and Gentiles, to salvation by Jesus Christ; through his gracious impartiality, providing for Gentiles as well as Jews. See the notes on Romans 3:21-26.

***Of God and our Savior Jesus Christ*** This is not a proper translation of the original **του θεου ημων και σωτηρος ιησου χριστου**, which is literally, Of our God and Savior Jesus Christ; and this reading, which is indicated in the margin, should have been received into the text; and it is an absolute proof that St. Peter calls Jesus Christ GOD, even in the properest sense of the word, with the article prefixed. It is no evidence against this doctrine that one MS. of little authority, and the Syriac and two Arabic versions have **κυριου**, Lord, instead of **θεου**, God, as all other MSS. and versions agree in the other reading, as well as the fathers. See in Griesbach.

**Verse 2. *Grace*** God's favor; peace — the effects of that favor in the communication of spiritual and temporal blessings.

***Through the knowledge of God*** **εν επιγνωσει**. By the acknowledging of God, and of Jesus our Lord. For those who acknowledge him in all their ways, he will direct their steps. Those who know Christ; and do not acknowledge him before men, can get no multiplication of grace and peace.

**Verse 3. *As his Divine power*** His power, which no power can resist, because it is Divine — that which properly belongs to the infinite Godhead.

***Hath given unto us*** **δεδορημενης**. Hath endowed us with the gifts; or, hath gifted us, as Dr. Macknight translates it, who observes that it refers to the gifts which the Holy Spirit communicated to the apostles, to enable them to bring men to life and godliness; which were, 1. A complete knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel. 2. Power to preach and defend their doctrines in suitable language, which their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist. 3. Wisdom to direct them how to behave in all cases, where and when to labor; and the matter suitable to all different cases, and every variety of persons. 4. Miraculous powers, so that on all proper and necessary occasions they could work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrines and mission.

By life and godliness we may understand, 1. a godly life; or, 2. eternal life as the end, and godliness the way to it; or, 3. what was essentially necessary for the present life, food, raiment, etc., and what was requisite for the life to come. As they were in a suffering state, and most probably many of them strangers in those places, one can scarcely say that they had

all things that pertained to life; and yet so had God worked in their behalf, that none of them perished, either through lack of food or raiment. And as to what was necessary for godliness, they had that from the Gospel ministry, which it appears was still continued among them, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit which were not withdrawn; and what was farther necessary in the way of personal caution, comfort, and instruction, was supplied by means of these two epistles.

***That hath called us to glory and virtue*** To virtue or courage as the means; and glory — the kingdom of heaven, as the end. This is the way in which these words are commonly understood, and this sense is plain enough, but the construction is harsh. Others have translated *δια δοξης και αρετης*, by his glorious benignity, a Hebraism for *δια της ενδοξου αρετης*; and read the whole verse thus: God by his own power hath bestowed on us every thing necessary for a happy life and godliness, having called us to the knowledge of himself, by his own infinite goodness. It is certain that the word *αρετη*, which we translate virtue or courage, is used, 1 Peter 2:9, to express the perfection of the Divine nature: That ye may show forth *τας αρετας*, the virtues or PERFECTIONS, of him who hath called you from darkness into his marvellous light.

But there is a various reading here which is of considerable importance, and which, from the authorities by which it is supported, appears to be genuine: *του καλεσαντος ημας ιδια δοξη και αρετη*, through the knowledge of him who hath called us by his own glory and power, or by his own glorious power. This is the reading of AC, several others; and, in effect, of the Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, AETHiopic, Vulgate, Cyril, Cassiodorus, etc.

**Verse 4. *Whereby are given unto us*** By his own glorious power he hath freely given unto us exceeding great and invaluable promises. The Jews were distinguished in a very particular manner by the promises which they received from God; the promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets. God promised to be their God; to protect, support, and save them; to give them what was emphatically called the promised land; and to cause the Messiah to spring from their race. St. Peter intimates to these Gentiles that God had also given unto them exceeding great promises; indeed all that he had given to the Jews, the mere settlement in the

promised land excepted; and this also he had given in all its spiritual meaning and force. And besides **τα μεγαιστα επαγγελματα**, these superlatively great promises, which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation, he had given them **τα τιμια επαγγελματα**; the valuable promises, those which came through the great price; enrolment with the Church of God, redemption in and through the blood of the cross, the continual indwelling influence of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of the body, and eternal rest at the right hand of God. It was of considerable consequence to the comfort of the Gentiles that these promises were made to them, and that salvation was not exclusively of the Jews.

***That by these ye might be partakers*** The object of all God's promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to the image of God, which he had lost. This, indeed, is the sum and substance of the religion of Christ. We have partaken of an earthly, sensual, and devilish nature; the design of God by Christ is to remove this, and to make us partakers of the Divine nature; and save us from all the corruption in principle and fact which is in the world; the source of which is lust, **επιθυμια**, irregular, unreasonable, in ordinate, and impure desire; desire to have, to do, and to be, what God has prohibited, and what would be ruinous and destructive to us were the desire to be granted.

Lust, or irregular, impure desire, is the source whence all the corruption which is in the world springs. Lust conceives and brings forth sin; sin is finished or brought into act, and then brings forth death. This destructive principle is to be rooted out; and love to God and man is to be implanted in its place. This is every Christian's privilege; God has promised to purify our hearts by faith; and that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life; that here we are to be delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, and have even "the thoughts of our hearts so cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

This blessing may be expected by those who are continually escaping, **αποφυγοντες**, flying from, the corruption that is in the world and in themselves. God purifies no heart in which sin is indulged. Get pardon through the blood of the Lamb; feel your need of being purified in heart; seek that with all your soul; plead the exceeding great and invaluable

promises that refer to this point; abhor your inward self; abstain from every appearance of evil; flee from self and sin to God; and the very God of peace will sanctify you through body, soul, and spirit, make you burning and shining lights here below, (a proof that he can save to the uttermost ail that come to him by Christ,) and afterwards, having guided you by his counsel through life, will receive you into his eternal glory.

**Verse 5. *And beside this*** Notwithstanding what God hath done for you, in order that ye may not receive the grace of God in vain;

***Giving all diligence*** Furnishing all earnestness and activity: the original is very emphatic.

***Add to your faith*** *επιχορηγησατε*· Lead up hand in hand; alluding, as most think, to the chorus in the Grecian dance, who danced with joined hands. See the note on this word, 2 Corinthians 9:10.

Your faith — That faith in Jesus by which ye have been led to embrace the whole Gospel, and by which ye have the evidence of things unseen.

***Virtue*** *αρετην*· Courage or fortitude, to enable you to profess the faith before men, in these times of persecution.

***Knowledge*** True wisdom, by which your faith will be increased, and your courage directed, and preserved from degenerating into rashness.

**Verse 6. *Temperance*** A proper and limited use of all earthly enjoyments, keeping every sense under proper restraints, and never permitting the animal part to subjugate the rational.

***Patience*** Bearing all trials and difficulties with an even mind, enduring in all, and persevering through all.

***Godliness*** Piety towards God; a deep, reverential, religious fear; not only worshipping God with every becoming outward act, but adoring, loving, and magnifying him in the heart: a disposition indispensably necessary to salvation, but exceedingly rare among professors.

**Verse 7. *Brotherly kindness*** *φιλαδελφικον*· Love of the brotherhood — the strongest attachment to Christ's flock; feeling each as a member of your own body.

**Charity** *αγαπην*· Love to the whole human race, even to your persecutors: love to God and the brethren they had; love to all mankind they must also have. True religion is neither selfish nor insulated; where the love of God is, bigotry cannot exist. Narrow, selfish people, and people of a party, who scarcely have any hope of the salvation of those who do not believe as they believe, and who do not follow with them, have scarcely any religion, though in their own apprehension none is so truly orthodox or religious as themselves.

After *αγαπην*, love, one MS. adds these words, *εν δε τη αγαπη την παρακλησιν*, and to this love consolation; but this is an idle and useless addition.

**Verse 8.** *For if these things be in you and abound* If ye possess all these graces, and they increase and abound in your souls, they will make — show, you to be neither *αργους*, idle, nor *ακαρπους*, unfruitful, in the acknowledgment of our Lord Jesus Christ. The common translation is here very unhappy: barren and unfruitful certainly convey the same ideas; but idle or inactive, which is the proper sense of *αργους*, takes away this tautology, and restores the sense. The graces already mentioned by the apostle are in themselves active principles; he who was possessed of them, and had them abounding in him, could not be inactive; and he who is not inactive in the way of life must be fruitful. I may add, that he who is thus active, and consequently fruitful, will ever be ready at all hazard to acknowledge his Lord and Savior, by whom he has been brought into this state of salvation.

**Verse 9.** *But he that lacketh these things* He, whether Jew or Gentile, who professes to have FAITH in God, and has not added to that FAITH fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness, and universal love; is blind — his understanding is darkened, and cannot see afar off, *μωπαζων*, shutting his eyes against the light, winking, not able to look truth in the face, nor to behold that God whom he once knew was reconciled to him: and thus it appears he is wilfully blind, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins — has at last, through his nonimprovement of the grace which he received from God, his faith ceasing to work by love, lost the evidence of things not seen; for, having grieved the Holy Spirit by not showing forth the virtues of him who called him

into his marvellous light, he has lost the testimony of his sonship; and then, darkness and hardness having taken place of light and filial confidence, he first calls all his former experience into doubt, and questions whether he has not put enthusiasm in the place of religion. By these means his darkness and hardness increase, his memory becomes indistinct and confused, till at length he forgets the work of God on his soul, next denies it, and at last asserts that the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins, is impossible, and that no man can be saved from sin in this life.

Indeed, some go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them; to renounce Jesus Christ as having made atonement for them; and finish their career of apostasy by utterly denying his Godhead. Many cases of this kind have I known; and they are all the consequence of believers not continuing to be workers together with God, after they had experienced his pardoning love.

Reader, see that the light that is in thee become not darkness; for if it do, how great a darkness!

**Verse 10. *Wherefore*** Seeing the danger of apostasy, and the fearful end of them who obey not the Gospel, and thus receive the grace of God in vain; give all diligence, **σπουδασατε**, hasten, be deeply careful, labor with the most intense purpose of soul.

***To make your calling*** From deep Gentile darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

***And election*** Your being chosen, in consequence of obeying the heavenly calling, to be the people and Church of God. Instead of **κλησιν**, calling, the Codex Alexandrinus has **παρακλησιν**, consolation.

***Sure βεβαιαν*** Firm, solid. For your calling to believe the Gospel, and your election to be members of the Church of Christ, will be ultimately unprofitable to you, unless you hold fast what you have received by adding to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, etc.

***For if ye do these things*** If ye be careful and diligent to work out your own salvation, through the grace which ye have already received from God; ye shall never fall, **ου μη πταισητε ποτε**, ye shall at no time stumble or fall; as the Jews have done, and lost their election, Romans 11:11, where the same word is used, and as apostates do, and lose their peace and salvation. We find, therefore, that they who do not these things shall fall;



and thus we see that there is nothing absolute and unconditional in their election. There is an addition here in some MSS. and versions which should not pass unnoticed: the Codex Alexandrinus, nine others, with the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, later Syriac with an asterisk, the Vulgate, and Bede, have *ἵνα δια τῶν καλῶν (ὑμῶν) ἔργων*, THAT BY (your) GOOD WORKS ye may make your calling and election firm. This clause is found in the edition of Colinaeus, Paris, 1534, and has been probably omitted by more recent editors on the supposition that the edition does not make a very orthodox sense. But on this ground there need be no alarm, for it does not state that the good works thus required merit either the calling and election, or the eternal glory, of God. He who does not by good works confirm his calling and election, will soon have neither; and although no good works ever did purchase or ever can purchase the kingdom of God, yet no soul can ever scripturally expect to see God who has them not. I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: go, ye cursed. I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; etc., etc.; come, ye blessed.

**Verse 11.** *For so an entrance shall be ministered* If ye give diligence; and do not fall, an abundant, free, honorable, and triumphant entrance shall be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom. There seems to be here an allusion to the triumphs granted by the Romans to their generals who had distinguished themselves by putting an end to a war, or doing some signal military service to the state. (See the whole account of this military pageant in the note on 2 Corinthians 2:14.) "Ye shall have a triumph, in consequence of having conquered your foes, and led captivity captive."

Instead of everlasting kingdom, *αιωνιον βασιλειαν*, two MSS. have *επουρανιον*, heavenly kingdom; and several MSS. omit the word *και σωτηρος*, and Savior.

**Verse 12.** *Wherefore I will not be negligent* He had already written one epistle, this is the second; and probably he meditated more should he be spared. He plainly saw that there was no way of entering into eternal life but that which he described from the 5th to the 10th verse; {2 Peter 1:5-10} and although they knew and were established in the present truth, yet he saw it necessary to bring these things frequently to their recollection.

**Verse 13. *As long as I am in this tabernacle*** By tabernacle we are to understand his body; and hence several of the versions have **σωματι**, body, instead of **σκηνωματι**, tabernacle. Peter's mode of speaking is very remarkable: as long as I AM in this tabernacle, so then the body was not Peter, but Peter dwelt in that body. Is not this a proof that St. Peter believed his soul to be very distinct from his body? As a man's house is the place where he dwells, so the body is the house where the soul dwells.

**Verse 14. *Knowing that shortly I must put off*** St. Peter plainly refers to the conversation between our Lord and himself, related John 21:18, 19. And it is likely that he had now a particular intimation that he was shortly to seal the truth with his blood. But as our Lord told him that his death would take place when he should be old, being aged now he might on this ground fairly suppose that his departure was at hand.

**Verse 15. *Moreover, I will endeavor*** And is not this endeavor seen in these two epistles? By leaving these among them, even after his decease, they had these things always in remembrance.

***After my decease*** **μετα την εμην εξοδον**. After my going out, i.e. of his tabernacle. The real Peter was not open to the eye, nor palpable to the touch; he was concealed in that tabernacle vulgarly supposed to be Peter. There is a thought very similar to this in the last conversation of Socrates with his friends. As this great man was about to drink the poison to which he was condemned by the Athenian judges, his friend CRITO said, "But how would you be buried?—SOCRATES: Just as you please, if you can but catch me, and I do not elude your pursuit. Then, gently smiling, he said: I cannot persuade Crito, **ως εγω ειμι ουτος ο σωκρατης ο νυνι διαλεγομενος**, that I AM that Socrates who now converses with you; but he thinks that I am he, **ον οψεται ολιγον υστερον νεκρον, και ερωτα πως εδι με θαπτειν**, whom he shall shortly see dead; and he asks how I would be buried? I have asserted that, after I have drunk the poison, I should no longer remain with you, but shall depart to certain felicities of the blessed." PLATONIS Phaedo, Oper., vol. i, edit. Bipont., p 260.

**Verse 16. *Cunningly devised fables*** **σεσοφισμενοις μυθοις**. I think, with Macknight and others, from the apostle's using **εποπται**, eye witnesses, or rather beholders, in the end of the verse, it is probable that he means those cunningly devised fables among the heathens, concerning the

appearance of their gods on earth in human form. And to gain the greater credit to these fables, the priests and statesmen instituted what they called the mysteries of the gods, in which the fabulous appearance of the gods was represented in mystic shows. But one particular show none but the fully initiated were permitted to behold; hence they were entitled **εποπται**, beholders. This show was probably some resplendent image of the god, imitating life, which, by its glory, dazzled the eyes of the beholders, while their ears were ravished by hymns sung in its praise; to this it was natural enough for St. Peter to allude, when speaking about the transfiguration of Christ. Here the indescribably resplendent majesty of the great God was manifested, as far as it could be, in conjunction with that human body in which the fullness of the Divinity dwelt. And we, says the apostle, were **εποπται**, beholders, **της εκεινου μεγαλειοτητος**, of his own majesty. Here was no trick, no feigned show; we saw him in his glory whom thousands saw before and afterwards; and we have made known to you the power and coming, **παρουσιαν**, the appearance and presence, of our Lord Jesus; and we call you to feel the exceeding greatness of this power in your conversion, and the glory of this appearance in his revelation by the power of his Spirit to your souls. These things we have witnessed, and these things ye have experienced: and therefore we can confidently say that neither you nor we have followed cunningly devised fables, but that blessed Gospel which is the power of God to the salvation of every one that believes.

**Verse 17. *For he received honor and glory*** In his transfiguration our Lord received from the Father honor in the voice or declaration which said, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted. And he received glory, when, penetrated with, and involved in, that excellent glory, the fashion of his countenance was altered, for his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white and glistening, exceeding white like snow; which most glorious and preternatural appearance was a confirmation of the supernatural voice, as the voice was of this preternatural appearance: and thus his Messiahship was attested in the most complete and convincing manner.

**Verse 18. *And this voice-we heard*** That is, himself, James, and John heard it, and saw this glory; for these only were the **εποπται**, beholders, on the holy mount. It is worthy of remark that our blessed Lord, who

came to give a new law to mankind, appeared on this holy mount with splendor and great glory, as God did when he came on the holy mount, Sinai, to give the old law to Moses. And when the voice came from the excellent glory, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted; hear him: the authority of the old law was taken away. Neither Moses nor Elijah, the law nor the prophets, must tabernacle among men, as teaching the whole way of salvation, and affording the means of eternal life; these things they had pointed out, but these things they did not contain; yet the fulfillment of their types and predictions rendered their declarations more firm and incontestable. See below.

**Verse 19.** *We have also a more sure word of prophecy* εχομεν βεβαιοτερον τον προφητικον λογον. We have the prophetic doctrine more firm or more confirmed; for in this sense the word βεβαιω is used in several places in the New Testament. See 1 Corinthians 1:6: Even as the testimony of Christ εβεβαιωθη, was CONFIRMED, among you. 2 Corinthians 1:21: Now he which stablisheth us, ο δε βεβαιων ημας, who CONFIRMETH US. Colossians 2:7: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, βεβαιουμενοι, CONFIRMED in the faith. Hebrews 2:3: How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation ητις εβεβαιωτη, which was CONFIRMED to us. Hebrews 6:16: And an oath, εις βεβαιωσιν, for CONFIRMATION. This is the literal sense of the passage in question; and this sense removes that ambiguity from the text which has given rise to so many different interpretations. Taken according to the common translation, it seems to say that prophecy is a surer evidence of Divine revelation than miracles; and so it has been understood. The meaning of the apostle appears to be this: The law and the prophets have spoken concerning Jesus Christ, and Isaiah has particularly pointed him out in these words: Behold my servant whom I uphold, my CHOSEN IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH; I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS out of the prison house, Isaiah 42:1, 7. Now both at his baptism, Matthew 3:17, and at his transfiguration, Jesus Christ was declared to be this chosen person, God's only Son, the beloved One in WHOM HE DELIGHTED. The voice, therefore, from heaven, and the miraculous transfiguration of his person, have confirmed the prophetic doctrine concerning him. And to this

doctrine, thus confirmed, ye do well to take heed; for it is that light that shines in the dark place—in the Gentile world, as well as among the Jews; giving light to them that sit in darkness, and bringing the prisoners out of the prison house: and this ye must continue to do till the day of his second, last, and most glorious appearing to judge the world comes; and the day star, **φωσφορος**, this light-bringer, arise in your hearts—manifest himself to your eternal consolation. Or perhaps the latter clause of the verse might be thus understood: The prophecies concerning Jesus, which have been so signally confirmed to us on the holy mount, have always been as a light shining in a dark place, from the time of their delivery to the time in which the bright day of Gospel light and salvation dawned forth, and the Son of righteousness has arisen in our souls, with healing in his rays. And to this all who waited for Christ's appearing have taken heed. The word **φωσφορος**, phosphorus, generally signified the planet Venus, when she is the morning star; and thus she is called in most European nations.

**Verse 20. *Knowing this first*** Considering this as a first principle, that no prophecy of the Scripture, whether that referred to above, or any other, is of any private interpretation—proceeds from the prophet's own knowledge or invention, or was the offspring of calculation or conjecture. The word **επιλυσις** signifies also impetus, impulse; and probably this is the best sense here; not by the mere private impulse of his own mind.

**Verse 21. *For the prophecy came not in old time*** That is, in any former time, by the will of man—by a man's own searching, conjecture, or calculation; but holy men of God—persons separated from the world, and devoted to God's service, spake, moved by the Holy Ghost. So far were they from inventing these prophetic declarations concerning Christ, or any future event, that they were **φερομενοι**, carried away, out of themselves and out of the whole region, as it were, of human knowledge and conjecture, by the Holy Ghost, who, without their knowing any thing of the matter, dictated to them what to speak, and what to write; and so far above their knowledge were the words of the prophecy, that they did not even know the intent of those words, but searched what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow. See 1 Peter 1:11, 12, and the notes there.

1. As the writer of this epistle asserts that he was on the holy mount with Christ when he was transfigured, he must be either Peter, James, or John, for there was no other person present on that occasion except Moses and Elijah, in their glorious bodies. The epistle was never attributed to James nor John; but the uninterrupted current, where its Divine inspiration was granted, gave it to Peter alone. See the preface.

2. It is not unfrequent for the writers of the New Testament to draw a comparison between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations; and the comparison generally shows that, glorious as the former was, it had no glory in comparison of the glory that excelleth. St. Peter seems to touch here on the same point; the Mosaic dispensation, with all the light of prophecy by which it was illustrated, was only as a lamp shining in a dark place. There is a propriety and delicacy in this image that are not generally noticed: a lamp in the dark gives but a very small portion of light, and only to those who are very near to it; yet it always gives light enough to make itself visible, even at a great distance; though it enlightens not the space between it and the beholder, it is still literally the lamp shining in a dark place. Such was the Mosaic dispensation; it gave a little light to the Jews, but shone not to the Gentile world, any farther than to make itself visible. This is compared with the Gospel under the emblem of daybreak, and the rising of the sun. When the sun is even eighteen degrees below the horizon daybreak commences, as the rays of light begin then to diffuse themselves in our atmosphere, by which they are reflected upon the earth. By this means a whole hemisphere is enlightened, though but in a partial degree; yet this increasing every moment, as the sun approaches the horizon, prepares for the full manifestation of his resplendent orb: so the ministry of John Baptist, and the initiatory ministry of Christ himself, prepared the primitive believers for his full manifestation on the day of pentecost and afterwards. Here the sun rose in his strength, bringing light, heat, and life to all the inhabitants of the earth. So far, then, as a lantern carried in a dark night differs from and is inferior to the beneficial effects of daybreak, and the full light and heat of a meridian sun; so far was the Mosaic dispensation, in its beneficial effects, inferior to the Christian dispensation.

3. Perhaps there is scarcely any point of view in which we can consider prophecy which is so satisfactory and conclusive as that which is here stated; that is, far from inventing the subject of their own predictions, the

ancient prophets did not even know the meaning of what themselves wrote. They were carried beyond themselves by the influence of the Divine Spirit, and after ages were alone to discover the object of the prophecy; and the fulfillment was to be the absolute proof that the prediction was of God, and that it was of no private invention — no discovery made by human sagacity and wisdom, but by the especial revelation of the all-wise God. This is sufficiently evident in all the prophecies which have been already fulfilled, and will be equally so in those yet to be fulfilled; the events will point out the prophecy, and the prophecy will be seen to be fulfilled in that event.

## CHAPTER 2

*False teachers foretold, who shall bring in destructive doctrines and shall pervert many, but at last be destroyed by the judgments of God, 1-3. Instances of God's judgments in the rebellious angels, 4. In the antediluvians, 5. In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, 6-8. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly, as well as to punish the ungodly, 9. The character of those seducing teachers and their disciples; they are unclean, presumptuous, speak evil of dignities, adulterous, covetous, and cursed, 10-14. Have forsaken the right way, copy the conduct of Balaam, speak great swelling words, and pervert those who had escaped from error, 15-19. The miserable state of those who, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, have turned back like the dog to his vomit, and the washed swine to her wallowing in the mire, 20-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

**Verse 1.** *But there were false prophets* There were not only holy men of God among the Jews, who prophesied by Divine inspiration, but there were also false prophets, whose prophecies were from their own imagination, and perverted many.

*As there shall be false teachers among you* At a very early period of the Christian Church many heresies sprung up; but the chief were those of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Nicolaitans, Menandrians, and Gnostics, of whom many strange things have been spoken by the primitive fathers, and of whose opinions it is difficult to form any satisfactory view. They were, no doubt, bad enough, and their opponents in general have doubtless made them worse. By what name those were called of whom the apostle here speaks, we cannot tell. They were probably some sort of apostate Jews, or those called the Nicolaitans. See the preface.

*Damnable heresies* **αἱρεσεις ἀπωλειας** Heresies of destruction; such as, if followed, would lead a man to perdition. And these **παρεισάξουσιν**, they will bring in privately — cunningly, without



making much noise, and as covertly as possible. It would be better to translate destructive heresies than damnable.

***Denying the Lord that bought them*** It is not certain whether God the Father be intended here, or our Lord Jesus Christ; for God is said to have purchased the Israelites, Exodus 15:16, and to be the Father that had bought them, Deuteronomy 32:6, and the words may refer to these or such like passages; or they may point out Jesus Christ, who had bought them with his blood; and the heresies, or dangerous opinions, may mean such as opposed the Divinity of our Lord, or his meritorious and sacrificial death, or such opinions as bring upon those who hold them swift destruction. It seems, however, more natural to understand the Lord that bought them as applying to Christ, than otherwise; and if so, this is another proof, among many, 1. That none can be saved but by Jesus Christ. Z. That through their own wickedness some may perish for whom Christ died.

**Verse 2. *Many shall follow*** WILL follow, because determined to gratify their sinful propensities.

***Pernicious ways*** ταις ἀπωλειαις· Their destructions; i.e. the heresies of destruction, or destructive opinions, mentioned above. But instead of ἀπωλειαις, destructions, ἀσελγειαις, lasciviousnesses or uncleannesses, is the reading of ABC, and upwards of sixty others, most of which are among the most ancient, correct, and authentic. This is the reading also of both the Syriac, all the Arabic, the Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Chrysostom, Theophylact, Oecumenius, and Jerome. A very few, and those of little repute, have the word in the text.

The word lasciviousnesses is undoubtedly the true reading, and this points out what the nature of the heresies was: it was a sort of Antinomianism; they pampered and indulged the lusts of the flesh; and, if the Nicolaitans are meant, it is very applicable to them, for they taught the community of wives, etc. Griesbach has received this reading into the text.

***By reason of whom*** These were persons who professed Christianity; and because they were called Christians, and followed such abominable practices, the way of truth — the Christian religion, βλασφημηθησεται, was blasphemed. Had they called themselves by any name but that of Christ, his religion would not have suffered.

**Verse 3. *And through covetousness*** That they might get money to spend upon their lusts, with feigned words, *πλαστοις λογοις*, with counterfeit tales, false narrations, of pretended facts, lying miracles, fabulous legends. “In this single sentence,” says Dr. Macknight, “there is a clear prediction of the iniquitous practices of those great merchants of souls, the Romish clergy, who have rated all crimes, even the most atrocious, at a fixed price; so that if their doctrine be true, whoever pays the price may commit the crime without hazarding his salvation.” How the popish Church has made merchandise of souls, needs no particular explanation here. It was this abominable doctrine that showed to some, then in that Church, the absolute necessity of a reformation.

***Whose judgment now of a long time*** From the beginning God has condemned sin, and inflicted suitable punishments on transgressors; and has promised in his word, from the earliest ages, to pour out his indignation on the wicked. The punishment, therefore, so long ago predicted, shall fall on these impure and incorrigible sinners; and the condemnation which is denounced against them slumbers not — it is alert, it is on its way, it is hurrying on, and must soon overtake them.

**Verse 4. *For if God spared not the angels*** The angels were originally placed in a state of probation; some having fallen and some having stood proves this. How long that probation was to last to them, and what was the particular test of their fidelity, we know not; nor indeed do we know what was their sin; nor when nor how they fell. St. Jude says they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation; which seems to indicate that they got discontented with their lot, and aspired to higher honors, or perhaps to celestial domination. The tradition of their fall is in all countries and in all religions, but the accounts given are various and contradictory; and no wonder, for we have no direct revelation on the subject. They kept not their first estate, and they sinned, is the sum of what we know on the subject; and here curiosity and conjecture are useless.

***But cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness***  
*αλλα σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας παρεδωκεν εις κρισιν*  
*τετηρημενους*· But with chains of darkness confining them in Tartarus, delivered them over to be kept to judgment; or, sinking them into Tartarus, delivered them over into custody for punishment, to chains of darkness.

Chains of darkness is a highly poetic expression. Darkness binds them on all hands; and so dense and strong is this darkness that it cannot be broken through; they cannot deliver themselves, nor be delivered by others.

As the word Tartarus is found nowhere else in the New Testament, nor does it appear in the Septuagint, we must have recourse to the Greek writers for its meaning. Mr. Parkhurst, under the word **ταρταρω**, has made some good collections from those writers, which I here subjoin.

“The Scholiast on AESCHYLUS, Eumen., says: Pindar relates that Apollo overcame the Python by force; wherefore the earth endeavored **ταρταρωσαι**, to cast him into Tartarus. Tzetzes uses the same word, **ταρταρω**, for casting or sending into Tartarus; and the compound verb **καταταρταρουν**, is found in Apollodorus; in Didymus’ Scholia on Homer; in Phurnutus, Deuteronomy Nat, Deor., p. 11, edit. Gale; and in the book **περι ποταμων**, which is extant among the works of Plutarch. And those whom Apollodorus styles **καταταρταρωθεντας**, he in the same breath calls **ριφθεντας εις ταρταρον**, cast into Tartarus. Thus the learned Windet, in Pole’s Synopsis. We may then, I think, safely assert that **ταρταρωσας**, in St. Peter, means not, as Mede (Works, fol., p. 23) interprets it, to adjudge to, but to cast into, Tartarus; **ριπτειν εις ταρταρον**, as in Homer, cited below. And in order to know what was the precise intention of the apostle by this expression, we must inquire what is the accurate import of the term **ταρταρος**. Now, it appears from a passage of Lucian, that by **ταρταρος** was meant, in a physical sense, the bounds or verge of this material system; for, addressing himself to **ερως**, Cupid or Love, he says: **συ γαρ εξ αφανους και κεχυμενης αμορφιας το πανεμορφωσας, κ. τ. λ.** ‘Thou formedst the universe from its confused and chaotic state; and, after separating and dispersing the circumfused chaos, in which, as in one common sepulchre, the whole world lay buried, thou drovest it to the confines or recesses of outer Tartarus —

*‘Where iron gates and bars of solid brass  
Keep it in durance irrefragible,  
And its return prohibit.’*

“The ancient Greeks appear to have received, by tradition, an account of the punishment of the ‘fallen angels,’ and of bad men after death; and their poets did, in conformity I presume with that account, make Tartarus the

place where the giants who rebelled against Jupiter, and the souls of the wicked, were confined. ‘Here,’ saith Hesiod, Theogon., lin. 720, 1, ‘the rebellious Titans were bound in penal chains.’

τοσσον ενερθ’ υπο γης, οσον ουρανος εστ’  
απο γαιης. ισον γαρ τ’ απο γης ες ταρταρον ηεροεντα.

*‘As far beneath the earth as earth from heaven;  
For such the distance thence to Tartarus.’*

Which description will very well agree with the proper sense of Tartarus, if we take the earth for the center of the material system, and reckon from our zenith, or the extremity of the heavens that is over our heads. But as the Greeks imagined the earth to be of a boundless depth, so it must not be dissembled that their poets speak of Tartarus as a vast pit or gulf in the bowels of it. Thus Hesiod in the same poem, lin. 119, calls it-

ταρταρα τ’ ηεροεντα μυχω χθονος ευρυοδειης·

*‘Black Tartarus, within earth’s spacious womb.’*

“And Homer, Iliad viii., lin. 13, etc., introduces Jupiter threatening any of the gods who should presume to assist either the Greeks or the Trojans, that he should either come back wounded to heaven, or be sent to Tartarus.

η μιν ελων ριψω ες ταρταρον ηερεντα,  
τηλε μαλ’, ηχι βαθιστον υπο χθονος εστι βεπεθρον,  
ενθα σιδηρειαι τε πυλαι, και χαλκεος ουδος,  
τοσσον ενερθ’ αιδεω, οσον ονρανος εστ’ απο γαιης.

*‘Or far, O far, from steep Olympus thrown,  
Low in the deep Tartarean gulf shall groan.  
That gulf which iron gates and brazen ground  
Within the earth inexorably bound;  
As deep beneath th’ infernal center hurl’d,  
As from that center to the ethereal world.’*

POPE.

‘Where, according to Homer’s description, Iliad viii., lin. 480, 1,-

οὐτ' αὐγῆς ὑπεριονος ἡελιοιο  
 τερποντ', οὐτ' ἀνεμοισι· βαθὺς δὲ τε τάρταρος ἀμοις.

*'No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there,  
 No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air,  
 But murky Tartarus extends around.'*

*POPE.*

“Or, in the language of the old Latin poet, (cited by Cicero, Tuscul., lib. i. cap. 15.)

*Ubi rigida constat crassa caligo inferum.*

“On the whole, then, **τάρταρον**, in St. Peter, is the same as **ριπτειν ες τάρταρον**, to throw into Tartarus, in Homer, only rectifying the poet’s mistake of Tartarus being in the bowels of the earth, and recurring to the original sense of that word above explained, which when applied to spirits must be interpreted spiritually; and thus **τάρταρωσας** will import that God cast the apostate angels out of his presence into that **ζοφος του σκοτους**

σπηλαιω κρυπτομενος ελαθε, sometimes he the third (i.e. he with two others) lay hid in a cave. ANDOCIDES, Orat. iv. p. 295: **αιρεθεις επι τουτω δεκατος αυτος**, he himself the tenth (i.e. he and nine others) were chosen to this. See a number of other examples in Kypke.

**World of the ungodly** A whole race without God — without any pure worship or rational religion.

**Verse 6. *The cities of Sodom and Gomorrha*** See the notes on Gen. 19, for an account of the sin and punishment of these cities.

**Making them an ensample** These three words, **υποδειγμα**, **παραδειγμα**, and **δειγμα**, are used to express the same idea; though the former may signify an example to be shunned, the second an example to be followed, and the third a simple exhibition. But these differences are not always observed.

**Verse 7. *Vexed with the filthy conversation*** **καταπονουμενον υπο της των αθεσμων εν ασελγεια αναστροφης**: Being exceedingly pained with the unclean conduct of those lawless persons. What this was, see in the history, Gen. 19., and the notes there.

**Verse 8. *That righteous man dwelling among them*** Lot, after his departure from Abraham, A. M. 2086, lived at Sodom till A. M. 2107, a space of about twenty years; and, as he had a righteous soul, he must have been tormented with the abominations of that people from day to day.

The word **εβασανιζεν**, tormented, is not less emphatic than the word **καταπονουμενον**, grievously pained, in the preceding verse, and shows what this man must have felt in dwelling so long among a people so abandoned.

**Verse 9. *The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly*** The preservation and deliverance of Lot gave the apostle occasion to remark, that God knew as well to save as to destroy; and that his goodness led him as forcibly to save righteous Lot, as his justice did to destroy the rebellious in the instances already adduced. And the design of the apostle in producing these examples is to show to the people to whom he was writing that, although God would destroy those false teachers, yet he would powerfully save his faithful servants from their contagion and from their destruction. We should

carefully observe, 1. That the godly man is not to be preserved from temptation. 2. That he will be preserved in temptation. 3. That he will be delivered out of it.

**Verse 10. *But chiefly them that walk*** That is, God will in the most signal manner punish them that walk after the flesh- addict themselves to sodomitical practices, and the lust of pollution; probably alluding to those most abominable practices where men abuse themselves and abuse one another.

***Despise government.*** They brave the power and authority of the civil magistrate, practising their abominations so as to keep out of the reach of the letter of the law; and they speak evil of dignities — they blaspheme civil government, they abhor the restraints laid upon men by the laws, and would wish all governments destroyed that they might live as they list.

***Presumptuous are they*** τολμηται· They are bold and daring, headstrong, regardless of fear.

***Self-willed*** αυθαδεις· Self-sufficient; presuming on themselves; following their own opinions, which no authority can induce them to relinquish.

***Are not afraid to speak evil of dignities*** . They are lawless and disobedient, spurn all human authority, and speak contemptuously of all legal and civil jurisdiction. Those in general despise governments, and speak evil of dignities, who wish to be under no control, that they may act as freebooters in the community.

**Verse 11. *Whereas angels, etc.*** This is a difficult verse, but the meaning seems to be this: The holy angels, who are represented as bringing an account of the actions of the fallen angels before the Lord in judgment, simply state the facts without exaggeration, and without permitting any thing of a bitter, reviling, or railing spirit, to enter into their accusations. See Zechariah 3:1, and Jude 9; to the former of which St. Peter evidently alludes. But these persons, not only speak of the actions of men which they conceive to be wrong, but do it with untrue colourings, and the greatest malevolence. Michael, the archangel, treated a damned spirit with courtesy; he only said, The Lord rebuke thee, Satan! but these treat the rulers of God's appointment with disrespect and calumny.

**Before the Lord.** παρα κυριω is wanting in a number of MSS. and most of the versions.

**Verse 12. *But these, as natural brute beasts*** ὡς αλογα ζωα φυσικα. As those natural animals void of reason, following only the gross instinct of nature, being governed neither by reason nor religion.

***Made to be taken and destroyed*** Intended to be taken with nets and gins, and then destroyed, because of their fierce and destructive nature; so these false teachers and insurgents must be treated; first incarcerated, and then brought to judgment, that they may have the reward of their doings. And thus, by blaspheming what they do not understand, they at last perish in their own corruption; i.e. their corrupt doctrines and vicious practices.

**Verse 13. *They that count it pleasure to riot in the day time.*** Most sinners, in order to practice their abominable pleasures, seek the secrecy of the night; but these, bidding defiance to all decorum, decency, and shame, take the open day, and thus proclaim their impurities to the sun.

***Spots-and blemishes*** They are a disgrace to the Christian name.

***Sporting themselves*** Forming opinions which give license to sin, and then acting on those opinions; and thus rioting in their own deceits.

***With their own deceivings*** εν ταις απαταις. But instead of this, AB, and almost all the versions and several of the fathers, have εν ταις αγαπαις, in your love feasts, which is probably the true reading.

***While they feast with you*** It appears they held a kind of communion with the Church, and attended sacred festivals, which they desecrated with their own unhallowed opinions and conduct.

**Verse 14. *Having eyes full of adultery*** μοιχαλιδος. Of an adulteress; being ever bent on the gratification of their sensual desires, so that they are represented as having an adulteress constantly before their eyes, and that their eyes can take in no other object but her. But instead of μοιχαλιδος of an adulteress, the Codex Alexandrinus, three others, with the Coptic, Vulgate, and one copy of the Itala, together with several of the fathers, have μοιχαλιας, of adultery.



**Cannot cease from sin** Which cease not from sin; they might cease from sin, but they do not; they love and practice it. Instead of *ακαταπαυστους*, which cannot cease, several MSS. and versions have *ακαταπαυστου*, and this requires the place to be read, Having eyes full of adultery and incessant sin. The images of sinful acts were continually floating before their disordered and impure fancy. This figure of speech is very common in the Greek writers; and Kypke gives many instances of it, which indeed carry the image too far to be here translated.

**Beguiling unstable souls** The metaphor is taken from adulterers seducing unwary, inexperienced, and light, trifling women; so do those false teachers seduce those who are not established in righteousness.

**Exercised with covetous practices** The metaphor is taken from the agonistae in the Grecian games, who exercised themselves in those feats, such as wrestling, boxing, running, etc., in which they proposed to contend in the public games. These persons had their hearts schooled in nefarious practices; they had exercised themselves till they were perfectly expert in all the arts of seduction, overreaching, and every kind of fraud.

**Cursed children** Such not only live under God's curse here, but they are heirs to it hereafter.

**Verse 15. Which have forsaken the right way** As Balaam did, who, although God showed him the right way, took one contrary to it, preferring the reward offered him by Balak to the approbation and blessing of God.

**The way of Balaam** Is the counsel of Balaam. He counselled the Moabites to give their most beautiful young women to the Israelitish youth, that they might be enticed by them to commit idolatry. See the notes on Numbers 22:5, etc., and Numbers 23:1, etc.

**The son of Bosor** Instead of *βοσορ*, BOSOR two ancient MSS. and some of the versions have *βεωρ*, Beor, to accommodate the word to the Hebrew text and the Septuagint. The difference in this name seems to have arisen from mistaking one letter for another in the Hebrew name, *בעור* Beor, for *בצור* Betsor or Bosor; tsaddi *צ* and ain *ע*, which are very like each other, being interchanged.

**Verse 16. *The dumb ass, speaking with man's voice*** See the note on Numbers 22:28.

***The madness of the prophet.*** Is not this a reference to the speech of the ass, as represented in the Targums of Jonathan ben Uzziel and Jerusalem? “Wo to thee, Balaam, thou sinner, thou madman: there is no wisdom found in thee.” These words contain nearly the same expressions as those in St. Peter.

**Verse 17. *These are wells without water*** Persons who, by their profession, should furnish the water of life to souls athirst for salvation; but they have not this water; they are teachers without ability to instruct; they are sowers, and have no seed in their basket. Nothing is more cheering in the deserts of the east than to meet with a well of water; and nothing more distressing, when parched with thirst, than to meet with a well that contains no water.

***Clouds that are carried with a tempest*** In a time of great drought, to see clouds beginning to cover the face of the heavens raises the expectation of rain; but to see these carried off by a sudden tempest is a dreary disappointment. These false teachers were equally as unprofitable as the empty well, or the light, dissipated cloud.

***To whom the mist of darkness is reserved*** That is, an eternal separation from the presence of God, and the glory of his power. They shall be thrust into outer darkness, Matthew 8:12; into the utmost degrees of misery and despair. False and corrupt teachers will be sent into the lowest hell; and be “the most downcast, underfoot vassals of perdition.”

It is scarcely necessary to notice a various reading here, which, though very different in sound, is nearly the same in sense. Instead of **νεφελαι**, clouds, which is the common reading, **και ομιχλαι**, and mists, or perhaps more properly thick darkness, from **ομου**, together, and **αχλυσ**, darkness, is the reading in ABC, sixteen others, Erpen's Arabic, later Syriac, Coptic, Aethiopic, and Vulgate, and several of the fathers. This reading Griesbach has admitted into the text.

**Verse 18. *They speak great swelling words of vanity*** The word **υπερογκα** signifies things of great magnitude, grand, superb, sublime; it sometimes signifies inflated, tumid, bombastic. These false teachers spoke

of great and high things, and no doubt promised their disciples the greatest privileges, as they themselves pretended to a high degree of illumination; but they were all false and vain, though they tickled the fancy and excited the desires of the flesh; and indeed this appears to have been their object. And hence some think that the impure sect of the Nicolaitans is meant. See the preface.

***Those that were clean escaped*** Those who, through hearing the doctrines of the Gospel, had been converted, were perverted by those false teachers.

**Verse 19. *While they promise them liberty*** Either to live in the highest degrees of spiritual good, or a freedom from the Roman yoke; or from the yoke of the law, or what they might term needless restraints. Their own conduct showed the falsity of their system; for they were slaves to every disgraceful lust.

***For of whom a man is overcome*** This is an allusion to the ancient custom of selling for slaves those whom they had conquered and captivated in war. The ancient law was, that a man might either kill him whom he overcame in battle, or keep him for a slave. These were called servi, slaves, from the verb servare, to keep or preserve. And they were also called mancipia, from manu capiuntur, they are taken captive by the hand of their enemy. Thus the person who is overcome by his lusts is represented as being the slave of those lusts. See Romans 6:16, and the note there.

**Verse 20. *The pollutions of the world*** Sin in general, and particularly superstition, idolatry, and lasciviousness. These are called **μιασματα**, miasmata, things that infect, pollute, and defile. The word was anciently used, and is in use at the present day, to express those noxious particles of effluvia proceeding from persons infected with contagious and dangerous diseases; or from dead and corrupt bodies, stagnant and putrid waters, marshes etc., by which the sound and healthy may be infected and destroyed.

The world is here represented as one large, putrid marsh, or corrupt body, sending off its destructive miasmata everywhere and in every direction, so that none can escape its contagion, and none can be healed of the great epidemic disease of sin, but by the mighty power and skill of God. St. Augustine has improved on this image: “The whole world,” says he, “is

one great diseased man, lying extended from east to west, and from north to south; and to heal this great sick man, the almighty Physician descended from heaven.” Now, it is by the knowledge of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as says St. Peter, that we escape the destructive influence of these contagious miasmata. But if, after having been healed, and escaped the death to which we were exposed, we get again entangled, **εμπλακεντες**, enfolded, enveloped with them; then the latter end will be worse than the beginning: forasmuch as we shall have sinned against more light, and the soul, by its conversion to God, having had all its powers and faculties greatly improved, is now, being repolluted, more capable of iniquity than

of Christ, was led to loathe and reject his sin; and, on his application to God for mercy, was washed from his unrighteousness. But he is here represented as taking up again what he had before rejected, and defiling himself in that from which he had been cleansed.

Here is a sad proof of the possibility of falling from grace, and from very high degrees of it too. These had escaped from the contagion that was in the world; they had had true repentance, and cast up “their soursweet morsel of sin;” they had been washed from all their filthiness, and this must have been through the blood of the Lamb; yet, after all, they went back, got entangled with their old sins, swallowed down their formerly rejected lusts, and rewallowed in the mire of corruption. It is no wonder that God should say, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning: reason and nature say it must be so; and Divine justice says it ought to be so; and the person himself must confess that it is right that it should be so. But how dreadful is this state! How dangerous when the person has abandoned himself to his old sins! Yet it is not said that it is impossible for him to return to his Maker; though his case be deplorable, it is not utterly hopeless; the leper may yet be made clean, and the dead may be raised. Reader, is thy backsliding a grief and burden to thee? Then thou art not far from the kingdom of God; believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.

## CHAPTER 3

*The apostle shows his design in writing this and the preceding epistle, 1, 2. Describes the nature of the heresies which should take place in the last times, 3-8. A thousand years with the Lord are but as a day, 9. He will come and judge the world as he has promised, and the heavens and the earth shall be burnt up, 10. How those should live who expect these things, 11, 12. Of the new heavens and the new earth, and the necessity of being prepared for this great change, 13, 14. Concerning some difficult things in St. Paul 's epistles, 15, 16. We must watch against the error of the wicked, grow in grace, and give all glory to God, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1. *This second epistle*** In order to guard them against the seductions of false teachers, he calls to their remembrance the doctrine of the ancient prophets, and the commands or instructions of the apostles, all founded on the same basis.

He possibly refers to the prophecies of Enoch, as mentioned by Jude, Jude 14, 15; of David, Psalm 1:1, etc.; and of Daniel, Daniel 12:2, relative to the coming of our Lord to judgment: and he brings in the instructions of the apostles of Christ, by which they were directed how to prepare to meet their God.

**Verse 3. *Knowing this first*** Considering this in an especial manner, that those prophets predicted the coming of false teachers: and their being now in the Church proved how clearly they were known to God, and showed the Christians at Pontus the necessity of having no intercourse or connection with them.

***There shall come-scoffers*** Persons who shall endeavor to turn all religion into ridicule, as this is the most likely way to depreciate truth in the sight of the giddy multitude. The scoffers, having no solid argument to produce against revelation, endeavor to make a scaramouch of some parts; and then affect to laugh at it, and get superficial thinkers to laugh with them.

***Walking after their own lusts*** Here is the true source of all infidelity. The Gospel of Jesus is pure and holy, and requires a holy heart and holy life. They wish to follow their own lusts, and consequently cannot brook the restraints of the Gospel: therefore they labor to prove that it is not true, that they may get rid of its injunctions, and at last succeed in persuading themselves that it is a forgery; and then throw the reins on the neck of their evil propensities. Thus their opposition to revealed truth began and ended in their own lusts.

There is a remarkable addition here in almost every MS. and version of note: There shall come in the last days, IN MOCKERY, *εν εμπαιγμονη*, scoffers walking after their own lusts. This is the reading of ABC, eleven others, both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Coptic, AETHiopic, Vulgate, and several of the fathers. They come in mockery; this is their spirit and temper; they have no desire to find out truth; they take up the Bible merely with the design of turning it into ridicule. This reading Griesbach has received into the text.

***The last days*** Probably refer to the conclusion of the Jewish polity, which was then at hand.

**Verse 4. *Where is the promise of his coming?*** Perhaps the false teachers here referred to were such as believed in the eternity of the world: the prophets and the apostles had foretold its destruction, and they took it for granted, if this were true, that the terrestrial machine would have begun long ago to have shown some symptoms of decay; but they found that since the patriarchs died all things remained as they were from the foundation of the world; that is, men were propagated by natural generation, one was born and another died, and the course of nature continued regular in the seasons, succession of day and night, generation and corruption of animals and vegetables, etc.; for they did not consider the power of the Almighty, by which the whole can be annihilated in a moment, as well as created. As, therefore, they saw none of these changes, they presumed that there would be none, and they intimated that there never had been any. The apostle combats this notion in the following verse.

**Verse 5. *For this they willingly are ignorant of*** They shut their eyes against the light, and refuse all evidence; what does not answer their

purpose they will not know. And the apostle refers to a fact that militates against their hypothesis, with which they refused to acquaint themselves; and their ignorance he attributes to their unwillingness to learn the true state of the case.

*By the word of God the heavens were of old* I shall set down the Greek text of this extremely difficult clause: *ουπανοι ησαν εκπαλαι, και γη εξ υδατος και δι' υδατος συνεστωσα, τω του θεου λογω* translated thus by Mr. Wakefield: "A heaven and an earth formed out of water, and by means of water, by the appointment of God, had continued from old time." By Dr. Macknight thus; "The heavens were anciently, and the earth of water: and through water the earth consists by the word of God." By Kypke thus: "The heavens were of old, and the earth, which is framed, by the word of God, from the waters, and between the waters." However we take the words, they seem to refer to the origin of the earth. It was the opinion of the remotest antiquity that the earth was formed out of water, or a primitive moisture which they termed *υλη*, hule, a first matter or nutriment for all things; but Thales pointedly taught *αρχην δε των πανθως υδωρ ειναι*, that all things derive their existence from water, and this very nearly expresses the sentiment of Peter, and nearly in his own terms too. But is this doctrine true? It must be owned that it appears to be the doctrine of Moses: In the beginning, says he, God made the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. Now, these heavens and earth which God made in the beginning, and which he says were at first formless and empty, and which he calls the deep, are in the very next verse called waters; from which it is evident that Moses teaches that the earth was made out of some fluid substance, to which the name of water is properly given. And that the earth was at first in a fluid mass is most evident from its form; it is not round, as has been demonstrated by measuring some degrees near the north pole, and under the equator; the result of which proved that the figure of the earth was that of an oblate spheroid, a figure nearly resembling that of an orange. And this is the form that any soft or elastic body would assume if whirled rapidly round a center, as the earth is around its axis. The measurement to which I have referred shows the earth to be flatted at the poles, and raised at the equator. And by this



measurement it was demonstrated that the diameter of the earth at the equator was greater by about twenty-five miles than at the poles.

Now, considering the earth to be thus formed *ἐξ ὑδατος*, of water, we have next to consider what the apostle means by *δι' ὑδατος*, variously translated by out of, by means of, and between, the water.

Standing out of the water gives no sense, and should be abandoned. If we translate between the waters, it will bear some resemblance to Genesis 1:6, 7: And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of, *בְּתוֹךְ* bethoch, between, the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters: and God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; then it may refer to the whole of the atmosphere, with which the earth is everywhere surrounded, and which contains all the vapours which belong to our globe, and without which we could neither have animal nor vegetative life. Thus then the earth, or terraqueous globe, which was originally formed out of water, subsists by water; and by means of that very water, the water compacted with the earth—the fountains of the great deep, and the waters in the atmosphere—the windows of heaven, Genesis 7:11, the antediluvian earth was destroyed, as St. Peter states in the next verse: the terraqueous globe, which was formed originally of water or a fluid substance, the chaos or first matter, and which was suspended in the heavens — the atmosphere, enveloped with water, by means of which water it was preserved; yet, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, was destroyed by those very same waters out of which it was originally made, and by which it subsisted.

**Verse 7. *But the heavens and the earth, which are now*** The present earth and its atmosphere, which are liable to the same destruction, because the same means still exist, (for there is still water enough to drown the earth, and there is iniquity enough to induce God to destroy it and its inhabitants,) are nevertheless kept in store, *τεθησαυρισμενοι*, treasured up, kept in God's storehouse, to be destroyed, not by water, but by fire at the day of judgment.

From all this it appears that those mockers affected to be ignorant of the Mosaic account of the formation of the earth, and of its destruction by the waters of the deluge; and indeed this is implied in their stating that all things continued as they were from the creation. But St. Peter calls them

back to the Mosaic account, to prove that this was false; for the earth, etc., which were then formed, had perished by the flood; and that the present earth, etc., which were formed out of the preceding, should, at the day of judgment, perish by the fire of God's wrath.

**Verse 8. *Be not ignorant*** Though they are wilfully ignorant, neglect not ye the means of instruction.

***One day is with the Lord as a thousand years*** That is: All time is as nothing before him, because in the presence as in the nature of God all is eternity; therefore nothing is long, nothing short, before him; no lapse of ages impairs his purposes, nor need he wait to find convenience to execute those purposes. And when the longest period of time has passed by, it is but as a moment or indivisible point in comparison of eternity. This thought is well expressed by PLUTARCH, Consol. ad Apoll.: "If we compare the time of life with eternity, we shall find no difference between long and short. *τα γαρ χιλια, και τα μυρια ετη, στιγμή τις εστιν αοριστος, μαλλον δε μοριον τι βραχυτατον στιγμης*· for a thousand or ten thousand years are but a certain indefinite point, or rather the smallest part of a point." The words of the apostle seem to be a quotation from Psalm 90:4.

**Verse 9. *The Lord is not slack*** They probably in their mocking said, "Either God had made no such promise to judge the world, destroy the earth, and send ungodly men to perdition; or if he had, he had forgotten to fulfill it, or had not convenient time or leisure." To some such mocking the apostle seems to refer: and he immediately shows the reason why deserved punishment is not inflicted on a guilty world.

***But is long-suffering*** It is not slackness, remissness, nor want of due displacence at sin, that induced God to prolong the respite of ungodly men; but his long-suffering, his unwillingness that any should perish: and therefore he spared them, that they might have additional offers of grace, and be led to repentance — to deplore their sins, implore God's mercy, and find redemption through the blood of the Lamb.

As God is not willing that any should perish, and as he is willing that all should come to repentance, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul

to be saved, either by necessitating him to do evil, that he might die for it, or refusing him the means of recovery, without which he could not be saved.

**Verse 10. *The day of the Lord will come*** See Matthew 24:43, to which the apostle seems to allude.

***The heavens shall pass away with a great noise*** As the heavens mean here, and in the passages above, the whole atmosphere, in which all the terrestrial vapours are lodged; and as water itself is composed of two gases, eighty-five parts in weight of oxygen, and fifteen of hydrogen, or two parts in volume of the latter, and one of the former; (for if these quantities be put together, and several electric sparks passed through them, a chemical union takes place, and water is the product; and, vice versa, if the galvanic spark be made to pass through water, a portion of the fluid is immediately decomposed into its two constituent gases, oxygen and hydrogen;) and as the electric or ethereal fire is that which, in all likelihood, God will use in the general conflagration; the noise occasioned by the application of this fire to such an immense congeries of aqueous particles as float in the atmosphere, must be terrible in the extreme. Put a drop of water on an anvil, place over it a piece of iron red hot, strike the iron with a hammer on the part above the drop of water, and the report will be as loud as a musket; when, then, the whole strength of those opposite agents is brought together into a state of conflict, the noise, the thunderings, the innumerable explosions, (till every particle of water on the earth and in the atmosphere is, by the action of the fire, reduced into its component gaseous parts,) will be frequent, loud, confounding, and terrific, beyond every comprehension but that of God himself.

***The elements shall melt with fervent heat*** When the fire has conquered and decomposed the water, the elements, **στοιχεῖα**, the hydrogen and oxygen airs or gases, (the former of which is most highly inflammable, and the latter an eminent supporter of all combustion,) will occupy distinct regions of the atmosphere, the hydrogen by its very great levity ascending to the top, while the oxygen from its superior specific gravity will keep upon or near the surface of the earth; and thus, if different substances be once ignited, the fire, which is supported in this case, not only by the oxygen which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air, but also by a

great additional quantity of oxygen obtained from the decomposition of all aqueous vapours, will rapidly seize on all other substances, on all terrestrial particles, and the whole frame of nature will be necessarily torn in pieces, and thus the earth and its works be burned up.

**Verse 11. *All these things shall be dissolved*** They will all be separated, all decomposed; but none of them destroyed. And as they are the original matter out of which God formed the terraqueous globe, consequently they may enter again into the composition of a new system; and therefore the apostle says, 2 Peter 3:13: we look for new heavens and a new earth — the others being decomposed, a new system is to be formed out of their materials. There is a wonderful philosophic propriety in the words of the apostle in describing this most awful event.

***What manner of persons ought ye to be*** Some put the note of interrogation at the end of this clause, and join the remaining part with the 12th verse, {2 Peter 3:12} thus: Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be? By holy conversation and godliness, expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, etc. Only those who walk in holiness, who live a godly and useful life, can contemplate this most awful time with joy.

The word *σπευδοντας*, which we translate hastening unto, should be tendered earnestly desiring, or wishing for; which is a frequent meaning of the word in the best Greek writers.

**Verse 12. *The heavens being on fire*** See on 2 Peter 3:10. It was an ancient opinion among the heathens that the earth should be burnt up with fire; so OVID, *Met.*, lib. i. v. 256.

*Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, adfore tempus,  
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regia coeli  
Ardeat; et mundi moles operosa laboret.*

*“Remembering in the fates a time when fire  
Should to the battlements of heaven aspire,  
And all his blazing world above should burn,  
And all the inferior globe to cinders turn.”*

DRYDEN.

Minucius Felix tells us, xxxiv. 2, that it was a common opinion of the Stoics that, the moisture of the earth being consumed, the whole world would catch fire. The Epicureans held the same sentiment; and indeed it appears in various authors, which proves that a tradition of this kind has pretty generally prevailed in the world. But it is remarkable that none have fancied that it will be destroyed by water. The tradition, founded on the declaration of God, was against this; therefore it was not received.

**Verse 13.** *We, according to his promise, look for new heavens* The promise to which it is supposed the apostle alludes, is found Isaiah 65:17: Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind; and Isaiah 66:22: For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your seed, etc. Now, although these may be interpreted of the glory of the Gospel dispensation, yet, if St. Peter refer to them, they must have a more extended meaning.

It does appear, from these promises, that the apostle says here, and what is said Revelation 21:27; 22:14, 15, that the present earth, though destined to be burned up, will not be destroyed, but be renewed and refined, purged from all moral and natural imperfection, and made the endless abode of blessed spirits. But this state is certainly to be expected after the day of judgment; for on this the apostle is very express, who says the conflagration and renovation are to take place at the judgment of the great day; see 2 Peter 3:7, 8, 10, 12. That such an event may take place is very possible; and, from the terms used by St. Peter, is very probable. And, indeed, it is more reasonable and philosophical to conclude that the earth shall be refined and restored, than finally destroyed. But this has nothing to do with what some call the millennium state; as this shall take place when time, with the present state and order of things, shall be no more.

**Verse 14.** *Seeing that ye look for such things* As ye profess that such a state of things shall take place, and have the expectation of enjoying the blessedness of it, be diligent in the use of every means and influence of grace, that ye may be found of him — the Lord Jesus, the Judge of quick and dead, without spot — any contagion of sin in your souls, and blameless — being not only holy and innocent, but useful in your lives.

**Verse 15. *And account that the long-suffering of our Lord*** Conclude that God's long-suffering with the world is a proof that he designs men to be saved; even as our beloved brother Paul. "This epistle being written to those to whom the first epistle was sent, the persons to whom the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the long-suffering of God were the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Accordingly, we know he wrote to the Ephesians, (Ephesians 2:3-5,) to the Colossians, (Colossians 1:21,) and to Timothy, (1 Timothy 2:3, 4,) things which imply that God's bearing with sinners is intended for their salvation. The persons to whom Peter's epistles were sent were, for the most part, Paul's converts." — Macknight.

***According to the wisdom given unto him*** That is, according to the measure of the Divine inspiration, by which he was qualified for the Divine work, and by which he was so capable of entering into the deep things of God. It is worthy of remark that Paul's epistles are ranked among the Scriptures; a term applied to those writings which are divinely inspired, and to those only.

**Verse 16. *As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things*** Paul, in all his epistles, says Dr. Macknight, has spoken of the things written by Peter in this letter. For example, he has spoken of Christ's coming to judgment; 1 Thessalonians 3:13; 4:14-18; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-10; Titus 2:13. And of the resurrection of the dead, 1 Corinthians 15:22; Philippians 3:20, 21. And of the burning of the earth; 2 Thessalonians 1:8. And of the heavenly country; 2 Corinthians 5:1-10. And of the introduction of the righteous into that country; 1 Thessalonians 4:17; Hebrews 4:9; 12:14, 18, 24. And of the judgment of all mankind by Christ; Romans 14:10.

***In which are some things hard to be understood*** δυσνοητα τινα· That is, if we retain the common reading εν οις, in or among which things, viz., what he says of the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body etc., etc., there are some things difficult to be comprehended, and from which a wrong or false meaning may be taken. But if we take the reading of AB, twelve others, with both the Syriac, all the Arabic, and Theophylact, εν αις, the meaning is more general, as εν αις must refer to επιστολαις, epistles, for this would intimate that there were difficulties in all the

epistles of St. Paul; and indeed in what ancient writings are there not difficulties? But the papists say that the decision of all matters relative to the faith is not to be expected from the Scriptures on this very account, but must be received from the Church; i.e. the Popish or Romish Church. But what evidence have we that that Church can infallibly solve any of those difficulties? We have none! And till we have an express, unequivocal revelation from heaven that an unerring spirit is given to that Church, I say, for example, to the present Church of Rome, with the pope called Pius VII. at its head, we are not to receive its pretensions. Any Church may pretend the same, or any number of equally learned men as there are of cardinals and pope in the conclave; and, after all, it would be but the opinion of so many men, to which no absolute certainty or infallibility could be attached.

This verse is also made a pretext to deprive the common people of reading the word of God; because the unlearned and unstable have sometimes wrested this word to their own destruction: but if it be human learning, and stability in any system of doctrine, that qualifies men to judge of these difficult things, then we can find many thousands, even in Europe, that have as much learning and stability as the whole college of cardinals, and perhaps ten thousand times more; for that conclave was never very reputable for the learning of its members: and to other learned bodies we may, with as much propriety, look up as infallible guides, as to this conclave.

Besides, as it is only the unlearned and the unestablished (that is, young Christian converts) that are in danger of wresting such portions; the learned, that is, the experienced and the established in the knowledge and life of God, are in no such danger; and to such we may safely go for information: and these abound everywhere, especially in Protestant countries; and by the labors of learned and pious men on the sacred writings there is not one difficulty relative to the things which concern our salvation left unexplained. If the members of the Romish Church have not these advantages, let them go to those who have them; and if their teachers are afraid to trust them to the instruction of the Protestants, then let them who pretend to have infallibly written their exposition of these difficult places, also put them, with a wholesome text in the vulgar language, into the hands of their people, and then the appeal will not lie to Rome, but to

the Bible, and those interpretations will be considered according to their worth, being weighed with other scriptures, and the expositions of equally learned and equally infallible men.

We find, lastly, that those who wrest such portions, are those who wrest the other scriptures to their destruction; therefore they are no patterns, nor can such form any precedent for withholding the Scriptures from the common people, most of whom, instead of wresting them to their destruction, would become wise unto salvation by reading them. We may defy the Romish Church to adduce a single instance of any soul that was perverted, destroyed, or damned, by reading of the Bible; and the insinuation that they may is blasphemous. I may just add that the verb **στρεβλω**, which the apostle uses here, signifies to distort, to put to the rack, to torture, to overstretch and dislocate the limbs; and hence the persons here intended are those who proceed according to no fair plan of interpretation, but force unnatural and sophistical meanings on the word of God: a practice which the common simple Christian is in no danger of following. I could illustrate this by a multitude of interpretations from popish writers.

**Verse 17. *Seeing ye know-before*** Seeing that by prophets and apostles you have been thus forewarned, beware, **φυλασσεσθε**, keep watch, be on your guard; cleave to God and the word of his grace, lest ye be led away from the truth delivered by the prophets and apostles, by the error of the wicked, **αθεσμων**, of the lawless — those who wrest the Scriptures to make them countenance their lusts, exorbitant exactions, and lawless practices.

***Fall from your own steadfastness.*** From that faith in Christ which has put you in possession of that grace which establishes the heart.

**Verse 18. *But grow in grace*** Increase in the image and favor of God; every grace and Divine influence which ye have received is a seed, a heavenly seed, which, if it be watered with the dew of heaven from above, will endlessly increase and multiply itself. He who continues to believe, love, and obey, will grow in grace, and continually increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as his sacrifice, sanctifier, counsellor, preserver, and final Savior. The life of a Christian is a growth; he is at first born of God, and is a little child; becomes a young man, and a father in Christ.



Every father was once an infant; and had he not grown, he would have never been a man. Those who content themselves with the grace they received when converted to God, are, at best, in a continual state of infancy: but we find, in the order of nature, that the infant that does not grow, and grow daily, too, is sickly and soon dies; so, in the order of grace, those who do not grow up into Jesus Christ are sickly, and will soon die, die to all sense and influence of heavenly things.

There are many who boast of the grace of their conversion; persons who were never more than babes, and have long since lost even that grace, because they did not grow in it. Let him that readeth understand.

*To him.* The Lord Jesus, be glory — all honor and excellency attributed, both now — in this present state, and for ever, *εις ημεραν αιωνος*, to the day of eternity — that in which death, and misery, and trial, and darkness, and change, and time itself, are to the righteous for ever at an end: it is eternity; and this eternity is one unalterable, interminable, unclouded, and unchangeable DAY!

*Amen.* So let it be! and so it shall be! Though this word is wanting in some reputable MSS., get it should be retained, as it has here more than usual authority in its support.

Subscriptions to this epistle in the VERSIONS:

The end of the Second Epistle of Peter the apostle. — SYRIAC.

The Second Epistle of Peter the apostle is ended. — SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN.

Nothing in the printed Vulgate.

The end of the epistles of blessed Peter the apostle, the rock of the faith.  
— ARABIC.

The Second Epistle of Peter is ended; and glory be to God for ever and ever! — AETHIOPIC.

Nothing in the COPTIC.

The end of the Second catholic Epistle of St. Peter. — COMPLUTENSIAN POLYGLOT.

The end of the Second Epistle of St. Peter. — BIB. LAT., edit. antiq.

Subscriptions in the MANUSCRIPTS;

Of the second of Peter. — CODEX ALEXANDRIUS, and CODEX VATICANUS.

Of the catholic epistle of Peter. — CODEX EPHREM.

The Second Epistle of the holy Apostle Peter. — Other MSS.

WE have now passed over all the canonical writings of Peter that are extant; and it is worthy of remark that, in no place of the two epistles already examined, nor in any of this apostle's sayings in any other parts of the sacred writings do we find any of the peculiar tenets of the Romish Church: not one word of his or the pope's supremacy; not one word of those who affect to be his successors; nothing of the infallibility claimed by those pretended successors; nothing of purgatory, penances, pilgrimages, auricular confession, power of the keys, indulgences, extreme unction, masses, and prayers for the dead; and not one word on the most essential doctrine of the Romish Church, transubstantiation. Now, as all these things have been considered by themselves most essential to the being of that Church; is it not strange that he, from whom they profess to derive all their power, authority, and influence, in spiritual and secular matters, should have said nothing of these most necessary things? Is it not a proof that they are all false and forged; that the holy apostle knew nothing of them; that they are no part of the doctrine of God; and, although they distinguish the Church of Rome, do not belong to the Church of Christ? It is no wonder that the rulers of this Church endeavor to keep the Scriptures from the common people; for, were they permitted to consult these, the imposture would be detected, and the solemn, destructive cheat at once exposed.

## PREFACE

### TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF

### JOHN.

As the author of this epistle is the same who wrote the gospel, I need not detain the reader with any particulars of his life, having taken up the subject pretty much at large in my preface to his gospel, to which I must refer for that species of information.

Two questions have been urged relative to this epistle, which are very difficult to be solved: 1. When was it written? 2. To whom was it sent? The precise year it is impossible to determine; but it was probably written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and perhaps about the year 68 or 69, though some think not before 80. The second question Michaelis answers thus:—

“This question is still more difficult to decide than the preceding. In the Latin version it was formerly called *The Epistle of St. John to the Parthians*; and this title was adopted by some of the ancient fathers, and in modern times has been defended by Grotius. But if St. John had intended this epistle for the use of the Parthians, he would hardly have written it in Greek, but would have used either the language of the country, or, if he was unacquainted with it, would have written at least in Syriac, which was the language of the learned in the Parthian empire, and especially of the Christians. We know, from the history of Manes, that even the learned in that country were for the most part unacquainted with the Greek language; for to Manes, though he united literature with genius, his adversaries objected that he understood only the barbarous Syriac. That a Grecian book would not have been understood in the Parthian empire, appears from what Josephus says in the preface to his *History of the Jewish War*, where he declares that a work intended for Parthian Jews must be written, not in Greek, but Hebrew. However, it is worth while to examine whence

the superscription 'ad Parthos' took its rise. Whiston conjectures that an ancient Greek superscription of this epistle was **προς παρθενους**, (to virgins,) because this epistle is chiefly addressed to uncorrupted Christians, and that this title was falsely copied **προς παρθαυς**, whence

which the apostle declared to the whole world his disapprobation of the doctrines maintained by Cerinthus and the Gnostics. However, as I do not think it worth while to dispute about words, I have retained the usual title, and have called it the First Epistle of St. John.

“That the design of this epistle was to combat the doctrine delivered by certain false teachers, appears from 1 John 2:18-26; 1 John 3:7; 4:1-3: and what this false doctrine was may be inferred from the counter doctrine delivered by St. John, 1 John 5:1-6. The apostle here asserts that Jesus is the Christ,’ and that he was the Christ, ‘not by water only, but by water and blood.’ Now these words, which are not in themselves very intelligible, become perfectly clear if we consider them as opposed to the doctrine of Cerinthus, who asserted that Jesus was by birth a mere man; but that the AEon, Christ, descended on him at his baptism, and left him before his death. But if what St. John says, 1 John 5:1-6, was opposed to Cerinthus, the Antichrists of whom he speaks, 1 John 2:18, 19, and who, according to 1 John 2:22, denied that Jesus was the Christ, as also the false prophets, mentioned 1 John 4:1, 3, must be Cerinthians, or at least Gnostics. That they were neither Jews nor heathens may be inferred from 1 John 2:19, where St. John says, ‘They went out from us.’ Farther, he describes them, 1 John 2:18, as persons who had lately appeared in the world. But this description suits neither Jews nor heathens, who, when this epistle was written, had not lately begun to deny that Jesus was the Christ. Lastly, in the same verse, he describes them as tokens of the last time, saying, ‘As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists, whereby we know that it is the last time.’ But this inference could not be drawn from the refusal of the Jews to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. Now, as soon as we perceive that the position, ‘Jesus is the Christ,’ is a counter position against Cerinthus, we may infer, as I have already observed, that the Antichrists who denied that Jesus was the Christ, or who denied that Christ had appeared in the flesh, were Cerinthians; or perhaps the latter were Docetes. It is, therefore, highly probable that the whole epistle, which in various places discovers an opposition to false teachers, was written against Cerinthians, or at least against Gnostics and Magi. A proposition can never be completely understood, unless we know the author’s design in delivering it. For instance, ‘God is light, and in him is no darkness,’ appears to contain a

tautology, if we consider it as a detached dogma; and if it be considered as an admonitory proposition, it may be thought to contain a severe reproof; but if we regard it in a polemical view, it will present itself under a very different form. This epistle abounds with exhortations; but no man who wishes to understand it will be satisfied without asking the following questions: Why did St. John give these admonitions? Why has he so frequently repeated them? Why has he admonished, if he thought admonition necessary, merely in general terms, to holiness and brotherly love? And why has he not sometimes descended to particulars, as other apostles have done? An answer to these questions will throw great light on the epistle; and this light I will endeavor to procure for the reader, by pointing out the several propositions which, in my opinion, are laid down in opposition to Gnostic errors.

“1. In the first chapter the four first verses are opposed to the following assertion of the Gnostics: ‘That the apostles did not deliver the doctrine of Jesus as they had received it, but made additions to it, especially in the commandments which were termed legal; whereof they themselves (the Gnostics) retained the genuine and uncorrupted mystery.’ St. John therefore says: ‘That he declared that which was from the beginning, which he himself had seen and heard;’ that is, that he taught the doctrine of Christ as it was originally delivered, as he had heard it from Christ’s own mouth, whose person he had seen and felt; and that he made no additions of his own, but only reported as a faithful witness. In like manner he appeals, 1 John 2:13, 14, to the elder Christians, whom he calls fathers, ‘because they knew him who was from the beginning;’ that is, because they knew how Christ had taught from the beginning; and 1 John 2:24, he says: ‘Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.’ Farther he says, 1 John 2:7: ‘Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning.’ In the next verse he adds: ‘Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the light now shineth.’ Now Christ himself had given his disciples a commandment which he called a new commandment, and this was, ‘that they should love one another.’ The term ‘new commandment,’ therefore, St. John borrowed from Christ; but in the present instance he appears to have applied it to a different subject, because the special command which Christ gave to his

disciples, that they should love one another, and which he called a new commandment, could not well be called an old commandment, being very different from the general commandment, that we should love our neighbor. St. John, therefore, very probably meant that the commandment of love and sanctification was no new commandment, as the Gnostics contended, but the old commandment which the Christians had heard from the beginning. It was, indeed, become a new commandment, in consequence of the false doctrines which then prevailed; or rather, it appeared to be so, because the Gnostics had endeavored to banish it from their system of theology. But whether a new or an old commandment, St. John thought proper to enforce it.

“2. The Gnostics, who contended that those commandments which were legal were not given by Christ, but were added by the apostles without his authority, counteracted, by so doing, the whole doctrine of sanctification. St. John, therefore, devotes the greatest part of his epistle to the confirmation and enforcement of this doctrine. In 1 John 1:5, 7, he asserts, as a principal part of the message which he had heard from Christ, that no one who does not walk in the light has fellowship with God. In the three following verses he limits this proposition in such a manner as was necessary in arguing with an adversary; and 1 John 2:1, 2, he removes the objection, that, according to his doctrine, a Christian who was guilty of wilful sins lost thereby all hopes of salvation. He then maintains, 1 John 2:3-5, and apparently in allusion to the word **γνωσις**, knowledge, the favourite term of the Gnostics, that he who boasted of profound knowledge, and at the same time rejected the commandments of Christ, had not a real but only a pretended knowledge; and that in him only the love of God is perfected, **τετελειωται**, who keeps God’s word. The expression **τετελειωται** is a term which was used in the schools of the philosophers, and applied to the scholars called esoterici, who had made a considerable progress in the inner school. Now the Gnostics were, in their own opinion, scholars of this description; but since they, whose imaginary system of theology annuls the commands of God, are so far from being perfect that they are not even beginners in the science, St. John very properly refuses to admit their pretensions, and opposes to them others who were perfect in a different way, and who were more justly entitled to the appellation. With respect to the expressions, ‘keeping the commandments of God,’ or

‘not keeping his commandments,’ it must be observed that, when used in a polemical work, they denote, not merely the observance or violation of God’s commands in our own practice, but the teaching of others that they are to be observed or rejected. What St. John says, 1 John 2:7, 8, has been already explained in the preceding paragraph.

“The whole of the third chapter, and part of the fourth, is devoted to the doctrine of sanctification, on which I have to make the following remarks. When St. John says, 1 John 3:7, ‘Let no man deceive you; he who doeth righteousness is righteous,’ he probably intends, not merely to deliver a precept, but to oppose the doctrine of those who asserted that a man, though he sinned, might be righteous in respect to his spiritual soul, because sin proceeded only from the material body. A similar observation may be applied to 1 John 3:4: ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law;’ which, considered by itself, appears to be an identical proposition; but when considered as an assertion opposed to the Gnostics, it is far from being superfluous, because, evident as it appears to be, they virtually denied it. From the passage above quoted from the works of Irenaeus, we have seen that they rejected the legal commandments as parts of the Christian religion which were not warranted by the authority of Christ; consequently, they denied that sin was a transgression of the law. Farther, it was consistent with their principles to regard sins as diseases; for they believed in a metempsychosis, and imagined that the souls of men were confined in their present bodies as in a prison, and as a punishment for having offended in the region above. According to this system, the violent and irregular passions of anger, hatred, etc., were tortures for the soul; they were diseases, but not punishable transgressions of the law. I will not assert that all who believed in a transmigration of souls argued in this manner, but some of them certainly did so; and against these it was not superfluous to write, ‘Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.’

“The love of the brethren, which St. John enforced as a chief commandment, is generally understood of that special love which Christ commanded his disciples to have towards each other. But I rather think that St. John means the love of our neighbor in general, which Christ commanded, as comprehending the half of the law; for this general love St. John might very properly call the love of our brother, since God has



created us all, and is our common Father. Besides, as St. John calls Cain, Abel's brother, he could not intend to signify by this term a person of the same religious sentiments. Nor would it have been consistent with candour to have censured the Gnostics for not having Christian brotherly love towards St. John and other true believers, for in this particular sense they were not brethren; and St. John himself, in his second epistle, 2 John 10, forbids the exercise of Christian brotherly love towards those who teach false doctrines. I believe, therefore, that the brotherly love of which St. John speaks in the third chapter of this epistle, is not confined to that special love which we owe to those who are allied to us by religion, but denotes the love of our neighbor in general. Nor do I except even 1 John 3:16, where some think that St. John would require too much, if he meant brotherly love in general, or charity toward all men. But are there not certain cases in which it is our duty to hazard and even sacrifice our lives, in order to rescue our neighbor! Is not this duty performed by the soldier? And is it not performed by him who visits those who are infected with contagious diseases? It is true that this is not a duty which every man owes in all cases to his neighbor; but then, on the other hand, is it not a duty which every man owes to his spiritual brother? Nor was it St. John's design so much to enforce this duty, and to recommend the exercise of it, as to argue from the acknowledgment of this duty in certain cases, to the necessity of performing the less painful duty of supporting our brethren in distress, by a participation of our temporal possessions. But though I believe that in the third chapter St. John speaks of the love of our neighbor in general, I do not mean to affirm that he nowhere understands that special love which Christians owe one to another, of which we meet with an instance in 1 John 5:1, 2.

“With respect to the moral conduct of the Gnostics, against whom St. John wrote, we may infer, therefore, that the apostle found more reason to censure them for their want of charity toward their neighbors, than for dissoluteness or debauchery. This want of charity they probably displayed by a hatred of the true believers.

“What St. John says, 1 John 5:3, that ‘God's commandments are not grievous,’ appears in the clearest light when we consider it as opposed to the Gnostics, to whom the Divine commandments, as delivered by the apostles, appeared to be too legal.

“St. John declares, 1 John 1:5, as the message which he had heard from Christ, that ‘God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.’ Now if this proposition had been then as generally admitted as it is at present, there could have been no necessity for declaring it at the very beginning of the epistle, with so much energy, to be the grand message of Christ. We may reasonably infer, therefore, that it was opposed to certain persons who delivered a contrary doctrine. Farther, the words ‘light’ and ‘darkness,’ which are here applied to the Deity in a manner which is not usual in the Bible, remind us of the technical terms used by the Persian Magi, and afterwards by the Manicheans. It is true that in the Bible we meet with the expressions ‘works of the light,’ ‘children of the light,’ ‘to walk in the light,’ and others of the same kind; but in these instances the term ‘light’ is not synonymous with ‘holiness;’ works of the light denoting nothing more than works which no man need be ashamed to perform openly, and in the face of the whole world. This explanation of the word ‘light’ is inapplicable in the proposition ‘God is light;’ because there would be an impropriety in representing God either as fearing or not fearing to act in the face of the whole world. St. John, therefore, uses the term ‘light’ as equivalent to holiness.

“Now, the Gnostics admitted that the supreme Being was perfectly holy and pure light; but they denied that the supreme Being was the God whom the Jews and the Christians worshipped. For the Jews and the Christians worshipped the Creator of the world; and the Gnostics asserted that the Creator of the world was either a spirit of darkness, or, if he was a spirit of light, that he was not free from darkness.

“From 1 John 2:23, where St. John says, that ‘he who denies the Son, rejects also the Father,’ it appears that his adversaries did not deny the Father in positive terms, since the apostle argues only that they virtually did so by denying the Son. Now, the Gnostics did not positively deny the Father of Christ, whom they allowed to be the supreme Being, but then they did not allow that he was the Creator. The terms, therefore, ‘God’ and the ‘Father of Christ,’ though they denote in reality the same person, must not be considered as having precisely the same import; since the adversaries of St. John admitted that the Father of Christ was the supreme Being, and pure light; but denied that the Creator, who is in fact God, was light without darkness.

“4. In some places, especially 1 John 4:2, 3, St. John opposes false teachers of another description, namely, those who denied that Christ was come in the flesh. Now they who denied this were not Cerinthians, but another kind of Gnostics, called Docetes. For as, on the one hand, Cerinthus maintained that Jesus was a mere and therefore real man, the Docetes on the other hand contended that he was an incorporeal phantom, in which the AEon, Christ, or Divine nature, presented itself to mankind. 1 John 1:1: ‘Our hands have handled,’ appears likewise to be opposed to this error of the Docetes.

“The doctrines which St. John has delivered in this epistle he has not supported, either by arguments drawn from reason, or by quotations from the Old Testament; for neither of them are necessary, since the bare assertion of an apostle of Christ is sufficient authority. It is true that, in one respect, this epistle has less energy than St. John’s gospel, because in his gospel he warrants his doctrines by the speeches of Christ. But then, on the other hand, St. John declares in this epistle, 1 John 3:24; 4:4; 5:14, 16, that God sent his Spirit to the apostolic Church, and heard their prayers. And it is evident that St. John alludes to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to the miraculous powers obtained by prayer.

“The close of this epistle, ‘Keep yourselves from idols,’ has no immediate connection with the preceding discourse. I am therefore in doubt whether St; John meant to warn his readers against taking part in heathen sacrifices, which was allowed by these Gnostics, who are called Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse; or whether he meant to describe the system of the Gnostics in general as a system of idolatry, which in fact it was.”

Dr. Macknight has some judicious observations on the authenticity of this epistle, from the similarity of the style to that of the gospel of John.

“The authenticity of any ancient writing is established, first, by the testimony of contemporary and succeeding authors, whose works have come down to us, and who speak of that writing as known to be the work of the person whose name it bears. Secondly, by the suitableness of the things contained in such writing to the character and circumstances of its supposed author, and by the similarity of its style to the style of the other acknowledged writings of that author. The former of these proofs is called the external evidence of the authenticity of a writing; The latter, its internal

evidence. When these two kinds of evidence are found accompanying any writing, they render its genuineness indubitable.

“The external evidence of the authenticity of John’s first epistle has been amply detailed by Dr. Lardner, who shows that the earliest and best Christian writers have all, with one consent, and without any hesitation, ascribed the first epistle to him. And their testimony is confirmed by this circumstance, that the Syriac translator, who omitted the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude, because some doubts were entertained concerning them in the first age, or perhaps because they had not come to his knowledge, has translated John’s first epistle, as an apostolical writing of which there never was any doubt in that or in any other Christian Church.

“In this preface, therefore, we shall state the internal evidence of the authenticity of John’s first epistle, by showing, first, that, in respect of its matter, and, secondly, in respect of its style, it is perfectly suitable to the character and circumstances of its supposed author. In respect of the matter or subject of the epistle under consideration, the writer of it has discovered himself to be John the apostle, by introducing a number of sentiments and expressions found in the gospel, which all Christians from the beginning have acknowledged to be the work of John the apostle.

#### EPISTLE. vs. GOSPEL.

1 John 1:1. That which was from the beginning **ο θεασαμεθα**, which we have contemplated, concerning the living Word. John 1:1. In the beginning was the Word: John 1:14; And **εθεασαμεθα**, we beheld his glory: John 1:4; In him was light: John 1:14; The Word was made flesh.

1 John 2:5. Whosoever keepeth his word truly, in that man the love of God is perfected. John 14:23. If a man love me he will keep my words, and my Father will love him.

1 John 2:6. He who saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. See 1 John 3:24; 4:13-16. John 15:4. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in me.

1 John 2:8. I write to you a new commandment. 1 John 3:11. This is the message which ye heard from the beginning, that ye should love one another. John 13:34. A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

1 John 2:8. The darkness passeth away, and the light which is true now shineth. John 1:5. The light shineth in darkness. John 1:9. That was the true light.

1 John 2:10. Abideth in the light, and there is no stumbling block to him. John 11:10. If a man walk in the night he stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

1 John 2:13. Young children, I write to you, because ye have known the Father. 1 John 2:14. Because ye have known him from the beginning. John 17:3. This is the eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, And Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

1 John 3:7-9. Every one who worketh righteousness is begotten of God. See also 1 John 5:1. John 3:3. Except a man be begotten again, John 3:5; Except a man be begotten of water and of the Spirit.

1 John 3:1. Behold how great love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God! John 1:12. To them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name.

1 John 3:2. We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. John 17:24. Be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.

1 John 3:8. He who worketh sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. John 8:44. Ye are of your father the devil; he was a murderer from the beginning.

1 John 3:13. Do not wonder, my brethren, that the world hateth you. John 15:20. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

1 John 4:9. By this the love of God was manifested, that God sent his Son, the only begotten, into the world, that we might live through him. John 3:16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life.

1 John 4:12. No man hath seen God at any time. John 1:18. No man hath seen God at any time.

1 John 5:13. These things I have written to you, who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life; and that ye may believe in the name of the Son of God. John 20:31. These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

1 John 5:14. If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us. John 14:14. If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

1 John 5:20. The Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. John 17:2. Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. John 17:3: And this is the eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

“From the above comparison of the first epistle of John with his gospel, there appears such an exact agreement of sentiment in the two writings, that no reader who is capable of discerning what is peculiar in an author’s turn of thinking, can entertain the least doubt of their being the productions of one and the same writer. Farther, since John has not mentioned his own name in his gospel, the want of his name in the epistle is no proof that it was not written by him; but rather a presumption that it is his; especially as he has sufficiently discovered himself to be an apostle, by affirming, in the beginning of the epistle, that he was an eye and an ear witness of the things he has written concerning the living word.

“The style of this epistle being the same with the style of the gospel of John, it is, by that internal mark likewise, denoted to be his writing. In his gospel, John does not content himself with simply affirming or denying a thing; but, to strengthen his affirmation, he denies the contrary. In like manner, to strengthen his denial of a thing, he affirms its contrary. See John 1:20; 3:36; 5:22. The same manner of expressing things strongly, is found in this epistle; for example, 1 John 2:4: ‘He who saith, I have known him, and doth not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in

him.' 1 John 2:27: 'The same unction teacheth you concerning all things, and is truth, and is no lie.' 1 John 4:2: 'Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh, is from God.' 1 John 4:3: 'And every spirit which doth not confess that Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh, is not from God.'

"In his gospel likewise, John, to express things emphatically, frequently uses the demonstrative pronoun this. John 1:19; **αυτη** 'This is the testimony.' John 3:19; **αυτη** 'This is the condemnation, that light,' etc. John 6:29: **τουτο** 'This is the work of God.' John 6:40: **τουτο** 'This is the will of him.' John 6:50: **ουτος** 'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven.' John 17:3: **αυτη** 'This is the eternal life.' In the epistle the same emphatical manner of expression is found, 1 John 1:5; 2:25: 'This is the promise.' 1 John 3:23: **αυτη** 'This is the commandment.' 1 John 5:3: **αυτη** 'This is the love of God.' 1 John 5:4: 'This is the victory.' 1 John 5:6: **ουτος** 'This is he who came by water.' 1 John 5:14: **αυτη** 'This is the boldness which we have with him.'

"Such is the internal evidence on which all Christians, from the beginning, have received the First Epistle of John as really written by him, and of Divine authority, although his name is not mentioned in the inscription, nor in any part of the epistle."

On the term epistle, as applied to this work of St. John, it may be necessary to make a few remarks. There is properly nothing of the epistolary style in this work: it is addressed neither to any particular person, nor to any Church.

The writer does not mention himself either in the beginning or ending; and, although this can be no objection against its authenticity, yet it is some proof that the work was never intended to be considered in the light of an epistle.

1. Is it a tract or dissertation upon the more sublime parts of Christianity.
2. Is it a polemical discourse against heretics, particularly the Gnostics, or some of their teachers, who were disturbing the Churches where John dwelt.
3. Is it a sermon, the subject of which is God's love to man in the mission of Jesus Christ; from which our obligations to love and serve him are particularly inferred.
4. Or is it a collection of Christian aphorisms,

made by John himself; and put together as they occurred to his mind, without any intended order or method. Much might be said on all these heads of inquiry; and the issue would be, that the idea of its being an epistle of any kind must be relinquished; and yet epistle is its general denomination through all antiquity.

It is a matter, however, of little importance what its title may be, or to what species of literary composition it belongs; while we know that it is the genuine work of St. John; of the holiest man who ever breathed; of one who was most intimately acquainted with the doctrine and mind of his Lord; of one who was admitted to the closest fellowship with his Savior; and who has treated of the deepest things that can be experienced or comprehended in the Christian life.

As to distinct heads of discourse, it does not appear to me that any were intended by the apostle; he wrote just as the subjects occurred to his mind, or rather as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance; and, although technical order is not here to be expected, yet nothing like disorder or confusion can be found in the whole work.

As Professor Michaelis has considered it in the light of a polemical treatise, written against the Gnostics, and other false teachers of that time, I have thought it right to give his view of the work considered in this light; but as I, in general, pursue another plan of interpretation in the notes, I have inserted his elucidations in the preceding pages of this preface.

On the controverted text of the three heavenly Witnesses I have said what truth and a deep and thorough examination of the subject have obliged me to say. I am satisfied that it is not genuine, though the doctrine in behalf of which it has been originally introduced into the epistle is a doctrine of the highest importance, and most positively revealed in various parts both of the Old and New Testament. The stress which has been laid on the testimony of this text in behalf of the doctrine of the Trinity has done much evil; for when its own authenticity has come to be critically examined, and has been found to rest on no sure foundation, the adversaries of the doctrine itself have thought they had full cause for triumph, and have in effect said, "If this text be to the epistle, and to the doctrine in question, what the sun is in the world, what the heart is in man, and what the needle is in the mariner's compass, then the doctrine is



spurious, for the text is a most manifest forgery." I would just observe, that incautious or feeble defences of any doctrine do not affect the doctrine itself but in the view of superficial minds. The proof that this text is an interpolation which, first existing as an illustrative marginal note, has afterwards been unfortunately introduced into the text, has "demolished no strong hold of the orthodox, has taken away no pillar from the Christian faith." The grand defences of the doctrine of the Trinity, brought down to us from the highest Christian antiquity, stand still in all their force; not one of them was built upon this text, because the text, as a supposed part of St. John's work, did not then exist; therefore neither evidence, prop, nor pillar of the grand doctrine is injured. We have what we ever had in this respect, and we may make the same illustrating use of the words in reference to this doctrine which many Latin writers, since the time of St. Cyprian, made; and which was proper enough in its own place, but became useless when incorporated with the sure sayings of God.

No man, it is hoped, will be so obstinate, perverse, or disingenuous, as to say or insinuate that the man who gives up this text is unsound in the faith; it would be as reasonable to assert, on the other hand, that he who understands the mass of evidence that is against the authenticity of this verse, and who nevertheless will contend for its continuance in the sacred canon, is a Deist in his heart, and endeavors to discredit the truth by mixing it with error and falsehood. Those whose doubts are not removed by the dissertation at the end of his epistle had better read the late Professor Porson's Answer to Dean Travis, where it is presumed they will receive the fullest satisfaction.

**THE**

**FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE**

**OF**

**JOHN.**

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern Writers, 5577.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5571.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5561.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4073.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4297.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3829.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4428.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2417.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3171.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1009.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 818.
- Year of the CCXIIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 820.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 821.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 822.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 381.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 117.
- Year of the Julian era, 114.

- Year of the Spanish era, 107.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 73.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 69.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 20.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 70.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 13; or the fifth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 22.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, A.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-fourth of March, which happened in this year on the sixth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the twenty-sixth of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 12.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 20.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 20, 22, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 27, 28, 0, 0, 2, 2.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 3.
- In this year reigned four Roman emperors, viz., Galba, from Jan. 1 to Jan. 15, Otho ninety days, Vitellius eight months, and Vespasian for the remainder of the year.
- Roman Consuls, Servius Sulpicius Galba Augustus, the second time, and Titus Vinius Rufinus, from Jan. 1 to the death of Galba, Jan. 15; Salvius Otho Augustus, and L. Salvius Otho Titianus, from Jan. 15 to March 1; L. Virginius Rufus, and Vopiscus Pompeius Silvanus, from March 1 to May 1; Titus Arrius Antoninus and P. Marius Celsus, the second time, from May 1 to Sept. 1; C. Fabius Valens and Aulus Alienus Coecina, from Sept. 1, the former holding the Consulship to Nov. 1, the latter being succeeded by Roscius Regulus, on Oct. 31; Cn. Caecilius Simplex and C. Quintius Atticus, from Nov. 1, to the end of the year.

## CHAPTER 1

*The testimony of the apostle concerning the reality of the person and doctrine of Christ; and the end for which he bears this testimony, 1-4. God is light, and none can have fellowship with him who do not walk in the light; those who walk in the light are cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood of Christ, 5-7. No man can say that he has not sinned; but God is faithful and just to cleanse from all unrighteousness them who confess their sins, 8-10.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

**Verse 1. *That which was from the beginning*** That glorious personage, JESUS CHRIST the LORD, Who was from eternity; him, being manifested in the flesh, we have heard proclaim the doctrine of eternal life; with our own eyes have we seen him, not transiently, for we have looked upon him frequently; and our hands have handled — frequently touched, his person; and we have had every proof of the identity and reality of this glorious being that our senses of hearing, ο ακηκοαμεν, seeing, ο εωρακαμεν τοις αφθαλμοις ημων, and feeling, και αι χειρες ημων εψηλαφησαν could possibly require.

**Verse 2. *For the Life was manifested*** The Lord Jesus, who is the creator of all things, and the fountain of life to all sentient and intellectual beings, and from whom eternal life and happiness come, was manifested in the flesh, and we have seen him, and in consequence bear witness to him as the fountain and author of eternal life; for he who was from eternity with the Father was manifested unto us his apostles, and to the whole of the Jewish nation, and preached that doctrine of eternal life which I have before delivered to the world in my gospel, and which I now farther confirm by this epistle.

**Verse 3. *That which we have seen and heard*** We deliver nothing by hearsay, nothing by tradition, nothing from conjecture; we have had the fullest certainty of all that we write and preach.

***That ye also may have fellowship with us*** That ye may be preserved from all false doctrine, and have a real participation with us apostles of the grace, peace, love, and life of God, which communion we have with God the Father, who hath loved us, and given his Son Jesus Christ to redeem us; and with his Son Jesus Christ, who laid down his life for the life of the world and through whom, being God manifested in the flesh, we have union with God, are made partakers of the Divine nature and dwell in God, and God in us.

**Verse 4. *That your joy may be full.*** Ye have already tasted that the Lord is good; but I am now going to show you the height of your Christian calling, that your happiness may be complete, being thoroughly cleansed from all sin, and filled with the fullness of God.

**Verse 5. *This then is the message*** This is the grand principle on which all depends, which we have heard of  $\alpha\pi' \alpha\upsilon\tau\omicron\upsilon$ , FROM him; for neither Moses nor the prophets ever gave that full instruction concerning God and communion with him which Jesus Christ has given, for the only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, has alone declared the fullness of the truth, and the extent of the blessings, which believers on him are to receive. See John 1:18.

***God is light*** The source of wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and in him is no darkness at all — no ignorance, no imperfection, no sinfulness, no misery. And from him wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness are received by every believing soul. This is the grand message of the Gospel, the great principle on which the happiness of man depends. LIGHT implies every essential excellence, especially wisdom, holiness, and happiness. DARKNESS implies all imperfection, and principally ignorance, sinfulness, and misery. LIGHT is the purest, the most subtle, the most useful, and the most diffusive of all God's creatures; it is, therefore, a very proper emblem of the purity, perfection, and goodness of the Divine nature. God is to human soul, what the light is to the world; without the latter all would be dismal and uncomfortable, and terror and death would universally prevail: and without an indwelling God what is religion? Without his all-penetrating and diffusive light, what is the soul of man? Religion would be an empty science, a dead letter, a system unauthoritated and uninfluencing, and the soul a trackless wilderness, a howling waste, full

of evil, of terror and dismay, and ever racked with realizing anticipations of future, successive, permanent, substantial, and endless misery. No wonder the apostle lays this down as a first and grand principle, stating it to be the essential message which he had received from Christ to deliver to the world.

**Verse 6. *If we say that we have fellowship*** Having fellowship, **κοινωνια**, communion, with God, necessarily implies a partaking of the Divine nature. Now if a man profess to have such communion, and walk in darkness — live an irreligious and sinful life, he lies, in the profession which he makes, and does not the truth — does not walk according to the directions of the Gospel, on the grace of which he holds his relation to God, and his communion with him.

The Gnostics, against whose errors it is supposed this epistle was written, were great pretenders to knowledge, to the highest degrees of the Divine illumination, and the nearest communion with the fountain of holiness, while their manners were excessively corrupt.

**Verse 7. *But if we walk in the light*** If, having received the principle of holiness from him, we live a holy and righteous life, deriving continual light, power, and life from him, then we have fellowship one with another; that is, we have communion with God, and God condescends to hold communion with us. This appears to be the intention of the apostle; and so he was understood by some versions and MSS., which, instead of **μετ' αλληλων**, with each other, have **μετ' αυτον**, with him. Those who are deeply experienced in Divine things converse with God, and God with them. What John says is no figure; God and a holy heart are in continual correspondence.

***The blood of Jesus Christ*** The meritorious efficacy of his passion and death has purged our consciences from dead works, and cleanseth us, **καθαριζει ημας**, continues to cleanse us, i.e., to keep clean what it has made clean, (for it requires the same merit and energy to preserve holiness in the soul of man, as to produce it,) or, as several MSS. and some versions read, **καθαριει** and **καθαρισει**, will cleanse; speaking of those who are already justified, and are expecting full redemption in his blood.

And being cleansed from all sin is what every believer should look for, what he has a right to expect, and what he must have in this life, in order to be prepared to meet his God. Christ is not a partial Savior, he saves to the uttermost, and he cleanses from ALL sin.

**Verse 8. *If we say that we have no sin*** This is tantamount to 1 John 1:10: If we say that we have not sinned. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; and therefore every man needs a Savior, such as Christ is. It is very likely that the heretics, against whose evil doctrines the apostle writes, denied that they had any sin, or needed any Savior. In deed, the Gnostics even denied that Christ suffered: the AEon, or Divine Being that dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, according to them, left him when he was taken by the Jews; and he, being but a common man, his sufferings and death had neither merit nor efficacy.

***We deceive ourselves*** By supposing that we have no guilt, no sinfulness, and consequently have no need of the blood of Christ as an atoning sacrifice: this is the most dreadful of all deceptions, as it leaves the soul under all the guilt and pollution of sin, exposed to hell, and utterly unfit for heaven.

***The truth is not in us.*** We have no knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus, the whole of which is founded on this most awful truth—all have sinned, all are guilty, all are unholy; and none can redeem himself. Hence it is as necessary that Jesus Christ should become incarnated, and suffer and die to bring men to God.

**Verse 9. *If we confess our sins*** If, from a deep sense of our guilt, impurity, and helplessness, we humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our iniquity, his holiness, and our own utter helplessness, and implore mercy for his sake who has died for us; he is faithful, because to such he has promised mercy, Psalm 32:5; Proverbs 28:13; and just, for Christ has died for us, and thus made an atonement to the Divine justice; so that God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

***And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*** Not only to forgive the sin, but to purify the heart.

OBSERVE here, 1. Sin exists in the soul after two modes or forms: (1.) In guilt, which requires forgiveness or pardon. (2.) In pollution, which requires cleansing.

2. Guilt, to be forgiven, must be confessed; and pollution, to be cleansed, must be also confessed. In order to find mercy, a man must know and feel himself to be a sinner, that he may fervently apply to God for pardon; in order to get a clean heart, a man must know and feel its depravity, acknowledge and deplore it before God, in order to be fully sanctified.

3. Few are pardoned, because they do not feel and confess their sins; and few are sanctified or cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own sore, and the plague of their hearts.

4. As the blood of Jesus Christ, the merit of his passion and death, applied by faith, purges the conscience from all dead works, so the same cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness.

5. As all unrighteousness is sin, so he that is cleansed from all unrighteousness is cleansed from all sin. To attempt to evade this, and plead for the continuance of sin in the heart through life, is ungrateful, wicked, and even blasphemous; for as he who says he has not sinned, 1 John 1:10, makes God a liar, who has declared the contrary through every part of his revelation; so he that says the blood of Christ either cannot or will not cleanse us from all sin in this life, gives also the lie to his Maker, who has declared the contrary, and thus shows that the word — the doctrine of God is not in him.

Reader, it is the birthright of every child of God to be cleansed from all sin, to keep himself unspotted from the world, and so to live as never more to offend his Maker. All things are possible to him that believeth; because all things are possible to the infinitely meritorious blood and energetic Spirit of the Lord Jesus. See the notes on the parallel passages in the margin; and particularly in St. John's gospel, John 1.



## CHAPTER 2

*He exhorts them not to sin; yet encourages those who may have fallen, by the hope of mercy through Christ, who is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1, 2. He who knows God keeps his commandments; and he who professes to abide in Christ ought to walk as Christ walked, 3-6. The old and new commandment, that we should walk in the light, and love the brethren, 7-11. The apostle's description of the different states in the family of God; little children, young men, and fathers; and directions to each, 12-15. A statement of what prevails in the world, 16, 17. Cautions against antichrists, 18-23. Exhortations to persevere in what they had received, and to continue to follow that anointing of the Divine Spirit, by which they could discern all men, and know all things necessary to their salvation, and proper to prepare them for eternal glory, 24-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2

**Verse 1.** *My little children* **τεκνία μου**. My beloved children; the address of an affectionate father to children whom he tenderly loves. The term also refers to the apostle's authority as their spiritual father, and their obligation to obey as his spiritual children.

***That ye sin not.*** This is the language of the whole Scripture; of every dispensation, ordinance, institution, doctrine, and word of God. Sin not — do not run into ruin; live not so as to promote your own misery; be happy, for it is the will of God that ye should be so; therefore he wills that ye should be holy: holiness and happiness are inseparable; sin and misery are equally so.

***And if any man sin*** If, through ignorance, inexperience, the violence of temptation, unwatchfulness, etc., ye have fallen into sin, and grieved the Spirit of God, do not continue in the sin, nor under the guilt; do not despair of being again restored to the favor of God; your case, it is true, is deeply deplorable, but not desperate; there is still hope, for—

***We have an advocate with the Father*** We still have him before the throne who died for our offenses, and rose again for our justification; and there he makes intercession for us. He is the righteous; he who suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. Do not, therefore, despair, but have immediate recourse to God through him.

**Verse 2. *And he is the propitiation*** ἱλασμος: The atoning sacrifice for our sins. This is the proper sense of the word as used in the Septuagint, where it often occurs; and is the translation of אָשָׁם asham, an oblation for sin, Amos 8:14. חַטָּאת chattath, a sacrifice for sin, Ezekiel 44:27. כִּפּוּר kippur, an atonement, Numbers 5:8. See the note on Romans 3:25, and particularly the note on Luke 18:13. The word is used only here and in 1 John 4:10.

***And not for ours only*** It is not for us apostles that he has died, nor exclusively for the Jewish people, but **περι ολου του κοσμου**, for the whole world, Gentiles as well as Jews, all the descendants of Adam. The apostle does not say that he died for any select part of the inhabitants of the earth, or for some out of every nation, tribe, or kindred; but for ALL MANKIND; and the attempt to limit this is a violent outrage against God and his word.

For the meaning of the word **παρακλητος**

known either God or his Son Jesus-nor is any man properly acquainted with God, who is still under the power of his sins.

**Verse 4. *He that saith, I know him*** This is a severe blow against those false teachers, and against all pretenders to religious knowledge, who live under the power of their sins; and against all Antinomians, and false boasters in the righteousness of Christ as a covering for their personal unholiness. They are all liars, and no truth of God is in them.

**Verse 5. *But whoso keepeth his word*** Conscientiously observes his doctrine, the spirit and letter of the religion of Christ.

***Is the love of God perfected*** The design of God's love in sending Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sin of man *τετελειωται*, is accomplished, in that man who receives the doctrine, and applies for the salvation provided for him. This seems to be the meaning of the apostle.

***That we are in him.*** That we have entered into his spirit and views, received his salvation, have been enabled to walk in the light, and have communion with him by the Holy Spirit.

**Verse 6. *Abideth in him*** He who not only professes to have known Christ, but also that he has communion with him, and abides in his favor, should prove the truth of his profession by walking as Christ walked; living a life of devotion and obedience to God, and of benevolence and beneficence to his neighbor. Thus Christ walked; and he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.

To be in Christ, 1 John 2:5, is to be converted to the Christian faith, and to have received the remission of sins. To abide in Christ, 1 John 2:6, is to continue in that state of salvation, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Verse 7. *Brethren, I write no new commandment*** There seems a contradiction between this and the next verse. But the apostle appears to speak, not so much of any difference in the essence of the precept itself, as in reference to the degrees of light and grace belonging to the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. It was ever the command of God that men should receive his light, walk by that light, and love him and one another. But this commandment was renewed by Christ with much latitude and spirituality

of meaning; and also with much additional light to see its extent, and grace to observe it. It may therefore be called the OLD commandment, which was from the beginning; and also a NEW commandment revealed afresh and illustrated by Christ, with the important addition to the meaning of Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, ye shall love the brethren so as to lay down your lives for each other. See the note on John 13:34.

Instead of **αδελφοι**, brethren, ABC, thirteen others, with both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonic, and Vulgate, with several of the fathers, have **αγαπητοι**, beloved. This is without doubt the true reading.

**Verse 8. *Which thing is true in him and in you*** It is true that Christ loved the world so well as to lay down his life for it; and it was true in them, in all his faithful followers at that time, who were ready to lay down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. There is a saying in Synopsis Sohar, p. 94, n. 51, that may cast some light on this passage: That way in which the just have walked, although it be OLD, yet may be said to be NEW in the love of the righteous. The love that the righteous bear to God and to each other is a renewal of the commandment.

***The darkness is past*** The total thick darkness of the heathen world, and the comparative darkness of the Mosaic dispensation, are now passing away; and the pure and superior light of Christianity is now diffusing its beams everywhere. He does not say that the darkness was all gone by, but **παραγεται**, it is passing away; he does not say that the fullness of the light had appeared, but **ηδη φαινει**, it is now shining and will shine more and more to the perfect day; for the darkness passes away in proportion as the light shines and increases.

**Verse 9. *He that saith he is in the light*** He that professes to be a convert to Christianity, even in the lowest degree; and hateth his brother — not only does not love him, but wills and does him evil, as the Jews did the Gentiles; is in darkness — has received no saving knowledge of the truth; and, whatever he may pretend, is in heathen ignorance, or even worse than heathen ignorance, to the present time, notwithstanding the clear shining of the light of the Gospel.

**Verse 10. *He that loveth his brother*** That is, his neighbor, his fellow creature, whether Jew or Gentile, so as to bear him continual good will, and to be ready to do him every kind office; abideth in the light — not only gives proof that he has received Christ Jesus the Lord, but that he walks in him, that he retains the grace of his justification, and grows therein.

***And there is none occasion of stumbling in him.*** και σκανδαλον εν αυτω ουκ εστιν. And there is no stumbling block in him; he neither gives nor receives offense: love prevents him from giving any to his neighbor; and love prevents him from receiving any from his neighbor, because it leads him to put the best construction on every thing. Besides, as he walks in the light, he sees the stumbling blocks that are in the way, and avoids them; every part of his path being illuminated. Many fall into sin because they do not see the snares that are in the way; and they do not see the snares because they either have not received, or do not abide in, the light.

**Verse 11. *But he that hateth his brother is in darkness*** He is still in his heathen or unconverted state; and walketh in darkness, his conduct being a proof of that state; and knoweth not whither he goeth — having no proper knowledge of God or eternal things; and cannot tell whether he is going to heaven or hell, because that darkness has blinded his eyes — darkened his whole soul, mind, and heart.

**Verse 12. *I write unto you, little children*** τεκνια. Beloved children, (see on 1 John 2:1,) those who were probably the apostle's own converts, and members of the Church over which he presided. But it may be applied to young converts in general; those who can call God Abba, Father, by the Holy Spirit: therefore he says of them, that their sins were forgiven them for his name's sake: i.e. on account of Jesus, the Savior, who had died for them, and was now their Mediator at the right hand of God.

**Verse 13. *I write unto you, fathers*** By fathers it is very likely that the apostle means persons who had embraced Christianity on its first promulgation in Judea and in the Lesser Asia, some of them had probably seen Christ in the flesh; for this appears to be what is meant by, Ye have known him from the beginning. These were the elders and eye witnesses, who were of the longest standing in the Church, and well established in the truths of the Gospel, and in Christian experience. But τον απ' αρχης, him

who is from the beginning, may mean Jesus Christ in the eternity of his nature, see John 1:1, 2; but the sense is the same.

*I write unto you, young men* These were confirmed disciples of Christ;

These four classes constituted the household or family of God; each class, in ascending gradation, seems to have had more light, experience, and holiness than the other. 1. The **τεκνία**, beloved children, or infants, are those who are just born into the heavenly family. 2. The **παιδία**, little children, are those who are able to walk and speak; they know their heavenly Father, and can call him by that name. 3. The **νεανίσκοι**, young men, are such as are grown up to man's estate; these perform the most difficult part of the labor, and are called to fight the battles of the Lord. 4. The **πατερες**, fathers, are those who are at the foundation of the spiritual family, and have known the whole economy of the work of God in themselves and in others. These have the largest stock of spiritual wisdom and religious experience. All these answer to the component members of a perfect human family. 1. There is the beloved infant dandled on the knees of its parents. 2. There are the little children that can speak a little, run about, answer to their own names, distinguish and call on their father and mother, and are now put under instruction. 3. There are the youths, those who are grown up to man's estate, are strong to labor, retain the instructions they have received, act upon them, and are occasionally called upon to defend their family, property, and country, against spoilers and oppressors. 4. There are the parents, the father and mother, from whom the family sprang, and who are the governors and directors of the household. To these four classes, in a perfect family, the apostle appears to allude; and we see, considered in this light, with what delicacy and propriety he uses these images.

**Verse 14. *The word of God abideth in you*** Ye have not only thoroughly known and digested the Divine doctrine, but your hearts are moulded into it; ye know it to be the truth of God from the power and happiness with which it inspires you, and from the constant abiding testimony of the Spirit of that truth which lives and witnesses wherever that truth lives and predominates.

**Verse 15. *Love not the world*** Though these several classes were so well acquainted with Divine things, and had all tasted the powers of the world to come: yet so apt are men to be drawn aside by sensible things, that the Holy Spirit saw it necessary to caution these against the love of the world, the inordinate desire of earthly things. Covetousness is the predominant vice of old age: Ye fathers, love not the world. The things which are in the

world, its profits, pleasures, and honors, have the strongest allurements for youth; therefore, ye young men, little children, and babes, love not the things of this world. Let those hearts abide faithful to God who have taken him for their portion.

***The love of the Father is not in him.*** The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible. If you give place to the love of the world, the love of God cannot dwell in you; and if you have not his love, you can have no peace, no holiness, no heaven.

**Verse 16. *For all that is in the world*** All that it can boast of, all that it can promise, is only sensual, transient gratification, and even this promise it cannot fulfill; so that its warmest votaries can complain loudest of their disappointment.

***The lust of the flesh*** Sensual and impure desires which seek their gratification in women, strong drink, delicious viands, and the like.

***Lust of the eyes*** Inordinate desires after finery of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings, and decorations of all sorts.

***Pride of life*** Hunting after honors, titles, and pedigrees; boasting of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honorable acquaintance, and the like.

***Is not of the Father*** Nothing of these inordinate attachments either comes from or leads to God. They are of this world; here they begin, flourish, and end. They deprave the mind, divert it from Divine pursuits, and render it utterly incapable of spiritual enjoyments.

**Verse 17. *The world passeth away*** All these things are continually fading and perishing; and the very state in which they are possessed is changing perpetually, and the earth and its works will be shortly burnt up.

***And the lust thereof*** The men of this world, their vain pursuits, and delusive pleasures, are passing away in their successive generations, and their very memory perishes; but he that doeth the will of God — that seeks the pleasure, profit, and honor that comes from above, shall abide for ever, always happy through time and eternity, because God, the unchangeable source of felicity, is his portion.



**Verse 18. *Little children, it is the last time*** This place is variously understood. This is the last dispensation of grace and mercy to mankind; the present age is the conclusion of the Jewish state, as the temple and holy city are shortly to be destroyed. But as there are many who suppose that this epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, consequently the words cannot, on that supposition, refer to this. Others think that *εσχάτη ώρα* should be translated, a most difficult, perilous, and wretched time; a time in which all kinds of vices, heresies, and pollutions shall have their full reign; that time which our Lord predicted, Matthew 7:15, when he said, Beware of false prophets. And Matthew 24:11, 12: Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And Matthew 24:24: There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders. And Matthew 24:25: Behold, I have told you before. Now the apostle may allude to these predictions of our Lord; but all these refer to a time antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem. I am therefore inclined to think, whatever may be here the precise meaning of the last time, that the epistle before us was written while Jerusalem yet stood. See what is said in the preface on this head.

***Antichrist shall come*** Who is this *αντιχριστος* antichrist? Is he the Emperor Domitian, the Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Nazareans, Cerinthians, Romish pontiffs, etc., etc.! Ans. Any person, thing, doctrine, system of religion, polity, etc., which is opposed to Christ, and to the spirit and spread of his Gospel, is antichrist. We need not look for this imaginary being in any of the above exclusively. Even Protestantism may have its antichrist as well as Popery. Every man who opposes the spirit of the Gospel, and every teacher and writer who endeavors to lower the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world, is a genuine antichrist, no matter where or among whom he is found. The heresies which sprang up in the days of St. John were the antichrist of that time. As there has been a succession of oppositions to Christianity in its spirit and spread through every age since its promulgation in the world, so there has been a succession of antichrists. We may bring this matter much lower; every enemy of Christ, every one who opposes his reign in the world, in others, or in himself, is an antichrist; and consequently every wicked man is an

antichrist. But the name has been generally applied to whatever person or thing systematically opposes Christ and his religion.

***Many antichrists*** Many false prophets, false Messiahs, heretics, and corrupters of the truth.

***Whereby we know that it is the last time.*** That time which our Lord has predicted, and of which he has warned us.

**Verse 19. *They went out from us*** These heretics had belonged to our Christian assemblies, they professed Christianity, and do so still; but we apostles did not commission them to preach to you, for they have disgraced the Divine doctrine with the most pernicious opinions; they have given up or explained away its most essential principles; they have mingled the rest with heathenish rites and Jewish glosses. While, therefore, we acknowledge that they once belonged to us, we assert that they are not of us. They are not Christians; we abhor their conduct and their creed. We never sent them to teach.

***They were not of us*** For a considerable time before they left our assemblies they gave proofs that they had departed from the faith; for if they had been of us — if they had been apostles, and continued in the firm belief of the Christian doctrines, they would not have departed from us to form a sect of themselves.

***That they were not all of us.*** They were not expelled from the Christian Church; they were not sent out by us; but they separated from it and us. None of them had been inspired as we apostles were, though they pretended to a very high teaching; but their separating from us manifested that they were not taught, as we were, by the Spirit of God. These false teachers probably drew many sincere souls away with them; and to this it is probable the apostle alludes when he says, they were not ALL of us. Some were; others were not.

**Verse 20. *But ye have an unction*** The word χρισμα signifies not an unction, but an ointment, the very thing itself by which anointing is effected; and so it was properly rendered in our former translations. Probably this is an allusion to the holy anointing oil of the law, and to Psalm 14:7: God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness — he hath given thee the plenitude of the Spirit, which none of thy fellows — none

of the prophets, ever received in such abundance. By this it is evident that not only the gifts of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit himself, is intended. This Spirit dwelt at that time in a peculiar manner in the Church, to teach apostles, teachers, and all the primitive believers, every thing requisite for their salvation; and to make them the instruments of handing down to posterity that glorious system of truth which is contained in the New Testament. As oil was used among the Asiatics for the inauguration of persons into important offices, and this oil was acknowledged to be an emblem of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, without which the duties of those offices could not be discharged; so it is put here for the Spirit himself, who presided in the Church, and from which all gifts and graces flowed. The **χρῖσμα**, chrisem or ointment here mentioned is also an allusion to the holy anointing ointment prescribed by God himself, Exodus 30:23-25, which was composed of fine myrrh, sweet cinnamon, sweet calamus, cassia lignea, and olive oil. This was an emblem of the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit. See the notes on the above place. And for the reason of this anointing see the note on Exodus 29:7.

***Ye know all things.*** Every truth Of God necessary to your salvation and the salvation of man in general, and have no need of that knowledge of which the Gnostics boast.

But although the above is the sense in which this verse is generally understood, yet there is reason to doubt its accuracy. The adjective **παντα**, which we translate all things, is most probably in the accusative case singular, having **ανθρωπον**, man, or some such substantive, understood. The verse therefore should be translated: Ye have an ointment from the Holy One, and ye know or discern EVERY MAN. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by **των πλαωντων** in 1 John 2:26, those who are deceiving or misleading you; and in the same sense should **παντων**, 1 John 2:27, be understood: But as the same anointing teacheth you **παντων**, not of all things, but of ALL MEN. It is plain, from the whole tenor of the epistle, that St. John is guarding the Christians against seducers and deceivers, who were even then disturbing and striving to corrupt the Church. In consequence of this he desires them to try the spirits whether they were of God, 1 John 4:1. But how were they to try them? Principally by that anointing — that spiritual light and discernment which they had received from God; and also by comparing the doctrine of these men with

what they had heard from the beginning. The anointing here mentioned seems to mean the spirit of illumination, or great knowledge and discernment in spiritual things. By this they could readily distinguish the false apostles from the true.

**Verse 21. *I have not written, etc.*** It is not because ye are ignorant of these things that I write to you, but because you know them, and can by these judge of the doctrines of those false teachers, and clearly perceive that they are liars; for they contradict the truth which ye have already received, and consequently their doctrine is a lie, and no lie can be of the truth, i.e. consistent with Christianity.

**Verse 22. *Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?*** Here we see some of the false doctrines which were then propagated in the world. There were certain persons who, while they acknowledged Jesus to be a Divine teacher, denied him to be the Christ, i.e. the MESSIAH.

***He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son,*** He is antichrist who denies the supernatural and miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, who denies Jesus to be the Son of God, and who denies God to be the Father of the Lord Jesus; thus he denies the Father and the Son. The Jews in general, and the Gnostics in particular, denied the miraculous conception of Jesus; with both he was accounted no more than a common man, the son of Joseph and Mary. But the Gnostics held that a Divine person, AEon, or angelical being, dwelt in him; but all things else relative to his miraculous generation and Divinity they rejected. These were antichrists, who denied Jesus to be the Christ.

**Verse 23. *Whosoever denieth the Son*** He who denies Jesus to be the Son of God, and consequently the Christ or Messiah, he hath not the Father — he can have no birth from above, he cannot be enrolled among the children of God, because none can be a child of God but by faith in Christ Jesus.

***He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.*** This clause is printed by our translators in Italics to show it to be of doubtful authority, as it was probably wanting in the chief of those MSS. which they consulted, as it was in Coverdale's Bible, printed 1535; Tindall's Text, printed 1548; and in all the early printed editions (which I have seen) previously to 1566; the Bible of Richard Cardmarden, printed in English at

Rouen, where this clause is inserted in a different letter between brackets. But that the clause is genuine, and should be restored to the text without any mark of spuriousness, as I have done in the text of this work, is evident from the authorities by which it is supported. It is found in ABC, and in between twenty and thirty others of the best authority; as also in both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, and Vulgate. It is also quoted as a part of the text by Origen, Meletius, Athanasius, both the Cyrils, Theophylact, Vigilus of Tapsum, Pelagius, Cerealis, Cassian; and in substance by Euthalius, Epiphanius, Cyprian, Hilary, Faustinus, Lucifer of Cagliari, Augustine, and Bede. It is wanting in the Arabic, in the Polyglot, in a MSS. in the Harleian library, and in some few others. It is doubtless genuine, and Griesbach has with propriety restored it to the text, from which it never should have been separated.

**Verse 24. *Let that therefore abide in you*** Continue in the doctrines concerning the incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Lord Jesus, which you have heard preached from the beginning by us his apostles.

***Ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.*** Ye who are preachers shall not only be acknowledged as ministers of the Church of Christ, but be genuine children of God, by faith in the Son of his love; and ye all, thus continuing, shall have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

**Verse 25. *This is the promise*** God has promised eternal life to all who believe on Christ Jesus. So they who receive his doctrine, and continue in communion with the Father and the Son, shall have this eternal life.

**Verse 26. *These things have I written*** Either meaning the whole epistle, or what is contained in the preceding verses, from the beginning of the 18th to the end of the 25th. { 1 John 2:18-25 }

***Them that seduce you.*** περι των πλανωντων υμας· That is, the deceivers that were among them, and who were labouring to pervert the followers of Christ.

**Verse 27. *But the anointing which ye have received*** That ointment, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned 1 John 2:20, where see the note.

***Ye need not that any man teach you*** The Gnostics, who pretended to the highest illumination, could bring no proof that they were divinely taught, nor had they any thing in their teaching worthy the acceptance of the meanest Christian; therefore they had no need of that, nor of any other teaching but that which the same anointing teacheth, the same Spirit from whom they had already received the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Whatever that taught, they needed; and whatever those taught whose teaching was according to this Spirit, they needed. St. John does not say that those who had once received the teaching of the Divine Spirit had no farther need of the ministry of the Gospel; no, but he says they had no need of such teaching as their false teachers proposed to them; nor of any other teaching that was different from that anointing, i.e. the teaching of the Spirit of God. No man, howsoever holy, wise, or pure, can ever be in such a state as to have no need of the Gospel ministry: they who think so give the highest proof that they have never yet learned of Christ or his Spirit.

***And is truth*** Because it is the Spirit of truth John 16:13.

***And is no lie*** It has nothing like the fables of the Gnostics. It can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

**Verse 28. *And now, little children*** **τεκνία**, Beloved children, abide in him — in Christ Jesus. Let his word and spirit continually abide in you, and have communion with the Father and the Son.

***That when he shall appear*** To judge the world, we may have confidence, **παρρησιαν**, freedom of speech, liberty of access, boldness, from a conviction that our cause is good, and that we have had proper ground for exultation; and not be ashamed — confounded, when it appears that those who were brought to Christ Jesus, have apostatized, and are no longer found in the congregation of the saints, and consequently are not our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Abide in him, that this may not be the case.

**Verse 29. *If ye know that he is righteous*** That God is a holy God, ye know also, that every one who doeth righteousness — who lives a holy life, following the commandments of God, is born of him, **BEGOTTEN** of

him — is made a partaker of the Divine nature, without which he could neither have a holy heart, nor live a holy life.

This verse properly belongs to the following chapter, and should not be separated from it. The subject is the same, and does not stand in any strict relation to that with which the 28th verse concludes.

THE titles bestowed on Christians in the New Testament have been misunderstood by many. What belongs, strictly speaking, to the PURE and HOLY, is often applied to those who, though bound by their PROFESSION to be such, were very far from it. This has been strongly denied by writers who should have known better. Dr. Taylor has handled this point well in his Key to the Apostolic Writings, from which I have given a copious extract in my preface to the Epistle to the Romans, from the conviction that the subject had been most dangerously misapprehended; and that several of the worst heresies which disgrace religion had sprung from this misapprehension. With some, Dr. Taylor's being an Arian was sufficient to invalidate any testimony he might offer; but it is no discovery of Dr. Taylor; it is what every attentive, unprejudiced reader finds on reading the Old Testament in connection with the New. Perhaps the testimony of a judicious Calvinist may be better received, not that this truth needs the testimony of either, because it everywhere speaks for itself, but because those who have too little grace, sense, and candour to search for themselves, may be pleased that Dr. Macknight saves them the trouble.

After having remarked that the words born of him, **ΕΞ ΑΥΤΟΥ ΓΕΓΕΝΝΗΤΑΙ**, should be translated hath been BEGOTTEN of him, which is the literal signification of the word, from **γενναω**, genero, gigno, I beget, (BORN of God being nowhere found in the Scripture,) he goes on to say:—

“To understand the import of the high titles which in the New Testament are given to the disciples of Christ, viz.: the begotten of God, as here; children of God, as in the next chapter; heirs of God, Romans 8:17; elect of God-adopted of God-saints-a royal priesthood-a holy nation-a peculiar people, 1 Peter 2:9; the following observations may be of use.

“1. These high titles were anciently given to the Israelites as a nation, because they were separated from mankind to be God's visible Church, for

the purpose of preserving the knowledge and worship of him in the world, as the only true God.

“This appears from God’s own words, Exodus 19:3-6, etc.: Tell the



which Abraham was constituted the father of all believers. This higher generation, by which believers have the moral image of God communicated to them, is well described, John 1:12: As many as received him, to them gave he power to be called the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name; **οι εγεννηθησαν**, who were BEGOTTEN, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. That is: Men become the true sons of God, not by their being naturally descended from this or that father, nor by their being called the sons of God by men like themselves, but by God's bestowing on them that high appellation on account of their faith and holiness," (which were produced in them by their regeneration through the Spirit of God.)

"3. If the Israelites, of whom the ancient visible Church and people of God were composed, were all called the sons of God because Isaac, from whom they were descended, was supernaturally begotten by the power of God; certainly the believers of all ages and nations, of whom the visible Church is composed, may with much greater propriety be called the sons of God, since they are begotten of God, and possess his moral nature.

"4. Thus it appears that the high titles above mentioned, namely, the sons of God, the children of God, the elect of God, the adoption of sons, the election, saints, holy nation, royal priesthood, peculiar people, were anciently given to the Israelites AS A NATION, merely on account of their being the visible Church and people of God, without any regard to the personal character of the individuals of whom that nation was composed. It appears, also, that under the Gospel the same high titles were bestowed on whole Churches, merely on account of their profession of Christianity, without any regard to the personal character of the individuals who composed these Churches. But these high titles, with some others of greater importance, such as the begotten of God, the heirs of God, the adoption, were given in an appropriated sense to individuals likewise, on account of their faith and holiness. When given to whole Churches, these titles imported nothing more than that the society to which they were given was a Church of Christ, (i.e. professed Christianity,) and that the individuals of which that society was composed were entitled to all the privileges belonging to the visible Church of God. But when appropriated to individuals, these titles implied that the persons to whom they were

given were really partakers of the nature of God; and that they were the objects of his paternal love, and heirs of his glory.

“Wherefore, in reading the Scriptures, by attending to the different foundations of these titles, and by considering whether they are applied to Churches or individuals, we shall easily understand their true import. Thus, when St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, 1 Thessalonians 1:4, Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election, he could not mean their election to eternal life, since many of them were living disorderly, 2 Thessalonians 3:11, but their election to be the visible Church of God under the Gospel; whereas, when John, in the verse before us, says, Every one who doeth righteousness hath been begotten of God, by restricting the title to a specific character he teaches us that the persons of whom he speaks are the sons of God in the highest sense, and heirs of eternal glory.” How forcible are right words! See also the introduction to the Epistle to the Romans.

## CHAPTER 3

*The extraordinary love of God towards mankind, and the effects of it, 1-3. Sin is the transgression of the law, and Christ was manifested to take away our sins, 4-6. The children of God are known by the holiness of their lives, the children of the devil by the sinfulness of theirs, 7-10. We should love one another, for he that hateth his brother is a murderer; as Christ laid down his life for us, so we should lay down our lives for the brethren, 11-16. Charity is a fruit of brotherly love; our love should be active, not professional merely, 17, 18. How we may know that we are of the truth, 19-21. They whose ways please God, have an answer to all their prayers, 22. The necessity of keeping the commandment of Christ, that he may dwell in us and we in him by his Spirit, 23, 24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

**Verse 1.** *Behold, what manner of love* Whole volumes might be written upon this and the two following verses, without exhausting the extraordinary subject contained in them, viz., the love of God to man. The apostle himself, though evidently filled with God, and walking in the fullness of his light, does not attempt to describe it; he calls on the world and the Church to behold it, to look upon it, to contemplate it, and wonder at it.

What manner of love. — *ποταπην αγαπην*. What great love, both as to quantity and quality; for these ideas are included in the original term. The length, the breadth, the depth, the height, he does not attempt to describe.

*The Father hath bestowed* For we had neither claim nor merit that we should be called, that is, constituted or made, the sons of God, who were before children of the wicked one, animal, earthly, devilish; therefore, the love which brought us from such a depth of misery and degradation must appear the more extraordinary and impressive. After *κληθωμεν*, that we might be called, *και εσμεν*, and we are, is added by ABC, seventeen others, both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, AEthiopic, Slavonic, and Vulgate.

**Therefore the world** The Jews, and all who know not God, and are seeking their portion in this life; knoweth us not — do not acknowledge, respect, love, or approve of us. In this sense the word **γενοσκειν** is here to be understood. The world KNEW well enough that there were such persons; but they did not approve of them. We have often seen that this is a frequent use of the term know, both in Hebrew and Greek, in the Old Testament and also in the New.

**Because it knew him not.** The Jews did not acknowledge Jesus; they neither approved of him, his doctrine, nor his manner of life.

**Verse 2. Now are we the sons of God** He speaks of those who are begotten of God, and who work righteousness. See the preceding chapter.

**And it doth not yet appear what we shall be** **ουπω εμφανερωθη**· It is not yet manifest; though we know that we are the children of God, we do not know that state of glorious excellence to which, as such, we shall be raised.

**When he shall appear** **εαν φανερωθη**· When he shall be manifested; i.e., when he comes the second time, and shall be manifested in his glorified human nature to judge the world.

**We shall be like him** For our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body; we shall see him as he is, in all the glory and majesty both of the Divine and human nature. See Philippians 3:21; and John 17:24: Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory. John had seen his glory on the mount when he was transfigured; and this we find was ineffably grand; but even this must have been partially obscured, in order to enable the disciples to bear the sight, for they were not then like him. But when they shall be like him, they shall see him as he is — in all the splendor of his infinite majesty.

**Verse 3. And ever man that hath this hope in him** All who have the hope of seeing Christ as he is; that is, of enjoying him in his own glory; purifieth himself — abstains from all evil, and keeps himself from all that is in the world, viz., the lusts of the flesh, of the eye, and the pride of life. God having purified his heart, it is his business to keep himself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life. The apostle does not here speak of any man purifying his own heart,

because this is impossible; but of his persevering in the state of purity into which the Lord hath brought him. The words, however, may be understood of a man's anxiously using all the means that lead to purity; and imploring God for the sanctifying Spirit, to "cleanse the thoughts of his heart by its inspiration, that he may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his name."

*As he is pure.* Till he is as completely saved from his sins as Christ was free from sin. Many tell us that "this never can be done, for no man can be saved from sin in this life." Will these persons permit us to ask, how much sin may we be saved from in this life? Something must be ascertained on this subject: 1. That the soul may have some determinate object in view; 2. That it may not lose its time, or employ its faith and energy, in praying for what is impossible to be attained. Now, as he was manifested to take away our sins, 1 John 3:5, to destroy the works of the devil, 1 John 3:8; and as his blood cleanseth from all sin and unrighteousness, 1 John 1:7, 9; is it not evident that God means that believers in Christ shall be saved from all sin? For if his blood cleanses from all sin, if he destroys the works of the devil, (and sin is the work of the devil,) and if he who is born of God does not commit sin, 1 John 3:9, then he must be cleansed from all sin; and, while he continues in that state he lives without sinning against God, for the seed of God remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born, or begotten, of God, 1 John 3:9. How strangely warped and blinded by prejudice and system must men be who, in the face of such evidence as this, will still dare to maintain that no man can be saved from his sin in this life; but must daily commit sin, in thought, word, and deed, as the Westminster divines have asserted: that is, every man is laid under the fatal necessity of sinning as many ways against God as the devil does through his natural wickedness and malice; for even the devil himself can have no other way of sinning against God except by thought, word, and deed. And yet, according to these, and others of the same creed, "even the most regenerate sin thus against God as long as they live." It is a miserable salvo to say, they do not sin so much as they used to do; and they do not sin habitually, only occasionally. Alas for this system! Could not the grace that saved them partially save them perfectly? Could not that power of God that saved them from habitual sin, save them from occasional or accidental sin? Shall we suppose that sin, how potent soever it may be, is as potent as the Spirit and grace of Christ? And

may we not ask, If it was for Gad's glory and their good that they were partially saved, would it not have been more for God's glory and their good if they had been perfectly saved? But the letter and spirit of God's word, and the design and end of Christ's coming, is to save his people from their sins. Dr. Macknight having stated that *αγνιζει*, purifieth, is in the present tense, most ridiculously draws this conclusion from it: "In this life no one can attain to perfect purity; by this text, therefore, as well as by 1 John 1:8, those fanatics are condemned who imagine they are able to live without sin." Yes, doctor, the men you call fanatics do most religiously believe that, by the grace of Christ cleansing and strengthening them, they can love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbor as themselves; and live without grieving the Spirit of God, and without sinning against their heavenly Father. And they believe that, if they are not thus saved, it is their own fault. But a blind man must ever be a bad judge of colors.

**Verse 4. *Sin is the transgression of the law.*** The spirit of the law as well as of the Gospel is, that "we should love God with all our powers, and our neighbor as ourselves." All disobedience is contrary to love; therefore sin is the transgression of the law, whether the act refers immediately to God or to our neighbor.

**Verse 5. *And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins*** He came into the world to destroy the power, pardon the guilt, and cleanse from the pollution of sin. This was the very design of his manifestation in the flesh. He was born, suffered, and died for this very purpose; and can it be supposed that he either cannot or will not accomplish the object of his own coming?

***In him is no sin.*** And therefore he is properly qualified to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of men.

**Verse 6. *Whosoever abideth in him*** By faith, love, and obedience.

***Sinneth not*** Because his heart is purified by faith, and he is a worker together with God, and consequently does not receive the grace of God in vain. See on 1 John 3:3.

***Hath not seen him*** It is no unusual thing with this apostle, both in his gospel and in his epistles, to put occasionally the past for the present, and

the present for the past tense. It is very likely that here he puts, after the manner of the Hebrew, the preterite for the present: He who sins against God doth not see him, neither doth he know him — the eye of his faith is

indubitable evidence that many of the heathen philosophers had acquired, by mental discipline and cultivation, an entire ascendancy over all their wonted vicious habits. Perhaps my reader will recollect the story of the physiognomist, who, coming into the place where Socrates was delivering a lecture, his pupils, wishing to put the principles of the man's science to proof, desired him to examine the face of their master, and say what his moral character was. After a full contemplation of the philosopher's visage, he pronounced him "the most gluttonous, drunken, brutal, and libidinous old man that he had ever met." As the character of Socrates was the reverse of all this, his disciples began to insult the physiognomist. Socrates interfered, and said, "The principles of his science may be very correct, for such I was, but I have conquered it by my philosophy." O ye Christian divines! ye real or pretended Gospel ministers! will ye allow the influence of the grace of Christ a sway not even so extensive as that of the philosophy of a heathen who never heard of the true God?

**Verse 10. *In this the children of God are manifest*** Here is a fearful text. Who is a child of the devil? He that commits sin. Who is a child of God? He that works righteousness. By this text we shall stand or fall before God, whatever our particular creed may say to the contrary.

***Neither he that loveth not his brother.*** No man is of God who is not ready on all emergencies to do any act of kindness for the comfort, relief, and support of any human being. For, as God made of one blood all the nations of men to dwell upon the face of the whole earth, so all are of one family; and consequently all are brethren, and should love as brethren.

**Verse 11. *For this is the message*** See 1 John 1:5. From the beginning God hath taught men that they should love one another. How essentially necessary this is to the comfort and well-being of man in this state of trial and difficulty, every sensible man must see. All are dependent upon all; all upon each, and each upon all. Mutual love makes this dependence pleasant and doubly profitable. Nothing can be more pleasing to an ingenuous and generous mind than to communicate acts of kindness.

**Verse 12. *Not as Cain*** Men should not act to each other as Cain did to his brother Abel. He murdered him because he was better than himself. But who was Cain? *εκ του πονηρου ην*, he was of the devil. And who are they who, through pride, lust of power, ambition, gain, etc., murder each



other in wars and political contentions? **ΕΚ ΤΟΥ ΠΟΝΗΡΟΥ ΕΙΣΙ**. To attempt to justify the principle, and excuse the instigators, authors, abettors, etc., of such wars, is as vain as it is wicked. They are opposed to the nature of God, and to that message which he has sent to man from the beginning: Love one another. Love your enemies. Surely this does not mean, Blow out their brains, or, Cut their throats. O, how much of the spirit, temper, and letter of the Gospel have the nations of the world, and particularly the nations of Europe, to learn!

*And wherefore slew he him?* What could induce a brother to imbrue his hands in a brother's blood? Why, his brother was righteous, and he was wicked; and the seed of the wicked one which was in him induced him to destroy his brother, because the seed of God-the Divine nature, was found in him.

**Verse 13. *Marvel not-if the world hate you.*** Expect no better treatment from unconverted Jews and Gentiles than Abel received from his wicked and cruel brother. This was a lesson to the Church, preparatory to martyrdom. Expect neither justice nor mercy from the men who are enemies of God. They are either full of malice and envy, hateful, hating one another, or they are specious, hollow, false, and deceitful.

*“A foe to GOD was ne'er true friend to MAN.”*

**Verse 14. *We know that we have passed from death unto life*** Death and life are represented here as two distinct territories, states, or kingdoms, to either of which the inhabitants of either may be removed. This is implied in the term **μεταβεβηκαμεν**, from **μετα**, denoting change of place, and **βαινω**, I go. It is the same figure which St. Paul uses, Colossians 1:13: Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love. The believers to whom St. John writes had been once in the region and shadow of death, in the place where sin and death reigned, whose subjects they were; but they had left that kingdom of oppression, wretchedness, and wo, and had come over to the kingdom of life, whose king was the Prince and Author of life; where all was liberty, prosperity, and happiness; where life and love were universally prevalent, and death and hatred could not enter. We know, therefore, says the apostle, that we are passed over from the territory of death to the kingdom of life, because we love the brethren, which those

who continue in the old kingdom-under the old covenant, can never do; for he that loveth not his brother abideth in death. He has never changed his original residence. He is still an unconverted, unrenewed sinner.

**Verse 15. *Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer*** He has the same principle in him which was in Cain, and it may lead to the same consequences.

***No murderer hath eternal life*** Eternal life springs from an indwelling God; and God cannot dwell in the heart where hatred and malice dwell. This text has been quoted to prove that no murderer can be saved. This is not said in the text; and there have been many instances of persons who have been guilty of murder having had deep and genuine repentance, and who doubtless found mercy from his hands who prayed for his murderers, Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do! It is, however, an awful text for the consideration of those who shed human blood on frivolous pretences, or in those wars which have their origin in the worst passions of the human heart.

**Verse 16. *Hereby perceive we the love of God*** This sixteenth verse of this third chapter of John's first epistle is, in the main, an exact counterpart of the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John's gospel: God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, etc. Here the apostle says, We perceive, *εγνωκαμεν*, we have known, the love of God, because he laid down his life for us. Of God is not in the text, but it is preserved in one MS., and in two or three of the versions; but though this does not establish its authenticity, yet *του θεου*, of God, is necessarily understood, or *του χριστου*, of Christ, as Erpen's Arabic has it; or *αυτου εις ημας*, his love to us, as is found in the Syriac. A higher proof than this of his love Christ could not have possibly given to the children of men.

***We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.*** We should risk our life to save the lives of others; and we should be ready to lay down our lives to redeem their souls when this may appear to be a means of leading them to God.

**Verse 17. *But whoso hath this worlds good*** Here is a test of this love; if we do not divide our bread with the hungry, we certainly would not lay down our life for him. Whatever love we may pretend to mankind, if we

are not charitable and benevolent, we give the lie to our profession. If we have not bowels of compassion, we have not the love of God in us; if we shut up our bowels against the poor, we shut Christ out of our hearts, and ourselves out of heaven.

This worlds good. — *του βιον του κοσμου*. The life of this world, i.e. the means of life; for so *βιος* is often used. See Mark 12:44; Luke 8:43; 15:12, 30; 21:4, and other places.

*How dwelleth the love of God in him?* That is, it cannot possibly dwell in such a person. Hardheartedness and God's love never meet together, much less can they be associated.

**Verse 18.** *My little children* *τεκνια μου*, My beloved children, let us not love in word — in merely allowing the general doctrine of love to God and man to be just and right;

*Neither in tongue* In making professions of love, and of a charitable and humane disposition, and resting there; but in deed — by humane and merciful acts;

*And in truth.* Feeling the disposition of which we speak. There is a good saying in Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 145, 4, on this point: "If love consisted in word only, then love ceaseth as soon as the word is pronounced. Such was the love between Balak and Balaam. But if love consisteth not in word, it cannot be dissolved; such was the love of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs which were before them."

**Verse 19.** *Hereby we know that we are of the truth* That we have the true religion of the Lord Jesus, and shall assure our hearts — be persuaded in our consciences, that we have the truth as it is in Jesus; as no man can impose upon himself by imagining he loves when he does not: he may make empty professions to others, but if he loves either God or man, he knows it because he feels it; and love unfelt is not love, it is word or tongue. This the apostle lays down as a test of a man's Christianity, and it is the strongest and most infallible test that can be given. He that loves feels that he does love; and he who feels that he loves God and man has true religion; and he who is careful to show the fruits of this love, in obedience to God and humane acts to man, gives others the fullest proof that he has the loving mind that was in Jesus.

**Verse 20. *If our heart condemn us*** If we be conscious that our love is feigned, we shall feel inwardly condemned in professing to have what we have not. And if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, for he knows every hypocritical winding and turning of the soul, he searches the heart, and tries the reins, and sees all the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart which we cannot see, and, if we could see them, could not comprehend them; and as he is the just Judge, he will condemn us more strictly and extensively than we can be by our own conscience.

**Verse 21. *If our heart condemn us not*** If we be conscious to ourselves of our own sincerity, that we practice not deceit, and use no mask, then have we confidence toward God — we can appeal to him for our sincerity, and we can come with boldness to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. And therefore says the apostle,

**Verse 22. *Whatsoever we ask*** In such a spirit, we receive of him, for he delights to bless the humble, upright, and sincere soul.

***Because we keep his commandments*** Viz., by loving him and loving our neighbor. These are the great commandments both of the old covenant and the new. And whoever is filled with this love to God and man will do those things which are pleasing to him; for love is the very soul and principle of obedience.

The word heart is used in the preceding verses for conscience; and so the Greek fathers interpret it, particularly Origen, Nicephorus, and OEcumenius; but this is not an unfrequent meaning of the word in the sacred writings.

**Verse 23. *That we should believe on the name of his Son*** We are commanded to believe on Christ, that for the sake of his passion and death we may be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; and being through him redeemed from the guilt of sin, restored to the Divine favor, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost, we are enabled to love one another as he gave us commandment; for without a renewal of the heart, love to God and man is impossible, and this renewal comes by Christ Jesus.

**Verse 24. *Dwelleth in him*** i.e. in God; and he — God, in him — the believer.

*And hereby we know* We know by the Spirit which he hath given us that we dwell in God, and God in us. It was not by conjecture or inference that Christians of old knew they were in the favor of God, it was by the testimony of God's own Spirit in their hearts; and this testimony was not given in a transient manner, but was constant and abiding while they continued under the influence of that faith that worketh by love. Every good man is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and wherever he is, he is both light and power. By his power he works; by his light he makes both himself and his work known. Peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost must proceed from the indwelling of that Holy Spirit; and those who have these blessings must know that they have them, for we cannot have heavenly peace and heavenly joy without knowing that we have them. But this Spirit in the soul of a believer is not only manifest by its effects, but it bears its own witness to its own indwelling. So that a man not only knows that he has this Spirit from the fruits of the Spirit, but he knows that he has it from its own direct witness. It may be said, "How can these things be?" And it may be answered, By the power, light, and mercy of God. But that such things are, the Scriptures uniformly attest, and the experience of the whole genuine Church of Christ, and of every truly converted soul, sufficiently proves. As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit: the thing is certain, and fully known by its effects; but how this testimony is given and confirmed is inexplicable. Every good man feels it, and knows he is of God by the Spirit which God has given him.

## CHAPTER 4

*We must not believe every teacher who professes to have a Divine commission to preach, but try such, whether they be of God; and the more so because many false prophets are gone out into the world, 1. Those who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh have the spirit of antichrist, 2, 3. The followers of God have been enabled to discern and overcome them, 4-6. The necessity of love to God and one another shown, from God's love to us, 7-11. Though no man hath seen God, yet every genuine Christian knows him by the spirit which God has given him, 12, 13. The apostles testified that God sent his Son to be the Savior of the world; and God dwelt in those who confessed this truth, 14, 15. God is love, 16. The nature and properties of perfect love, 17, 18. We love him because he first loved us, 19. The wickedness of pretending to love God while we hate one another, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1.** *Beloved, believe not every spirit* Do not be forward to believe every teacher to be a man sent of God. As in those early times every teacher professed to be inspired by the Spirit of God, because all the prophets had come thus accredited, the term spirit was used to express the man who pretended to be and teach under the Spirit's influence. See 1 Corinthians 12:1-12; 1 Timothy 4:1.

*Try the Spirits* δοκιμαζετε τα πνευματα· Put these teachers to the proof. Try them by that testimony which is known to have come from the Spirit of God, the word of revelation already given.

*Many false prophets* Teachers not inspired by the Spirit of God, are gone out into the world — among the Jewish people particularly, and among them who are carnal and have not the Spirit.

**Verse 2.** *Hereby know ye the Spirit of God* We know that the man who teaches that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, and that he is come in

the flesh, is of God — is inspired by the Divine Spirit; for no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

**Verse 3. *Every spirit*** Every teacher, that confesseth not Jesus, is not of God — has not been inspired by God. The words *εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα*, is come in the flesh, are wanting in AB, several others, both the Syriac, the Polyglot Arabic, Aethiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate; in Origen, Cyril, Theodoret, Irenaeus, and others. Griesbach has left them out of the text.

***Spirit of antichrist*** All the opponents of Christ's incarnation, and consequently of his passion, death, and resurrection, and the benefits to be derived from them.

***Ye have heard that it should come*** See 2 Thessalonians 2:7.

***Even now already is it in the world.*** Is working powerfully both among the Jews and Gentiles.

**Verse 4. *Ye are of God*** Ye are under the influence of the Divine Spirit, and have overcome them — your testimony, proceeding from the Spirit of Christ, has invalidated theirs which has proceeded from the influence of Satan; for greater is the Holy Spirit which is in you, than the spirit which is in the world.

**Verse 6. *We are of God*** We, apostles, have the Spirit of God, and speak and teach by that Spirit. He that knoweth God — who has a truly spiritual discernment, heareth us — acknowledges that our doctrine is from God; that it is spiritual, and leads from earth to heaven.

***Hereby know we the Spirit of truth*** The doctrine and teacher most prized and followed by worldly men, and by the gay, giddy, and garish multitude, are not from God; they savor of the flesh, lay on no restraints, prescribe no cross-bearing, and leave every one in full possession of his heart's lusts and easily besetting sins. And by this, false doctrine and false teachers are easily discerned.

**Verse 7. *Beloved, let us love one another*** And ever be ready to promote each other's welfare, both spiritual and temporal.

***For love is of God*** And ever acts like him; he loves man, and daily loads him with his benefits. He that loveth most has most of God in him; and he that loveth God and his neighbor, as before described and commanded, is born of God, **εκ του θεου γεγεννηται**, is begotten of God — is a true child of his heavenly Father, for he is made a partaker of the Divine nature; and this his love to God and man proves.

**Verse 8. *He that loveth not*** As already described, knoweth not God — has no experimental knowledge of him.

***God is love.*** An infinite fountain of benevolence and beneficence to every human being. He hates no thing that he has made. He cannot hate, because he is love. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust. He has made no human being for perdition, nor ever rendered it impossible, by any necessitating decree, for any fallen soul to find mercy. He has given the fullest proof of his love to the whole human race by the incarnation of his Son, who tasted death for every man. How can a decree of absolute, unconditional reprobation, of the greater part or any part of the human race, stand in the presence of such a text as this? It has been well observed that, although God is holy, just, righteous, etc., he is never called holiness, justice, etc., in the abstract, as he is here called LOVE. This seems to be the essence of the Divine nature, and all other attributes to be only modifications of this.

**Verse 9. *In this was manifested the love of God*** The mission of Jesus Christ was the fullest proof that God could give, or that man could receive, of his infinite love to the world.

***That we might live through him.*** The whole world was sentenced to death because of sin; and every individual was dead in trespasses and sins; and Jesus came to die in the stead of the world, and to quicken every believer, that all might live to him who died for them and rose again. This is another strong allusion to John 3:16: God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; where the reader is requested to see the note.

**Verse 10. *Not that we loved God*** And that he was thereby induced to give his Son to be a propitiation for our sins. No: we were enemies to God, and yet Christ died for our ungodly souls. (See Romans 5:6-11, and the



notes there.) So it was God's love, not our merit, that induced him to devise means that his banished might not be expelled from him.

**Verse 11. *If God so loved us*** Without any reason or consideration on our part, and without any desert in us; we ought also, in like manner, to love one another, and not suspend our love to a fellow-creature, either on his moral worth or his love to us. We should love one another for God's sake; and then, no unkind carriage of a brother would induce us to withdraw our love from him; for if it have GOD for its motive and model, it will never fail.

**Verse 12. *No man hath seen God at any time.*** The very words, with the change of *εωρακε* for *τεθεαται*, of this apostle in his gospel, John 1:18. We may feel him, though we cannot see him; and if we love one another he dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us — it has then its full accomplishment, having moulded us according to its own nature.

**Verse 13. *Hereby know we, etc.*** See the note on 1 John 3:24.

**Verse 14. *And we have seen*** Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh; see 1 John 1:1, etc.; and do testify — bear witness, in consequence of having the fullest conviction, that the Father sent the son to be the Savior of the world. We have had the fullest proof of this from his doctrine and miracles, which we heard and saw during the whole time that he sojourned among men.

**Verse 15. *Whosoever shall confess*** Much stress is laid on this confession, because the false teachers denied the reality of the incarnation; but this confession implied also such a belief in Christ as put them in possession of his pardoning mercy and indwelling Spirit.

**Verse 16. *God is love*** See on 1 John 4:8. He that dwelleth in love — he who is full of love to God and man is full of God, for God is love; and where such love is, there is God, for he is the fountain and maintainer of it.

**Verse 17. *Herein is our love made perfect*** By God dwelling in us, and we in him; having cast out all the carnal mind that was enmity against himself, and filled the whole heart with the spirit of love and purity. Thus the love is made perfect; when it thus fills the heart it has all its degrees; it is all in all; and all in every power, passion, and faculty of the soul.

**May have boldness in the day of judgment** *παρρησιαν*· Freedom of speech, and liberty of access; seeing in the person of our Judge, him who has died for us, regenerated our hearts, and who himself fills them.

**As he is** Pure, holy, and loving; so are we in this world; being saved from our sins, and made like to himself in righteousness and true holiness. No man can contemplate the day of judgment with any comfort or satisfaction but on this ground, that the blood of Christ hath cleansed him from all sin, and that he is kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. This will give him boldness in the day of judgment.

**Verse 18. There is no fear in love** The man who feels that he loves God with all his heart can never dread him as his Judge. As he is now made a partaker of his Spirit, and carries a sense of the Divine approbation in his conscience, he has nothing of that fear that produces terror or brings torment. The perfect love — that fullness of love, which he has received, casteth out fear — removes all terror relative to this day of judgment, for it is of this that the apostle particularly speaks. And as it is inconsistent with the gracious design of God to have his followers miserable, and as he cannot be unhappy whose heart is full of the love of his God, this love must necessarily exclude this fear or terror; because that brings torment, and hence is inconsistent with that happiness which a man must have who continually enjoys the approbation of his God.

**He that feareth** He who is still uncertain concerning his interest in Christ; who, although he has many heavenly drawings, and often sits with Christ some moments on a throne of love, yet feels from the evils of his heart a dread of the day of judgment; is not made perfect in love — has not yet received the abiding witness of the Spirit that he is begotten of God; nor that fullness of love to God and man which excludes the enmity of the carnal mind, and which it is his privilege to receive. But is the case of such a man desperate? No: it is neither desperate nor deplorable; he is in the way of salvation, and not far from the kingdom of heaven. Let such earnestly seek, and fervently believe on the Son of God; and he will soon give them another baptism of his Spirit, will purge out all the old leaven, and fill their whole souls with that love which is the fulfilling of the law. He who is not yet perfect in love may speedily become so, because God can say in a moment, I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy

will depart. Among men we find some that have neither love nor fear; others that have fear without love; others that have love and fear; and others that have love without fear.

1. Profligates, and worldly men in general, have neither the fear nor love of God.

2. Deeply awakened and distressed penitents have the fear or terror of God without his love.

3. Babes in Christ, or young converts, have often distressing fear mixed with their love.

4. Adult Christians have love without this fear; because fear hath torment, and they are ever happy, being filled with God. See Mr. Wesley's note on this place.

1. We must not suppose that the love of God shed abroad in the heart is ever imperfect in itself; it is only so in degree. There may be a less or greater degree of what is perfect in itself; so it is with respect to the love which the followers of God have; they may have measures or degrees of perfect love without its fullness. There is nothing imperfect in the love of God, whether it be considered as existing in himself, or as communicated to his followers.

2. We are not to suppose that the love of God casts out every kind of fear from the soul; it only casts out that which has torment. 1. A filial fear is consistent with the highest degrees of love; and even necessary to the preservation of that grace. This is properly its guardian; and, without this, love would soon degenerate into listlessness, or presumptive boldness. 2. Nor does it cast out that fear which is so necessary to the preservation of life; that fear which leads a man to flee from danger lest his life should be destroyed. 3. Nor does it cast out that fear which may be engendered by sudden alarm. All these are necessary to our well-being. But it destroys, 1. The fear of want; 2. The fear of death; and 3. The fear or terror of judgment. All these fears bring torment, and are inconsistent with this perfect love.

**Verse 19. *We love him because he first loved us.*** This is the foundation of our love to God. 1. We love him because we find he has loved us. 2. We

love him from a sense of obligation and gratitude. 3. We love him from the influence of his own love; from his love shed abroad in our hearts, our love to him proceeds. It is the seed whence our love springs. The verse might be rendered, Let us therefore love him, because he first loved us: thus the Syriac and Vulgate.

**Verse 20. *If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother*** This, as well as many other parts of this epistle, seems levelled against the Jews, who pretended much love to God while they hated the Gentiles; and even some of them who were brought into the Christian Church brought this leaven with them. It required a miracle to redeem St. Peter's mind from the influence of this principle. See Acts 10.

***Whom he hath seen*** We may have our love excited towards our brother, 1. By a consideration of his excellences or amiable qualities. 2. By a view of his miseries and distresses. The first will excite a love of complacency and delight; the second, a love of compassion and pity.

***Whom he hath not seen?*** If he love not his brother, it is a proof that the love of God is not in him; and if he have not the love of God, he cannot love God, for God can be loved only through the influence of his own love. See on 1 John 4:19. The man who hates his fellow does not love God. He who does not love God has not the love of God in him, and he who has not the love of God in him can neither love God nor man.

**Verse 21. *This commandment have we*** We should love one another, and love our neighbor as ourselves. The love of God and the love of man can never be separated; he who loves God will love his brother; he who loves his brother gives this proof that he loves God, because he loves with a measure of that love which, in its infinitude, dwells in God.

## CHAPTER 5

*He that believeth is born of God; loves God and his children; and keeps his commandments, which are not grievous, 1-3. Faith in Christ overcomes the world, 4, 5. The three earthly and heavenly witnesses, 6-9. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, 10. God has given unto us eternal life in his Son, 11, 12. The end for which St. John writes these things, 13-16. The sin unto death, and the sin not unto death, 16, 17. He that is born of God sinneth not, 18. The whole world lieth in the wicked one, 19. Jesus is come to give us understanding, that we may know the true God, 20. All idolatry to be avoided, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1. *Whosoever believeth, etc.*** Expressions of this kind are to be taken in connection with the subjects necessarily implied in them. He that believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, and confides in him for the remission of sins, is begotten of God; and they who are pardoned and begotten of God love him in return for his love, and love all those who are his children.

**Verse 2. *By this we know that we love the children of God*** Our love of God's followers is a proof that we love God. Our love to God is the cause why we love his children, and our keeping the commandments of God is the proof that we love him.

**Verse 3. *For this is the love of God*** This the love of God necessarily produces. It is vain to pretend love to God while we live in opposition to his will.

***His commandments*** To love him with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, are not grievous — are not burdensome; for no man is burdened with the duties which his own love imposes. The old proverb explains the meaning of the apostle's words, Love feels no loads. Love to God brings strength from God; through his love and his strength, all his commandments are not only easy and light, but pleasant and delightful.

On the love of God, as being the foundation of all religious worship, there is a good saying in Sohar Exod., fol. 23, col. 91: “Rabbi Jesa said, how necessary is it that a man should love the holy blessed God! For he can bring no other worship to God than love; and whoever loves him, and worships him from a principle of love, him the holy blessed God calls his beloved.”

**Verse 4. *Whatever is born of God* πᾶν το γεγεννημενον.** Whatever (the neuter for the masculine) is begotten of God: overcometh the world. “I understand by this,” says Schoettgen, “the Jewish Church, or Judaism, which is often termed **עולם הזה** olam hazzeh, this world. The reasons which induce me to think so are, 1. Because this **κοσμος**, world, denied that the Messiah was come; but the Gentiles did not oppose this principle. 2. Because he proves the truth of the Christian religion against the Jews, reasoning according to the Jewish manner; whence it is evident that he contends, not against the Gentiles, but against the Jews. The sense therefore is, he who possesses the true Christian faith can easily convict the Jewish religion of falsity.” That is, He can show the vanity of their expectations, and the falsity of their glosses and prejudices. Suppose we understand by the world the evil principles and practices which are among men, and in the human heart; then the influence of God in the soul may be properly said to overcome this; and by faith in the Son of God a man is able to overcome all that is in the world, viz., the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.

**Verse 5. *He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?*** That he is the promised Messiah, that he came by a supernatural generation; and, although truly man, came not by man, but by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The person who believes this has the privilege of applying to the Lord for the benefits of the incarnation and passion of Jesus Christ, and receives the blessings which the Jews cannot have, because they believe not the Divine mission of Christ.

**Verse 6. *This is he that came by water and blood*** Jesus was attested to be the Son of God and promised Messiah by water, i.e. his baptism, when the Spirit of God came down from heaven upon him, and the voice from heaven said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Jesus Christ came also by blood. He shed his blood for the sins of the world; and

this was in accordance with all that the Jewish prophets had written concerning him. Here the apostle says that the Spirit witnesses this; that he came not by water only — being baptized, and baptizing men in his own name that they might be his followers and disciples; but by blood also — by his sacrificial death, without which the world could not be saved, and he could have had no disciples. As, therefore, the Spirit of God witnessed his being the Son of God at his baptism, and as the same Spirit in the prophets had witnessed that he should die a cruel, yet a sacrificial, death; he is said here to bear witness, because he is the Spirit of truth.

Perhaps St. John makes here a mental comparison between CHRIST, and Moses and Aaron; to both of whom he opposed our Lord, and shows his superior excellence. Moses came by water — all the Israelites were baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea, and thus became his flock and his disciples; 1 Corinthians 10:1, 2. Aaron came by blood — he entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the victim, to make atonement for sin. Moses initiated the people into the covenant of God by bringing them under the cloud and through the water. Aaron confirmed that covenant by shedding the blood, sprinkling part of it upon them, and the rest before the Lord in the holy of holies. Moses came only by water, Aaron only by blood; and both came as types. But CHRIST came both by water and blood, not typically, but really; not by the authority of another, but by his own. Jesus initiates his followers into the Christian covenant by the baptism of water, and confirms and seals to them the blessings of the covenant by an application of the blood of the atonement; thus purging their consciences, and purifying their souls.

Thus, his religion is of infinitely greater efficacy than that in which Moses and Aaron were ministers. See Schoettgen.

It may be said, also, that the Spirit bears witness of Jesus by his testimony in the souls of genuine Christians, and by the spiritual gifts and miraculous powers with which he endowed the apostles and primitive believers. This is agreeable to what St. John says in his gospel, John 15:26, 27: When the Comforter is come, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning. This place the apostle seems to have in his eye; and this would naturally lead him to speak

concerning the three witnesses, the SPIRIT, the WATER, and the BLOOD, 1 John 5:8.

**Verse 7. *There are three that bear record*** The FATHER, who bears testimony to his Son; the WORD or λογος, Logos, who bears testimony to the Father; and the HOLY GHOST, which bears testimony to the Father and the Son. And these three are one in essence, and agree in the one testimony, that Jesus came to die for, and give life to, the world.

But it is likely this verse is not genuine. It is wanting in every MS. of this epistle written before the invention of printing, one excepted, the Codex Montfortii, in Trinity College, Dublin: the others which omit this verse amount to one hundred and twelve.

It is wanting in both the Syriac, all the Arabic, Aethiopic, the Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, Slavonian, etc., in a word, in all the ancient versions but the Vulgate; and even of this version many of the most ancient and correct MSS. have it not. It is wanting also in all the ancient Greek fathers; and in most even of the Latin.

The words, as they exist in all the Greek MSS. with the exception of the Codex Montfortii, are the following:—

“6. This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, etc.”

The words that are omitted by all the MSS., the above excepted, and all the versions, the Vulgate excepted, are these:—

(Ἰν η̅α̅α̅εν, τη̅ Φ̅α̅τη̅ερ, τη̅ Ω̅ο̅ρ̅δ, αν̅δ̅ τη̅ε̅ Η̅ο̅λ̅θ̅ Σ̅π̅ι̅ρ̅ι̅τ, αν̅δ̅ τη̅ε̅σ̅ε̅ τη̅ρ̅ε̅ α̅ρ̅ε̅ ο̅ν̅ε, αν̅δ̅ τη̅ρ̅ε̅ α̅ρ̅ε̅ τη̅ρ̅ε̅ ω̅ι̅η̅χ̅η̅ β̅ε̅α̅ρ̅ ω̅ι̅τ̅ν̅ε̅σ̅σ̅ ι̅ν̅ ε̅α̅ρ̅τ̅ῆ̅.)

To make the whole more clear, that every reader may see what has been added, I shall set down these verses, with the inserted words in brackets.

“6. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear record”(Ἰν η̅α̅α̅εν, τη̅ Φ̅α̅τη̅ερ, τη̅ε̅ Ω̅ο̅ρ̅δ, αν̅δ̅ τη̅ε̅ Η̅ο̅λ̅θ̅ Γ̅η̅ο̅σ̅τ, αν̅δ̅ τη̅ε̅σ̅ε̅ τη̅ρ̅ε̅ α̅ρ̅ε̅ ο̅ν̅ε. 8. Αν̅δ̅ τη̅ρ̅ε̅ α̅ρ̅ε̅



τηρεε τηατ βεαρ ωιτνεσσ ιν εαρτη’), the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, etc.” Any man may see, on examining the words, that if those included in brackets, which are wanting in the MSS. and versions, be omitted, there is no want of connection; and as to the sense, it is complete and perfect without them; and, indeed much more so than with them. I shall conclude this part of the note by observing, with Dr. Dodd, “that there are some internal and accidental marks which may render the passage suspected; for the sense is complete, and indeed more clear and better preserved, without it. Besides, the Spirit is mentioned, both as a witness in heaven and on earth; so that the six witnesses are thereby reduced to five, and the equality of number, or antithesis between the witnesses in heaven and on earth, is quite taken away. Besides, what need of witnesses in heaven? No one there doubts that Jesus is the Messiah; and if it be said that Father, Son, and Spirit are witnesses on earth, then there are five witnesses on earth, and none in heaven; not to say that there is a little difficulty in interpreting how the Word or the Son can be a witness to himself.”

It may be necessary to inquire how this verse stood in our earliest English Bibles. In COVERDALE’S Bible, printed about 1535, for it bears no date, the seventh verse is put in brackets thus:—

And it is the Sprete that beareth wytnes; for the Sprete is the truth. (For there are thre which beare recorde in heaven: the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost, and these thre are one.) And there are thre which beare record in earth: the Sprete, water, and bloude and these thre are one. If we receyve, etc.

TINDAL was as critical as he was conscientious; and though he admitted the words into the text of the first edition of his New Testament printed in 1526, yet he distinguished them by a different letter, and put them in brackets, as Coverdale has done; and also the words in earth, which stand in 1 John 5:8, without proper authority, and which being excluded make the text the same as in the MSS., etc.

Two editions of this version are now before me; one printed in English and Latin, quarto, with the following title:—

The New Testament, both in Englyshe and Laten, of Master Erasmus translation-and imprinted by William Powell-the yere of our Lorde M.CCCXXVII. And the fyrste yere of the kynges (Edw. VI.) moste gracious reygne.

In this edition the text stands thus:—

And it is the Spirite that beareth wytnes, because the Spirite is truth (for there are thre whiche beare recorde in heaven, the Father, the Worde, and the Holy Ghost, and these thre are one.) For there are thre which beare recorde, (in earth,) the Spirite, water, and blode, and these thre are one. If we receyve, etc.

The other printed in London “by William Tylle, 4to; without the Latin of Erasmus in M.CCCXXIX. the thyrde yere of the reigne of our moost drede Soverayne Lorde Kyng Edwarde the Syxte,” has, with a small variety of spelling, the text in the same order, and the same words included in brackets as above.

The English Bible, with the book of Common Prayer, printed by Richard Cardmarden, at Rouen in Normandy, fol. 1566, exhibits the text faithfully, but in the following singular manner:—

And it is the Spyryte that beareth witnesse, because the Spyryte is truthe. (for there are three which beare recorde in heaven, the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One) And three which beare recorde\* (in earth) the Spirite, and water, and bloode; and these three are one.

The first English Bible which I have seen, where these distinctions were omitted, is that called The Bishops' Bible, printed by Jugge, fol. 1568. Since that time, all such distinctions have been generally disregarded.

Though a conscientious believer in the doctrine of the ever blessed, holy, and undivided Trinity, and in the proper and essential Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which doctrines I have defended by many, and even new, arguments in the course of this work, I cannot help doubting the authenticity of the text in question; and, for farther particulars, refer to the observations at the end of this chapter.

**Verse 8. *The Spirit, and the water, and the blood*** This verse is supposed to mean “the Spirit — in the word confirmed by miracles; the water — in baptism, wherein we are dedicated to the Son, (with the Father and the Holy Spirit,) typifying his spotless purity, and the inward purifying of our nature; and the blood — represented in the Lord’s Supper, and applied to the consciences of believers: and all these harmoniously agree in the same testimony, that Jesus Christ is the Divine, the complete, the only Savior of the world.” — Mr. Wesley’s notes.

By the written word, which proceeded from the Holy Spirit, that Spirit is continually witnessing upon earth, that God hath given unto us eternal life.

By baptism, which points out our regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and which is still maintained as an initiatory rite in the Christian Church, we have another witness on earth of the truth, certainty, importance, and efficacy of the Christian religion. The same may be said of the blood, represented by the holy eucharist, which continues to show forth the death and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God till he comes. See the note on 1 John 5:6.

**Verse 9. *If we receive the witness of men*** Which all are obliged to do, and which is deemed a sufficient testimony to truth in numberless cases; the witness of God is greater — he can neither be deceived nor deceive, but man may deceive and be deceived.

**Verse 10. *He that believeth on the Son of God*** This is God’s witness to a truth, the most important and interesting to mankind. God has witnessed that whosoever believeth on his Son shall be saved, and have everlasting life; and shall have the witness of it in himself, the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. To know, to feel his sin forgiven, to have the testimony of this in the heart from the Holy Spirit himself, is the privilege of every true believer in Christ.

**Verse 11. *This is the record*** The great truth to which the Spirit, the water, and the blood bear testimony. God hath given us eternal life — a right to endless glory, and a meetness for it. And this life is in his Son; it comes by and through him; he is its author and its purchaser; it is only in and through HIM. No other scheme of salvation can be effectual; God has provided none other, and in such a case a man’s invention must be vain.

**Verse 12. *He that hath the Son hath life*** As the eternal life is given IN the Son of God, it follows that it cannot be enjoyed without him. No man can have it without having Christ; therefore he that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life. It is in vain to expect eternal glory, if we have not Christ in our heart. The indwelling Christ gives both a title to it, and a meetness for it. This is God's record. Let no man deceive himself here. An indwelling Christ and GLORY; no indwelling Christ, NO glory. God's record must stand.

**Verse 13. *That ye may know that ye have eternal life*** I write to show your privileges—to lead you into this holy of holies—to show what believing on the Son of God is, by the glorious effects it produces: it is not a blind reliance for, but an actual enjoyment of, salvation; Christ living, working, and reigning in the heart.

***And that ye may believe*** That is, continue to believe: for Christ dwells in the heart only by FAITH, and faith lives only by LOVE, and love continues only by OBEDIENCE; he who BELIEVES loves, and he who LOVES obeys. He who obeys loves; he who loves believes; he who believes has the witness in himself: he who has this witness has Christ in his heart, the hope of glory; and he who believes, loves, and obeys, has Christ in his heart, and is a man of prayer.

**Verse 14. *This is the confidence* *παρρησια***, The liberty of access and speech, that if we ask any thing according to his will, that is, which he has promised in his word. His word is a revelation of his will, in the things which concern the salvation of man. All that God has promised we are justified in expecting; and what he has promised, and we expect, we should pray for. Prayer is the language of the children of God. He who is begotten of God speaks this language. He calls God Abba, Father, in the true spirit of supplication. Prayer is the language of dependence on God; where the soul is dumb, there is neither life, love, nor faith. Faith and prayer are not boldly to advance claims upon God; we must take heed that what we ask and believe for is agreeable to the revealed will of God. What we find promised, that we may plead.

**Verse 15. *And if we know that he hear us*** Seeing we are satisfied that he hears the prayer of faith, requesting the things which himself has promised; we know, consequently, that we have the petitions — the

answer to the petitions, that we desired of him; for he cannot deny himself; and we may consider them as sure as if we had them; and we shall have them as soon as we plead for and need them. We are not to ask to-day for mercy that we now need, and not receive it till to-morrow, or some future time. God gives it to him who prays, when it is needful.

**Verse 16.** *A sin which*

3. The sin unto death means a case of transgression, particularly of grievous backsliding from the life and power of godliness, which God determines to punish with temporal death, while at the same time he extends mercy to the penitent soul. The disobedient prophet, 1 Kings 13:1-32, is, on this interpretation, a case in point: many others occur in the history of the Church, and of every religious community. The sin not unto death is any sin which God does not choose thus to punish. This view of the subject is that taken by the late Rev. J. Wesley, in a sermon entitled, *A Call to Backsliders*. — *WORKS*, vol ii. page 239.

I do not think the passage has any thing to do with what is termed the sin against the Holy Ghost; much less with the popish doctrine of purgatory; nor with sins committed before and after baptism, the former pardonable, the latter unpardonable, according to some of the fathers. Either of the last opinions (viz., 2 and 3) make a good sense; and the first (1) is not unlikely: the apostle may allude to some maxim or custom in the Jewish Church which is not now distinctly known. However, this we know, that any penitent may find mercy through Christ Jesus; for through him every kind of sin may be forgiven to man, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; which I have proved no man can now commit. See the note on Matthew 12:31, 39.

**Verse 17.** *All unrighteousness is sin* πασα αδικια. Every act contrary to justice is sin—is a transgression of the law which condemns all injustice.

**Verse 18.** *Whosoever is born of God sinneth not* This is spoken of adult Christians; they are cleansed from all unrighteousness, consequently from all sin, 1 John 1:7-9.

*Keepeth himself* That is, in the love of God, Jude 21, by building up himself on his most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost; and that wicked one — the devil, toucheth him not — finds nothing of his own nature in him on which he can work, Christ dwelling in his heart by faith.

**Verse 19.** *We know that we are of God* Have the fullest proof of the truth of Christianity, and of our own reconciliation to God through the death of his Son.

*The whole world lieth in wickedness.* εν τω πονηρω κειται. Lieth in the wicked one — is embraced in the arms of the devil, where it lies fast

asleep and carnally secure, deriving its heat and power from its infernal fosterer. What a truly awful state! And do not the actions, tempers, propensities, opinions and maxims of all worldly men prove and illustrate this? “In this short expression,” says Mr. Wesley, “the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colors; a comment on which we have in the actions, conversations, contracts, quarrels and friendships of worldly men.” Yes, their ACTIONS are opposed to the law of God; their CONVERSATIONS shallow, simulous, and false; their CONTRACTS forced, interested, and deceitful; their QUARRELS puerile, ridiculous, and ferocious; and their FRIENDSHIPS hollow, insincere, capricious, and fickle:-all, all the effect of their lying in the arms of the wicked one; for thus they become instinct with his own spirit: and because they are of their father the devil, therefore his lusts they will do.

**Verse 20.** *We know that the Son of God is come* In the flesh, and has made his soul an offering for sin; and hath given us an understanding — a more eminent degree of light than we ever enjoyed before; for as he lay in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him unto us; and he hath besides given us a spiritual understanding, that we may know him who is true, even the TRUE GOD, and get eternal life from him through his Son, IN whom we are by faith, as the branches in the vine, deriving all our knowledge, light, life, love, and fruitfulness from him. And it is through this revelation of Jesus that we know the ever blessed and glorious Trinity; and the Trinity, Father, Word, and Holy Ghost, in the eternal, undivided unity of the ineffable Godhead.

**Verse 21.** *Little children* **τεκνία**: Beloved children; he concludes with the same affectionate feeling with which he commenced.

***Keep yourselves from idols.*** Avoid the idolatry of the heathens; not only have no false gods, but have the true God. Have no idols in your houses, none in your churches, none in your hearts. Have no object of idolatrous worship; no pictures, relics, consecrated tapers, wafers, crosses, etc., by attending to which your minds may be divided, and prevented from worshipping the infinite Spirit in spirit and in truth.

The apostle, says Dr. Macknight cautioned his disciples against going with the heathens into the temple of their idol gods, to eat of their feasts upon the sacrifices they had offered to these gods; and against being present at

any act of worship which they paid them; because, by being present, they participated of that worship, as is plain from what St. Paul has written on the subject, 1 Corinthians 8:10, where see the notes.

That is a man's idol or god from which he seeks his happiness; no matter whether it be Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Minerva, Venus, or Diana; or pleasure, wealth, fame, a fine house, superb furniture, splendid equipage, medals, curiosities, books, titles, human friendships, or any earthly or heavenly thing, God, the supreme good, only excepted. That is a man's



The First Epistle of John the evangelist.

The First catholic Epistle of St. John the divine, written from Ephesus.

The Epistle to the Parthians. — See several Latin MSS.

The word amen is wanting in all the best MSS. and in most of the versions.

For other matters relative to the epistle itself see the preface: and for its heavenly doctrine and unction read the text, in the original if you can; if not, in our own excellent translation.

### **Observations On The Text Of The Three Divine Witnesses.**

1. The Codex Guelpherbytanus G, which is demonstrably a MS. of the seventeenth century; (for it contains the Latin translation of Beza, written by the same hand,) and therefore of no use or importance in sacred criticism.
  
2. The Codex Ravianus or Berolinensis, which is a forgery, and only a copy of the Greek text in the Complutensian Polyglot, printed in 1514, and so close an imitation of it, that it copies even its typographical errors; hence, and from the similarity of the letters, it appears to have been forged that it might pass for the original MS. from which the Complutensian text was taken. In this MS. some various readings are inserted from the margin of Stevens' edition of 1550.
  
3. The Codex Montfortii, or Codex Dubliniensis, cited by Erasmus, under the title of Codex Britannicus, in Trinity College, Dublin. This may be said to be the only genuine MS. which contains this text; as no advocate of the sacred doctrine contained in the disputed passage would wish to lay any stress whatever on such evidence as the two preceding ones afford. Michaelis roundly asserts, vol. iv., page 417, of his Introductory Lectures, that this MS. was written after the year 1500. This, I scruple not to affirm, is a perfectly unguarded assertion, and what no man can prove. In 1790 I examined this MS. myself, and though I thought it to be comparatively modern, yet I had no doubt that it existed before the invention of printing, and was never written with an intention to deceive. I am rather inclined to think it the work of an unknown bold critic, who formed a text from one or more MSS. in conjunction with the Vulgate, and was by no means sparing of his own conjectural emendations; for it contains many various readings which exist in no other MS. yet discovered. But how far the writer has in any place faithfully copied the text of any ancient MS. is more than can be determined. To give the reader a fair view of this subject, I here subjoin what I hope I may call a perfect fac-simile of the seventh and eighth verses, as they exist in this MS., copied by the accurate hand of the Rev. Dr. Barrett, the present learned librarian of Trinity College.

FAC-SIMILE of 1 John 5:7-9, From the Codex Montfortii in Trinity College, Dublin. [Omitted]

When I examined the original myself, though I took down a transcript, yet I neglected to take a fac-simile. That no mistake might be made in a matter of so much importance, I got a fac-simile, and after it was engraved, had it collated with the MS. by Dr. Barrett himself, and the plate finished according to his last corrections; so that I hope it may be said every jot and every tittle belonging to the text are here fairly and faithfully represented; nothing being added, and nothing omitted. I have examined this MS. since, and have not been able to detect any inaccuracy in my fac-simile. To it I have annexed a perfect facsimile of the same words, as they stand in the Complutensian Polyglot, which the curious reader will be glad to see associated with the other, as they are properly the only Greek authorities on which the authenticity of the text of the Three Witnesses depends.

FAC-SIMILE of 1 John 5:7-9, From the Editio Princeps of the Greek Testament, printed at Complutum, in 1514. [Omitted]

It may be necessary to observe,

First, That the five first lines of the fac-simile of the text in the Complutensian edition are at the top of the opposite page to that on which the other four lines are found. The alphabetical letters, mingled with the Greek text, are those which refer to the corresponding words in the Latin text, printed in a parallel column in the Complutensian Polyglot, and marked with the same letters to ascertain more easily the corresponding Greek and Latin words, for the benefit, I suppose, of learners. The column containing the Latin text, which is that of the Vulgate, is not introduced here, being quite unnecessary.

Second. The sixth and seventh lines of the fac-simile of the Codex Montfortii belong to the second page of that leaf on which the other five lines are written.

This MS. is a thick duodecimo, written on paper, without folios. There is an inscription in it in these words, Sum Thomae Clementis, olim fratris Froyhe. On this inscription Dr. Barrett remarks: "It appears Froyhe was a Franciscan; and I find in some blank leaves in the book these words written (by the same hand, in my opinion, that wrote the MS.) **Ἰησοῦς μαρτῖα φραγκισκος**; by the latter, I understand the founder of that order." If St. Francis d'Assise be here meant, who was the founder of the order of Franciscans, and the inscription be written by the same who wrote the MS., then the MS. could not have been written before the thirteenth century, as St. Francis founded his order in 1206, and died in 1226, and consequently quotes that the MS. could not have been written in the eleventh century, as Mr. Martin of Utrecht, and several others, have imagined.

Much stress has been laid on the dots over the **ι** and **υ** which frequently appear in this MS. Montfaucon has observed, Palaeographia Graeca, page 33, that such dots were in use a thousand years ago: hence the advocates of the antiquity of the Codex Montfortii have inferred that this MS. must have been written at least in the tenth or eleventh century. But as these are found in modern MSS. (see Palaeog. pages 324, 333,) they are therefore no proof of antiquity. In Michaelis' Introduction, vol. ii., page 286, where he is describing the MSS. of the Greek Testament, he gives the text in question as it is supposed to exist in the Codex Montfortii, in which two dots appear over every iota and upsilon in the whole five lines there introduced; but on comparing this of Michaelis with the fac-simile here produced, the reader will at once perceive that the arrangement is false, and the dotting egregiously inaccurate. Deceived by this false representation, Dr. Marsh, (bishop of Peterborough,) in his notes on the passage, page 754, observes, "that no MS. written in small characters before the twelfth century has these dots. That a MS. written in the twelfth century has these dots sometimes on the iota, but never on the upsilon; but MSS. written in the fourteenth century have these dots on both letters, but not in all cases. Now as these letters are dotted always in the Codex Montfortianus, but not always in the MSS. of the thirteenth and

fourteenth centuries, and still less often in those of the twelfth century, we may infer that the Codex Montfortianus is at least as modern as the fifteenth century.”

On this quotation I beg leave to make a few remarks.

Dr. Marsh says, “that no MS. written in small letters previous to the twelfth century has these dots.” This excellent critic has only to consult the *Palaeographia Graeca*, page 293, in which he will find No. 1, a fac-simile of one of the Colbert MSS. (No. 4954,) written A. D. 1022, where the iota appears thrice dotted; and in No. 2, on the same page, another fac-simile of a MS. written A. D. 1045, the iota is dotted in the word **ιησου**. Ibid., page 283, (No. 7,) a MS. written in 986, has the iota twice dotted in the word **ιμενει**. Ibid., page 275, (No. 2,) a MS. of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, has the iota dotted in **αχαιας** and in No. 3, a specimen of the Codex Reginus, (No. 2271,) written A. D. 914, the iota is dotted in **θεικην**. Ibid., page 271, (No. 4,) written about 890, the iota is dotted in **ιερων** and in Spec. v. in the word **ποιια**. See also Ibid., page 320, No. 3, another of the Colbert MSS. (4111,) written A. D. 1236, where the iota is dotted seven times. All these specimens are taken from MSS. written in small characters, and, as the dates show, (the last excepted,) long before the twelfth century. As to these dots being more frequent in manuscripts of the fifteenth than those of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, I cannot say much; it is certain they became more frequent towards the fourteenth century than they were in the twelfth, and yet this was not a general case. In two well-written manuscripts now before me, one of which I suppose to be of the fourteenth century, and the other of the fifteenth, these dots often occur, but they are by no means regular. I have noticed several pages in the oldest manuscript where they occur but once; and in other pages they may be met with ten or twelve times. On the contrary, in the more recent manuscript, whole pages occur without one of them; and where they do occur, they are much less frequent than in the former. So that it rather appears from this evidence; that they began to disappear in the fifteenth century. Dr. Marsh, misled by the specimen in Michaelis, vol. ii. page 286, says: “The letters in question are always dotted in the Codex Montfortianus.” By referring to the fac-simile, the reader will be able at once to correct this mistake. The iota in the fac-simile occurs thirty times,

and is dotted only in five instances; and the upsilon occurs nineteen times, and is dotted only in seven.

But arguments for or against the age of any MS., on account of such dots, are futile in the extreme; as the most ancient MSS. have them not only on the iota and upsilon, but upon several other letters, as may be seen in the Codex Alexandrinus, the Codex Rescriptus, published by Dr. Barrett, and the Codex Bezae; in the latter of which they seem to occur more frequently than they do even in the Codex Montfortii.

On the evidence of these dots, Mr. Martin of Utrecht supposed the Dublin manuscript to be as old as the eleventh century and on the same evidence Dr. Marsh argues, "that it is at least as modern as the fifteenth." Both these judgments are too hastily formed; *medio tutissimus ibis* is the best counsel in such a case; the manuscript is more likely to have been a production of the thirteenth than of either the eleventh or fifteenth. The former date is as much too high as the latter is too low; the zeal of the critics for and against this controverted text having carried them, in my opinion; much too far on either side.

In comparing the writing of the Codex Montfortii, with the different specimens given by Montfaucon in the *Palaeographia Graeca*, it appears to approach nearest to that on page 320, No. 4, which was taken from one of the Colbert manuscripts, (No. 845,) written in the year of our Lord 1272, which I am led to think may be nearly about the date of the Codex Montfortii; but on a subject of so much difficulty, where critics of the first rank have been puzzled, I should be sorry to hazard any more than an opinion, which the reader is at liberty to consider either correct or incorrect, as may seem best to his own judgment.

Though a conscientious advocate for the sacred doctrine contained in the disputed text, and which I think expressly enough revealed in several other parts of the sacred writings, I must own the passage in question stands on a most dubious foundation. All the Greek manuscripts (the Codex Montfortii alone excepted) omit the passage; so do all the ancient versions; the Vulgate excepted; but in many of the ancient MSS. even of this version it is wanting. There is one in the British Museum, of the tenth or eleventh century, where it is added by a more recent hand in the margin; for it is wanting in the text. It is also variously written in those manuscripts which

retain it. This will appear more plainly by comparing the following extracts taken from four manuscripts of the Vulgate in my own possession:—

1. — Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, sanguis, et aqua. This is the same with the text in the Complutensian Polyglot, only aqua is placed before sanguis.

2. — Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt.

3. — Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis.

4. — Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt.

5. — Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et tres sunt qui testitnonium perhibent in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hi tres unum sunt.

This last I took from an ancient manuscript in Marsh's library, St. Patrick's, Dublin.

In what has been denominated the Editio Princeps of the Latin Bible, and supposed to have been printed between 1455 and 1468, the text stands thus: "Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in coelo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra. Spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et tres unum sunt."

In the Bible printed by Fradin and Pinard, Paris, 1497, fol., the text is the same with No. 2, only instead of testimonium dant, it reads dant testimonium.

The reader will observe that in Nos. 2, 4, and 5, the eighth verse is put before the seventh, and that 3 and 4 have filius instead of verbum. But both these readings are united in an ancient English manuscript of my own,

which contains the Bible from the beginning of Proverbs to the end of the New Testament, written on thick strong vellum, and evidently prior to most of those copies attributed to Wiclif.

For three ben that geven witnessing in heven the Fadir, the Word or Sone and the Hooly Goost, and these three ben oon. And three ben that geven witnessing in erthe, the Spirit, Water, and Blood, and these three ben oon.

As many suppose the Complutensian editors must have had a manuscript or manuscripts which contained this disputed passage, I judge it necessary to add the note which they subjoin at the bottom of the page, by which (though nothing is clearly expressed) it appears they either had such a manuscript, or wished to have it thought they had such. However, the note is curious, and shows us how this disputed passage was read in the most approved manuscripts of the Vulgate extant in the thirteenth century,



notice of so important an omission as the text of the three witnesses, if they really had no manuscript in which it was contained? Did they intend to deceive the reader, and could they possibly imagine that the knavery could never be detected? If they designed to deceive, they took the most effectual way to conceal the fraud, as it is supposed they destroyed the manuscripts from which they printed their text; for the story of their being sold in 1749 to a rocket-maker (see Michaelis, vol. ii., page 440) is every way so exceptionable and unlike the truth, that I really wonder there should be found any person who would seriously give it credit. The substance of this story, as given by Michaelis, is as follows: "Professor Moldenhawer, who was in Spain in 1784, went to Alcala on purpose to discover these MSS., but was informed that a very illiterate librarian, about thirty-five years before, who wanted room for some new books, sold the ancient vellum MSS. as useless parchments, to one Toryo who dealt in fireworks, as materials for making rockets." It is farther added that "Martinez, a man of learning, heard of it soon after they were sold, and hastened to save these treasures from destruction; but it was too late, for they were already destroyed, except a few scattered leaves which are now in the library." On the whole of this account, it is natural to ask the following questions: Is it likely that the management of so important a trust should be in the hands of a person so ignorant that he could not know a Hebrew or Greek MS. from a piece of useless parchment? Could such a person be intrusted to make a purchase of new books for the library, for which he wanted room? or if they were purchased by the trustees of the library, is it likely they would leave the classification and arrangement of these to such a Goth as this librarian is said to be? Would such a librarian, or indeed any other, be permitted to dispose of any part of the library which he might deem useless? If Mr. Martinez heard of it soon after they were sold, and hastened to rescue them, is it likely that almost the whole should have been converted into rockets before he got to the place, when we are informed they were so many as to cost originally 4, 000 aurei; and that even the price which the librarian sold them for was so considerable, that it had to be paid at two different installments? Was it possible that in so short a time the rocket-maker could have already consumed the whole? The whole account is so improbable that I cannot help saying, *Credat Judaeus Apella; non ego.*

It is more likely the manuscripts were destroyed at first, or that they are still kept secret, to prevent the forgery (if it be one) of the text of the three witnesses from being detected; or the librarian already mentioned may have converted them to his own use. If they were not destroyed by the Complutensian editors, I should not be surprised if the same manuscripts should come to light in some other part of the world, if not in the Alcala library itself.

It is worthy of remark that Luther never admitted the text of the three witnesses into any of the editions of his translation; it is true it was afterwards added, but never during his lifetime. On this Professor Michaelis makes the following observation: "It is uncandid in the extreme for one Protestant to condemn another for rejecting 1 John 5:7, since it was rejected by the author of our Reformation." Any conscientious Trinitarian may innocently hesitate to receive the feebly supporting evidence of this disputed text, in confirmation of a doctrine which he finds it his duty and interest to receive on the unequivocal testimony of various other passages in the book of Gad.

Professor Griesbach, who does not appear to be an enemy to the doctrine, and who has carefully and critically examined all the evidences and arguments, pro and con, has given up the text as utterly defenceless, and thinks that to plead for its authenticity is dangerous. "For if," says he, "a few dubious, suspicious, and modern evidences, with such weak arguments as are usually adduced, are sufficient to demonstrate the authenticity of a reading, then there remains no longer any criterion by which the spurious may be distinguished from the genuine; and consequently the whole text of the New Testament is unascertained and dubious."

Much stress has been laid on Bengel's defense of this text: Michaelis has considered the strength of his arguments in a candid and satisfactory manner.

"The ancient writers which Bengel has produced in favor of 1 John 5:7, are all Latin writers, for he acknowledges that no Greek father has ever quoted it. Now, if no objection could be made to Bengel's witnesses, and the most ancient Latin fathers had quoted in express terms the whole of the controverted passage, their quotations would prove nothing more than that the passage stood in their manuscripts of the Latin version, and therefore

that the Latin version contained it in a very early age. But it will appear upon examination that their evidence is very unsatisfactory. The evidence of Tertullian, the oldest Latin writer who has been quoted in favor of 1 John 5:7, is contained in the following passage of his treatise against Praxeas, book 1:, chap. 25: Ita connexus Patris in Filio et Filii in Paracleto, tres efficit cohaerentes, alterum ex altero; qui tres unum sunt, non unus; quomodo dictum est: Ego et Pater unum sumus. Hence it is inferred, that because tres unum sunt stand at present in the Latin version, 1 John 5:7, these words stood there likewise in the time of Tertullian, and that Tertullian borrowed them from the Latin version. But this inference is wholly without foundation; for Tertullian does not produce these words as a quotation, and the bare circumstance of his using the expression tres unum sunt will not prove that he found that expression in the Bible. On the contrary, it is evident, from what immediately follows, that 1 John 5:7 was not contained in the Latin version when Tertullian wrote. For, in proof of this assertion, qui tres unum sunt, he immediately adds, quomodo dictum est: Ego et Pater unum sumus, which is a quotation from St. John's gospel, John 10:30. Now as this quotation relates only to the Father and the Son, and not to the Holy Ghost, surely Tertullian would not have proved the unity of the Trinity from this passage, if 1 John 5:7, which is much more to the purpose, had then been contained in any Latin manuscript with which he was acquainted. At any rate, the mere use of the words tres unum sunt affords no argument in favor of the controverted passage; and if any inference is to be deduced from their agreement with our present copies of the Latin version in 1 John 5:7; it is this: that the person who afterwards fabricated this passage retained an expression which had been sanctioned by the authority of Tertullian. So much for the evidence of this Latin father, the only writer of the second century to whom appeal has been made.

“Of the Latin fathers who lived in the third century, Cyprian alone has been produced as evidence in favor of 1 John 5:7. From the writings of Cyprian two passages have been quoted as proofs that 1 John 5:7 was contained in his manuscript of the Latin version. The one is from his epistle to Jubaianus; where Cyprian writes thus: Si baptizari quis apud haereticum potuit, utique et remissam consecutus est, et sanctificatus est, et templum Dei factus est; quaero cujus Dei? Si Creatoris; non potuit; qui

in eum non credit: si Christi, non hujus potest fieri templum, qui negat, Deum Christum: si Spiritus Sancti, cum tres unum sint, quomodo Spiritus Sanctus placatus esse ei potest, qui aut Patris aut Filii inimicus est? Here it must be observed, that the words *cum tres unum sint*, though inserted in the later editions of Cyprian's works, are not contained in that edition which was published by Erasmus; and even if they were genuine, they will prove nothing more than the same words just quoted from Tertullian. The other passage, which is much more to the purpose; is in Cyprian's treatise, *Deuteronomy Ecclesiae Unitate*, where Cyprian writes thus: *Dicit Dominus: Ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, scriptum est: Et tres unum sunt*. Now, admitting that the words *et tres unum sunt* were quoted by Cyprian from 1 John 5:7, I seriously ask every impartial judge whether a passage found in no ancient Greek manuscript, quoted by no Greek father, and contained in no other ancient version than the Latin, (and not in all copies of this,) is therefore to be pronounced genuine; merely because one Latin father of the three first centuries, who was bishop of Carthage, where the Latin version only was used, and where Greek was unknown, has quoted it? Under these circumstances, should we conclude that the passage stood originally in the Greek autograph of St. John? Certainly not; for the only inference which could be deduced from Cyprian's quotation would be this, that the passage had been introduced into the Latin version so early as the third century.

“The preceding answer is sufficient to invalidate Cyprian's authority in establishing the authenticity of 1 John 5:7, on the supposition that Cyprian really quoted it; but that he did so is more than any man can prove. The words *tres unum sunt* are contained not only in the seventh, but also in the eighth verse, which is a part of the ancient and genuine text of St. John; and therefore it is at least possible that Cyprian took them not from the seventh, but from the eighth verse. It is true that he says these words are written of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whereas *tres unum sunt*, in the eighth verse, relates only to the spirit, the water, and the blood. But it must be observed that the Latin fathers interpreted *spiritus, aquas et sanguis*, not literally, but mystically; and some of them really understood by these words, *Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*, taking *aqua* in the sense of *Pater*, *sanguis* in the sense of *Filius*, and *spiritus* in the sense of *Spiritus Sanctus*.

“This is expressly asserted by Eucherius in his *Questiones N. T. difficiliores*; for after having quoted 1 John 5:8, thus: *Tria sunt, quae testimonium perhibent, aqua, sanguis, et spiritus*, he adds, soon after, *plures tamen hic ipsam interpretatione mystica intelligere Trinitatem; aqua Patrem, sanguine Christum, spiritu Spiritum Sanctum manifestante*. But if Cyprian really thought that *aqua, sanguis, et spiritus*, 1 John 5:8, denoted *Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*, he might say of *tres unum sunt*, 1 John 5:8, that it was written, *de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto*. And that he actually did so, that he quoted not 1 John 5:7, but understood 1 John 5:8, mystically, appears from the following passage of Facundus, who lived in the neighborhood of Carthage, and consequently used the same Latin version as Cyprian. *Johannes Apostolus in epistola sua de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, sic dicit: Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hi tres unum sunt: in spiritu significans Patrem, etc. Quod Johannis Apostoli testimonium beatus Cyprianus, in epistola, sive libro, quem de Trinitate scripsit, de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, dictum intelligit.*” Facundus then quotes the words of Cyprian, which are the subject of our present inquiry. From the preceding passage it is manifest that 1 John 5:7 was unknown to Facundus; for he proves the doctrine of the Trinity by a mystical interpretation of 1 John 5:8, and appeals to the authority of Cyprian, who, he says, gave the same interpretation. But if 1 John 5:7 was unknown to Facundus, who lived in the same country as Cyprian, used the same Latin version, and wrote almost three centuries later, it is incredible that 1 John 5:7 was already introduced in the Latin manuscripts which Cyprian used. Consequently we must conclude that the assertion of Facundus is true, and that the words of Cyprian contain, not a quotation from 1 John 5:7, but a mystical application of 1 John 5:8. This is farther confirmed by Augustine, who was likewise an African bishop, who lived a hundred years later than Cyprian, and still knew nothing of 1 John 5:7, for he has never quoted this passage, not even where he speaks of the Trinity, but he has mystically applied the eighth verse.” — MICHAELIS, vol. vi. p. 420.

The Greek writers who have not quoted this verse, though several of them wrote professedly on the Deity of Christ, and on the Trinity, are the following:-

Irenaeus. Cyril of Alexandria. Clemens Alexandrinus. The Exposition of Faith Dionysius Alexandrinus (or in Justin Martyr's the writer against Paul works. of Samosatsa under his Caesarius. name.) Proclus. Athanasius. The Council of Nice, as The Synopsis of Scripture. it is represented by Ge- The Synod of Sardica. Iasius Cyzicenus. Epiphanius. Hippolytus. Basil. Andreas. Alexander of Alexandria. Six catenae, quoted by Gregory Nyssen. Simon. Gregory Nazianzen, with The marginal scholia of his two commentators, three MSS. Elias Cretensis and Hesychius. Nicetas. John Damascenus. Didysus de Spiritu Sancto. Germanus of Constanti-Chrysostom. nople. An author under his name, OEcumenius. de sancta et consubstan- Euthymius Zigabenus tiali Trinitate.

### LATIN AUTHORS

Novatian. Facundus. Hilary. Junilius. Lucifer Calaritanus. Cerealis. Jerome. Rusticus. Augustine. Bede. Ambrose. Gregory. Faustinus. Philastrius. Leo Magnus. Paschasius. The author de Promissis. Arnobius, junior Eucherius. Pope Eusebius.

The writers that have quoted it are comparatively recent or spurious, for those of any note which have been supposed, from certain expressions in their works, to have had reference to this verse, have been proved by learned men to have had no such text in view. A great and good man has said that "the seventh verse, in conjunction with the sixth and eighth, has been quoted by Tertullian, Cyprian, and an uninterrupted train of fathers." But a more incautious assertion was never made, as the preceding list will prove; and the evidence on the subject I have most carefully examined. Bengel, who was an excellent critic and a good man, endeavored to defend it, but without success; and Michaelis demonstrated its spuriousness from Bengel's five concessions. Knittel has defended its authenticity with much critical acumen; Hezelius with great sagacity; David Martin, of Utrecht, with much honest simplicity; and Dean Travis with abundance of zeal, without much knowledge of the critical bearings of the subject. Socinians need not glory that it is indefensible, and that honest Trinitarians give it up; for the sacred doctrine which it appears to express is diffused through every part of the Scriptures, and is as inexpugnable as a rock of adamant, and will live and prevail in the Church of Christ while sun and moon endure, and till time shall be swallowed up in eternity.

SUMMARY of the whole evidence relative to the THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES, 1 John 5:7.

1. ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN Greek MSS. are extant, containing the First Epistle of John, and the text in question is wanting in 112. It only exists in the Codex Montfortii, (a comparatively recent MS..) already described. The Codex Ravianus, in the Royal Library at Berlin, is a transcript taken from the Complutensian Polygot.
2. All the GREEK fathers omit the verse, though many of them quote both 1 John 5:6 and 1 John 5:8, applying them to the Trinity, and Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit; yea, and endeavor to prove the doctrine of the Trinity from 1 John 5:6 and 1 John 5:8, without referring to any such verse as 1 John 5:7, which, had it existed, would have been a more positive proof, and one that could not have been overlooked.
3. The first place in which the verse appears in Greek is the Greek translation of the Acts of the Council of Lateran, held A. D. 1215.
4. Though it is found in many Latin copies, yet it does not appear that any written previously to the TENTH CENTURY contains it.
5. The LATIN fathers do not quote it, even where it would have greatly strengthened their arguments; and where, had it existed, it might have been most naturally expected.
6. Virilius, bishop of Tapsum, at the conclusion of the fifth century, is the first who seems to have referred expressly to the three heavenly witnesses; but his quotation does not agree with the present text either in words or in sense; and besides, he is a writer of very little credit, nor does the place alleged appear to learned men to be genuine.
7. The Latin writers who do refer to the three heavenly witnesses vary greatly in their quotations, the more ancient placing the eighth verse before the seventh, and very many omitting, after the earthly witnesses, the clause these three are one. Others who insert these three are one add in Christ Jesus; others use different terms.
8. It is wanting in all the ancient VERSIONS, the Vulgate excepted; but the more ancient copies of this have it not; and those which have it vary

greatly among themselves, as may be seen in the specimens already produced.

9. It is wanting in the first edition of Erasmus, A. D. 1516, which is properly the editio princeps of the Greek text.

It is wanting also in his second edition 1519, but he added it in the third from the Codex Montfortii.

It is wanting in the editions of Aldus, Gerbelius, Cephalaeus, etc.

It is wanting in the German translation of LUTHER, and in all the editions of it published during his lifetime.

It is inserted in our early English translations, but with marks of doubtfulness, as has already been shown.

10. In short, it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God.

See Griesbach's Dissertation on this verse at the end of the second volume of his Greek text. Halae et Londini, 1806.

In defense of this verse see "Archdeacon Travis' Letters to Gibbon;" and on the other side, "Professor Porson's Answer to Travis." The latter has left nothing farther to be said on the subject either in vindication or reply.

Finished the correction for a reimpression, Jan. 3, 1832. — A. C.



## PREFACE

### TO THE

### SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN

THE authority of the First Epistle of John being established, little need be said concerning either the second or third, if we regard the language and the sentiment only, for these so fully accord with the first, that there can be no doubt that he who wrote one, wrote all the three. But it must not be concealed that there were doubts entertained in the primitive Church as to the two latter being canonical. And so late as the days of Eusebius, who lived in the fourth century, they were ranked among those writings which were then termed **αντιλεγόμενα**, not received by all, or contradicted, because not believed to be the genuine productions of the Apostle John.

It is very likely that, being letters to private persons, they had for a considerable time been kept in the possession of the families to which they were originally sent; and only came to light perhaps long after the death of the apostle, and the death of the elect lady or Kyria, and Gaius or Caius, to whom they were addressed. When first discovered, all the immediate vouchers were gone; and the Church of Christ, that was always on its guard against imposture, and especially in relation to writings professing to be the work of apostles, hesitated to receive them into the number of canonical Scriptures, till it was fully satisfied that they were Divinely inspired. This extreme caution was of the utmost consequence to the Christian faith; for had it been otherwise, had any measure of what is called credulity prevailed, the Church would have been inundated with spurious writings, and the genuine faith greatly corrupted, if not totally destroyed.

The number of apocryphal gospels, acts of apostles, and epistles, which were offered to the Church in the earliest ages of Christianity, is truly

astonishing. We have the names of at least seventy-five gospels which were offered to, and rejected by, the Church; besides Acts of Peter, Acts of Paul and Thecla, Third Epistle to the Corinthians, Epistle to the Laodiceans, Book of Enoch, etc., some of which are come down to the present time, but are convicted of forgery by the sentiment, the style, and the doctrine.

The suspicion, however, of forgery, in reference to the Second Epistle of Peter, second and third of John, Jude, and the Apocalypse, was so strong, that in the third century, when the Peshito Syriac version was made, these books were omitted, and have not since been received into that version to the present day, which is the version still in use in the Syrian Churches. But the later Syriac version, which was made A. D. 508, and is called the Philoxenian, from Philoxenus, bishop of Hierapolis, under whose direction it was formed from the Greek by his rural Bishop Polycarp, and was afterwards corrected and published by Thomas of Charkel, in 616, contains these, as well as all the other canonical books of the New Testament.

From the time that the language, sentiments, and doctrines of these two epistles were critically examined, no doubts were entertained of their authenticity; and at present they are received by the whole Christian Church throughout the world; for although they are not in the ancient Syriac version, they are in the Philoxenian; and concerning their authenticity I believe the Syrian Churches have at present no doubts.

Dr. Lardner observes that the first epistle was received and quoted by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, contemporary with the apostle; by Papias, who himself had been a disciple of St. John; by Irenaeus; Clement of Alexandria; Origen, and many others. The second epistle is quoted by Irenaeus, was received by Clement of Alexandria, mentioned by Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria, is quoted by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. All the three epistles were received by Athanasius, by Cyril, of Jerusalem; by the council of Laodicea; by Epiphanius; by Jerome; by Ruffinus; by the third council of Carthage; by Augustine, and by all those authors who received the same canon of the New Testament that we do. All the epistles are in the Codex Alexandrinus, in the catalogues of Gregory of Nazianzen, etc., etc.

Thus we find they were known and quoted at a very early period; and have been received as genuine by the most respectable fathers, Greek and Latin, of the Christian Church. Their being apparently of a private nature might have prevented their more general circulation at the beginning, kept them for a considerable time unknown, and prevented them from being reckoned canonical. But such a circumstance as this cannot operate in the present times.

As to the time in which this epistle was written, it is very uncertain. It is generally supposed to have been written at Ephesus between A. D. 80 and 90, but of this there is no proof; nor are there any data in the epistle itself to lead to any probable conjecture relative to this point. I have placed it at A D. 85, but could not wish to pledge myself to the correctness of that date.

# THE SECOND EPISTLE

OF

JOHN

## Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5593.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5587.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5577.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4089.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4311.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3845.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4444.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2433.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3187.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1025.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 834.
- Year of the CCXVIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 832.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 836.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 837.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 838.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 397.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 133.
- Year of the Julian era, 130.
- Year of the Spanish era, 123.

- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 89.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.
- Year of Artabanus IV., king of the Parthians, 4.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 86.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 7; or the year before the third embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 10.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-seventh of March, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the third of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 9.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 17.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 17, 19, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 24, 25, 27, 27.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 6.
- Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Caesar, the last of those usually styled the Twelve Caesars, 5.
- Roman Consuls, Domitianus Augustus Caesar, the eleventh time, and T. Aurelius Fulvus or Fulvius.
- The years in which Domitian had been consul before were, A. D. 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, and 84.

It should be observed that the date of this epistle is very uncertain. The above is only upon the supposition that it was written about A. D. 85. See the preface.

## 2 JOHN

*The apostle's address to a Christian matron and her children, 1-3. He rejoices to find that certain of her family had received, and continued to adorn, the truth; and he exhorts them to continue to love one another according to the commandment of Christ, 4-6. And particularly cautions them against deceivers, and to so watch, that they might not lose the benefit of what they had received, 7, 8. The necessity of abiding in the doctrine of Christ, 9. He cautions them against receiving, or in any way forwarding, those who did not bring the true doctrine of Christ, 10, 11. Excuses himself from writing more largely, and purposes to pay her and family a visit shortly, 12, 13.*

### NOTES ON 2. JOHN.

Verse 1. **The elder** John the apostle, who was now a very old man, generally supposed to be about ninety, and therefore he uses the term **ο πρεσβυτερος**, presbyter or elder, not as the name of an office, but as designating his advanced age. He is allowed to have been the oldest of all the apostles, and to have been the only one who died a natural death.

This title led some of the ancients to attribute this epistle to a person called John the Presbyter, a member of the Church at Ephesus; and not to John the apostle. But this is a groundless supposition.

**The elect lady** **εκλεκτη κυρια**: As **κυρια**, kuria, may be the feminine of **κυριος**, kurios, lord, therefore it may signify lady; and so several, both ancients and moderns, have understood it. But others have considered it the proper name of a woman, Kyria; and that this is a very ancient opinion is evident from the Peshito Syriac, the oldest version we have, which uses it as a proper name (Syriac) koureea, as does also the Arabic (Arabic) kooreea.

Some have thought that Eclecta was the name of this matron, from the word **εκλεκτη**, which we translate elect, and which here signifies the same as excellent, eminent, honorable, or the like. Others think that a particular Church is intended, which some suppose to be the Church at Jerusalem, and that the elect sister, 2 John 13, means the Church at Ephesus; but these are conjectures which appear to me to have no good ground. I am satisfied that no metaphor is here intended; that the epistle was sent to some eminent

Christian matron, not far from Ephesus, who was probably deaconess of the Church, who, it is likely, had a Church at her house, or at whose house the apostles and traveling evangelists frequently preached, and were entertained. This will appear more probable in the course of the notes.

***Whom I love in the truth*** Whom I love as the Christian religion requires us to love one another.

***And not I only*** She was well known in the Churches; many had witnessed or heard of her fidelity, and partook of her hospitality; so that she had a good report of all Christians in that quarter.

**Verse 2. *For the truth's sake*** On account of the Gospel.

***Which dwelleth in us*** By the grace which it has proclaimed.

***And shall be with us*** For God will preserve not only the Christian religion but its truth, all its essential doctrines for ever. And they that abide in the truth shall go whither that truth leads, i.e. to glory. The Armenian has a strange reading here: "For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, because it is also with you; and ye shall be with us for ever." But this is supported by no other version, nor by any MS.

**Verse 3. *Grace be with you*** This is addressed to her, her household, and probably that part of the Church which was more immediately under her care.

***The Son of the Father*** The apostle still keeps in view the miraculous conception of Christ; a thing which the Gnostics absolutely denied; a doctrine which is at the ground work of our salvation.

**Verse 4. *That I found of thy children walking in truth*** I have already supposed this Christian matron to be mother of a family, probably a widow, for no mention is made of her husband; and that she was also a deaconess in the church, and one in those house the traveling evangelists preached, and there they were entertained. The children mentioned here may either be her own children, or those members of the Church which were under her care, or some of both. The apostle was glad to find, probably by an epistle sent from herself to him, or from the information of some of the itinerant evangelists, that the work of God was prospering in the place where she lived, and also in her own household. He does not say

that all were walking in the truth, but **ἐκ τῶν τέκνων**, some of her children; there was a growing and spreading work, and there were many adversaries who strove to pervert them who had already believed, and perhaps were successful in drawing several away from their simplicity.

**Verse 5. *That which we had from the beginning*** The commandment to love one another was what they had heard from the first publication of Christianity, and what he wishes this excellent woman to inculcate on all those under her care. The mode of address here shows that it was a person, not a Church, to which the apostle wrote.

**Verse 6. *And this is love*** That is, our love is shown and proved by our walking according to the commandments of God; for love is the principle of obedience.

**Verse 7. *For many deceivers, etc.*** Of these he had spoken before, see 1 John 4:1, etc. And these appear to have been Gnostics, for they denied that Jesus was come in the flesh. And this doctrine, so essential to salvation, none could deny but a deceiver and an antichrist. Instead of **εἰσηλθόν** are entered in, many excellent MSS. and versions have **ἐξηλθόν**, are gone out. The sense is nearly the same.

**Verse 8. *Look to yourselves*** Be on your guard against these seducers; watch, pray, love God and each other, and walk in newness of life.

***That we lose not those things which we have wrought*** That we apostles, who have been the means of your conversion, may not be deprived of you as our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Instead of the first person plural, **ἀπολεσώμεν**, etc., WE lose, etc., many MSS., versions, and fathers, read the whole clause in the second person plural, **ἀπολεσητε**, YE lose, etc. Take heed to yourselves that YE lose not the things which YE have wrought, but that YE receive a full reward. This reading is more consistent and likely, and is supported by at least as good evidence as the other. We find that if these persons did not keep on their guard they might lose their salvation, and the apostles their rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Even this intimation might put them on their guard. Had the apostle said ye cannot finally fall, what a different effect would it have produced! Griesbach has placed these readings in the margin as being very probable.



**Verse 9. *Whosoever transgresseth*** παραβαινων· He who passes over the sacred enclosure, or goes beyond the prescribed limits; and abideth not in the doctrine — does not remain within these holy limits, but indulges himself either in excesses of action or passion; hath not God for his Father, nor the love of God in his heart.

***Hath both the father and the Son.*** He who abideth in the doctrine of Christ, his body is a temple of the Holy Trinity, and he has communion with the Father as his Father, and with the Son as his Savior and Redeemer.

**Verse 10. *If there come any unto you*** Under the character of an apostle or evangelist, to preach in your house; and bring not this doctrine, that Jesus is come in the flesh, and has died for the redemption of the world.

***Receive him not unto your house*** Give him no entertainment as an evangelical teacher. Let him not preach under your roof.

***Neither bid him God speed.*** και χαιρειν αυτω μη λεγερε· And do not say, Health to him — do not salute him with Peace be to thee! The usual salutation among friends and those of the same religion in the east is, (Arabic) Salam aleekum, “Peace be to you;” which those of the same religion will use among themselves, but never to strangers, except in very rare cases. This is the case to the present day; and, from what John says here, it was a very ancient custom. We have often seen that peace among the Hebrews comprehended every spiritual and temporal blessing. The words mean, according to the eastern use of them, “Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother.”

**Verse 11. *Is partaker of his evil deeds.*** He that acts towards him as if he considered him a Christian brother, and sound in the faith, puts it in his power to deceive others, by thus apparently accrediting his ministry. No sound Christian should countenance any man as a Gospel minister, who holds and preaches erroneous doctrines; especially concerning the Lord Jesus. Nor can any Christian attend the ministry of such teachers without being criminal in the sight of God. He who attends their ministry is, in effect, bidding them God speed; no matter whether such belong to an established Church, or to any congregation of dissenters from it. But what

St. John says here does not mean that we should deny such the common offices of humanity, charity, and mercy. No. In these offices we are equally bound to all men; far less does it intimate that we should persecute such on account of their heretical or heterodox sentiments. No. This right has God given to no man, to no Church, to no state. They who persecute others, even for the worst heretical opinions, may expect the heaviest judgments of Almighty God.

There is a remarkable addition here in several MSS. Of the Vulgate, and in some printed editions. *Ecce praedixi vobis, ut in diem Domini nostri Jesu Christi non confundamini.* “Behold, I have foretold this to you, that ye may not be confounded in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

This addition is found in the edition of Pope Sixtus the Fifth, and in the Complutensian Polyglot; but it is not acknowledged by any of the versions, nor by any Greek MSS.

**Verse 12.** *Having many things to write* That is, I have many things that I might write to thee, but I think it best not to commit them to paper, because I hope to visit thee shortly, and speak fully of those matters, which will be a means of increasing the comfort both of thee and thy family, as well as my own. There is more comfort in mutual interviews among friends than in epistolary correspondence,

**Verse 13.** *The children of thy elect sister* Probably her own sister, who lived at Ephesus; and, being acquainted with the apostle’s writing, desired to be thus remembered to her. Elect, both in this and the first verse, signifies excellent, eminent, or honorable. See on 2 John 1.

Amen is wanting in the most ancient MSS., and in most of the versions; but *η χάρις μετα σου* and *μεθ’ υμων*, Grace be with thee, or with you, is found in several MSS. and versions.

Subscriptions in the VERSIONS:—

The end of the Second Epistle. — SYRIAC.

The Second Epistle of John is ended. — Philox. SYRIAC.

Praise be to God for ever, Amen! — ARABIC.

In the MANUSCRIPTS:—

The Second of John. — Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus.

The Second of John to the Parthians. — One of Colbert's MSS.

The Second catholic Epistle of St. John the apostle and divine.

There are other subscriptions, but, like the above, they are worthy of little regard.

THIS epistle is more remarkable for the spirit of Christian love which it breathes than for any thing else. It contains scarcely any thing that is not found in the preceding; and out of the thirteen verses there are at least eight which are found, either in so many words or in sentiment, precisely the same with those of the first epistle. The most remarkable part of it is the tenth and eleventh verses, {2 John 10, 11} relative to the orders concerning the heretical teacher; and from them we see how such teachers were treated in the apostolic Church. They held no communion with them, afforded them no support, as teachers; but did not persecute them.

On this model the conduct of all Christians should be formed, relative to the teachers of false doctrine in general. To go thus far, we have apostolical authority, to go farther, we have none. And let us still remember, in all cases it is our duty to love even our enemies, and consequently to do them any act of humanity and mercy.

# THE THIRD EPISTLE

OF

JOHN.

## Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5593.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5587.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5577.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4089.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4311.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3845.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4444.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2433.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3187.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1025.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 834.
- Year of the CCXVIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 832.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 836.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 837.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 838.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 397.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 133.
- Year of the Julian era, 130.
- Year of the Spanish era, 123.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 89.

- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.
  - Year of Artabanus IV., king of the Parthians, 4.
  - Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 86.
  - Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
  - Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 7; or the year before the third embolismic.
  - Year of the Solar Cycle, 10.
  - Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
  - Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-seventh of March, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
  - Easter Sunday, the third of April.
  - Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 9.
  - Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 17.
  - Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 17, 19, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 24, 25, 27, 27.
  - Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 6.
  - Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Caesar, the last of those usually styled the Twelve Caesars, 5.
  - Roman Consuls, Domitianus Augustus Caesar, the eleventh time, and T. Aurelius Fulvus or Fulvius.
  - The years in which Domitian had been consul before were, A. D. 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, and 84.
- It should be observed that the date of this epistle is very uncertain. The above is only upon the supposition that it was written about A. D. 85.

### 3 JOHN

*The apostle's address to Caius, and his good wishes for his prosperity in body and soul, 1, 2. He commends him for his steadiness in the truth, and his general hospitality, especially to the itinerant evangelists, 3-8. Speaks*

*of the bad conduct of Diotrephes; his abuse of his power in the Church; and his slander of the apostles, 9, 10. Exhorts Caius to avoid his example, and to follow what is good, 11. Commends Demetrius, 12. Excuses himself from writing more fully, and proposes to pay him a visit shortly, 13, 14.*

This epistle being of nearly the same complexion with the former, and evidently written about the same time, and incontestably by the same person, it is not necessary to give it any particular preface; as the subject of the authenticity of all the three epistles has been treated already so much at large, not only in the introduction to them, but in the notes in general.

This and the preceding epistle are, by Dr. Lardner, supposed to have been written between A. D. 80 and 90. There are no notes of time in the epistles themselves to help us to fix any date, therefore all is conjecture concerning the time in which they were written: but to me it appears as likely that they were written before the destruction of Jerusalem as after; for it is scarcely to be supposed that so signal a display of the justice of God, and such a powerful argument in favor of Christianity and of the truth of Christ's predictions, could be passed unnoticed and unappealed to by any of the inspired persons who wrote after that event. However, where there is no positive evidence, conjecture is useless.

### NOTES ON 3. JOHN.

**Verse 1.** *The elder* See on the first verse of the preceding epistle, and also the preface.

*The well-beloved Gaius* γαίος Gaius, is the Greek mode of writing the Roman name Caius; and thus it should be rendered in European languages.

Several persons of the name of Caius occur in the New Testament.

1. In the Epistle to the Romans, Romans 16:23, St. Paul mentions a Caius who lived at Corinth, whom he calls his host, and the host of the whole Church.

2. In 1 Corinthians 1:14, St. Paul mentions a Caius who lived at Corinth, whom he had baptized; but this is probably the same with the above.
3. In Acts 19:29, mention is made of a Caius who was a native of Macedonia, who accompanied St. Paul, and spent some time with him at Ephesus. This is probably a different person from the preceding; for the description given of the Caius who lived at Corinth, and was the host of the whole Church there, does not accord with the description of the Macedonian Caius, who, in the very same year, traveled with St. Paul, and was with him at Ephesus.
4. In Acts 20:4, we meet a Caius of Derbe, who was likewise a fellow traveler of St. Paul. This person cannot be the Corinthian Caius, for the host of the Church at Corinth would hardly leave that city to travel into Asia: and he is clearly distinguishable from the Macedonian Caius by the epithet **δερβαιος**, of Derbe.
5. And lastly, there is the Caius who is mentioned here, and who is thought by some critics to be different from all the above; for, in writing to him, St. John ranks him among his children, which seems, according to them, to intimate that he was converted by this apostle.

Now, whether this Caius was one of the persons just mentioned, or whether he was different from them all, is difficult to determine; because Caius was a very common name. Yet if we may judge from the similarity of character, it is not improbable that he was the Caius who lived at Corinth, and who is styled by St. Paul the host of the whole Church; for hospitality to his Christian brethren was the leading feature in the character of this Caius to whom St. John wrote, and it is on this very account that he is commended by the apostle. Besides, St. John's friend lived in a place where this apostle had in Diotrephes a very ambitious and tyrannical adversary; and that there were men of this description at Corinth is evident enough from the two epistles to the Corinthians, though St. Paul has not mentioned their names. See Michaelis.

The probability of this Caius being the same with the Corinthian Caius has suggested the thought that this epistle was sent to Corinth; and consequently that the second epistle was sent to some place in the neighborhood of that city. But I think the distance between Ephesus,

where St. John resided, and Corinth, was too considerable for such an aged man as St. John is represented to be to travel, whether by land or water. If he went by land, he must traverse a great part of Asia, go through Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, and down through Greece, to the Morea, a most tedious and difficult journey. If he went by water, he must cross the AEgean Sea, and navigate among the Cyclades Islands, which was always a dangerous voyage. Now as the apostle promises, both in the second and in this epistle, to see the persons shortly to whom he wrote, I take it for granted that they could not have lived at Corinth, or anywhere in the vicinity of that city. That St. John took such a voyage Michaelis thinks probable; “for since Corinth lay almost opposite to Ephesus, and St. John, from his former occupation, before he became an apostle, was accustomed to the sea, it is not improbable that the journey or voyage which he proposed to make was from Ephesus to Corinth.”

In answer to this I would just observe, 1. That the voyage was too long and dangerous for a man at John’s advanced age to think of taking. 2. That John had never been accustomed to any such sea as the AEgean, for the sea of Galilee, or sea of Tiberias, on which, as a fisherman, he got his bread, was only an inconsiderable fresh water lake; and his acquaintance with it could give him very few advantages for the navigation of the AEgean Sea, and the danger of coasting the numerous islands dispersed through it.

**Verse 2.** *I wish above all things* περι παντων ευχομαι. Above all things I pray that thou mayest prosper, and be in health, και υγιασινειν· to which one MS. adds εν αληθεια, which gives it a different meaning, viz., that thou mayest be sound in the truth. The prayer of St. John for Caius includes three particulars: 1. Health of body; 2. Health of soul; and 3. Prosperity in secular affairs. That thou mayest PROSPER and be in HEALTH, as thy SOUL PROSPERETH. These three things, so necessary to the comfort of life, every Christian may in a certain measure expect, and for them every Christian is authorized to pray; and we should have more of all three if we devoutly prayed for them.

It appears from the last clause that the soul of Caius was in a very prosperous state.



**Verse 3. *When the brethren came*** Probably the same of whom he speaks in the fifth {3 John 5} and following verses, and who appear to have been itinerant evangelists.

***The truth that is in thee*** The soundness of thy faith and the depth of thy religion.

**Verse 4. *To hear that my children*** From this it has been inferred that Caius was one of St. John's converts, and consequently not the Corinthian Caius, who was converted, most probably, by St. Paul. But the apostle might use the term children here as implying those who were immediately under his pastoral care, and, being an old man, he had a right to use such terms in addressing his juniors both in age and grace; and there is much both of propriety and dignity in the appellation coming from such a person.

**Verse 5. *Thou doest faithfully*** ΠΙΣΤΟΝ ΠΟΙΕΙΣ. Kypke thinks that ΠΙΣΤΟΝ is put here for ΠΙΣΤΙΝ, and that the phrase signifies to keep or preserve the faith, or to be bound by the faith, or to keep one's engagements. Thou hast acted as the faith — the Christian religion, required thee to act, in all that thou hast done, both to the brethren at home, and to the strangers — the itinerant evangelists, who, in the course of their travels, have called at thy house. There is not a word here about the pilgrims and penitential journeys which the papists contrive to bring out of this text.

**Verse 6. *Which have borne witness of thy charity*** Of thy love and benevolence.

***Before the Church*** The believers at Ephesus; for to this Church the apostle seems to refer.

***Whom if thou bring forward*** If thou continue to assist such, as thou hast done, thou shalt do well.

The brethren of whom St. John speaks might have been apostles; the strangers, assistants to these apostles, as John Mark was to Barnabas. Both were itinerant evangelists.

***After a godly sort*** ΑΞΙΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ. Worthy of God; and in such a way as he can approve. Let all Churches, all congregations of Christians, from

whom their ministers and preachers can claim nothing by law, and for whom the state makes no provision, lay this to heart; let them ask themselves, Do we deal with these in a manner worthy of God, and worthy of the profession we make? Do we suffer them to lack the bread that perisheth, while they minister to us with no sparing hand the bread of life? Let a certain class of religious people, who will find themselves out when they read this note, consider whether, when their preachers have ministered to them their certain or stated time, and are called to go and serve other Churches, they send them forth in a manner worthy of God, making a reasonable provision for the journey which they are obliged to take. In the itinerant ministry of the apostles it appears that each Church bore the expenses of the apostle to the next Church or district to which he was going to preach the word of life. So it should be still in the mission and itinerant ministry.

**Verse 7. *For his name's sake they went forth*** For the sake of preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, and making known JESUS to the heathen.

***Taking nothing of the Gentiles.*** Receiving no emolument for their labor, but in every respect showing themselves to be truly disinterested. Sometimes, and on some special occasions, this may be necessary; but the laborer is worthy of his hire is the maxim of the author of Christianity. And those congregations of Christians are ever found to prize the Gospel most, and profit most by it, who bear all expenses incident to it, and vice versa.

But some construe **εξηλθον**, they went out, with **απο των εθνων**, from the Gentiles, or rather by the Gentiles, and give the passage this sense: They went out, i.e., were driven out by the Gentiles, taking nothing with them, i.e., leaving all their property behind, so that they were in a state of great destitution. A curious reading here, **εθνικων**, heathenish men, for **εθνων**, Gentiles, which latter might imply those who were converted from among the Gentiles, while the sense of the other term seems to be restrained to those who were still unconverted, may seem to strengthen the above interpretation; and although the construction seems rather harsh, yet it is not, on the whole, unlikely. The reading above referred to is that of the most ancient and reputable MSS. That to be driven out or expelled is one scriptural meaning of the verb **εξερχομαι**, see Matthew 8:32: And when

they were come out, **οι δε εξελθοντες**, and when they were DRIVEN OUT. Matthew 12:43: When the unclean spirit is gone out, **εξελθη**, is DRIVEN OUT. See Mark 5:13, 7:29: The devil is gone out of thy daughter, **εξεληλυθε**, is EXPELLED. Mark 9:29: This kind can come forth by nothing **εν ουδενι δυναται εξελθειν**, can be DRIVEN OUT by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. Luke 8:2: Mary Magdalene; out of whom went, **αφ' ης δαιμονια επτα εξεληλυθει**, out of whom were CAST, seven demons. See also 1 John 2:19; Revelation 3:12; and Schleusner, in voc. **εξερχομαι**.

**Verse 8. *We therefore ought to receive such*** Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and have professed the truth at the hazard of their lives, and the loss of all their worldly substance. Instead of **απολαμβανειν**, to receive, the most ancient and reputable MSS. have **υπολαμβανειν**, to take up, undertake for, or kindly receive.

***Fellow helpers to the truth*** And thus encourage the persecuted, and contribute to the spread and maintenance of the Gospel.

**Verse 9. *I wrote unto the Church.*** The Church where Caius was; but Diotrophes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence, **φιλοπρωτευων**, who loves the presidency, or chief place in the Church. He was doubtless an officer in the Church, at least a deacon, probably a bishop; and, being one, he magnified himself in his office; he loved such eminence, and behaved himself haughtily in it.

***Receiveth us not.*** Does not acknowledge the apostolical authority. As some MSS. supply **αν** after **εγραψα**, and several judicious critics believe it is implied, the translation will run thus: I would have written to the Church to receive these men kindly, but Diotrophes, who affects the presidency; and into whose hands, if I wrote to the Church, my letter must come, receiveth us not — would not acknowledge my authority to interfere with any of the matters of his Church; and therefore I have written unto thee, whose love to the brethren and general hospitality are well known, that thou wouldst receive those strangers and persecuted followers of our common Lord.

**Verse 10. *If I come, I will remember*** I will show him the authority which, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, I possess.

***Prating against us*** Diotrephes might have been a converted Jew, who was unwilling that the Gentiles should be received into the Church; or a Judaizing Christian, who wished to incorporate the law with the Gospel, and calumniated the apostles who taught otherwise. This haughty and unfeeling man would give no countenance to the converted Gentiles; so far from it, that he would not receive any of them himself, forbade others to do it, and excommunicated those who had been received into the Church by the apostles. This appears to be the meaning of neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church. He had the complete dog in the manger principle: he would neither do, nor let do; and when good was done that he did not approve, he endeavored to undo it.

**Verse 11.** ***Follow not that which is evil*** μιμιον το κακον· Do not imitate that wicked man, i.e., the conduct of Diotrephes; be merciful, loving, and kind. For whatever profession any man may make, it will ever appear that he who doeth good is of God — he alone is the person who uses rightly the grace received from God, and he alone shall enjoy the Divine approbation;

*Our friends salute thee.* Desire to be affectionately remembered to thee. Greet the friends by name — remember me to all those with whom I am acquainted, as if I had specified them by name. This is a proof to me that this epistle was not sent to Corinth, where it is not likely John ever was; and where it is not likely he had any particular acquaintances, unless we could suppose he had seen some of them when he was an exile in Patmos, an island in the AEgean Sea.

For other particulars concerning John, the reader is requested to refer to the preface to his gospel.

Instead of *φιλοι* and *φιλους*, friends, the Codex Alexandrinus and several others read *αδελφοι* and *αδελφους*, brethren. The former (friends) is a very singular appellation, and nowhere else found in Scripture; the latter is of frequent occurrence.

Subscriptions in the VERSIONS:—

In the ancient SYRIAC. — Nothing.

The Third Epistle of John the apostle is ended. — SYRIAC Philoxenian.

AETHIOPIC. — Nothing.

VULGATE. — Nothing.

The end of the epistles of the pure Apostle and Evangelist John. — ARABIC.

The Third Epistle of St. John the apostle is ended. — Latin text of the COMPLUTENSIAN.

The end of the Third catholic Epistle of St John. — DITTO, Greek text.

Subscriptions in the Manuscripts:—

The third of John. — CODD. ALEX. and VATICAN.

The Third catholic Epistle of John the evangelist and divine.

The third of John to Caius concerning Demetrius, of whom he witnesses the most excellent things.

I have already shown in the preface to those epistles termed catholic, that the word *καθολικος* is not to be taken here, and elsewhere in these epistles, as signifying universal, but canonical; for it would be absurd to call an epistle universal that was written to a private individual.

We seldom hear this epistle quoted but in the reproof of lordly tyrants, or prating troublesome fellows in the Church. And yet the epistle contains many excellent sentiments, which, if judiciously handled, might be very useful to the Church of God. But it has been the lot both of the minor prophets and the minor epistles to be generally neglected; for with many readers bulk is every thing; and, no magnitude no goodness.

This and the preceding epistle both read over in reference to a new edition, Jan. 3rd, 1832. — A. C.

# PREFACE

## TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF

## JUDE

IN the preface to the Epistle of James several things have been said relative to Jude the brother of James, the supposed author of this epistle; and to that preface the reader is requested to refer. What is farther necessary to be said on the author and the authenticity of this epistle, I shall take the liberty to borrow principally from Michaelis.

“If James and Jude, whom the evangelists call brothers of Jesus, were in fact only cousins or relations as some suppose, and were sons, not of Joseph, but of Alpheus, these two persons were the same as the two brothers James and Jude, who were apostles. And in this case Jude, the author of this epistle, was the same as the Apostle Jude, the brother of James who was son of Alpheus. On the other hand, if the James and the Jude, whom the evangelists call brothers of Jesus, were not the two brothers of this name who were apostles, but were the sons of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, we have then two different persons of the name of Jude, either of which might have written this epistle. And in this case we have to examine whether the epistle was written by an apostle of the name of Jude, or by Jude the brother-in-law of Christ.

“The author of the epistle himself has assumed neither the title of apostle of Jesus Christ, nor of brother of Jesus Christ, but calls himself only ‘Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.’ Now, as the author distinguishes himself by the title ‘brother of James,’ and this was a common name among the Jews, he undoubtedly meant some eminent person of this name, who was well known at the time when he wrote, or the title ‘brother of James’ would have been no mark of distinction. We

may infer, therefore, that the author of this epistle was the brother, either of the Apostle James the son of Alpheus, or of James, named the brother of Jesus, or of both, if they were one and the same person.

“The first question, therefore, to be asked is, Was the author of this epistle the Apostle Jude? or was he brother of James, the son of Alpheus? Now, I have already observed, that this question must be answered in the affirmative if James and Jude who were called brothers of Jesus, were the same as the two brothers James and Jude who were apostles. And it may be answered in the affirmative, even if they were different persons, for Jude, the author of this epistle, had in either case a brother of the name of James, and therefore might in either case call himself Jude the brother of James. I say the question may be answered in the affirmative, even if the Apostle Jude was a different person from Jude, called the brother of James. But whether it ought in this case to be answered in the affirmative, is another matter; and I really believe that it ought not: for if the Jude who wrote this epistle had been himself an apostle, and brother of an apostle, he would hardly have called himself, in an epistle written to Christians, simply ‘Jude, the brother of James’ without adding the title apostle. It is true that the Apostle Jude, who was brother of James, is called by St. Luke **ιουδας ακωβου**; but St. Luke gives him this title merely to distinguish him from another apostle of this name, who was called Iscariot. Now the author of this epistle could have no motive for distinguishing himself from Judas Iscariot, who had hanged himself many years before this epistle was written. The name of Jude was very common among the Jews; and therefore the author of this epistle wished to distinguish himself from other persons who were so called. But James was likewise a very common name, and therefore if the author had been an apostle he surely would have preferred an appellation which would have removed all doubts to an appellation which left it at least uncertain whether he was an apostle or not; I grant that the omission of this title does not necessarily prove that the author of this epistle was not an apostle, for Paul has omitted it in four of his epistles: in the Epistle to the Philippians, in both Epistles to the Thessalonians, and in that to Philemon. But St. Paul was sufficiently known without this title, whereas the author of the epistle in question felt the necessity of a distinguishing appellation, as appears from the very title which he has given himself of ‘brother of James.’ Besides, at the time



when this epistle was written, only one apostle of the name of James was then alive; for the elder James, the son of Zebedee, had been beheaded many years before. If then the author of this epistle had only given to his brother James the title of apostle, he would thus likewise have clearly ascertained who he himself was. But since he has no more given to his brother than to himself the title of apostle, I think it highly probable that neither of them were apostles.

“The next question to be asked, therefore, is, Was the Jude, who wrote this epistle, the same person as the Jude whom the evangelists call brother of Jesus? and who, according to the opinion which I think the most defensible, was in this sense brother of Jesus, that he was son of Joseph by a former wife, and therefore not his own brother, but only brother-in-law of Jesus. Now, that this epistle was written by a person of this description, appears to me highly probable; and on this supposition we may assign the reason why the author called himself ‘brother of James;’ for, if he was the brother-in-law of Jesus, his brother James was the person who, during so many years, had presided over the Church at Jerusalem, was well known both to Jews and Christians, and appears to have been more celebrated than either of the apostles called James. It will be objected, perhaps, that the very same reasons which I have alleged, to show that an apostle of the name of Jude would have assumed his proper title, will likewise show that a person who was called brother of Jesus would have done the same, and styled himself brother of Jesus. To this I answer, that if he was the son of Joseph, not by Mary but by a former wife, and Jude believed in the immaculate conception, he must have been sensible that though to all outward appearance he was brother-in-law to Jesus, since his own father was the husband of Jesus’ mother, yet in reality he was no relation of Jesus. On the other hand, if Jude, called the brother of Jesus, was the son of Joseph, not by a former wife but by Mary, as Herder asserts, I do not see how the preceding objection can be answered; for if Jesus and Jude had the same mother, Jude might without the least impropriety, have styled himself ‘brother of Jesus,’ or ‘brother of the Lord;’ and this would have been a much more remarkable and distinguishing title than that of brother of James. A third question still remains to be asked on this subject. The apostle whom St. Luke calls Jude is called Thaddaeus by St. Matthew and St. Mark, as I have already

observed. But the apostle of the Syrians, who first preached the Gospel at Edessa, and founded a Church there, was named Thaddaeus or Adaeus. It may be asked, therefore, whether the author of this epistle was Thaddaeus, the apostle of the Syrians? But the answer is decisive: the old Syriac version does not contain this epistle; consequently it is highly probable that Adai or Adaeus was not the author, for an epistle written by the great apostle of the Syrians would surely have been received into the canon of the Syrian Church.”

The most accurate critics have been unable to determine the time when, and the persons to whom, this epistle was written; so that much concerning these points, as well as the author of the epistle, must remain undecided.

“I am really unable to determine,” says Michaelis, “who the persons were to whom this epistle was sent; for no traces are to be discovered in it which enable us to form the least judgment on this subject; and the address with which this epistle commences is so indeterminate, that there is hardly any Christian community where Greek was spoken, which might not be denoted by it. Though this epistle has a very great similarity to the Second Epistle of Peter, it cannot have been sent to the same persons, namely, the Christians who resided in Pontus, etc., because no mention is made of them in this epistle. Nor can it have been sent to the Christians of Syria and Assyria, where Jude preached the Gospel, if he be the same person as the apostle of the Syrians; for in this case the epistle would not have been written in Greek, but in Syriac or Chaldee, and would certainly have been received into the old Syriac version.

“With respect to the date of this epistle, all that I am able to assert is, that it was written after the Second Epistle of Peter; but how many years after, whether between 64 and 66, as Lardner supposes, or between 70 and 75, as Beausobre and L’Enfant believe; or, according to Dodwell and Cave, in 71 or 72, or so late as the year 90, as is the opinion of Mill, I confess I am unable to determine, at least from any certain data. The expression, ‘in the last time,’ which occurs Jude 18, as well as in 2 Peter 3:3, is too indeterminate to warrant any conclusion respecting the date of this epistle; for though, on the one hand, it may refer to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, it may, on the other hand, refer to a later period, and denote the

close of the apostolic age; for in the First Epistle of St. John a similar expression occurs, which must be taken in this latter sense. The inference, therefore, that the Epistle of St. Jude was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, which some commentators have deduced from the above-mentioned expression, on the supposition that it alluded to that event then approaching, is very precarious, because it is drawn from premises which are themselves uncertain. However, there is some reason to believe, on other grounds, that this epistle was not written after the destruction of Jerusalem; for, as the author has mentioned, Jude 5-8, several well known instances of God's justice in punishing sinners, which Peter had already quoted in his second epistle to the same purpose, he would probably, if Jerusalem had been already destroyed at the time he wrote, have not neglected to add to his other examples this most remarkable instance of Divine vengeance, especially as Christ himself had foretold it.

“Lardner, indeed, though he admits the similarity of the two epistles, still thinks it a matter of doubt whether St. Jude had ever seen the Second Epistle of St. Peter; his reason is, that ‘if St. Jude had formed a design of writing, and had met with an epistle of one of the apostles very suitable to his own thoughts and intentions, he would have forborne to write.’

“To this argument I answer:—

“1. If the Epistle of St. Jude was inspired by the Holy Ghost, as Lardner admits, the Holy Ghost certainly knew, while he was dictating the epistle to St. Jude, that an epistle of St. Peter, of a like import, already existed. And if the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding this knowledge, still thought that an epistle of St. Jude was not unnecessary; why shall we suppose that St. Jude himself would have been prevented writing by the same knowledge?

“2. The Second Epistle of St. Peter was addressed to the inhabitants of some particular countries; but the address of St. Jude's is general: St. Jude therefore might think it necessary to repeat for general use what St. Peter had written only to certain communities.

“3. The Epistle of St. Jude is not a bare copy of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, for in the former, not only several thoughts are more completely

unravelling than in the latter, but several additions are made to what St. Peter had said; for instance Jude 4, 5, 9, 16.

“Eusebius, in his catalogue of the books of the New Testament, places the Epistle of St. Jude among the *αντιλεγόμενα*, contradicted or apocryphal books, in company with the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, and the Second and Third of John.

“But Origen, who lived in the third century, though he speaks in dubious terms of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, has several times quoted the Epistle of St. Jude, and has spoken of it as an epistle on which he entertained no doubt. In his commentary on St. Matthew, when he comes to Matthew 13:55, where James, Joses, Simon, and Jude are mentioned; he says Jude wrote an epistle of few lines indeed, but full of the powerful words of the heavenly grace, who at the beginning says, ‘Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.’ This is a very clear and unequivocal declaration of Origen’s opinion; and it is the more remarkable because he says nothing of the Epistle of St. James, though the passage, Matthew 13:55, afforded him as good an opportunity of speaking of this epistle, as it did of the Epistle of St. Jude. Nay, Origen carries his veneration for the Epistle of Jude so far that, in his treatise *Deuteronomy Principiis*, lib. iii. cap. 2, he quotes an apocryphal book, called the Assumption of Moses, as a work of authority; because a passage from this book had been quoted by St. Jude. In one instance, however, in his commentary on St. Matthew, Origen speaks in less positive terms, for there he says, ‘If any one receive the Epistle of St. Jude,’ etc. Tertullian, in whose works Lardner could discover no quotation from the Second Epistle of St. Peter, describes the Epistle of St. Jude as the work of an apostle; for in his treatise *Deuteronomy cultu faeminarum*, chap. 3, he says, ‘Hence it is that Enoch is quoted by the Apostle Jude.’

“Clement of Alexandria, in whose works likewise Lardner could find no quotation from the Second Epistle of St. Peter, has three times quoted the Epistle of St. Jude without expressing any doubt whatever. It appears, then, that the three ancient fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, as far as we may judge from their writings which are now extant, preferred the Epistle of St. Jude to the Second Epistle of St. Peter. However, I think it not impossible that if all the writings of these authors

were now extant, passages might be found in them which would turn the scale in favor of the latter; and it may be owing to mere accident that in those parts of their works which have descended to us, more passages in which they speak decidedly of St. Jude are to be found, than such as are favorable to the Second Epistle of St. Peter. For I really cannot comprehend how any impartial man who has to choose between these two epistles, which are very similar to each other, can prefer the former to the latter, or receive the Epistle of St. Jude, the contents of which labor under great difficulties, and at the same time reject, or even consider as dubious, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the contents of which labor under no such difficulties.

“But it is much more difficult to explain Jude 9, in which the Archangel Michael is said to have disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. The history of this dispute, which has the appearance of a Jewish fable, it is not at present very easy to discover; because the book from which it is supposed to have been taken by the author of this epistle is no longer extant; but I will here put together such scattered accounts of it as I have been able to collect.

“Origen found in a Jewish Greek book called the Assumption of Moses, which was extant in his time, this very story related concerning the dispute of the Archangel Michael with the devil about the body of Moses. And from a comparison of the relation in his book with St. Jude’s quotation, he was thoroughly persuaded that it was the book from which St. Jude quoted. This he asserts without the least hesitation; and in consequence of this persuasion he himself has quoted the Assumption of Moses as a work of authority, in proof of the temptation of Adam and Eve by the devil. But as he quoted it merely for this purpose, he has given us only an imperfect account of what this book contained, relative to the dispute about the body of Moses. One circumstance, however, he has mentioned, which is not found in the Epistle of St. Jude, viz., that Michael reproached the devil with having possessed the serpent that seduced Eve. In what manner this circumstance is connected with the dispute about the body of Moses, will appear from the following consideration:—

“The Jews imagined the person of Moses was so holy that God could find no reason for permitting him to die; and that nothing but the sin committed

by Adam and Eve in paradise, which brought death into the world, was the cause why Moses did not live for ever. The same notions they entertained of some other very holy persons; for instance, of Isaiah, who they say was delivered to the angel of death merely on account of the sins of our first parents, though he himself did not deserve to die. Now, in the dispute between Michael and the devil about Moses, the devil was the accuser, and demanded the death of Moses. Michael therefore replied to him that he himself was the cause of that sin, which alone could occasion the death of Moses. How very little such notions as these agree, either with the Christian theology, or with Moses' own writings, it is unnecessary for me to declare. Besides the account given by Origen, there is a passage in the works of OEcumenius, which likewise contains a part of the story related in the Assumption of Moses, and which explains the reason of the dispute which St. Jude has mentioned concerning Moses' body. According to this passage, Michael was employed in burying Moses; but the devil endeavored to prevent it by saying that he had murdered an Egyptian, and was therefore unworthy an honorable burial. Hence it appears that some modern writers are mistaken, who have imagined that in the ancient narrative the dispute was said to have arisen from an attempt of the devil to reveal to the Jews the burial place of Moses, and to incite them to an idolatrous worship of his body.

“There is still extant a Jewish book, written in Hebrew, and intitled **משה פתירה** that is, ‘The Death of Moses,’ which some critics, especially Deuteronomy La Rue, supposed to be the same work as that which Origen saw in Greek. Now if it were this Hebrew book, intitled ‘Phetirath Mosheh,’ it would throw a great light on our present inquiry; but I have carefully examined it, and can assert that it is a modern work, and that its contents are not the same as those of the Greek book quoted by Origen. Of the Phetirath Mosheh we have two editions, which contain very different texts; the one was printed at Constantinople in 1518, and reprinted at Venice in 1544 and 1605, the other was published from a manuscript by Gilbert Gaulmyn, who added a translation of both texts, with notes.”

To show that neither St. Jude, nor any inspired writer, nor indeed any person in his sober senses, could quote or in any way accredit such stuff and nonsense, I shall give the substance of this most ridiculous legend as

extracted by Michaelis; for as to the Phetirath Mosheh, I have never seen it.

“Moses requests of God, under various pretences, either that he may not die at all, or at least that he may not die before he comes into Palestine. This request he makes in so froward and petulant a manner as is highly unbecoming, not only a great prophet, but even any man who has expectations of a better life after this. In short, Moses is here represented in the light of a despicable Jew begging for a continuance of life, and devoid both of Christian faith and heathen courage; and it is therefore not improbable that the inventor of this fable made himself the model after which he formed the character of Moses. God argues on the contrary with great patience and forbearance, and replies to what Moses had alleged relative to the merit of his own good works. Farther, it is God who says to Moses that he must die on account of the sin of Adam; to which Moses answers, that he ought to be excepted, because he was superior in merit to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, etc. In the meantime Samael, that is, the angel of death, whom the Jews describe as the chief of the devils rejoices at the approaching death of Moses: this is observed by Michael, who says to him, ‘Thou wicked wretch, I grieve, and thou laughest.’ Moses, after his request had been repeatedly refused, invokes heaven and earth, and all creatures around him to intercede in his behalf. Joshua attempts to pray for him, but the devil stops Joshua’s mouth, and represents to him, really in scriptural style, the impropriety of such a prayer. The elders of the people, and with them all the children of Israel, then offered to intercede for Moses; but their mouths are likewise stopped by a million eight hundred and forty thousand devils, which, on a moderate calculation, make three devils to one man. After this, God commands the angel Gabriel to fetch the soul of Moses; but Gabriel excuses himself, saying, that Moses was too strong for him: Michael receives the same order, and excuses himself in the same manner, or, as other accounts say, under pretense that he had been the instructor of Moses, and therefore could not bear to see him die. But this latter excuse, according to the Phetirath Mosheh, was made by Zinghiel, the third angel who received this command. Samael, that is, the devil, then offers his services; but God asks him how he would take hold of Moses, whether by his mouth, or by his hands, or by his feet, saying, that every part of Moses was too holy for him to touch. The devil,

however, insists on bringing the soul of Moses; yet he does not accuse him, for, on the contrary, he prizes him higher than Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. The devil then approaches towards Moses, to execute this voluntary commission; but as soon as he sees the shining countenance of Moses, he is seized with a violent pain, like that of a woman in labor: Moses, instead of using the oriental salutation, 'Peace be with thee,' says to him, in the words of Isaiah, (for in this work Moses frequently quotes Isaiah and the Psalms,) 'There is no peace to the wicked.' The devil replies that he was come, by the order of God, to fetch his soul; but Moses deters him from the attempt by representing his own strength and holiness; and saying, 'Go, thou wicked wretch, I will not give thee my soul,' he affrights the devil in such a manner that he immediately retires. The devil then returns to God, and relates what had passed, and receives an order to go a second time; the devil answers that he would go everywhere God commanded him, even into hell, and into fire, but not to Moses. This remonstrance is, however, of no avail, and he is obliged to go back again; but Moses, who sees him coming with a drawn sword, meets him with his miraculous rod, and gives him such a blow with it that the devil is glad to escape. Lastly, God himself comes; and Moses, having then no farther hopes, requests only that his soul may not be taken out of his body by the devil. This request is granted him; Zinghiel, Gabriel, and Michael then lay him on a bed, and the soul of Moses begins to dispute with God, and objects to its being taken out of a body which was so pure and holy that no fly dared to settle on it; but God kisses Moses, and with that kiss extracts his soul from his body. Upon this God utters a heavy lamentation; and thus the story in the Phetirath ends, without any mention of a dispute about the burial of Moses' body. This last scene, therefore, which was contained in the Greek book seen by Origen, is wanting in the Hebrew. But in both of these works Michael, as well as the devil, expresses the same sentiments in respect to Moses: in both works the same spirit prevails; and the concluding scene, which was contained in the Greek book, is nothing more than a continuation of the same story which is contained in the Hebrew."

Had Jude quoted a work like the above, it would have argued no inspiration, and little common sense; and the man who could have quoted it must have done it with approbation, and in that case his own



composition would have been of a similar stamp. But nothing can be more dissimilar than the Epistle of Jude and the Phetirath Mosheh: the former contains nothing but manly sense, expressed in pure, energetic, and often sublime language, and accompanied, most evidently, with the deepest reverence for God; while the latter is despicable in every point of view, even considered as the work of a filthy dreamer, or as the most superannuated of old wives' fables.

“Lastly,” says Michaelis, “besides the quotation which St. Jude has made in the 9th verse relative to the dispute between Michael and the devil, he has another quotation, Jude 14, 15, likewise from an apocryphal book called the ‘Prophecies of Enoch;’ or, if not from any written book, from oral tradition. Now, should it be granted that Enoch was a prophet, though it is not certain that he was, yet as none of his prophecies are recorded in the Old Testament no one could possibly know what they were. It is manifest, therefore, that the book called the ‘Prophecies of Enoch’ was a mere Jewish forgery, and that too a very unfortunate one, since in all human probability the use of letters was unknown in the time of Enoch, and consequently he could not have left behind him any written prophecies. It is true that an inspired writer might have known, through the medium of Divine information, what Enoch had prophesied, without having recourse to any written work on this subject. But St. Jude, in the place where he speaks of Enoch’s prophecies, does not speak of them as prophecies which had been made known to him by a particular revelation; on the contrary, he speaks of them in such a manner as implies that his readers were already acquainted with them.”

From all the evidence before him, Michaelis concludes that the canonical authority of this epistle is extremely dubious; that its author is either unknown, or very uncertain; and he has even doubts that it is a forgery in the name of the Apostle Jude. Others have spoken of it in strains of unqualified commendation and praise, and think that its genuineness is established by the matters contained in it, which in every respect are suitable to the character of an inspired apostle of Christ. What has led to its discredit with many is the hasty conclusion that St. Jude quotes such a work as the Phetirath Mosheh; than which nothing can be more improbable, and perhaps nothing more false.

In almost all ages of the Church it has been assailed and defended; but it is at present generally received over the whole Christian world. It contains some very sublime and nervous passages, from the 10th to the 13th verse {Jude 10-13} inclusive; the description of the false teachers is bold, happy, and energetic; the exhortation in verses 20 and 21 {Jude 20, 21}, is both forcible and affectionate; and the doxology, in verses 24 and 25 {Jude 24, 25}, is well adapted to the subject, and is peculiarly dignified and sublime.

I have done what I could, time and circumstances considered, to present the whole epistle to the reader in the clearest point of view; and now must commend him to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build him up, and give him an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

# THE GENERAL EPISTLE

OF

## JUDE

Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5573.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5567.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5557.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4069.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4291.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3825.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4424.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2413.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3167.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1005.
- Year of the era of Nahonassar, king of Babylon, 814.
- Year of the CCXIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 817.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 818.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 377.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 113.
- Year of the Julian era, 110.
- Year of the Spanish era, 103.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 69.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.

- Year of Gessius Florus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 5.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 2.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 16.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 66.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 9; or the year after the third embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 6; or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 18.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, F.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the seventh of April, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the fourteenth of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 28.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 6.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 6, 8, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 13, 14, 16, 16.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 17.
- Year of the Emperor Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Caesar, 12.
- Roman Consuls, A. Licinius Nerva Silanus, and M. Vestinius Atticus. Vestinius was succeeded by Anicius Cerealis on the first of July.

## JUDE

*The address and apostolical benediction, 1, 2. The reasons which induced Jude to write this epistle, to excite the Christians to contend for the true faith, and to beware of false teachers, lest, falling from their steadfastness, they should be destroyed after the example of backsliding Israel, the apostate angels, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrhah, 3-7. Of the false teachers, 8. Of Michael disputing about the body of*

*Moses, 9. The false teachers particularly described: they are like brute beasts, going the way of Cain, run after the error of Balaam, and shall perish, as did Korah in his gainsaying, 10, 11. Are impure, unsteady, fierce, shameless, etc., 12, 13. How Enoch prophesied of such, 14, 15. They are farther described as murmurers and complainers, 16. We should remember the cautions given unto us by the apostles who foretold of these men, 17-19. We should build up ourselves on our most holy faith, 20, 21. How the Church of Christ should treat such, 22, 23. The apostle's farewell, and his doxology to God, 24, 25.*

### NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

**Verse 1. *Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ*** Probably Jude the apostle, who was surnamed Thaddeus and Lebbeus, was son to Alpheus, and brother to James the less, Joses, and Simon. See Matthew 10:3, and collate with Luke 6:16; Matthew 13:55. See the preface.

***Brother of James*** Supposed to be James the less, bishop of Jerusalem, mentioned here, because he was an eminent person in the Church. See the preface to St. James.

***To them that are sanctified by God*** Instead of *ἡγιασμένοις*, to the sanctified, AB, several others, both the Syriac, Erpen's Arabic, Coptic, Sahidic, Armenian, AEthiopic, and Vulgate, with several of the fathers, have *ἠγαπημένοις*, to them that are beloved; and before *ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, in God, some MSS., with the Syriac and Armenian, have *ἐθνέσιν*, to the Gentiles, in God the Father: but although the first is only a probable reading, this is much less so. St. Jude writes to all believers everywhere, and not to any particular Church; hence this epistle has been called a general epistle.

Sanctified signifies here consecrated to God through faith in Christ.

***Preserved in (or by) Jesus Christ*** Signifies those who continued unshaken in the Christian faith; and implies also, that none can be preserved in the faith that do not continue in union with Christ, by whose grace alone they can be preserved and called. This should be read consecutively with the other epithets, and should be rather, in a translation, read first than last, to

the saints in God the Father, called and preserved by Christ Jesus. Saints is the same as Christians; to become such they were called to believe in Christ by the preaching of the Gospel, and having believed, were preserved by the grace of Christ in the life and practice of piety.

**Verse 2. *Mercy unto you*** For even the best have no merit, and must receive every blessing and grace in the way of mercy.

***Peace*** With God and your consciences, love both to God and man, be multiplied — be unboundedly increased.

**Verse 3. *When I gave all diligence*** This phrase, *πασαν σπουδην ποιουμενος*, is a Grecism for being exceedingly intent upon a subject; taking it up seriously with determination to bring it to good effect. The meaning of the apostle seems to be this: “Beloved brethren, when I saw it necessary to write to you concerning the common salvation, my mind being deeply affected with the dangers to which the Church is exposed from the false teachers that are gone out into the world, I found it extremely necessary to write and exhort you to hold fast the truth which you had received, and strenuously to contend for that only faith which, by our Lord and his apostles, has been delivered to the Christians.”

Some think that St. Jude intimates that he had at first purposed to write to the Church at large, on the nature and design of the Gospel; but seeing the dangers to which the Churches were exposed, because of the false teachers, he changed his mind, and wrote pointedly against those false doctrines, exhorting them strenuously to contend for the faith.

***The common salvation*** The Christian religion, and the salvation which it brings. This is called common because it equally belongs to Jews and Gentiles; it is the saving grace of God which has appeared to every man, and equally offers to every human being that redemption which is provided for the whole world.

**Verse 4. *For there are certain men crept in unawares*** *παρεισεδυσαν*. They had got into the Church under specious pretences; and, when in, began to sow their bad seed.

***Before of old ordained*** *οι παλαι προγεγραμμενοι* Such as were long ago proscribed, and condemned in the most public manner; this is the

import of the word **προγραφειν** in this place, and there are many examples of this use of it in the Greek writers. See Kypke.

**To this condemnation** To a similar punishment to that immediately about to be mentioned.

In the sacred writings all such persons, false doctrines, and impure practices, have been most openly proscribed and condemned; and the apostle immediately produces several examples, viz., the disobedient Israelites, the unfaithful angels, and the impure inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha. This is most obviously the apostle's meaning, and it is as ridiculous as it is absurd to look into such words for a decree of eternal reprobation, etc., such a doctrine being as far from the apostle's mind as from that of Him in whose name he wrote.

**Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness** Making the grace and mercy of God a covering for crimes; intimating that men might sin safely who believe the Gospel, because in that Gospel grace abounds. But perhaps the goodness of God is here meant, for I cannot see how they could believe the Gospel in any way who denied the Lord Jesus Christ; unless, which is likely, their denial refers to this, that while they acknowledged Jesus as the promised Messiah, they denied him to be the only Lord, Sovereign, and Ruler of the Church and of the world. There are many in the present day who hold the same opinion.

**The only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.** **μονον δεσποτην θεον και κυριον ημων ιησους χριστον αρνουμενοι.** These words may be translated, Denying the only sovereign God, even our Lord Jesus Christ. But **θεον** GOD, is omitted by ABC, sixteen others, with Erpen's Arabic, the Coptic, AEthiopic, Armenian, and Vulgate, and by many of the fathers. It is very likely that it was originally inserted as a gloss, to ascertain to whom the title of **τον μονον δεσποτην**, the only Sovereign, belonged; and thus make two persons where only one seems to be intended. The passage I believe belongs solely to Jesus Christ, and may be read thus: Denying the only sovereign Ruler, even our Lord Jesus Christ. The text is differently arranged in the Complutensian Polyglot, which contains the first edition of the Greek Testament: **και τον μονον θεον και δεσποτην, τον κυριον ημων ιησουν χριστον αρνουμενοι.** Denying the only God and Sovereign, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a very

remarkable position of the words, and doubtless existed in some of the MSS. from which these editors copied. The Simonians, Nicolaitans, and Gnostics, denied God to be the creator of the world; and Simon is said to have proclaimed himself as FATHER to the Samaritans, as SON to the Jews, and as the HOLY GHOST to all other nations. All such most obviously denied both Father, Son, and Spirit.

**Verse 5. *I will therefore put you in remembrance*** That is, how such persons were proscribed, and condemned to bear the punishment due to such crimes.

***Though ye once knew this*** The word **απαξ**, here translated once, has greatly puzzled many interpreters. It has two meanings in the sacred writings, and indeed in the Greek writers also. 1. It signifies once, one time, as opposed to twice, or several times. 2. Altogether, entirely, perfectly, interpreted by Suidas **αντι τον διολου, ολοσχερως**; and of this meaning he produces a proof from Josephus; This appears to be the sense of the word in Hebrews 6:4: **τους απαξ φωτισθεντας**; those who were FULLY enlightened. Hebrews 10:2: **απαξ κεκαθαρμενους**; THOROUGHLY cleansed. See also Hebrews 10:3 of this epistle. Psalm 62:11: **απαξ ελαλησεν ο θεος**; God spoke FULLY, completely, on the subject. St. Jude is to be understood as saying, I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye are THOROUGHLY instructed in this.

***Saved the people*** Delivered them from the Egyptian bondage.

***Afterward destroyed them*** Because they neither believed his word, nor were obedient to his commands. This is the first example of what was mentioned Jude 4.

**Verse 6. *The angels which kept not their first estate*** **την εαυτων αρχην** Their own principality. The words may be understood of their having invaded the office or dignity of some others, or of their having by some means forfeited their own. This is spoken of those generally termed the fallen angels; but from what they fell, or from what cause or for what crime, we know not. It is generally thought to have been pride; but this is mere conjecture. One thing is certain; the angels who fell must have been in a state of probation, capable of either standing or falling, as Adam was in



paradise. They did not continue faithful, though they knew the law on which they stood; they are therefore produced as the second example.

***But left their own habitation*** This seems to intimate that they had invaded the office and prerogatives of others, and attempted to seize on their place of residence and felicity.

***He hath reserved in everlasting chains*** That is, in a state of confinement from which they cannot escape.

***Under darkness*** Alluding probably to those dungeons or dark cells in prisons where the most flagitious culprits were confined.

***The judgment of the great day,*** The final judgment, when both angels and men shall receive their eternal doom. See on 2 Peter 2:4. In Sohar Exod., fol. 8, c. 32: “Rabbi Isaac asked: Suppose God should punish any of his heavenly family, how would he act? R. Abba answered: He would send them into the flaming river, take away their dominion, and put others in their place.” Some suppose that the saints are to occupy the places from which these angels, by transgression, fell.

**Verse 7. *Even as Sodom and Gomorrha*** What their sin and punishment were may be seen in Genesis 19, and the notes there. This is the third example to illustrate what is laid down Jude 4.

***Are set forth for an example*** Both of what God will do to such transgressors, and of the position laid down in Jude 4, viz., that God has in the most open and positive manner declared that such and such sinners shall meet with the punishment due to their crimes.

***Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.*** Subjected to such a punishment as an endless fire can inflict. Some apply this to the utter subversion of these cities, so that by the action of that fire which descended from heaven they were totally and eternally destroyed; for as to their being rebuilt, that is impossible, seeing the very ground on which they stood is burned up, and the whole plain is now the immense lake Asphaltites. See my notes on Genesis 19.

The first sense applies to the inhabitants of those wicked cities; the second, to the cities themselves: in either case the word **πυρ αἰώνιον** signifies an eternally destructive fire; it has no end in the punishment of

the wicked Sodomites, etc.; it has no end in the destruction of the cities; they were totally burnt up, and never were and never can be rebuilt. In either of these senses the word **αιωνιος**, eternal, has its grammatical and proper meaning.

**Verse 8. *Likewise also these filthy dreamers*** He means to say that these false teachers and their followers were as unbelieving and disobedient as the Israelites in the wilderness, as rebellious against the authority of God as the fallen angels, and as impure and unholy as the Sodomites; and that consequently they must expect similar punishment.

Our translators, by rendering **ενυπνιαζομενοι** filthy dreamers, seem to have understood St. Jude to mean les pollutions nocturnes et volontaires de ces hommes impurs, qui se livrent sans scrupule a toutes sortes des pensees; et salissant leur imagination pas la vue de toutes sortes d' objets, tombent ensuite dans les corruptions honteuses et criminelles. See Calmet. In plain English, self-pollution, with all its train of curses and cursed effects on body, soul, and spirit. The idea of our translators seems to be confirmed by the words **σαρκα μεν μιναινουσι**, they indeed pollute the flesh. See what is said at the conclusion of the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis.

***Despise dominion*** **κυριοτητα δε αθετουσι**. They set all government at nought — they will come under no restraints; they despise all law, and wish to live as they list.

***Speak evil of dignities.*** **δοξας δε βλασφημουσιν**. They blaspheme or speak injuriously of supreme authority. (See 2 Peter 2:10, 11.) They treat governors and government with contempt, and calumniate and misrepresent all Divine and civil institutions.

**Verse 9. *Yet Michael the archangel*** Of this personage many things are spoken in the Jewish writings “Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh says: Wherever Michael is said to appear, the glory of the Divine Majesty is always to be understood.” Shemoth Rabba, sec. ii., fol. 104, 3. So that it seems as if they considered Michael in some sort as we do the Messiah manifested in the flesh.

Let it be observed that the word archangel is never found in the plural number in the sacred writings. There can be properly only one archangel,

one chief or head of all the angelic host. Nor is the word devil, as applied to the great enemy of mankind, ever found in the plural; there can be but one monarch of all fallen spirits. Michael is this archangel, and head of all the angelic orders; the devil, great dragon, or Satan, is head of all the diabolic orders. When these two hosts are opposed to each other they are said to act under these two chiefs, as leaders; hence in Revelation 12:7, it is said: MICHAEL and his angels fought against the DRAGON and his angels. The word Michael מִיכָאֵל, seems to be compounded of מִי mi, who, כֵּ ke, like, and אֵל El, God; he who is like God; hence by this personage, in the Apocalypse, many understand the Lord Jesus.

***Disputed about the body of Moses*** What this means I cannot tell; or from what source St. Jude drew it, unless from some tradition among his countrymen. There is something very like it in Debarim Rabba, sec. ii., fol. 263, 1: “Samael, that wicked one, the prince of the satans, carefully kept the soul of Moses, saying: When the time comes in which Michael shall lament, I shall have my mouth filled with laughter. Michael said to him: Wretch, I weep, and thou laughest. Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, because I have fallen; for I shall rise again: when I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light; Micah 7:8. By the words, because I have fallen, we must understand the death of Moses; by the words, I shall rise again, the government of Joshua, etc.” See the preface.

Another contention of Michael with Satan is mentioned in Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 43, 3: “At the time in which Isaac was bound there was a contention between Michael and Satan. Michael brought a ram, that Isaac might be liberated; but Satan endeavored to carry off the ram, that Isaac might be slain.”

The contention mentioned by Jude is not about the sacrifice of Isaac, nor the soul of Moses, but about the BODY of Moses; but why or wherefore we know not. Some think the devil wished to show the Israelites where Moses was buried, knowing that they would then adore his body; and that Michael was sent to resist this discovery.

***Durst not bring against him a railing accusation*** It was a Jewish maxim, as may be seen in Synopsis Sohar, page 92, note 6: “It is not lawful for

man to prefer ignominious reproaches, even against wicked spirits.” See Schoettgen.

Dr. Macknight says: “In Daniel 10:13, 21; 12:1, Michael is spoken of as one of the chief angels who took care of the Israelites as a nation; he may therefore have been the angel of the Lord before whom Joshua the high priest is said, Zechariah 3:1, to have stood, Satan being at his right hand to resist him, namely, in his design of restoring the Jewish Church and state, called by Jude the body of Moses, just as the Christian Church is called by Paul the body of Christ. Zechariah adds, And the Lord, that is, the angel of the Lord, as is plain from Zechariah 3:1, 2, said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee!” This is the most likely interpretation which I have seen; and it will appear the more probable when it is considered that, among the Hebrews, **גוף** guph, BODY, is often used for a thing itself. So, in Romans 7:24, **σωματος αμαρτιας**, the body of sin, signifies sin itself; so the body of Moses, **גוף של משה** guph shel Mosheh, may signify Moses himself; or that in which he was particularly concerned, viz., his institutes, religion, etc.

It may be added, that the Jews consider Michael and Samael, one as the friend, the other as the enemy, of Israel. Samael is their accuser, Michael their advocate. “Michael and Samael stand before the Lord; Satan accuses, but Michael shows the merits of Israel. Satan endeavors to speak, but Michael silences him: Hold thy tongue, says he, and let us hear what the Judge determines; for it is written, He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints; Psalm 85:8.” Shemoth Rabba, sec. xviii. fol. 117, 3.

**Verse 10. *Speak evil of those things which they know not*** They do not understand the origin and utility of civil government; they revile that which ever protects their own persons and their property. This is true in most insurrections and seditions.

***But what they know naturally*** They are destitute of reflection; their minds are uncultivated; they follow mere natural instinct, and are slaves to their animal propensities.

***As brute beasts*** **ως τα αλογα ζωα**. Like the irrational animals; but, in the indulgence of their animal propensities, they corrupt themselves, beyond

the example of the brute beasts. A fearful description; and true of many in the present day.

**Verse 11. *They have gone in the way of Cain*** They are haters of their brethren, and they that are such are murderers; and by their false doctrine they corrupt and destroy the souls of the people.

***The error of Balaam*** For the sake of gain they corrupt the word of God and refine away its meaning, and let it down so as to suit the passions of the profligate. This was literally true of the Nicolaitans, who taught most impure doctrines, and followed the most lascivious practices.

***Gainsaying of Core.*** See the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company, in Num. 22. It appears that these persons opposed the authority of the apostles of our Lord, as Korah and his associates did that of Moses and Aaron; and St. Jude predicts them a similar punishment. In this verse he accuses them of murder, covetousness, and rebellion against the authority of God.

**Verse 12. *Spots in your feasts of charity*** It appears that these persons, unholy and impure as they were, still continued to have outward fellowship with the Church! This is strange: but it is very likely that their power and influence in that place had swallowed up, or set aside, the power and authority of the real ministers of Christ; a very common case when worldly, time-serving men get into the Church.

The feasts of charity, the *αγαπαι* or love feasts, of which the apostle speaks, were in use in the primitive Church till the middle of the fourth century, when, by the council of Laodicea, they were prohibited to be held in the Churches; and, having been abused, fell into disuse. In later days they have been revived, in all the purity and simplicity of the primitive institution, among the Moravians or Unitas Fratrum, and the people called Methodists.

Among the ancients, the richer members of the Church made an occasional general feast, at which all the members attended, and the poor and the rich ate together. The fatherless, the widows, and the strangers were invited to these feasts, and their eating together was a proof of their love to each other; whence such entertainments were called love feasts. The love feasts were at first celebrated before the Lord's Supper; in process of time they

appear to have been celebrated after it. But they were never considered as the Lord's Supper, nor any substitute for it. See, for farther information, Suicer, in his Thesaurus, under the word *αγαπη*.

***Feeding themselves without fear*** Eating, not to suffice nature, but to pamper appetite. It seems the provision was abundant, and they ate to gluttony and riot. It was this which brought the love feasts into disrepute in the Church, and was the means of their being at last wholly laid aside. This abuse is never likely to take place among the Methodists, as they only use bread and water; and of this the provision is not sufficient to afford the tenth part of a meal.

Instead of *αγαπαις*, love feasts, *απαταις*, deceits, is the reading of the Codex Alexandrinus, and the Codex Ephrem, two MSS. of the highest antiquity; as also of those MSS. collated by Laurentius Valla, and of some of those in the Medicean library. This reading appears to have been introduced in order to avoid the conclusion that some might be led to draw concerning the state of the Church; it must be very corrupt, to have in its communion such corrupt men.

***Clouds-without water*** The doctrine of God is compared to the rain, Deuteronomy 32:2, and clouds are the instruments by which the rain is distilled upon the earth. In arid or parched countries the very appearance of a cloud is delightful, because it is a token of refreshing showers; but when sudden winds arise, and disperse these clouds, the hope of the husbandman and shepherd is cut off. These false teachers are represented as clouds; they have the form and office of the teachers of righteousness, and from such appearances pure doctrine may be naturally expected: but these are clouds without water — they distil no refreshing showers, because they have none; they are carried away and about by their passions, as those light fleecy clouds are carried by the winds. See the notes on 2 Peter 2:17.

***Trees whose fruit withereth*** *δενδρα φθινοπωρινα*. Galled or diseased trees; for *φθινοπωρον* is, according to Phavorinus, *νοσος φθινουσα απωρας*, a disease (in trees) which causes their fruit to wither; for although there are blossoms, and the fruit shapes or is set, the galls in the trees prevent the proper circulation of the sap, and therefore the fruit never comes to perfection. Hence the apostle immediately adds, without

fruit; i.e. the fruit never comes to maturity. This metaphor expresses the same thing as the preceding. They have the appearance of ministers of the Gospel, but they have no fruit.

**Twice dead** First, naturally and practically dead in sin, from which they had been revived by the preaching and grace of the Gospel. Secondly, dead by backsliding or apostasy from the true faith, by which they lost the grace they had before received; and now likely to continue in that death, because plucked up from the roots, their roots of faith and love being no longer fixed in Christ Jesus. Perhaps the aorist is taken here for the future: They SHALL BE plucked up from the roots — God will exterminate them from the earth.

**Verse 13. *Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame*** The same metaphor as in Isaiah 57:20: The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. These are like the sea in a storm, where the swells are like mountains; the breakers lash the shore, and sound like thunder; and the great deep, stirred up from its very bottom, rolls its muddy, putrid sediment, and deposits it upon the beach. Such were those proud and arrogant boasters, those headstrong, unruly, and ferocious men, who swept into their own vortex the souls of the simple, and left nothing behind them that was not indicative of their folly, their turbulence, and their impurity.

**Wandering stars** ἀστερες πλανηται. Not what we call planets; for although these differ from what are called the fixed stars, which never change their place, while the planets have their revolution round the sun; yet, properly speaking, there is no irregularity in their motions: for their appearance of advancing, stationary, and retrograde, are only in reference to an observer on the earth, viewing them in different parts of their orbits; for as to themselves, they ever continue a steady course through all their revolutions. But these are uncertain, anomalous meteors, ignes fatui, wills-o'-the-wisp; dancing about in the darkness which themselves have formed, and leading simple souls astray, who have ceased to walk in the light, and have no other guides but those oscillating and devious meteors which, if you run after them, will flee before you, and if you run from them will follow you.

***The blackness of darkness*** They are such as are going headlong into that outer darkness where there is wailing, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth. The whole of this description appears to have been borrowed from 2 Peter 2, where the reader is requested to see the notes.

**Verse 14. *Enoch also, the seventh from Adam*** He was the seventh patriarch, and is distinguished thus from Enoch, son of Cain, who was but the third from Adam; this appears plainly from the genealogy, 1 Chronicles 1:1: Adams Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, Henoch or Enoch, etc. Of the book of Enoch, from which this prophecy is thought to have been taken, much has been said; but as the work is apocryphal, and of no authority, I shall not burden my page with extracts. See the preface.

Perhaps the word **προεφητευσε**, prophesied, means no more than preached, spoke, made declarations, etc., concerning these things and persons; for doubtless he reproved the ungodliness of his own times. It is certain that a book of Enoch was known in the earliest ages of the primitive Church, and is quoted by Origen and Tertullian; and is mentioned by St. Jerome in the Apostolical Constitutions, by Nicephorus, Athanasius, and probably by St. Augustine. See Suicer's Thesaurus, vol. i., col. 1131. Such a work is still extant among the Abyssinians.

***Ten thousand of his saints*** This seems to be taken from Daniel 7:10.

**Verse 15. *To execute judgment*** This was originally spoken to the antediluvians; and the coming of the Lord to destroy that world was the thing spoken of in this prophecy or declaration. But as God had threatened this, it required no direct inspiration to foretell it. To execute judgment, etc. This is a very strange verse as to its composition, and is loaded with various readings; the MSS. and versions being at little agreement among themselves on its phraseology. **αυτων**, which we translate among them, is omitted by the best MSS. and versions, and is, in all probability, spurious. Many also omit **ασεβειας** after **ργων**, ungodly deeds. Many insert **λογων**, words or speeches, after **σκληρων**, hard; and this word our translators have supplied. And instead of **αμαρτωλοι**, sinners, the Sahidic has **ανθρωποι**, men. There are others of less note; but the frequent recurrence of ALL and UNGODLY makes the construction of the sentence very harsh.



Dr. Macknight supposes that Enoch's prophecy was common among the Jews; for the first words in Hebrew are Maranatha, and these were used by them in that form of excommunication or cursing which they pronounced against irreclaimable offenders. The doctor forgets himself here; the words Maranatha are not Hebrew, but Syriac. In Hebrew the form of execration begins with אָרַר אֶתְּךָ arur attach, "cursed art thou;" or מוֹחֵרִים אֶתְּךָ mochoram attah: but the Syriac (Syriac) maran atha, is literally, our Lord is coming; see on 1 Corinthians 16:22; but here, in the Syriac, the words are (Syriac) atha moria, "the Lord cometh." So it is doubtful whether this fancied analogy exists.

**Verse 16. *These are murmurers*** Grudging and grumbling at all men, and at all things; complainers, **μεμψιμοιροι**, complainers of their fate or destiny — finding fault with God and all his providential dispensations, making and governing worlds in their own way; persons whom neither God nor man can please.

***Walking after their own lusts*** Taking their wild, disorderly, and impure passions for the rule of their conduct, and not the writings of the prophets and apostles.

***Great swelling words*** ὑπερογκᾶ. See the explanation of this term in 2 Peter 2:18.

***Having men's persons in admiration*** Time-servers and flatterers; persons who pretend to be astonished at the greatness, goodness, sagacity, learning, wisdom; etc., of rich and great men, hoping thereby to acquire money, influence, power, friends, and the like.

***Because of advantage.*** ωφελειας χαριν· For the sake of lucre. All the flatterers of the rich are of this kind; and especially those who profess to be ministers of the Gospel, and who, for the sake of a more advantageous settlement or living, will soothe the rich even in their sins. With such persons a rich man is every thing; and if he have but a grain of grace, his piety is extolled to the skies! I have known several ministers of this character, and wish them all to read the sixteenth verse of Jude. {Jude 16}

**Verse 17. *Remember-the words*** Instead of following those teachers and their corrupt doctrine, remember what Christ and his apostles have said; for they foretold the coming of such false teachers and impostors.

**Verse 18. *Mockers in the last time*** See the notes on 1 Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1, etc.; and particularly 2 Peter 3:2, 3, etc., to which Jude seems to refer.

The last time. — The conclusion of the Jewish polity.

**Verse 19. *Who separate themselves*** From the true Church, which they leave from an affectation of superior wisdom.

***Sensual ψυχικοι*** Animal — living as brute beasts, guided simply by their own lusts and passions, their Bible being the manifold devices and covetousness of their own hearts; for they have not the Spirit — they are not spiritually minded; and have no Holy Ghost, no inspiration from God.

**Verse 20. *Building up yourselves*** Having the most holy faith—the Gospel of our Lord Jesus, and the writings of his apostles, for your foundation; founding all your expectations on these, and seeking from the Christ who is their sum and substance; all the grace and glory ye need.

***Praying in the Holy Ghost*** Holding fast the Divine influence which ye have received, and under that influence making prayer and supplication to God. The prayer that is not sent up through the influence of the Holy Ghost is never likely to reach heaven.

**Verse 21. *Keep yourselves in the love of God*** By building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost; for without this we shall soon lose the love of God.

***Looking for the mercy of our Lord*** For although they were to build themselves up, and to pray in the Holy Ghost, and keep themselves in the love of God, yet this building, praying, and keeping, cannot merit heaven; for, after all their diligence, earnestness, self-denial, watching, obedience, etc., they must look for the MERCY of the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring them to ETERNAL LIFE.

**Verse 22. *And of some have compassion, making a difference*** The general meaning of this exhortation is supposed to be, “Ye are not to deal

alike with all those who have been seduced by false teachers; ye are to make a difference between those who have been led away by weakness and imprudence, and those who, in the pride and arrogance of their hearts, and their unwillingness to submit to wholesome discipline, have separated themselves from the Church, and become its inveterate enemies.”

Instead of **και ους μεν ελεειτε διακρινομενοι**, and of some have compassion, making a difference, many MSS., versions, and fathers have **και ους μεν ελεγχετε διακρινομενους**, and some rebuke, after having judged them; or, rebuke those that differ; or, some that are wavering convince; or whatever else the reader pleases: for this and the following verse are all confusion, both in the MSS. and versions; and it is extremely difficult to know what was the original text. Our own is as likely as any.

**Verse 23. *And others save with fear*** “Some of them snatch from the fire: but when they repent, have mercy upon them in fear.” — Syriac. “And some of them rebuke for their sins; and on others have mercy when they are convicted; and others save from the fire and deliver them.” — Erpen’s Arabic. Mr. Wesley’s note has probably hit the sense. “Meantime watch over others as well as yourselves; and give them such help as their various needs require. For instance, 1. Some that are wavering in judgment, staggered by others’ or by their own evil reasoning, endeavor more deeply to convince of the truth as it is in Jesus. 2. Some snatch with a swift and strong hand out of the fire of sin and temptation. 3. On others show compassion, in a milder and gentler way; though still with a jealous fear, lest you yourselves be infected with the disease you endeavor to cure. See therefore that, while ye love the sinners, ye retain the utmost abhorrence of their sins, and of any, the least degree of or approach to them.”

***Having even the garment spotted by the flesh.*** Fleeing from all appearance of evil. Dictum sumptum, ut apparet, a mulieribus sanguine menstruo pollutis, quarum vestes etiam pollutae censebantur: or there may be an allusion to a case of leprosy, for that infected the garments of the afflicted person, and these garments were capable of conveying the contagion to others.

**Verse 24. *Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling*** Who alone can preserve you from the contagion of sin, and preserve you from falling into any kind of error that might be prejudicial to the interests of your

souls; and thus to present you faultless, or, as many others read, **ασπιλους**, without spot, alluding to the spotted garment mentioned above.

**Before the presence of his glory** Where nothing can stand that does not resemble himself, with exceeding great joy, in finding yourselves eternally out of the reach of the possibility of falling, and for having now arrived at an eternity of happiness.

**Verse 25. To the only wise God** Who alone can teach, who alone has declared the truth; that truth in which ye now stand. See on Romans 16:27.

**Our Savior** Who has by his blood washed us from our sins, and made us kings and priests unto God the Father.

**Be glory** Be ascribed all light, excellence, and splendor.

**Majesty** All power, authority, and pre-eminence.

**Dominion** All rule and government in the world and in the Church, in earth and in heaven.

**And power** All energy and operation to every thing that is wise, great, good, holy, and excellent.

**Both now** In the present state of life and things.

**And ever.** **εις παντας τους αιωνας** To the end of all states, places, dispensations, and worlds; and to a state which knows no termination, being that ETERNITY in which this glory, majesty, dominion, and power ineffably and incomprehensibly dwell.

**Amen.** So let it be, so ought it to be, and so it shall be.

After to the only wise God our Savior, many excellent MSS. versions, etc., add **δια ιησου χριστου του κυριου ημων**, by Jesus Christ our Lord; and after dominion and power they add **προ παντος του αιωνος**, before all time; and both these readings Griesbach has received into the text. The text, therefore, may be read thus: To the only wise God our Savior, by Christ Jesus our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time; and now, and through all futurity. Amen. Let the whole creation join in one chorus, issuing in one eternal Amen!

Subscriptions to this epistle in the VERSIONS:—

The Epistle of Jude the apostle, whose intercession be ever with us, Amen. The end. — SYRIAC.

The Epistle of Jude, the brother of James is finished: and glory be to God for ever and ever, Amen. — AETHIOPIC.

Nothing in the VULGATE.

Nothing in the ARABIC.

“This epistle was written A. D. 64, by the Apostle Jude, the brother of James; who is also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus; and who preached (the Gospel) to the Armenians and to the Persians.” — This is found at the end of the ARMENIAN Bible, printed in 1698.

The Epistle of Jude the son of Joseph, and brother of James, is ended-A MS. copy of the SYRIAC.

The end of the catholic Epistle of St. Jude. — COMPLUTENSIAN.

The Epistle of Jude the apostle is ended. — IBID. Latin text.

In the MANUSCRIPTS:—

Jude. — Codex Vaticanus, B.

The Epistle of Jude. — Codex Alexandrinus.

The catholic Epistle of Jude. — Codex Ephrem.

The Epistle of the holy Apostle Jude. — Codex G, in Griesbach.

Of how little authority such subscriptions are, we have already had occasion to observe in various cases. Very few of them are ancient; and none of them coeval with the works to which they are appended. They are, in general, the opinions of the scribes who wrote the copies; or of the Churches for whose use they were written. No stress therefore should be laid on them, as if proceeding from Divine authority.

With the Epistle of Jude end all the apostolical epistles, and with it the canon of the New Testament, as to gospels and epistles; for the Apocalypse is a work sui generis, and can rank with neither. It is in general

a collection of symbolic prophecies, which do not appear to be yet fully understood by the Christian world, and which can only be known when they are fulfilled.

Finished for a new impression, January 4th, 1832. — A. C.

# INTRODUCTION TO THE REVELATION

OF

## ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

As there has been much controversy concerning the authenticity of this book; and as it was rejected by many for a considerable time, and, when generally acknowledged, was received cautiously by the Church; it will be well to examine the testimony by which its authenticity is supported, and the arguments by which its claim to a place in the sacred canon is vindicated. Before, therefore, I produce my own sentiments, I shall beg leave to lay before the reader those of Dr. Lardner, who has treated the subject with much judgment.

“We are now come to the last book of the New Testament, the Revelation; about which there have been different sentiments among Christians; many receiving it as the writing of John the apostle and evangelist, others ascribing it to John a presbyter, others to Cerinthus, and some rejecting it, without knowing to whom it should be ascribed. I shall therefore here rehearse the testimony of ancient Christians, as it arises in several ages.

“It is probable that Hermas read the book of the Revelation, and imitated it; he has many things resembling it. It is referred to by the martyrs at Lyons. There is reason to think it was received by Papias. Justin Martyr, about the year 140, was acquainted with this book, and received it as written by the Apostle John; for, in his dialogue with Trypho, he expressly says: ‘A man from among us, by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that shall be the general, and, in a word, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all together.’ To this passage we suppose Eusebius to refer in his ecclesiastical history, when giving an account of Justin’s works, he observes to this purpose. He also mentions the Revelation of John,

expressly calling it the apostle's. Among the works of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, one of the seven Churches of Asia, about the year 177, Eusebius mentions one entitled, 'Of the Revelation of John.' It is very probable that Melito ascribed this book to the apostle of that name, and esteemed it of canonical authority. Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, about A.D. 178, who in his younger days was acquainted with Polycarp, often quotes this book as the Revelation of John, the apostle of the Lord. And in one place he says: 'It was seen not long ago, but almost in our age, at the end of the reign of Domitian.'

"Theophilus was bishop of Antioch about 181. Eusebius, speaking of a work of his against the heresy of Hermogenes, says: 'He therein made use of testimonies, or quoted passages, from John's Apocalypse.' The book of the Revelation is several times quoted by Clement of Alexandria, who flourished about 194; and once in this manner: 'Such a one, though here on earth he is not honored with the first seat, shall sit upon the four and twenty thrones judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.' Tertullian, about the year 200, often quotes the Revelation, and supposes it to have been written by St. John, the same who wrote the First Epistle of John, universally received: 'Again, the Apostle John describes, in the Apocalypse, a sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth of God.' He also says: 'We have Churches that are the disciples of John. For though Marcion rejects the Revelation, the succession of bishops, traced to the original, will assure us that John is the author:' by John undoubtedly meaning the apostle.

"From Eusebius we learn that Apollonius, who wrote against the Montanists about 211, quoted the Revelation. By Caius, about 212, it was ascribed to Cerinthus: it was received by Hippolytus about 220, and by Origen about 230. It is often quoted by him. He seems not to have had any doubt about its genuineness. In his Commentary upon St. John's gospel, he speaks of it in this manner: 'Therefore John, the son of Zebedee, says in the Revelation.' Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, about 247, or somewhat later, wrote a book against the Millenarians, in which he allows the Revelation to be written by John, a holy and divinely inspired man. But he says, 'He cannot easily grant him to be the apostle, the son of Zebedee, whose is the gospel according to John, and the catholic epistle.' He rather thinks it may be the work of John an elder, who also lived at



Ephesus in Asia, as well as the apostle. It also appears, from a conference which Dionysius had with some Millenarians, that the Revelation was, about 240 and before, received by Nepus, an Egyptian bishop, and by many others in that country; and that it was in great reputation. It was received by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, about 248, and by the Church of Rome in his time, and by many Latin authors. The Revelation was received by Novatus and his followers, and by various other authors. It is also probable that it was received by the Manichees. It was received by Lactantius, and by the Donatists; by the latter Arnobius about 460, and by the Arians.

“In the time of Eusebius, in the former part of the fourth century, it was by some not received at all; and therefore it is reckoned by him among contradicted books. Nevertheless, it was generally received. Eusebius himself seems to have hesitated about it, for he says: ‘It is likely the Revelation was seen by John the elder, if not by John the apostle.’ It may be reckoned probable that the critical argument of Dionysius of Alexandria was of great weight with him and others of that time. The Revelation was received by Athanasius, and by Epiphanius; but we also learn from him that it was not received by all in his time. It is not in the catalogue of Cyril of Jerusalem, and seems not to have been received by him. It is also wanting in the catalogue of the Council of Laodicea, about 363.

“The Revelation is not in Gregory Nazianzen’s catalogue; however, it seems to have been received by him. It is in the catalogue of Amphilochius; but he says it was not received by all. It is also omitted in Ebedjesus’ catalogue of the books of Scripture received by the Syrians; nor is it in the ancient Syriac version.

“It was received by Jerome; but he says it was rejected by the Greek Christians. It was received by Rufin, by the third Council of Carthage, and by Augustine, but it was not received by all in his time. It is never quoted by Chrysostom, and probably was not received by him. It is in the catalogue of Dionysius, called the Areopagite, about 490. It is in the Alexandrian MS. It was received by Sulpicius Severus about 401; and by J. Damascenus, and by OEcumenius, and by many other authors. Andrew, bishop of Caesarea, in Cappadocia, at the end of the fifth century, and Arethas, bishop of the same place, in the sixth century, wrote

commentaries upon it. But it was not received by Severian, bishop of Gabala; nor, as it seems, by Theodoret. Upon the whole, it appears that this book has been generally received in all ages, though some have doubted of it, and rejected it; particularly the Syrians, and some other Christians in the east.

“Having thus represented the external evidence of the genuineness of the Book of the Revelation, or of its being written by St. John, I should proceed to consider the internal evidence. But I need not enlarge here, but merely take notice of a few things of principal note, which learned men insist upon as arguments that the Revelation has the same author with the gospel and epistles that go under the name of the Evangelist and Apostle John. Revelation 1:1: ‘The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass. And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.’

“Hence it is argued, that John styles himself the servant of Christ, in a sense not common to all believers, but peculiarly to those who are especially employed by him. So Paul and other apostles call themselves servants of God and of Christ. Particularly Romans 1:1: ‘Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.’ James 1:1: ‘James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.’ 2 Peter 1:1: ‘Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.’ Jude 1: ‘Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ.’ So Moses is called ‘the servant of God,’ Numbers 12:7; and Hebrews 3:2; and in like manner many of the prophets. And in this very book, Revelation 10:7, is the expression, ‘as he has declared unto his servants, the prophets.’

“This observation may be of some weight for showing that the writer is an apostle, but it is not decisive; and in the same verse, whence this argument is taken, the phrase is used in its general sense: ‘Which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants.’ Revelation 1:2: ‘Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.’

“Some suppose the writer here refers to the written gospel of St. John, and should be understood to say that he had already borne testimony concerning the word of God, and of Jesus Christ. But these words may be understood of this very book, the Revelation, and the things contained in it. The writer says here, very properly at the beginning, and by way of

preface, that he had performed his office in this book, having faithfully recorded in it the word of God which he had received from Jesus Christ. Certainly, if these words did clearly refer to a written gospel, they would be decisive; but they are allowed to be ambiguous, and other senses have been given of them. By some they have been understood to contain a declaration that the writer had already borne witness to Jesus Christ before magistrates. Moreover, I think that, if St. John had intended to manifest himself in this introduction, he would more plainly have characterized himself in several parts of this book than he has done. This observation therefore appears to me to be of small moment for determining who the writer is.

“Farther, it is argued, in favor of the genuineness of this book, that there are in it many instances of conformity, both of sentiment and expression, between the Revelation and the uncontested writings of St. John. Our Savior says to his disciples, John 16:33: ‘Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.’ Christian firmness under trials is several times represented by overcoming, overcoming the world, or overcoming the wicked one, in St. John’s First Epistle, 1 John 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5. And it is language peculiar to St. John, being in no other books of the New Testament. And our Lord says, Revelation 3:21: ‘To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with the in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.’ Compare Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7.

“Concerning the time of writing this book, I need not now say much. It is the general testimony of ancient authors that St. John was banished into Patmos in the time of Domitian, in the latter part of his reign, and restored by his successor Nerva. But the book could not be published till after John’s release and return to Ephesus in Asia. As Domitian died in 96, and his persecution did not commence till near the end of his reign, the Revelation seems to be fitly dated in the year 95 or 96. Mill places the Revelation in the year of Christ 96, and the last year of the Emperor Domitian. At first he supposed that the Revelation was written at Patmos; but afterwards he altered his mind, and thought it was not written till after his return to Ephesus. He builds his opinion upon the words of Revelation 1:9. If so, I apprehend it might not be published before the year 97; or, at the soonest, near the end of 96. Basnage places the Revelation in 96.

Leviticus Clerc, likewise, who readily admits the genuineness of this book, speaks of it in the same year. Mr. Lowman supposes St. John to have had his visions in the Isle of Patmos, in 95; but Mr. Wetstein favors the opinion of those who have argued that the Revelation was written before the Jewish war. He also says that, if the Revelation was written before that war, it is likely that the events of that time should be foretold in it; to which I answer, that though some interpreters have applied some things in this book to those times, I cannot say whether they have done it rightly or not, because I do not understand the Revelation. But, to me, it seems that though this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, there was no necessity that it should be foretold here; because our blessed Lord had, in his own preaching, frequently spoken very plainly and intelligibly concerning the calamities coming upon the Jewish people in general, and the city and temple of Jerusalem in particular; and his plain predictions and symbolical prefigurations of those events were recorded by no less than three historians and evangelists before the war in Judea broke out.

“Grotius, who places this book in the reign of Claudius, was of opinion that the visions of this book were seen at different times, and afterwards joined together in one book, in the same way as the visions and prophecies of some of the prophets of the Old Testament.

“Concerning this opinion it is not proper for me to dispute: though there appears not any foundation for it in the book itself, as Vitranga has observed. But that the Book of the Revelation in its present form, sent as an epistle to the seven Churches of Asia, Revelation 1:4, was not composed and published before the reign of Domitian, appears to me very probable, from the general and almost universally concurring testimony of the ancients, and from some things in the book itself.

“I shall now transcribe a part of L’Enfant’s and Beausobre’s Preface to the Revelation, at the same time referring to Vitranga, who has many like thoughts:—

“Having quoted Irenaeus, Origen, Eusebius, and various other writers, placing St. John’s banishment at Patmos in the latter part of the reign of Domitian, and saying, that he there saw the Revelation, they say: ‘To these incontestable witnesses it is needless to add a long list of others of all ages, and of the same sentiment, to whom the authority of Epiphanius is



The reasoning of Dr. Lardner, relative to the date of this book, is by no means satisfactory to many other critics, who consider it to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and in this opinion they are supported by the most respectable testimonies among the ancients, though the contrary was the more general opinion. Epiphanius says, that John was banished to Patmos by Claudius Caesar; this would bring back the date to about A.D. 50. Andreas, (bishop of Caesarea, in Cappadocia, about A.D. 500,) in his comment on this book, chap. vi. 16, says: "John received this Revelation under the reign of Vespasian." This date also might place it before the final overthrow of the Jewish state; though Vespasian reigned to A.D. 79. The inscription to this book, in the Syrian version, first published by Deuteronomy Dieu, in 1627, and, afterwards in the London Polyglot, is the following: "The Revelation which God made to John the evangelist, in the island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero Caesar." This places it before the year of our Lord 69, and consequently before the destruction of Jerusalem. Of this opinion are many eminent writers, and among them Hentenius, Harduin, Grotius, Lightfoot, Hammond, Sir Isaac Newton, Bishop Newton, Wetstein, and others.

If the date could be settled, it would be of the utmost consequence to the right interpretation of the book; but, amidst so many conflicting opinions, this is almost hopeless.

Dr. Lardner has given several proofs, from internal evidence, that the Revelation is the work of St. John; as there are found in it the same forms of expression which are found in his gospel and epistles, and which are peculiar to this apostle. Wetstein gives a collection, which the reader may examine at his leisure. E. g. compare:-

Revelation 1:1. with John 12:33; 18:37; 21:19. Revelation 1:5. " 1 John 1:7. Revelation 1:7. " John 19:37. Revelation 1:9. " 1 John 5:10. Revelation 2:10. " John 20:27. Revelation 2:17. " John 6:32. Revelation 3:4. " John 6:66. Revelation 3:7, 9. " John 15:20; 17:8; 1 John 2:5. Revelation 3:9. " John 11:27. Revelation 3:10. " John 12:27. Revelation 3:21. " 1 John 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:5. Revelation 6:12. " John 1:29. Revelation 9:5. " John 18:26; 3:17. Revelation 12:9. " John 12:31. Revelation 19:13. " John 1:1. Revelation 21:6. " John 7:37. Revelation 22:8, 10. " John 7:51-53; 14:23, 24.

Dr. Lardner has considered several of these, with the addition of other resemblances, in his account of Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, in A.D. 247, in the third volume of his works, pages 121-126. This mode of proof, as it applies to most of the above references, is not entirely satisfactory.

Dionysius argues that the style of the Revelation is totally different from that of John in his acknowledged writings; and it seems strange to me that this should be contested by any man of learning. Nothing more simple and unadorned than the narrative of St. John in his GOSPEL; nothing more plain and natural than his EPISTLES; but the REVELATION, on the contrary, is figurative, rhetorical, labored, and elevated to the highest degree. All that can be said here on this subject is, that if the Spirit of God choose to inspire the words and style, as well as the matter, of his communications, he may choose what variety he pleases; and speak at different times, and in divers manners, to the same person. This, however, is not his usual way.

For other matters relative to this subject I must refer to the following preface, and to the writers quoted above.

# PREFACE TO THE REVELATION

OF

## ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

AMONG the interpreters of the Apocalypse, both in ancient and modern times, we find a vast diversity of opinions, but they may be all reduced to four principal hypotheses, or modes of interpretation:—

1. The Apocalypse contains a prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem, of the Jewish war, and the civil wars of the Romans.
2. It contains predictions of the persecutions of the Christians under the heathen emperors of Rome, and of the happy days of the Church under the Christian emperors, from Constantine downwards.
3. It contains prophecies concerning the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of the Roman pontiffs, the true antichrist; and foretells the final destruction of popery.
4. It is a prophetic declaration of the schism and heresies of Martin Luther, those called Reformers, and their successors; and the final destruction of the Protestant religion.

The first opinion has been defended by Professor Wetstein, and other learned men on the continent.

The second is the opinion of the primitive fathers in general, both Greek and Latin.

The third was first broached by the AbbÇ Joachim, who flourished in the thirteenth century, was espoused by most of the Franciscans; and has been and still is the general opinion of the Protestants.



The fourth seems to have been invented by popish writers, merely by way of retaliation; and has been illustrated and defended at large by a Mr. Walmsley, (I believe,) titular dean of Wells, in a work called the History of the Church, under the feigned name of Signior Pastorini.

In this work he endeavors to turn every thing against Luther and the Protestants, which they interpreted of the pope and popery; and attempts to show, from a computation of the Apocalyptical numbers, that the total destruction of Protestantism in the world will take place in 1825! But this is not the first prophecy that has been invented for the sake of an event, the accomplishment of which was earnestly desired; and as a stimulus to excite general attention, and promote united exertion, when the time of the pretended prophecy was fulfilled. But 1825 is past by, and 1832 is come, and the Protestant Church is still in full vigor, while the Romish Church is fast declining.

The full title of the book which I quote is the following:—

“The General History of the Christian Church, from her birth to her final triumphant state in Heaven, chiefly deduced from the Apocalypse of St. John the Apostle. By SIG. PASTORINI.

‘Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy.’-APOCALYPSE, Revelation 1:3.

Printed in the year M.DCC.LXXI.” 8vo. No place nor printer’s name mentioned.

The place where he foretells the final destruction of Protestantism is in pp. 249 and 262.

The Catholic college of Maynooth, in Ireland, have lately published a new edition of this work! in which the author kindly predicts the approaching overthrow of the whole Protestant system, both in Church and state; and in the meantime gives them, most condescendingly, Abaddon or the devil for their king!

Who the writer of the Apocalypse was, learned men are not agreed. This was a question, as well in ancient as in modern times. We have already seen that many have attributed it to the Apostle John; others, to a person called John the presbyter, who they say was an Ephesian, and totally

different from John the apostle. And lastly, some have attributed it to Cerinthus, a contemporary of John the apostle. This hypothesis, however, seems utterly unsupportable; as there is no probability that the Christian Church would have so generally received a work which came from the hands of a man at all times reputed a very dangerous heretic; nor can the doctrines it contains ever comport with a Cerinthian creed.

Whether it was written by John the apostle, John the presbyter, or some other person, is of little importance if the question of its inspiration be fully established. If written by an apostle it is canonical; and should be received, without hesitation, as a work Divinely inspired. Every apostle acted under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. John was an apostle, and consequently inspired; therefore, whatever he wrote was written by Divine inspiration. If, therefore, the authenticity of the work be established, i.e., that it was written by John the apostle, all the rest necessarily follow.

As I have scarcely any opinion to give concerning this book on which I could wish any of my readers to rely, I shall not enter into any discussion relative to the author, or the meaning of his several visions and prophecies; but for general information refer to Dr. Lardner, Michaelis, and others.

Various attempts have been made by learned men to fix the plan of this work; but even in this few agree. I shall produce some of the chief of these: and first, that of Wetstein, which is the most singular of the whole.

He supposes the book of the Apocalypse to have been written a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem. The events described from the fourth chapter to the end he supposes to refer to the Jewish war, and to the civil commotions which took place in Italy while Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian were contending for the empire. These contentions and destructive wars occupied the space of about three years and a half, during which Professor Wetstein thinks the principal events took place which are recorded in this book. On these subjects he speaks particularly in his notes, at the end of which he subjoins what he calls his [ανακεφαλαίωσις](#), or synopsis of the whole work, which I proceed now to lay before the reader.

“This prophecy, which predicts the calamities which God should send on the enemies of the Gospel, is divided into two parts. The first is contained in the closed book; the second, in the open book.

I. The first concerns the earth and the third part, i.e., Judea and the Jewish nation,

II. The second concerns many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings, Revelation 10:11, i.e., the Roman empire.

1. The book written within and without, and sealed with seven seals, Revelation 5:1, is the bill of divorce sent from God to the Jewish nation.

2. The crowned conqueror on the white horse armed with a bow, Revelation 6:2, is Artabanus, king of the Parthians, who slaughtered multitudes of the Jews in Babylon.

3. The red horse, Revelation 6:4. The Sicarii and robbers in Judea, in the time of the Proconsuls Felix and Festus.

4. The black horse, Revelation 6:5. The famine under Claudius.

5. The pale horse, Revelation 6:8. The plague which followed the robberies and the famine.

6. The souls of those who were slain, Revelation 6:9. The Christians in Judea, who were persecuted, and were now about to be avenged.

7. The great earthquake, Revelation 6:12. The commotions which preceded the Jewish rebellion.

8. The servants of God from every tribe, sealed in their foreheads, Revelation 7:3. The Christians taken under the protection of God, and warned by the prophets to flee immediately from the land.

9. The silence for half an hour, Revelation 8:1. The short truce granted at the solicitation of King Agrippa.

Then follows the rebellion itself.

1. The trees are burnt, Revelation 8:7. The fields and villages, and unfortified places of Judea, which first felt the bad effects of the sedition.

2. The burning mountain cast into the sea which in consequence became blood, Revelation 8:8; and,
  3. The burning star falling into the rivers, and making the waters bitter, Revelation 8:10, 11. The slaughter of the Jews at Caesarea and Scythopolis.
  4. The eclipsing of the sun, moon, and stars, Revelation 8:12. The anarchy of the Jewish commonwealth.
  5. The locusts like scorpions hurting men, Revelation 9:3. The expedition of Cestius Gallus, prefect of Syria.
  6. The army with arms of divers colors, Revelation 9:16, 17. The armies under Vespasian in Judea. About this time Nero and Galba died; after which followed the civil war, signified by the sounding of the seventh trumpet, Revelation 10:7, 11; 11:15.
1. The two prophetic witnesses, two olive trees, two candlesticks, Revelation 11:3, 4. Teachers in the Church, predicting the destruction of the Jewish temple and commonwealth.
  2. The death of the witnesses, Revelation 11:7. Their flight, and the flight of the Church of Jerusalem, to Pella, in Arabia.
  3. The resurrection of the witnesses, after three days and a half, Revelation 11:11. The predictions began to be fulfilled at a time in which their accomplishment was deemed impossible; and the doctrine of Christ begins to prevail over Judea, and over the whole earth.
  4. The tenth part of the city fell in the same hour, and seven thousand names of men slain, Revelation 11:13. Jerusalem seized by the Idumeans; and many of the priests and nobles, with Annas, the high priest, signified by names of men, i.e. men of name, slain by the Zealots.
  5. The woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head, Revelation 12:1. The Christian Church.
  6. The great red dragon seen in heaven, with seven heads, seven diadems, and ten horns, Revelation 12:3. The six first Caesars, who were all made princes at Rome, governing the armies and the Roman people with great authority; especially Nero, the last of them, who, having killed his mother,

cruelly vexed the Christians, and afterwards turned his wrath against the rebellious Jews.

7. The seven-headed beast from the sea, having ten horns surrounded with diadems, Revelation 13:1. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who were shortly to reign, and who were proclaimed emperors by the army.

8. This beast, having a mouth like a lion, the body like a leopard, the feet like a bear, Revelation 13:2. Avaricious Galba; rash, unchaste, and inconstant Otho; Vitellius, cruel and sluggish, with the German any.

9. One head, i.e., the seventh, cut off, Revelation 13:3. Galba.

10. He who leadeth into captivity shall be led into captivity; he who killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword, Revelation 13:10. Otho, who subdued the murderers of Galba, and slew himself with a dagger, Vitellius, who bound Sabinus with chains and was himself afterwards bound.

11. Another beast rising out of the earth, with two horns, Revelation 13:11. Vespasian and his two and, Titus and Domitian, elected emperors at the same time in Judea.

12. The number of the wild beast, 666, the number of a man, TEITAN, Titan or Titus: T, 300. E, 5. I, 10. T, 300. A, 1. N. 50, making in the whole 666. (Βυτ σομε ζερθ ρεσπεχταβλε ΜΣΣ. ηαζε 616 φορ τηε νυμβερ; ιφ τηε Ν βε τακεν αωαθ φορμ Τειταν, τηεν τηε λεττερσ ιν Τειτα μακε εξαχτλθ τηε συμ 616'.)

13. A man sitting upon a cloud, unity a crown of gold upon his head, and a sickle in his hand, Revelation 14:14. Otho and his army, about to prevent supplies for the army of Vitellius.

14. An angel of fire commanding another angel to gather the vintage; the winepress trodden whence the blood flows out 1600 furlongs. The followers of Vitellius laying all waste with fire; and the Bebriaci conquering the followers of Otho with great slaughter.

Then follow the seven plagues:—

1. The grievous sore, Revelation 16:2. The diseases of the soldiers of Vitellius through intemperance.

2. The sea turned into blood, Revelation 16:3. The fleet of Vitellius beaten, and the maritime towns taken from them by the Flavii.

3. The rivers turned into blood, Revelation 16:4. The slaughter of the adherents of Vitellius, at Cremona and elsewhere, near rivers.

4. The scorching of the sun, Revelation 16:8. The diseases of the Vitellii increasing, and their exhausted bodies impatient of the heat.

5. The seat of the beast darkened, Revelation 16:10. All Rome in commotion through the torpor of Vitellius.

6. Euphrates dried up, and a way made for the kings of the east; and the three unclean spirits like frogs. The Flavii besieging Rome with a treble army; one part of which was by the bank of the Tiber.

The shame of him who is found asleep and naked. Vitellius, Revelation 16:15. Armageddon, Revelation 16:16. The praetorian camps.

7. The fall of Babylon, Revelation 16:19. The sacking of Rome.

1. The whore, Revelation 17:1. Rome.

2. The seven kings, Revelation 17:10. CAESAR, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, NERO, and GALBA.

3. The eighth, which is of the seven, Revelation 17:11. Otho, destined by adoption to be the son and successor of Galba.

4. The ten horns, Revelation 17:12-16. The leaders of the Flavian factions.

5. The merchants of the earth, Revelation 18:11; i.e., of Rome, which was then the emporium of the whole world.

6. The beast and the false prophet, Revelation 19:20. Vespasian and his family, contrary to all expectation, becoming extinct in Domitian, as the first family of the Caesars, and of the three princes, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius.

7. The millennium, or a thousand years, Revelation 20:2. Taken from Psalm 90:4, a time appointed by God, including the space of forty years, from the death of Domitian to the Jewish war under Adrian.

8. Gog and Magog, going out over the earth, Revelation 20:8. Barchochebas, the false Messiah, with an immense army of the Jews, coming forth suddenly from their caves and dens, tormenting the Christians, and carrying on a destructive war with the Romans.

9. The New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:1, 2. The Jews being brought so low as to be capable of injuring no longer; the whole world resting after being expiated by wars; and the doctrine of Christ propagated and prevailing everywhere with incredible celerity.

Wetstein contends (and he is supported by very great men among the ancients and moderns) that “the book of the Revelation was written before the Jewish war, and the civil wars in Italy; that the important events which took place at that time, the greatest that ever happened since the foundation of the world, were worth enough of the Divine notice, as the affairs of his Church were so intimately connected with them; that his method of exposition proves the whole book to be a well-connected, certain series of events; but the common method of interpretation, founded on the hypothesis that the book was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, is utterly destitute of certainty, and leaves every commentator to the luxuriance of his own fancy, as is sufficiently evident from what has been done already on this book; some interpreters leading the reader now to Thebes, now to Athens, and finding in the words of the sacred penman Constantine the Great; Arius, Luther, Calvin; the Jesuits; the Albigenses; the Bohemians; Chemnitius; Elizabeth, queen of England; Cecil, her treasurer; and who not?” — See Wetstein’s Gr. Test., vol. ii. p. 889.

Those who consider the Apocalypse as a prophecy and scenical exhibition of what shall happen to the Christian Church to the end of the world, lay this down as a proposition, which comprises the subject of the whole book: The contest of Christ with his enemies; and his final victory and triumph over them. See 1 Corinthians 15:25; Matthew 24:1-51; Mark 13:1-37; Luke 21:5-38. But what is but briefly hinted in the above scriptures, is detailed at large in the Apocalypse, and represented by various images nearly in the following order:—

1. The decrees of the Divine providence, concerning what is to come, are declared to John.

2. The manner in which these decrees shall be executed is painted in the most vivid colors.

3. Then follow thanksgivings to God, the ruler and governor of all things, for these manifestations of his power, wisdom and goodness.

After the exordium, and the seven epistles to the seven Churches of Asia Minor, to whose angels or bishops the book seems to be dedicated, (Revelation 1:1-3:22,) the scene of the visions is opened in heaven, full of majesty; and John receives a promise of a revelation relative to the future state of the Church, Revelation 4:1-5:14.

The enemies of the Church of Christ which the Christians had then most to fear were the Jews, the heathens, and the false teachers. All these are overcome by Christ, and over them he triumphs gloriously. First of all, punishments are threatened to the enemies of the kingdom of Christ, and the preservation of his own followers in their greatest trials determined; and these determinations are accompanied with the praises and thanksgivings of all the heavenly inhabitants, and of all good men, Revelation 6:1-10:11.

The transactions of the Christian religion are next recorded, Revelation 11:1-14:5. The Christians are persecuted:—

1. By the Jews; but they were not only preserved, but they increase and prosper.
2. By the heathens; but in vain do these strive to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, which is no longer confined within the limits of Judea, but spreads among the Gentiles, and diffuses itself over the whole Roman empire, destroying idolatry, and rooting out superstition, in every quarter, Revelation 12:1-13:10.
3. False teachers and impostors of various kinds, under the name of Christians, but enemies of the cross of Christ, more intent on promoting the interests of idolatry or false worship than the cause of true religion, Revelation 13:11-18, exert their influence to corrupt and destroy the Church; but, notwithstanding, Christianity becomes more extended, and true believers more confirmed in their holy faith, Revelation 14:1-5. Then new punishments are decreed against the enemies of Christ, both Jews and



heathens: the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation before its final overthrow are pointed out, Revelation 14:1-15:8. Next follows a prediction of the calamities which shall take place during the Jewish war; and the civil wars of the Romans during the contentions of Otho and Vitellius, Revelation 16:1-16, who are to suffer most grievous punishments for their cruelties against the Christians, Revelation 17:1-18. The Jewish state being now finally overthrown, Revelation 18:1-24, the heavenly inhabitants give praise to God for his justice and goodness; Christ is congratulated for his victory over his enemies, and the more extensive progress of his religion, Revelation 19:1-10.

Opposition is, however, not yet totally ended: idolatry again lifts up its head, and new errors are propagated; but over these also Christ shows himself to be conqueror, Revelation 19:11-21. Finally, Satan, who had long reigned by the worship of false gods, errors, superstitions, and wickedness, is deprived of all power and influence; and the concerns of Christianity go on gloriously, Revelation 20:1-6. But towards the end of the world new enemies arise, and threaten destruction to the followers of Christ; but in vain is their rage, God appears in behalf of his servants, and inflicts the most grievous punishments upon their adversaries, Revelation 20:6-10. The last judgment ensues, Revelation 20:11-15, all the wicked are punished, and the enemies of the truth are chained, so as to be able to injure the godly no more; the genuine Christians, who had persevered unto death, are brought to eternal glory; and, freed from all adversities, spend a life that shall never end, in blessedness that knows no bounds, Revelation 21:1-22:21. See Rosenmuller.

Eichhorn takes a different view of the plan of this book; though in substance not differing much from that above. According to this writer the whole is represented in the form of a drama, the parts of which are the following: I. The title, Revelation 1:1-3. II. The prologue, Revelation 1:4-3:22; in which it is stated that the argument of the drama refers to the Christians; epistles being sent to the Churches, which, in the symbolic style, are represented by the number seven. Next follows the drama itself, the parts of which are:—

The prolusio, or prelude, Revelation 4:1-8:5; in which the scenery is prepared and adorned.

Act the first, Revelation 8:6-12:17. Jerusalem is taken, and Judaism vanquished by Christianity.

Act the second, Revelation 13:1-20:10. Rome is conquered, and heathenism destroyed by the Christian religion.

Act the third, Revelation 20:11-22:5. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven; or the happiness of the life to come, and which is to endure for ever, is particularly described, Revelation 22:6-11. Taken in this sense, Eichhorn supposes the work to be most exquisitely finished, and its author to have had a truly poetic mind, polished by the highest cultivation; to have been accurately acquainted with the history of all times and nations, and to have enriched himself with their choicest spoils.

My readers will naturally expect that I should either give a decided preference to some one of the opinions stated above, or produce one of my own; I can do neither, nor can I pretend to explain the book: I do not understand it; and in the things which concern so sublime and awful a subject, I dare not, as my predecessors, indulge in conjectures. I have read elaborate works on the subject, and each seemed right till another was examined. I am satisfied that no certain mode of interpreting the prophecies of this book has yet been found out, and I will not add another monument to the littleness or folly of the human mind by endeavoring to strike out a new course. I repeat it, I do not understand the book; and I am satisfied that not one who has written on the subject knows any thing more of it than myself. I should, perhaps, except J. E. Clarke, who has written on the number of the beast. His interpretation amounts nearly to demonstration; but that is but a small part of the difficulties of the Apocalypse: that interpretation, as the most probable ever yet offered to the public, shall be inserted in its proper place; as also his illustration of the xiith, xiiiith, and xviith chapters. As to other matters, I must leave them to God, or to those events which shall point out the prophecy; and then, and probably not till then, will the sense of these visions be explained.

A conjecture concerning the design of the book may be safely indulged; thus then it has struck me, that the book of the Apocalypse may be considered as a PROPHET continued in the Church of God, uttering predictions relative to all times, which have their successive fulfillment as ages roll on; and thus it stands in the Christian Church in the place of the

SUCCESSION of PROPHETS in the Jewish Church; and by this especial economy PROPHECY is STILL CONTINUED, is ALWAYS SPEAKING; and yet a succession of prophets rendered unnecessary. If this be so, we cannot too much admire the wisdom of the contrivance which still continues the voice and testimony of prophecy, by means of a very short book, without the assistance of any extraordinary messenger, or any succession of such messengers, whose testimony would at all times be liable to suspicion, and be the subject of infidel and malevolent criticism, howsoever unexceptionable to ingenuous minds the credentials of such might appear.

On this ground it is reasonable to suppose that several prophecies contained in this book have been already fulfilled, and that therefore it is the business of the commentator to point such out. It may be so; but as it is impossible for me to prove that my conjecture is right, I dare not enter into proceedings upon it, and must refer to Bishop Newton, and such writers as have made this their particular study.

After having lived in one of the most eventful eras of the world; after having seen a number of able pens employed in the illustration of this and other prophecies; after having carefully attended to those facts which were supposed to be the incontestable proofs of the fulfillment of such and such visions, seals, trumpets, thunders, and vials of the Apocalypse; after seeing the issue of that most terrible struggle which the French nation, the French republic, the French consulate, and the French empire, have made to regain and preserve their liberties, which, like arguing in a circle, have terminated where they began, without one political or religious advantage to them or to mankind; and after viewing how the prophecies of this book were supposed to apply almost exclusively to these events, the writers and explainers of these prophecies keeping pace in their publications with the rapid succession of military operations, and confidently promising the most glorious issue, in the final destruction of superstition, despotism, arbitrary power, and tyranny of all kinds, nothing of which has been realized; I say, viewing all these things, I feel myself at perfect liberty to state that, to my apprehension, all these prophecies have been misapplied and misapprehended; and that the KEY to them is not yet intrusted to the sons of men. My readers will therefore excuse me from any exposure of my ignorance or folly by attempting to do what many, with much more wisdom and learning, have attempted, and what every man to the present

day has failed in, who has preceded me in expositions of this book. I have no other mountain to heap on those already piled up; and if I had, I have not strength to lift it: those who have courage may again make the trial; already we have had a sufficiency of vain efforts.

*Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
Scilicet, atque Ossae frondosum involvere Olympum:  
Ter Pater extractos disjecit fulmine montes.*

VIRG., *G. i.* 281.

*With mountains piled on mountains thrice they strove  
To scale the steepy battlements of Jove;  
And thrice his lightning and red thunder play'd,  
And their demolish'd works in ruin laid.*

DRYDEN

I had resolved, for a considerable time, not to meddle with this book, because I foresaw that I could produce nothing satisfactory on it: but when I reflected that the literal sense and phraseology might be made much plainer by the addition of philological and critical notes; and that, as the diction appeared in many places to be purely rabbinical, (a circumstance to which few of its expositors have attended,) it might be rendered plainer by examples from the ancient Jewish writers; and that several parts of it spoke directly of the work of God in the soul of man, and of the conflicts and consolations of the followers of Christ, particularly in the beginning of the book, I changed my resolution, and have added short notes, principally philological, where I thought I understood the meaning.

I had once thought of giving a catalogue of the writers and commentators on this book, and had begun a collection of this kind; but the question of *Cui bono?* What good end is this likely to serve? not meeting with a satisfactory answer in my own mind, caused me to throw this collection aside. I shall notice two only.

1. The curious and learned work entitled, "A plaine Discovery of the whole Revelation of St. John," written by Sir John Napier, inventor of the logarithms, I have particularly described in the general preface to the Holy Scriptures, prefixed to the Book of Genesis, to which the reader is requested to refer.

2. Another work, not less singular, and very rare, entitled, “The Image of both Churches, after the most wonderful and heavenly Revelation of Saint John the Evangelist, containing a very fruitfull exposition or paraphrase upon the same: wherein it is conferred with the other scriptures, and most auctourised histories Compyled by John Bale, an exyle also in thys lyfe for the faithful testimony of Jesu.” Printed at London by Thomas East, 18mo., without date.

The author was at first a Carmelite, but was afterwards converted to the Protestant religion. He has turned the whole of the Apocalypse against the Romish Church; and it is truly astonishing to see with what address he directs every image, metaphor, and description, contained in this book, against the corruptions of this Church. He was made bishop of Ossory, in Ireland; but was so persecuted by the papists that he narrowly escaped with his life, five of his domestics being murdered by them. On the accession of Mary he was obliged to take refuge in the Low Countries, where it appears he compiled this work. As he was bred up a papist, and was also a priest, he possessed many advantages in attacking the strongest holds of his adversaries. He knew all their secrets, and he uncovered the whole; he was acquainted with all their rites, ceremonies, and superstitions, and finds all distinctly marked in the Apocalypse, which he believes was written to point out the abominations, and to foretell the final destruction of this corrupt and intolerant Church. I shall make a few references to his work in the course of the following notes. In Revelation 17:1, the author shows his opinion, and speaks something of himself: Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great whore, etc. “Come hither, friende John, I will show thee in secretnesse the tirrible judgement of the great whore, or counterfaite Church of hypocrites. Needs must this whore be Rome, for that she is the great citie which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Evident it is both by Scriptures and Cronicles that in John’s dayes Rome had dominion over all the whole world: and being infected with the abominations of all landes, rightly is shee called Babylon. or Citie of Confusion. And like as in the Scriptures ofte tymes under the name of Jerusalem is ment the whole kingdom of Juda, so under the name of Rome here may be understood the unyversall worlde, with all their abominations and divilleshnesses, their idolatryes, witchcraftes, sectes, superstitions, papacyes, priesthoodes, relygions, shavings, anointings,

blessings, sensings, processions, and the divil of all such beggeryes. For all the people since Christes assencion, hath this Rome infected with hir pestilent poisons gathered from all idolatrous nations, such time as she held over them the monarchial suppremit. At the wryting of this prophecy felt John of their cruiltie, being exiled into Pathmos for the faithfull testimony of Jesu. And so did I, poore creature, with my poore wife and children, at the gatheringe of this present commentary, flying into Germanye for the same,” etc.

Shall I have the reader’s pardon if I say that it is my firm opinion that the expositions of this book have done great disservice to religion: almost every commentator has become a prophet; for as soon as he began to explain he began also to prophesy. And what has been the issue? Disappointment laughed at hope’s career, and superficial thinkers have been led to despise and reject prophecy itself. I shall sum up all that I wish to say farther in the words of GRASERUS: *Mihi tota Apocalypsis valde obscura videtur; et talis, cujus explicatio citra periculum vix queat tentari. Fateor me hactenus in nullius Scripti Biblici lectione minus vproficere, quam in hoc obscurissimo Vaticinio.*

# THE REVELATION

OF

## ST. JOHN THE DIVINE

### Chronological Notes relative to this Book.

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5604.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5598.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5588.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4100.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4322.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3856.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4455.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2444.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3198.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1036.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 845.
- Year of the CCXVIIIth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 843.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 847.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 848.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 849.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidae, 408.
- Year of the Caesarean era of Antioch, 144.
- Year of the Julian era, 141.
- Year of the Spanish era, 134.

- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 100.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 96.
- Year of Pacorus II, king of the Parthians, 6.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 97.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen gears, or Common Golden Number, 2; or the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 18; or the year before the seventh embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 21.
- Dominical Letters, it being the Bissextile, or Leap Year, CB.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-fifth of March, which happened in this year on the day before the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the twenty seventh of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 11.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 19.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 19, 21, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 26, 27, 29, 29.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 4.
- Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Caesar, the last of those usually styled The Twelve Caesars, 15: Nerva began his reign in this year.
- Roman Consuls, C. Antistius Vetus, and C. Maulius Valens.

## CHAPTER 1

*The preface to this book, and the promise to them who read it, 1-3. John's address to the seven Churches of Asia, whose high calling he particularly mentions; and shows the speedy coming of Christ, 4-8. Mentions his exile to Patmos, and the appearance of the Lord Jesus to him, 9-11. Of whom he gives a most glorious description, 12-18. The command to write what he saw, and the explanation of the seven stars and seven golden candlesticks, 19, 20.*



## NOTES ON CHAP. 1.

The Revelation of St. John the divine. To this book the inscriptions are various. “The Revelation. — The Revelation of John. — Of John the divine. — Of John the divine and evangelist. — The Revelation of John the apostle and evangelist. — The Revelation of the holy and glorious apostle and evangelist, the beloved virgin John the divine, which he saw in the island of Patmos. — The Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John the divine.” These several inscriptions are worthy of little regard; the first verse contains the title of the book.

**Verse 1. *The Revelation of Jesus Christ*** The word *αποκαλυψις*, from which we have our word Apocalypse, signifies literally, a revelation, or discovery of what was concealed or hidden. It is here said that this revelation, or discovery of hidden things, was given by GOD to Jesus Christ; that Christ gave it to his angel; that this angel showed it to JOHN; and that John sent it to the CHURCHES. Thus we find it came from God to Christ, from Christ to the angel, from the angel to John, and from John to the Church. It is properly, therefore, the Revelation of God, sent by these various agents to his servants at large; and this is the proper title of the book.

***Things which must shortly come to pass*** On the mode of interpretation devised by Wetstein, this is plain; for if the book were written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and the prophecies in it relate to that destruction, and the civil wars among the Romans, which lasted but three or four years, then it might be said the Revelation is of things which must shortly come to pass. But if we consider the book as referring to the state of the Church in all ages, the words here, and those in Revelation 1:3, must be understood of the commencement of the events predicted; as if he had said: In a short time the train of these visions will be put in motion:-

— *et incipient magni procedere menses.*

*“And those times, pregnant with the most stupendous events, will begin to roll on.”*

**Verse 2. *Who bare record of the word of God*** Is there a reference here to the first chapter of John's gospel, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, etc.? Of this Word John did bear record. Or, does the writer mean the fidelity with which he noted and related the word-doctrines or prophecies, which he received at this time by revelation from God? This seems more consistent with the latter part of the verse.

**Verse 3. *Blessed is he that readeth*** This is to be understood of the happiness or security of the persons who, reading and hearing the prophecies of those things which were to come to pass shortly, took proper measures to escape from the impending evils.

***The time is at hand.*** Either in which they shall be all fulfilled, or begin to be fulfilled. See the note on Revelation 1:1.

These three verses contain the introduction; now the dedication to the seven Churches commences.

**Verse 4. *John to the seven Churches*** The apostle begins this much in the manner of the Jewish prophets. They often name themselves in the messages which they receive from God to deliver to the people; e.g. "The vision of ISAIAH, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." "The words of JEREMIAH, the son of Hilkiah; to whom the word of the Lord came." "The word of the Lord came expressly unto EZEKIEL, the priest." "The word of the Lord that came unto HOSEA, the son of Beeri." "The word of the Lord that came to JOEL." "The words of AMOS, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa." "The vision of OBADIAH; thus saith the Lord." "The word of the Lord came unto JONAH." So, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which he sent and signified to his servant JOHN." "JOHN to the seven Churches," etc.

The Asia here mentioned was what is called Asia Minor, or the Lydian or Proconsular Asia; the seven Churches were those of Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea. Of these as they occur. We are not to suppose that they were the only Christian Churches then in Asia Minor; there were several others then in Phrygia, Pamphylia, Galatia, Pontus, Cappadocia, etc., etc. But these seven were those which lay nearest to the apostle, and were more particularly under his care; though the message was sent to the Churches in general, and perhaps it

concerns the whole Christian world. But the number seven may be used here as the number of perfection; as the Hebrews use the seven names of the heavens, the seven names of the earth, the seven patriarchs, seven suns, seven kinds, seven years, seven months, seven days, etc., etc.; in which the rabbins find a great variety of mysteries.

**Grace be unto you** This form of apostolical benediction we have often seen in the preceding epistles.

**From him which is, and which was, and which is to come** This phraseology is purely Jewish, and probably taken from the Tetragrammaton, יהוה YEHOVAH; which is supposed to include in itself all time, past, present, and future. But they often use the phrase of which the ο ων, και ο ην, και ο ερχομενος, of the apostle, is a literal translation. So, in Sohar Chadash, fol. 7, 1: “Rabbi Jose said, By the name Tetragrammaton, (i.e. יהוה Yehovah,) the higher and lower regions, the heavens, the earth, and all they contain, were perfected; and they are all before him reputed as nothing:- והוא היה והוא הוה והוא יהיה vehu hayah, vehu hoveh, vehu yihyeh; and HE WAS, and HE IS, and HE WILL BE. So, in Shemoth Rabba, sec. 3, fol. 105, 2: “The holy blessed God said to Moses, tell them:- שהייתי ואני הוא עכשיו ואני הוא לעתיד לבוא אני shehayithi, veani hu achshaiu, veani hu laathid labo; I WAS, I NOW AM, and I WILL BE IN FUTURE.”

In Chasad Shimuel, Rab. Samuel ben David asks: “Why are we commanded to use three hours of prayer? Answer: These hours point out the holy blessed God:- שהוא היה הוה ויהיה shehu hayah, hoveh, veyihyeh; he who WAS, who IS, and who SHALL BE. The MORNING prayer points out him who WAS before the foundation of the world; the NOONDAY prayer points out him who IS; and the EVENING prayer points out him who IS TO COME.” This phraseology is exceedingly appropriate, and strongly expresses the eternity of God; for we have no other idea of time than as past, or now existing, or yet to exist; nor have we any idea of eternity but as that duration called by some aeternitas a parte ante, the eternity that was before time, and aeternitas a parte post, the endless duration that shall be when time is no more. That which WAS, is the eternity before time; that

which IS, is time itself; and that which IS TO COME, is the eternity which shall be when time is no more.

***The seven Spirits-before his throne*** The ancient Jews, who represented the throne of God as the throne of an eastern monarch, supposed that there were seven ministering angels before this throne, as there were seven ministers attendant on the throne of a Persian monarch. We have an ample proof of this, Tobit 12:15: I am Raphael, one of the SEVEN HOLY ANGELS which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One. And in Jonathan ben Uzziel's Targum, on Genesis 11:7: God said to the SEVEN ANGELS which stand before him, Come now, etc.

In Pirkey Eliezer, iv. and vii: "The angels which were first created minister before him without the veil." Sometimes they represent them as seven cohorts or troops of angels, under whom are thirty inferior orders.

That seven ANGELS are here meant, and not the Holy Spirit, is most evident from the place, the number, and the tradition. Those who imagine the Holy Ghost to be intended suppose the number seven is used to denote his manifold gifts and graces. That these seven spirits are angels, see Revelation 3:1; 4:5; and particularly Revelation 5:6, where they are called the seven spirits of God SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH.

**Verse 5. *The faithful witness*** The true teacher, whose testimony is infallible, and whose sayings must all come to pass.

***The first-begotten of the dead*** See the note on Colossians 1:18.

***The prince of the kings*** ὁ ἀρχῶν, The chief or head, of all earthly potentates; who has them all under his dominion and control, and can dispose of them as he will.

***Unto him that loved us*** This should begin a new verse, as it is the commencement of a new subject. Our salvation is attributed to the love of God, who gave his Son; and to the love of Christ, who died for us. See John 3:16.

***Washed us from our sins*** The redemption of the soul, with the remission of sins, and purification from unrighteousness, is here, as in all the New Testament, attributed to the blood of Christ shed on the cross for man.

**Verse 6. *Kings and priests*** See on 1 Peter 2:5, 9. But instead of βασιλεις και ιερεις, kings and priests the most reputable MSS., versions, and fathers have βασιλειαν ιερεις, a kingdom and priests; i.e. a kingdom of priests, or a royal priesthood. The regal and sacerdotal dignities are the two highest that can possibly exist among men; and these two are here mentioned to show the glorious prerogatives and state of the children of God.

***To him be glory*** That is, to Christ; for it is of him that the prophet speaks, and of none other.

***For ever and ever*** εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων· To ages of ages; or rather, through all indefinite periods; through all time, and through eternity.

***Amen.*** A word of affirmation and approbation; so it shall be, and so it ought to be.

**Verse 7. *Behold, he cometh with clouds*** This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his religion; perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as he was to be particularly manifested to them that pierced him, which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews.

***And all kindreds of the earth*** πασαι αι φυλαι της γης· All the tribes of the land. By this the Jewish people are most evidently intended, and therefore the whole verse may be understood as predicting the destruction of the Jews; and is a presumptive proof that the Apocalypse was written before the final overthrow of the Jewish state.

***Even so, Amen.*** ναι αμην· Yea, Amen. It is true, so be it. Our Lord will come and execute judgment on the Jews and Gentiles. This the Jews and Romans particularly felt.

**Verse 8. *I am Alpha and Omega*** I am from eternity to eternity. This mode of speech is borrowed from the Jews, who express the whole compass of things by א aleph and ט tau, the first and last letters of the Hebrew alphabet; but as St. John was writing in Greek, he accommodates the whole to the Greek alphabet, of which α alpha and ω omega are the first and last letters. With the rabbins מֵא ועד ת mee-leph vead tau, “from aleph to tau,” expressed the whole of a matter, from the beginning to the

end. So in Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 17, 4: Adam transgressed the whole law from aleph to tau; i.e., from the beginning to the end.

Ibid., fol. 48, 4: Abraham observed the law, from aleph to tau; i.e., he kept it entirely, from beginning to end.

Ibid., fol. 128, 3: When the holy blessed God pronounced a blessing on the Israelites, he did it from aleph to tau; i.e., he did it perfectly.

***The beginning and the ending*** That is, as aleph or alpha is the beginning of the alphabet, so am I the author and cause of all things; as tau or omega is the end or last letter of the alphabet, so am I the end of all things, the destroyer as well as the establisher of all things. This clause is wanting in almost every MS. and version of importance. It appears to have been added first as an explanatory note, and in process of time crept into the text. Griesbach has left it out of the text. It is worthy of remark, that as the union of א aleph and ט tau in Hebrew make אט eth, which the rabbins interpret of the first matter out of which all things were formed, (see on Genesis 1:1;) so the union of α alpha and ω omega, in Greek, makes the verb αω, I breathe, and may very properly, in such a symbolical book, point out Him in whom we live, and move, and have our being; for, having formed man out of the dust of the earth, he breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and he became a living soul; and it is by the inspiration or inbreathing of his Spirit that the souls of men are quickened, made alive from the dead, and fitted for life eternal. He adds also that he is the Almighty, the all-powerful framer of the universe, and the inspirer of men.

**Verse 9. *Your brother*** A Christian, begotten of God, and incorporated in the heavenly family.

***Companion in tribulation*** Suffering under the persecution in which you also suffer.

***In the kingdom*** For we are a kingdom of priests unto God.

***And patience of Jesus*** Meekly bearing all indignities, privations, and sufferings, for the sake and after the example of our Lord and Master.

***The isle that is called Patmos*** This island is one of the Sporades, and lies in the AEgean Sea, between the island of Icaria, and the promontory of

Miletus. It is now called Pactino, Patmol, or Palmosa. It has derived all its celebrity from being the place to which St. John was banished by one of the Roman emperors; whether Domitian, Claudius, or Nero, is not agreed on, but it was most probably the latter. The island has a convent on a well fortified hill, dedicated to John the apostle; the inhabitants are said to amount to about three hundred men, and about twenty women to one man. It is very barren, producing very little grain, but abounding in partridges, quails, turtles, pigeons, snipes, and rabbits. It has many good harbours, and is much infested by pirates. Patmos, its capital and chief harbour, lies in east LONG. 26° 24', north LAT. 37° 24'. The whole island is about thirty miles in circumference.

***For the testimony of Jesus Christ.*** For preaching Christianity, and converting heathens to the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 10. *I was in the Spirit*** That is, I received the Spirit of prophecy, and was under its influence when the first vision was exhibited.

***The Lord's day*** The first day of the week, observed as the Christian Sabbath, because on it Jesus Christ rose from the dead; therefore it was called the Lord's day, and has taken place of the Jewish Sabbath throughout the Christian world.

***And heard behind me a great voice*** This voice came unexpectedly and suddenly. He felt himself under the Divine afflatus; but did not know what scenes were to be represented.

***As of a trumpet*** This was calculated to call in every wandering thought, to fix his attention, and solemnize his whole frame. Thus God prepared Moses to receive the law. See Exodus 19:16, 19, etc.

**Verse 11. *I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and*** This whole clause is wanting in ABC, thirty-one others; some editions; the Syriac, Coptic, Aethiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Arethas, Andreas, and Primasius. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

***Saying-What thou seest, write in a book*** Carefully note down every thing that is represented to thee. John had the visions from heaven; but he described them in his own language and manner.

***Send it unto the seven Churches*** The names of which immediately follow. In Asia. This is wanting in the principal MSS. and versions. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

***Ephesus*** This was a city of Ionia, in Asia Minor, situated at the mouth of the river Cayster, on the shore of the AEgean Sea, about fifty miles south of Smyrna. See preface to the Epistle to the Ephesians.

***Smyrna*** Now called also Ismir, is the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It is situated about one hundred and eighty-three miles west by south of Constantinople, on the shore of the AEgean Sea. It is supposed to contain about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, of whom there are from fifteen to twenty thousand Greeks, six thousand Armenians, five thousand Roman Catholics, one hundred and forty Protestants, eleven thousand Jews, and fifteen thousand Turks. It is a beautiful city, but often ravaged by the plague, and seldom two years together free from earthquakes. In 1758 the city was nearly desolated by the plague; scarcely a sufficient number of the inhabitants survived to gather in the fruits of the earth. In 1688 there was a terrible earthquake here, which overthrew a great number of houses; in one of the shocks, the rock on which the castle stood opened, swallowed up the castle and five thousand persons! On these accounts, nothing but the love of gain, so natural to man, could induce any person to make it his residence; though, in other respects, it can boast of many advantages. In this city the Turks have nineteen mosques; the Greeks, two churches; the Armenians, one; and the Jews, eight synagogues; and the English and Dutch factories have each a chaplain. Smyrna is one hundred miles north of the island of Rhodes, long. 27° 25' E., lat. 38° 28' N.

***Pergamos*** A town of Mysia, situated on the river Caicus. It was the royal residence of Eumenes, and the kings of the race of the Attali. It was anciently famous for its library, which contained, according to Plutarch, two hundred thousand volumes. It was here that the membranæ Pergameniae, Pergamenian skins, were invented; from which we derive our word parchment. Pergamos was the birthplace of Galen; and in it P. Scipio died. It is now called Pergamo and Bergamo, and is situated in long. 27° 0' E., lat. 39° 13' N.



**Thyatira** Now called Akissat and Ak-kissar, a city of Natolia, in Asia Minor, seated on the river Hermus, in a plain eighteen miles broad, and is about fifty miles from Pergamos; long. 27° 49' E., lat. 38° 16' N. The houses are chiefly built of earth, but the mosques are all of marble. Many remarkable ancient inscriptions have been discovered in this place.

**Sardis** Now called Sardo and Sart, a town of Asia, in Natolia, about forty miles east from Smyrna. It is seated on the side of mount Tmolus, and was once the capital of the Lydian kings, and here Croesus reigned. It is now a poor, inconsiderable village. Long. 28° 5' E., lat. 37° 51' N.

**Philadelphia** A city of Natolia, seated at the foot of mount Tmolus, by the river Cogamus. It was founded by Attalus Philadelphus, brother of Eumenes, from whom it derived its name. It is now called Alah-sheker, and is about forty miles ESE. of Smyrna. Long. 28° 15' E., lat. 38° 28' N.

**Laodicea** A town of Phrygia, on the river Lycus; first called Diospolis, or the city of Jupiter. It was built by Antiochus Theos, and named after his consort Laodice. See the note on Colossians 2:1. And, for a very recent account of these seven Churches, see a letter from the Rev. Henry Lindsay, inserted at the end of Rev. 3. {Revelation 3:22}

**Verse 12.** And I turned For he had heard the voice behind him. To see the voice; i.e., the person from whom the voice came.

**Seven golden candlesticks** ἑπτα λυχνιας χρυσαας. Seven golden lamps. It is absurd to say, a golden silver, or brazen candlestick. These seven lamps represented the seven Churches, in which the light of God was continually shining, and the love of God continually burning. And they are here represented as golden, to show how precious they were in the sight of God. This is a reference to the temple at Jerusalem, where there was a candlestick or chandelier of seven branches; or rather six branches; three springing out on either side, and one in the center. See Exodus 25:31-37. This reference to the temple seems to intimate that the temple of Jerusalem was a type of the whole Christian Church.

**Verse 13.** *Like unto the Son of man* This seems a reference to Daniel 7:13. This was our blessed Lord himself, Revelation 1:18.

***Clothed with a garment down to the foot*** This is a description of the high priest, in his sacerdotal robes. See these described at large in the notes on Exodus 28:4, etc., Jesus is our high priest, even in heaven. He is still discharging the sacerdotal functions before the throne of God.

***Golden girdle.*** The emblem both of regal and sacerdotal dignity.

**Verse 14. *His head and his hairs were white like wool*** This was not only an emblem of his antiquity, but it was the evidence of his glory; for the whiteness or splendor of his head and hair doubtless proceeded from the rays of light and glory which encircled his head, and darted from it in all directions. The splendor around the head was termed by the Romans nimbus, and by us a glory; and was represented round the heads of gods, deified persons, and saints. It is used in the same way through almost all the nations of the earth.

***His eyes were as a flame of fire*** To denote his omniscience, and the all-penetrating nature of the Divine knowledge.

**Verse 15. *His feet like unto fine brass*** An emblem of his stability and permanence, brass being considered the most durable of all metallic substances or compounds.

The original word, **χαλκολιβανον**, means the famous aurichalcum, or factitious metal, which, according to Suidas, was **ειδος ηλεκτρον, τιμωτερον χρυσου**, “a kind of amber, more precious than gold.” It seems to have been a composition of gold, silver, and brass, and the same with the Corinthian brass, so highly famed and valued; for when Lucius Mummius took and burnt the city of Corinth, many statues of these three metals, being melted, had run together, and formed the composition already mentioned, and which was held in as high estimation as gold. See Pliny, Hist. Nat., lib. 34, c. 2; Florus, lib. 2, c. 16. It may however mean no more than copper melted with lapis calaminaris, which converts it into brass; and the flame that proceeds from the metal during this operation is one of the most intensely and unsufferably vivid that can be imagined. I have often seen several furnaces employed in this operation, and the flames bursting up through the earth (for these furnaces are under ground) always called to remembrance this description given by St. John: His feet of fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; the propriety and accuracy of which

none could doubt, and every one must feel who has viewed this most dazzling operation.

***His voice as the sound of many waters.*** The same description we find in Ezekiel 43:2: The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east; and his voice was like the noise of many waters: and the earth shined with his glory.

**Verse 16. *In his right hand seven stars*** The stars are afterwards interpreted as representing the seven angels, messengers, or bishops of the seven Churches. Their being in the right hand of Christ shows that they are under his special care and most powerful protection. See below.

***Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword*** This is no doubt intended to point out the judgments about to be pronounced by Christ against the rebellious Jews and persecuting Romans; God's judgments were just now going to fall upon both. The sharp two-edged sword may represent the word of God in general, according to that saying of the apostle, Hebrews 4:12: The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, etc. And the word of God is termed the sword of the Spirit, Ephesians 6:17.

***And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.*** His face was like the disk of the sun in the brightest summer's day, when there were no clouds to abate the splendor of his rays. A similar form of expression is found in Judges 5:31: Let them that love him be as the sun when he GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT. And a similar description may be found, Midrash in Yalcut Simeoni, part I., fol. 55, 4: "When Moses and Aaron came and stood before Pharaoh, they appeared like the ministering angels; and their stature, like the cedars of Lebanon:- דומים לגלגלי חמה- וגלגלי עיניהם vegalgilley eyneyhem domim legalgilley chammah, and the pupils of their eyes were like the wheels of the sun; and their beards were as the grape of the palm trees:- וזיו פניהם כזיו חמה- veziv peneyhem keziv chammah, and the SPLENDOR of THEIR FACES was as the SPLENDOR of the SUN."

**Verse 17. *I fell at his feet as dead.*** The appearance of the glory of the Lord had then same effect upon Ezekiel, Ezekiel 1:28: and the appearance

of Gabriel had the same effect on Daniel, Daniel 8:17. The terrible splendor of such majesty was more than the apostle could bear, and he fell down deprived of his senses, but was soon enabled to behold the vision by a communication of strength from our Lord's right hand.

**Verse 18. *I am he that liveth, and was dead*** I am Jesus the Savior, who, though the fountain of life, have died for mankind; and being raised from the dead I shall die no more, the great sacrifice being consummated. And have the keys of death and the grave, so that I can destroy the living and raise the dead. The key here signifies the power and authority over life, death, and the grave. This is also a rabbinical form of speech. In the Jerusalem Targum, on Genesis 30:22, are these words: "There are four KEYS in the hand of God which he never trusts to angel or seraph. 1. The key of the rain; 2. The key of provision; 3. The key of the grave; and 4. The key of the barren womb."

In Sanhedrin, fol. 113, 1, it is said: "When the son of the woman of Sarepta died, Elijah requested that to him might be given the key of the resurrection of the dead. They said to him, there are three KEYS which are not given into the hand of the apostle, the key of life, the key of the rain, and the key of the resurrection of the dead." From these examples it is evident that we should understand **αδης**, hades, here, not as hell, nor the place of separate spirits, but merely as the grave; and the key we find to be merely the emblem of power and authority. Christ can both save and destroy, can kill and make alive. Death is still under his dominion, and he can recall the dead whensoever he pleases. He is the resurrection and the life.

**Verse 19. *Write the things which thou hast seen*** These visions and prophecies are for general instruction, and therefore every circumstance must be faithfully recorded. What he had seen was to be written; what he was about to see, relative to the seven Churches, must be also written; and what he was to see afterwards, concerning other Churches and states, to be recorded likewise.

**Verse 20. *The mystery*** That is, the allegorical explanation of the seven stars is the seven angels or ministers of the Churches; and the allegorical meaning of the seven golden lamps is the seven Churches themselves.

1. IN the seven stars there may be an allusion to the seals of different offices under potentates, each of which had its own particular seal, which verified all instruments from that office; and as these seals were frequently set in rings which were worn on the fingers, there may be an allusion to those brilliants set in rings, and worn **επι της δεξιᾶς**, UPON the right hand. In Jeremiah 22:24, Coniah is represented as a signet on the right hand of the Lord; and that such signets were in rings see Genesis 38:18, 25; Exodus 18:11; Daniel 6:17, Haggai 2:23. On close examination we shall find that all the symbols in this book have their foundation either in nature, fact, custom, or general opinion. One of the cutchery seals of the late Tippoo Saib, with which he stamped all the commissions of that office, lies now before me; it is cut on silver, in the Taaleck character, and the piece of silver is set in a large gold ring, heavy, but roughly manufactured.

2. The Churches are represented by these lamps; they hold the oil and the fire, and dispense the light. A lamp is not light in itself, it is only the instrument of dispensing light, and it must receive both oil and fire before it can dispense any; so no Church has in itself either grace or glory, it must receive all from Christ its head, else it can dispense neither light nor life.

3. The ministers of the Gospel are signets or seals of Jesus Christ; he uses them to stamp his truth, to accredit it, and give it currency. But as a seal can mark nothing of itself unless applied by a proper hand, so the ministers of Christ can do no good, seal no truth, impress no soul, unless the great owner condescend to use them.

4. How careful should the Church be that it have the oil and the light, that it continue to burn and send forth Divine knowledge! In vain does any Church pretend to be a Church of Christ if it dispense no light; if souls are not enlightened, quickened, and converted in it. If Jesus walk in it, its light will shine both clearly and strongly, and sinners will be converted unto him; and the members of that Church will be children of the light, and walk as children of the light and of the day, and there will be no occasion of stumbling in them.

5. How careful should the ministers of Christ be that they proclaim nothing as truth, and accredit nothing as truth, but what comes from their master!

They should also take heed lest, after having preached to others, themselves should be cast-aways; lest God should say unto them as he said of Coniah, As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, were the SIGNET UPON MY RIGHT HAND, yet would I pluck thee thence.

On the other hand, if they be faithful, their labor shall not be in vain, and their safety shall be great. He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of God's eye, and none shall be able to pluck them out of his hand. they are the angels and ambassadors of the Lord; their persons are sacred; they are the messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ. Should they lose their lives in the work, it will be only a speedier entrance into an eternal glory.

The rougher the way, the shorter their stay,  
The troubles that rise Shall gloriously hurry their souls to the skies.

## CHAPTER 2

*The epistle to the Church of Ephesus, commending their labor and patience, 1-3. And, reprehending their having left their first love, exhorting them to repent, with the promise of the tree of life, 4-7. The epistle to the Church of Smyrna, commending their piety, and promising them support in their tribulation, 8-11. The epistle to the Church of Pergamos, commending their steadfastness in the heavenly doctrine, 12, 13. And reprehending their laxity in ecclesiastical discipline, in tolerating heretical teachers in the Church, 14, 15. The apostle exhorts them to repent, with the promise of the white stone and a new name, 16, 17. The epistle to the Church of Thyatira, with a commendation of their charity, faith, and patience, 18, 19. Reprehending their toleration of Jezebel, the false prophetess, who is threatened with grievous punishment, 20-23. Particular exhortations and promises to this Church, 24-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 2.

I must here advertise my readers, 1. That I do not perceive any metaphorical or allegorical meaning in the epistles to these Churches. 2. I consider the Churches as real; and that their spiritual state is here really and literally pointed out; and that they have no reference to the state of the Church of Christ in all ages of the world, as has been imagined; and that the notion of what has been termed the Ephesian state, the Smyrnian state, the Pergamenian state, the Thyatirian state, etc., etc., is unfounded, absurd, and dangerous; and such expositions should not be entertained by any who wish to arrive at a sober and rational knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. 3. I consider the angel of the Church as signifying the messenger, the pastor, sent by Christ and his apostles to teach and edify that Church. 4. I consider what is spoken to this angel as spoken to the whole Church; and that it is not his particular state that is described, but the states of the people in general under his care.

*The epistle to the Church at Ephesus.*

**Verse 1. *Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus*** By *αγγελος*, angel, we are to understand the messenger or person sent by God to preside over this Church; and to him the epistle is directed, not as pointing out his state, but the state of the Church under his care. Angel of the Church here answers exactly to that officer of the synagogue among the Jews called *שליח ציבור* sheliach tsibbur, the messenger of the Church, whose business it was to read, pray, and teach in the synagogue. The Church at Ephesus is first addressed, as being the place where John chiefly resided; and the city itself was the metropolis of that part of Asia. The angel or bishop at this time was most probably Timothy, who presided over that Church before St. John took up his residence there, and who is supposed to have continued in that office till A.D. 97, and to have been martyred a short time before St. John's return from Patmos.

***Holdeth the seven stars*** Who particularly preserves, and guides, and upholds, not only the ministers of those seven Churches, but all the genuine ministers of his Gospel, in all ages and places.

***Walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks*** Is the supreme Bishop and Head, not only of those Churches, but of all the Churches or congregations of his people throughout the world.

**Verse 2. *I know thy works*** For the eyes of the Lord are throughout the earth, beholding the evil and the good; and, being omnipresent, all things are continually open and naked before him. It is worthy of remark, that whatsoever is praiseworthy in any of these Churches is first mentioned; thereby intimating that God is more intent on finding out the good than the evil in any person or Church; and that those who wish to reform such as have fallen or are not making sufficient advances in the Divine life, should take occasion, from the good which yet remains, to encourage them to set out afresh for the kingdom of heaven. The fallen or backsliding who have any tenderness of conscience left are easily discouraged, and are apt to think that there is no seed left from which any harvest can be reasonably expected. Let such be told that there is still a seed of godliness remaining, and that it requires only watching and strengthening the things which remain, by prompt application to God through Christ, in order to bring them back to the full enjoyment of all they have lost, and to renew them in



the spirit of their mind. Ministers continually harping on Ye are dead, ye are dead; there is little or no Christianity among you, etc., etc., are a contagion in a Church, and spread desolation and death wheresoever they go. It is far better to say, in such cases, "Ye have lost ground, but ye have not lost all your ground; ye might have been much farther advanced, but through mercy ye are still in the way. The Spirit of God is grieved by you, but it is evident he has not forsaken you. Ye have not walked in the light as ye should, but your candlestick is not yet removed, and still the light shines. Ye have not much zeal, but ye have a little. In short, God still strives with you, still loves you, still waits to be gracious to you; take courage, set out afresh, come to God through Christ; believe, love, obey, and you will soon find days more blessed than you have ever yet experienced." Exhortations and encouragements of this kind are sure to produce the most blessed effects; and under such the work of God infallibly revives.

***And thy labor*** He knew their works in general. Though they had left their first love, yet still they had so much love as excited them to labor, and enabled them to bear persecution patiently, and to keep the faith; for they could not tolerate evil men, and they had put fictitious apostles to the test, and had found them to be liars, pretending a Divine commission while they had none, and teaching false doctrines as if they were the truths of God.

**Verse 3. *And hast borne*** The same things mentioned in the preceding verse, but in an inverted order, the particular reason of which does not appear; perhaps it was intended to show more forcibly to this Church that there was no good which they had done, nor evil which they had suffered, that was forgotten before God.

***And hast not fainted.*** They must therefore have had a considerable portion of this love remaining, else they could not have thus acted.

**Verse 4. *Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee*** The clause should be read, according to the Greek, thus: But I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love. They did not retain that strong and ardent affection for God and sacred things which they had when first brought to the knowledge of the truth, and justified by faith in Christ.

**Verse 5. *Remember*** Consider the state of grace in which you once stood; the happiness, love, and joy which you felt when ye received remission of sins; the zeal ye had for God's glory and the salvation of mankind; your willing, obedient spirit, your cheerful self-denial, your fervor in private prayer, your detachment from the world, and your heavenly-mindedness. Remember — consider, all these.

***Whence thou art fallen*** Fallen from all those blessed dispositions and gracious feelings already mentioned. Or, remember what a loss you have sustained; for so *εκπιπτειν* is frequently used by the best Greek writers.

***Repent*** Be deeply humbled before God for having so carelessly guarded the Divine treasure.

***Do the first works*** Resume your former zeal and diligence; watch, fast, pray, reprove sin, carefully attend all the ordinances of God, walk as in his sight, and rest not till you have recovered all your lost ground, and got back the evidence of your acceptance with your Maker.

***I will come unto thee quickly*** In the way of judgment.

***And will remove thy candlestick*** Take away my ordinances, remove your ministers, and send you a famine of the word. As there is here an allusion to the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, which could not be removed without suspending the whole Levitical service, so the threatening here intimates that, if they did not repent, etc., he would unchurch them; they should no longer have a pastor, no longer have the word and sacraments, and no longer have the presence of the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 6. *The deeds of the Nicolaitanes*** These were, as is commonly supposed, a sect of the Gnostics, who taught the most impure doctrines, and followed the most impure practices. They are also supposed to have derived their origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned Acts 6:5, where see the note. The Nicolaitanes taught the community of wives, that adultery and fornication were things indifferent, that eating meats offered to idols was quite lawful; and mixed several pagan rites with the Christian ceremonies. Augustine, Irenaeus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian, have spoken largely concerning them. See more in my preface to 2d Peter, where are several particulars concerning these heretics.

**Verse 7. *He that hath an ear*** Let every intelligent person, and every Christian man, attend carefully to what the Holy Spirit, in this and the following epistles, says to the Churches. See the note on Matthew 11:15, where the same form of speech occurs.

***To him that overcometh*** To him who continues steadfast in the faith, and uncorrupt in his life; who faithfully confesses Jesus, and neither imbibes the doctrines nor is led away by the error of the wicked; will I give to eat of the tree of life. As he who conquered his enemies had, generally, not only great honor, but also a reward; so here a great reward is promised **τω ζικωντι**, to the conqueror: and as in the Grecian games, to which there may be an allusion, the conqueror was crowned with the leaves of some tree; here it is promised that they should eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God; that is, that they should have a happy and glorious immortality. There is also here an allusion to Genesis 2:9, where it is said, God made the tree of life to grow out of the midst of the garden; and it is very likely that by eating the fruit of this tree the immortality of Adam was secured, and on this it was made dependent. When Adam transgressed, he was expelled from this garden, and no more permitted to eat of the tree of life; hence he became necessarily mortal. This tree, in all its sacramental effects, is secured and restored to man by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The tree of life is frequently spoken of by the rabbins; and by it they generally mean the immortality of the soul, and a final state of blessedness. See many examples in Schoettgen. They talk also of a celestial and terrestrial paradise. The former, they say, “is for the reception of the souls of the just perfect; and differs as much from the earthly paradise as light from darkness.”

*The Epistle to the Church at Smyrna.*

**Verse 8. *Unto the angel*** This was probably the famous Polycarp. See below.

***These things saith the first and the last*** He who is eternal; from whom all things come, and to whom all things must return. Which was dead, for the redemption of the world; and is alive to die no more for ever, his glorified humanity being enthroned at the Father’s right hand.

**Verse 9. *I know thy works*** As he had spoken to the preceding Church, so he speaks to this: I know all that ye have done, and all that ye have suffered. The tribulation here mentioned must mean persecution, either from the Jews, the heathens, or from the heretics, who, because of their flesh-pampering doctrines might have had many partisans at Smyrna.

***And poverty*** Stripped probably of all their temporal possessions, because of their attachment to the Gospel.

***But thou art rich*** Rich in faith, and heir of the kingdom of Christ.

***The blasphemy of them which say they are Jews*** There were persons there who professed Judaism, and had a synagogue in the place, and professed to worship the true God; but they had no genuine religion, and they served the devil rather than God. They applied a sacred name to an unholy thing: and this is one meaning of the word blasphemy in this book.

**Verse 10. *Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer*** This may be addressed particularly to Polycarp, if he was at that time the bishop of this Church. He had much to suffer; and was at last burnt alive at Smyrna, about the year of our Lord 166. We have a very ancient account of his martyrdom, which has been translated by Cave, and is worthy of the reader's perusal. That account states that the Jews were particularly active in this martyrdom, and brought the fagots, etc., by which he was consumed. Such persons must indeed have been of the synagogue of Satan.

***Ten days*** As the days in this book are what is commonly called prophetic days, each answering to a year, the ten years of tribulation may denote ten years of persecution; and this was precisely the duration of the persecution under Diocletian, during which all the Asiatic Churches were grievously afflicted. Others understand the expression as implying frequency and abundance, as it does in other parts of Scripture. Genesis 31:7, 41: Thou hast changed my wages TEN TIMES; i.e. thou hast frequently changed my wages Numbers 14:22: Those men have tempted me now these TEN TIMES; i.e. they have frequently and grievously tempted and sinned against me. Nehemiah 4:12: The Jews that dwelt by them came and said unto us TEN TIMES, i.e. they were frequently coming and informing us, that our adversaries intended to attack us, Job 19:3; These TEN TIMES have ye reproached me; i.e. ye have loaded me with

continual reproaches. Daniel 1:20: In all matters of wisdom, he found them TEN TIMES better than all the magicians; i.e. the king frequently consulted Daniel and his companions, and found them more abundantly informed and wise than all his counsellors.

Some think the shortness of the affliction is here intended, and that the ten days are to be understood as in Terence, *Heaut.*, Act v., scen. 1, ver. 36, *Decem dierum vis mi est familia*. “I have enjoyed my family but a short time.”

***Be thou faithful unto death*** Be firm, hold fast the faith, confess Christ to the last, and at all hazards, and thou shalt have a crown of life — thou shalt be crowned with life, have an eternal happy existence, though thou suffer a temporal death. It is said of Polycarp that when brought before the judge, and commanded to abjure and blaspheme Christ, he firmly answered, “Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my king who hath saved me?” He was then adjudged to the flames, and suffered cheerfully for Christ his Lord and Master.

**Verse 11. *He that overcometh*** The conqueror who has stood firm in every trial, and vanquished all his adversaries.

***Shall not be hurt of the second death.*** That is, an eternal separation from God and the glory of his power; as what we commonly mean by final perdition. This is another rabbinical mode of speech in very frequent use, and by it they understand the punishment of hell in a future life.

*The Epistle to the Church at Pergamos.*

**Verse 12. *The angel of the Church in Pergamos*** See the description of this place, Revelation 1:11.

***Which hath the sharp sword*** See on Revelation 1:16. The sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God, cuts every way; it convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; pierces between the joints and the marrow, divides between the soul and spirit, dissects the whole mind, and exhibits a regular anatomy of the soul. It not only reproveth and exposes sin, but it slays the ungodly, pointing out and determining the punishment they shall

endure. Jesus has the sword with the two edges, because he is the Savior of sinners, and the Judge of quick and dead.

**Verse 13. *Where Satan's seat is*** ὅπου ο θρονος του σατανα. Where Satan has his throne — where he reigns as king, and is universally obeyed. It was a maxim among the Jews, that where the law of God was not studied, there Satan dwelt; but he was obliged to leave the place where a synagogue or academy was established.

***Thou holdest fast my name*** Notwithstanding that the profession of Christianity exposed this Church to the bitterest persecution, they held fast the name of Christian, which they had received from Jesus Christ, and did not deny his faith; for when brought to the trial they openly professed themselves disciples and followers of their Lord and Master.

***Antipas was my faithful martyr*** Who this Antipas was we cannot tell. We only know that he was a Christian, and probably bore some office in the Church, and became illustrious by his martyrdom in the cause of Christ. There is a work extant called The Acts of Antipas, which makes him bishop of Pergamos, and states that he was put to death by being enclosed in a burning brazen bull. But this story confutes itself, as the Romans, under whose government Pergamos then was, never put any person to death in this way. It is supposed that he was murdered by some mob, who chose this way to vindicate the honor of their god AEsculapius, in opposition to the claims of our Lord Jesus.

**Verse 14. *I have a few things against thee*** Their good deeds are first carefully sought out and commended; what was wrong in them is touched with a gentle but effectual hand.

The followers of Balaam, the Nicolaitanes, and the Gnostics, were probably all the same kind of persons; but see on Revelation 2:6. What the doctrine of Balaam was, see the notes on Numbers 24:1-25:18; 31:1-54. It appears that there were some then in the Church at Pergamos who held eating things offered to idols in honor of those idols, and fornication, indifferent things. They associated with idolaters in the heathen temples, and partook with them in their religious festivals.

**Verse 15. *The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes*** See on Revelation 2:6.

**Verse 16. *Will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.*** See on Revelation 2:12. He now speaks for their edification and salvation; but if they do not repent, he will shortly declare those judgments which shall unavoidably fall upon them.

**Verse 17. *The hidden manna*** It was a constant tradition of the Jews that the ark of the covenant, the tables of stone, Aaron's rod, the holy anointing oil, and the pot of manna, were hidden by King Josiah when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans; and that these shall all be restored in the days of the Messiah. This manna was hidden, but Christ promises to give it to him that is conqueror. Jesus is the ark, the oil, the rod, the testimony, and the manna. He who is partaker of his grace has all those things in their spiritual meaning and perfection.

***And will give him a white stone*** I. It is supposed that by the white stone is meant pardon or acquittance, and the evidence of it; and that there is an allusion here to the custom observed by judges in ancient times, who were accustomed to give their suffrages by white and black pebbles; those who gave the former were for absolving the culprit, those who gave the latter were for his condemnation. This is mentioned by Ovid, *Metam. lib. xv., ver. 41:*

*Mos erat antiquus, niveis atrisque lapillis,  
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa.  
Nunc quoque sic lata est sententia tristis.*

*“A custom was of old, and still remains,  
Which life or death by suffrages ordains:  
White stones and black within an urn are cast,  
The first absolve, but fate is in the last.”*

*DRYDEN.*

II. Others suppose there is an allusion here to conquerors in the public games, who were not only conducted with great pomp into the city to which they belonged, but had a white stone given to them, with their name inscribed on it; which badge entitled them, during their whole life, to be maintained at the public expense. See *Pind., Olymp. vii. 159*, and the *Scholia* there; and see the collections in *Wetstein*, and *Rosenmuller's* note. These were called *tesserae* among the Romans, and of these there were several kinds.

1. Tesseræ conviviales, which answered exactly to our cards of invitation, or tickets of admission to a public feast or banquet; when the person invited produced his tessera he was admitted. The mention of the hidden manna here may seem to intimate that there is a reference to these convivial tesseræ, whether given to the victor in the public games, entitling him to be fed at the public expense, or to a particular friend, inviting him to a family meal or to a public banquet.

2. There were tesseræ inscribed with different kinds of things, such as provisions, garments, gold or silver vessels, horses, mares, slaves, etc. These were sometimes thrown by the Roman emperors among the crowd in the theatres, and he that could snatch one; and on producing it he received that, the name of which was inscribed on it. But from Dio Cassius it appears that those tesseræ were small wooden balls, whereas the tesseræ in general were square, whence they had their name, as having four sides, angles, or corners. Illi **τεσσαρην**, vel **τεσσαραν**, vocabant figuram quamvis quadratam, quae quatuor angulos haberet; and these were made of stone, marble, bone, or ivory, lead, brass, or other metal. See Pitiscus.

3. Tesseræ frumentariae, or tickets to receive grain in the public distributions of corn; the name of the person who was to receive, and the quantum of grain; being both inscribed on this badge or ticket. Those who did not need this public provision for themselves were permitted to sell their ticket, and the bearer was entitled to the quantum of grain mentioned on it.

4. But the most remarkable of these instruments were the tesseræ hospitales, which were given as badges of friendship and alliance, and on which some device was engraved, as a testimony that a contract of friendship had been made between the parties. A small oblong square piece of wood, bone, stone, or ivory, was taken and divided into two equal parts, on which each of the parties wrote his own name, and then interchanged it with the other. This was carefully preserved, and handed down even to posterity in the same family; and by producing this when they traveled, it gave a mutual claim to the bearers of kind reception and hospitable entertainment at each other's houses.



It is to this custom that Plautus refers in his *POENULUS*, act. v., scen. 2, ver. 80, in the interview between Agorastocles, and his unknown uncle Hanno.

HANNO. — O mi popularis, salve!

AGORASTOCLES. — Et tu edepol, quisquis es. Et si quid opus est, quaeso, die atque impera, Popularitatis caussa.

HAN. — Habeo gratiam. Verum ego hic hospitium habeo: Antidamae filium Quaero; commonstra, si novisti, Agorastoclem. Ecquem adolescentem tu hic novisti Agorastoclem?

AGOR. — Siquidem tu Antidamarchi quaeris adoptatitium, Ego sum ipsus, quem tu quaeris.

HAN. — Hem! quid ego audio?

AGOR. — Antidamae gnatum me esse.

HAN. — si ita est, tesseram Conferre si vis hospitem, eccam adtuli.

AGOR. — Agedum huc ostende; est par probe: nam habeo domi.

HAN. — O mi hospes, salve multum! nam mihi tuus pater, Pater tuus ergo, hospes Antidamas fuit. Haec mihi hospitalis tessera cum illo fuit.

AGOR. — Ergo hic apud me hospitium tibi praebebitur. Nam haud repudio hospitium, neque Carthaginem: Inde sum oriundus.

HAN. — Di dent tibi omnes quae velis.

HANNO. — Hail, my countryman!

AGORASTOCLES. — I hail thee also, in the name of Pollux, whosoever thou art. And if thou have need of any thing, speak, I beseech thee; and thou shalt obtain what thou askest, for civility's sake.

HANNO. — I thank thee, but I have a lodging here; I seek the son of Antidamas. Tell me if thou knowest Agorastocles. Dost thou know in this place the young Agorastocles?

AGORASTOCLES. — If thou seek the adopted son of Antidamarchus, I am the person whom thou seekest.

HANNO. — Ha! What do I hear?

AGORASTOCLES. — Thou hearest that I am the son of Antidamas.

HANNO. — If it be so, compare, if thou pleasest, the hospitable tessera; here it is, I have brought it with me.

AGORASTOCLES. — Come then, reach it hither: it is the exact counterpart; I have the other at home.

HANNO. — O my friend, I am very glad to see thee, for thy father was my friend; therefore Antidamas thy father was my guest. I divided this hospitable tessera with him.

AGORASTOCLES. — Therefore, a lodging shall be provided for thee with me; I reverence hospitality, and I love Carthage, where I was born.

HANNO. — May all the gods grant thee whatsoever thou wishest!

The tessera taken in this sense, seems to have been a kind of tally; and the two parts were compared together to ascertain the truth. Now it is very probable that St. John may allude to this; for on this mode of interpretation every part of the verse is consistent. 1. The word ψηφος does not necessarily signify a stone of any kind, but a suffrage, sentence, decisive vote; and in this place seems answerable to the tessera. The tessera which Hanno had, he tells us in his Punic language, was inscribed with the image or name of his god. “*Sigillum hospitii mei est tabula sculpta, conjus sculptura est Deus meus.* This is the interpretation of the Punic words at the beginning of the above 5th act of the *Poenulus*, as given by Bochart. 2. The person who held it had a right to entertainment in the house of him who originally gave it; for it was in reference to this that the friendly contract was made. 3. The names of the contracting persons, or some device, were written on the tessera, which commemorated the friendly contract; and as the parts were interchanged, none could know that name or device, or the reason of the contract, but he who received it. 4. This, when produced, gave the bearer a right to the offices of hospitality; he was accommodated with food, lodging, etc., as far as these were necessary; and to this the eating of the hidden manna may refer.

But what does this mean in the language of Christ? 1. That the person is taken into an intimate state of friendship with him. 2. That this contract is

witnessed to the party by some especial token, sign, or seal, to which he may have recourse to support his claim, and identify his person. This is probably what is elsewhere called the earnest of the Spirit; see the note on

***The last to be more than the first.*** They not only retained what they had received at first, but grew in grace, and in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. This is a rare thing in most Christian Churches: they generally lose the power of religion, and rest in the forms of worship; and it requires a powerful revival to bring them to such a state that their last works shall be more than their first.

**Verse 20. *That woman Jezebel*** There is an allusion here to the history of Ahab and Jezebel, as given in 2 Kings 9:1-10:36; and although we do not know who this Jezebel was, yet from the allusion we may take it for granted she was a woman of power and influence in Thyatira, who corrupted the true religion, and harassed the followers of God in that city, as Jezebel did in Israel. Instead of that woman Jezebel, **την γυναικα ιεζαβηλ**, many excellent MSS., and almost all the ancient versions, read **την γυναικα σου ιεζαβηλ**, THY WIFE Jezebel; which intimates, indeed asserts, that this bad woman was the wife of the bishop of the Church, and his criminality in suffering her was therefore the greater. This reading Griesbach has received into the text. She called herself a prophetess, i.e., set up for a teacher; taught the Christians that fornication, and eating things offered to idols, were matters of indifference, and thus they were seduced from the truth. But it is probable that by fornication here is meant idolatry merely, which is often its meaning in the Scriptures. It is too gross to suppose that the wife of the bishop of this Church could teach fornication literally. The messenger or bishop of this Church, probably her husband, suffered this: he had power to have cast her and her party out of the Church, or, as his wife, to have restrained her; but he did not do it, and thus she had every opportunity of seducing the faithful. This is what Christ had against the messenger of this Church.

**Verse 21. *I gave her space to repent*** “This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab showed tokens of repentance, and so God put off his punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also put off. Thus God gave her time to repent, which she did not, but instead of that seduced her sons to the same sins. See 1 Kings 21:1-29. According to the Mosaic law, the punishment of idolatrous seducers was not to be delayed at all, but God sometimes showed mercy; and now much more under the Christian dispensation,

though that mercy is often abused, and thus produces the contrary effect, as in the case of this Jezebel. See Ecclesiastes 8:11.

**Verse 22.** *Behold, I will cast her into a bed* “This again alludes to the

undermine the Christian religion; he will not only bring to light, but baffle all their evil intentions. See Revelation 17:9.

**Verse 24. *But unto you I say, and unto the rest*** “But unto the rest, etc. This is the reading of the Complutensian, and seems preferable to the common one, as it evidently shows that the rest of the epistle wholly concerns the faithful, who have not received the former doctrine of error. I will put upon you none other burden is a commendation of the sound part of the Church, that they have no need of any new exhortation or charge to be given them, no new advice but to persevere as usual. See Romans 15:14, 15. The expression of burden is taken from the history of Ahab, 2 Kings 9:25: The Lord laid this burden on him; a word often used by the prophets to signify a prophecy threatening heavy things to be suffered. See on Isaiah 13:1, and Numbers 4:19.” See Dodd’s Notes.

It is worthy of remark that the Gnostics called their doctrine the depths of God, and the depths of Bythos, intimating that they contained the most profound secrets of Divine wisdom. Christ here calls them the depths of Satan, being master pieces of his subtlety. Perhaps they thought them to be of God, while all the time they were deceived by the devil.

**Verse 25. *That which ye have*** That is, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, hold fast till I come — till I come to execute the judgments which I have threatened.

**Verse 26. *Power over the nations*** Every witness of Christ has power to confute and confound all the false doctrines and maxims of the nations of the world, for Christianity shall at last rule over all; the kingdom of Christ will come, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

**Verse 27. *He shall rule them with a rod of iron*** He shall restrain vice by the strictest administration of justice; and those who finally despise the word and rebel shall be broken and destroyed, so as never more to be able to make head against the truth. This seems to refer to the heathen world; and perhaps Constantine the Great may be intended, who, when he overcame Licinius, became the instrument in God’s hand of destroying idolatry over the whole Roman empire; and it was so effectually broken as

to be ever after like the fragments of an earthen vessel, of no use in themselves, and incapable of being ever united to any good purpose.

**Verse 28. *And I will give him the morning star.*** He shall have the brightest and most glorious empire, next to that of Christ himself. And it is certain that the Roman empire under Constantine the Great was the brightest emblem of the latter day glory which has ever yet been exhibited to the world. It is well known that sun, moon, and stars are emblems, in prophetic language, of empires, kingdoms, and states. And as the morning star is that which immediately precedes the rising of the sun, it probably here intends an empire which should usher in the universal sway of the kingdom of Christ.

Ever since the time of Constantine the light of true religion has been increasingly diffused, and is shining more and more unto the perfect day.

**Verse 29. *He that hath an ear*** Let every Christian pay the strictest regard to these predictions of Christ; and let them have a suitable influence on his heart and life.

## CHAPTER 3

*The epistle to the Church of Sardis, 1-6. The epistle to the Church of Philadelphia, 7-13. The epistle to the Church of Laodicea, 14-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 3.

*Epistle to the Church at Sardis.*

**Verse 1. *The seven Spirits, of God*** See the note on Revelation 1:4, 16, etc.

***Thou hast a name that thou livest*** Ye have the reputation of Christians, and consequently of being alive to God, through the quickening influence of the Divine Spirit; but ye are dead — ye have not the life of God in your souls, ye have not walked consistently and steadily before God, and his Spirit has been grieved with you, and he has withdrawn much of his light and power.

**Verse 2. *Be watchful*** Ye have lost ground by carelessness and inattention. Awake, and keep awake!

***Strengthen the things which remain*** The convictions and good desires, with any measure of the fear of God and of a tender conscience, which, although still subsisting, are about to perish, because the Holy Spirit, who is the author of them, being repeatedly grieved, is about finally to depart.

***Thy works perfect*** *πεπληρωμενα*: Filled up. They performed duties of all kinds, but no duty completely. They were constantly beginning, but never brought any thing to a proper end. Their resolutions were languid, their strength feeble, and their light dim. They probably maintained their reputation before men, but their works were not perfect before God.

**Verse 3. *Remember*** Enter into a serious consideration of your state.

***How thou hast received*** With what joy, zeal, and gladness ye heard the Gospel of Christ when first preached to you.



***Hold fast*** Those good desires and heavenly influences which still remain.

***And repent.*** Be humbled before God, because ye have not been workers together with him, but have received much of his grace in vain.

***If therefore thou shalt not watch*** If you do not consider your ways, watching against sin, and for opportunities to receive and do good.

***I will come on thee as a thief*** As the thief comes when he is not expected, so will I come upon you if ye be not watchful, and cut you off from life and hope.

**Verse 4. *Thou hast a few names even in Sardis*** A few persons, names being put for those who bore them. And as the members of the Church were all enrolled, or their names entered in a book, when admitted into the Church or when baptized, names are here put for the people themselves. See Revelation 3:5.

***Have not defiled their garments*** Their souls. The Hebrews considered holiness as the garb of the soul, and evil actions as stains or spots on this garb. So in Shabbath, fol. 152, 2: "A certain king gave royal garments to his servants: those who were prudent folded them up, and laid them by in a chest; those who were foolish put them on, and performed their daily labor in them. After some time the king asked for those royal robes; the wise brought theirs white and clean, the foolish brought theirs spotted with dirt. With the former the king was well pleased; with the latter he was angry. Concerning the former he said: Let those garments be laid up in my wardrobe, and let the persons go home in peace. Of the latter he said: Let the garments be put into the hands of the fuller, and cast those who wore them into prison." This parable is spoken on these words of Ecclesiastes, Ecclesiastes 12:7: The spirit shall return to God who gave it.

***They shall walk with me in white*** They shall be raised to a state of eternal glory, and shall be for ever with their Lord.

**Verse 5. *I will not blot out his name*** This may be an allusion to the custom of registering the names of those who were admitted into the Church in a book kept for that purpose, from which custom our baptismal registers in Churches are derived. These are properly books of life, as there those who were born unto God were registered; as in the latter those who

were born in that parish were enrolled. Or there may be allusions to the white raiment worn by the priests, and the erasing of the name of any priest out of the sacerdotal list who had either sinned, or was found not to be of the seed of Aaron. In Middoth, fol. 37, 2: "The great council of Israel sat and judged the priests. If in a priest any vice was found they stripped of his white garments and clothed him in black, in which he wrapped himself, went out, and departed. Him in whom no vice was found they clothed in white, and he went and took his part in the ministry among his brother priests."

***I will confess his name*** I will acknowledge that this person is my true disciple, and a member of my mystical body. In all this there may also be an allusion to the custom of registering citizens. Their names were entered into books, according to their condition, tribes, family, etc.; and when they were dead, or had by unconstitutional acts forfeited their right of citizenship, the name was blotted out, or erased from the registers. See the note on Exodus 32:32.

**Verse 6. *He that hath an ear*** The usual caution and counsel carefully to attend to the things spoken to the members of that Church, in which every reader is more or less interested.

*Epistle to the Church at Philadelphia.*

**Verse 7. *He that is holy*** In whom holiness essentially dwells, and from whom all holiness is derived.

***He that is true*** He who is the fountain of truth; who cannot lie nor be imposed on; from whom all truth proceeds; and whose veracity in his Revelation is unimpeachable.

***He that hath the key of David*** See this metaphor explained, Matthew 16:19. Key is the emblem of authority and knowledge; the key of David is the regal right or authority of David. David could shut or open the kingdom of Israel to whom he pleased. He was not bound to leave the kingdom even to his eldest son. He could choose whom he pleased to succeed him. The kingdom of the Gospel, and the kingdom of heaven, are at the disposal of Christ. He can shut against whom he will; he can open to whom he pleases. If he shuts, no man can open; if he opens, no man can

shut. His determinations all stand fast, and none can reverse them. This expression is an allusion to Isaiah 22:22, where the prophet promises to Eliakim, under the symbol of the key of the house of David, the government of the whole nation; i.e., all the power of the king, to be executed by him as his deputy; but the words, as here applied to Christ, show that He is absolute.

**Verse 8. *I have set before thee an open door*** I have opened to thee a door to proclaim and diffuse my word; and, notwithstanding there are many adversaries to the spread of my Gospel, yet none of them shall be able to prevent it.

***Thou hast a little strength*** Very little political authority or influence; yet thou hast kept my word — hast kept the true doctrine; and hast not denied my name, by taking shelter in heathenism when Christianity was persecuted. The little strength may refer either to the smallness of the numbers, or to the littleness of their grace.

**Verse 9. *I will make them*** Show them to be, of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews, pretending thereby to be of the synagogue of GOD, and consequently his true and peculiar children.

***I will make them to come and worship*** I will so dispose of matters in the course of my providence, that the Jews shall be obliged to seek unto the Christians for toleration, support, and protection, which they shall be obliged to sue for in the most humble and abject manner.

***To know that I have loved thee.*** That the love which was formerly fixed on the Jews is now removed, and transferred to the Gentiles.

**Verse 10. *The word of my patience*** The doctrine which has exposed you to so much trouble and persecution, and required so much patience and magnanimity to bear up under its attendant trials.

***The hour of temptation*** A time of sore and peculiar trial which might have proved too much for their strength. He who is faithful to the grace of God is often hidden from trials and difficulties which fall without mitigation on those who have been unfaithful in his covenant. Many understand by the hour of temptation the persecution under Trajan, which was greater and more extensive than the preceding ones under Nero and Domitian.

**To try them** That is, such persecutions will be the means of trying and proving those who profess Christianity, and showing who were sound and thorough Christians and who were not.

**Verse 11. Behold, I come quickly** These things will shortly take place; and I am coming with consolations and rewards to my faithful followers, and with judgments to my adversaries.

**Take thy crown.** God has provided mansions for you; let none through your fall occupy those seats of blessedness.

**Verse 12. A pillar in the temple** There is probably all allusion here to the two pillars in the temple of Jerusalem, called Jachin and Boaz, stability and strength. The Church is the temple; CHRIST is the foundation on which it is built; and his ministers are the PILLARS by which, under him, it is adorned and supported. St. Paul has the same allusions, Galatians 2:9.

**I will write upon him the name of my God** That is, I will make him a priest unto myself. The priest had written on his forehead קודש ליהוה kodesh laihovah, “Holiness to the Lord.”

**And the name of the city of my God** As the high priest had on his breastplate the names of the twelve tribes engraved, and these constituted the city or Church of God; Christ here promises that in place of them the twelve apostles, representing the Christian Church, shall be written, which is called the New Jerusalem, and which God has adopted in place of the twelve Jewish tribes.

**My new name.** The Savior of ALL; the light that lightens the GENTILES; the CHRIST; the Anointed One; the only GOVERNOR of his Church; and the Redeemer of ALL mankind.

There is here an intimation that the Christian Church is to endure for ever; and the Christian ministry to last as long as time endures: He shall go no more out for ever.

*Epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans.*

**Verse 14. *These things saith the Amen*** That is, He who is true or faithful; from אמן aman, he was tree; immediately interpreted, The faithful and true witness. See Revelation 1:5.

***The beginning of the creation of God*** That is, the head and governor of all creatures: the king of the creation. See on Colossians 1:15. By his titles, here, he prepares them for the humiliating and awful truths which he was about to declare, and the authority on which the declaration was founded.

**Verse 15. *Thou art neither cold nor hot*** Ye are neither heathens nor Christians-neither good nor evil-neither led away by false doctrine, nor thoroughly addicted to that which is true. In a word, they were listless and indifferent, and seemed to care little whether heathenism or Christianity prevailed. Though they felt little zeal either for the salvation of their own souls or that of others, yet they had such a general conviction of the truth and importance of Christianity, that they could not readily give it up.

***I would thou wert cold or hot*** That is, ye should be decided; adopt some part or other, and be in earnest in your attachment to it. If ever the words of Mr. Erskine, in his Gospel Sonnets, were true, they were true of this Church:—

*“To good and evil equal bent,  
I’m both a devil and a saint.”*

They were too good to go to hell, too bad to go to heaven. Like Ephraim and Judah, Hosea 6:4: O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away. They had good dispositions which were captivated by evil ones, and they had evil dispositions which in their turn yielded to those that were good; and the Divine justice and mercy seem puzzled to know what to do to or with them. This was the state of the Laodicean Church; and our Lord expresses here in this apparent wish, the same that is expressed by Epictetus, Ench., chap. 36. ἕνα σε δεῖ ἀνθρωπον, ἢ ἀγαθον, ἢ κακον, εἶναι. “Thou oughtest to be one kind of man, either a good man or a bad man.”

**Verse 16. *Because thou art lukewarm*** Irresolute and undecided.

***I will spue thee out of my mouth.*** He alludes here to the known effect of tepid water upon the stomach; it generally produces a nausea. I wilt cast thee off. Thou shalt have no interest in me. Though thou hast been near to my heart, yet now I must pluck thee thence, because slothful, careless, and indolent; thou art not in earnest for thy soul.

**Verse 17. *I am rich*** Thou supposest thyself to be in a safe state, perfectly sure of final salvation, because thou hast begun well, and laid the right foundation. It was this most deceitful conviction that cut the nerves of their spiritual diligence; they rested in what they had already received, and seemed to think that once in grace must be still in grace.

***Thou art wretched* τάλαιπωρος** Most wretched. “The word signifies,” according to Mintert, “being worn out and fatigued with grievous labors, as they who labor in a stone quarry, or are condemned to the mines.” So, instead of being children of God, as they supposed, and infallible heirs of the kingdom, they were, in the sight of God, in the condition of the most abject slaves.

***And miserable* ὁ ελεεινος** Most deplorable, to be pitied by all men.

***And poor*** Having no spiritual riches, no holiness of heart. Rich and poor are sometimes used by the rabbins to express the righteous and the wicked.

***And blind*** The eyes of thy understanding being darkened, so that thou dost not see thy state.

***And naked*** Without the image of God, not clothed with holiness and purity. A more deplorable state in spiritual things can scarcely be imagined than that of this Church. And it is the true picture of many Churches, and of innumerable individuals.

**Verse 18. *I counsel thee*** O fallen and deceived soul, hear Jesus! Thy case is not hopeless. Buy of me.

***Gold tried in the fire*** Come and receive from me, without money and without price, faith that shall stand in every trial: so gold tried in the fire is here understood. But it may mean pure and undefiled religion, or that grace or Divine influence which produces it, which is more valuable to the soul than the purest gold to the body. They had before imaginary riches; this alone can make them truly rich.

**White raiment** Holiness of heart and life.

**Anoint thine eyes** Pray for, that ye may receive, the enlightening influences of my Spirit, that ye may be convinced of your true state, and see where your help lies.

**Verse 19. As many as I love** So it was the love he still had to them that induced him thus to reprehend and thus to counsel them.

**Be zealous** Be in earnest, to get your souls saved, They had no zeal; this was their bane. He now stirs them up to diligence in the use of the means of grace and repentance for their past sins and remissness.

**Verse 20. Behold, I stand at the door and knock** There are many sayings of this kind among the ancient rabbins; thus in Shir Hashirim Rabba, fol. 25, 1: “God said to the Israelites, My children, open to me one door of repentance, even so wide as the eye of a needle, and I will open to you doors through which calves and horned cattle may pass.”

In Sohar Levit, fol. 8, col. 32, it is said: “If a man conceal his sin, and do not open it before the holy King, although he ask mercy, yet the door of repentance shall not be opened to him. But if he open it before the holy blessed God, God spares him, and mercy prevails over wrath; and when he laments, although all the doors were shut, yet they shall be opened to him, and his prayer shall be heard.”

Christ stands — waits long, at the door of the sinner’s heart; he knocks — uses judgments, mercies, reproofs, exhortations, etc., to induce sinners to repent and turn to him; he lifts up his voice — calls loudly by his word, ministers, and Spirit.

**If any man hear** If the sinner will seriously consider his state, and attend to the voice of his Lord.

**And open the door** This must be his own act, receiving power for this purpose from his offended Lord, who will not break open the door; he will make no forcible entry.

**I will come in to him** I will manifest myself to him, heal all his backslidings, pardon all his iniquities, and love him freely.

***Will sup with him*** Hold communion with him, feed him with the bread of life.

***And he with me.*** I will bring him at last to dwell with me in everlasting glory.

**Verse 21. *To sit with me in my throne*** In every case it is to him that overcometh, to the conqueror, that the final promise is made. He that conquers not is not crowned, therefore every promise is here made to him that is faithful unto death. Here is a most remarkable expression: Jesus has conquered, and is set down with the FATHER upon the Father's throne; he who conquers through Christ sits down with Christ upon his throne: but Christ's throne and the throne of the Father is the same; and it is on this same throne that those who are faithful unto death are finally to sit! How astonishing is this state of exaltation! The dignity and grandeur of it who can conceive?

This is the worst of the seven Churches, and yet the most eminent of all the promises are made to it, showing that the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory.

**Verse 22. *He that hath an ear, let him hear*** Mr. Wesley has a very judicious note on the conclusion of this chapter, and particularly on this last verse, He that hath an ear, etc. "This (counsel) stands in three former letters before the promise, in the four latter after it; clearly dividing the seven into two parts, the first containing three, the last four letters. The titles given our Lord in the three former letters peculiarly respect his power after his resurrection and ascension, particularly over his Church; those in the four latter, his Divine glory and unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Again, this word being placed before the promises in the three former letters excludes the false apostles at Ephesus, the false Jews at Smyrna, and the partakers with the heathens at Pergamos, from having any share therein. In the four latter, being placed after them, it leaves the promises immediately joined with Christ's address to the angel of the Church, to show that the fulfilling of these was near; whereas the others reach beyond the end of the world. It should be observed that the overcoming or victory (to which alone these peculiar promises are annexed) is not the ordinary victory obtained by every believer, but a



special victory obtained over great and peculiar temptations, by those that are strong in faith.”

The latest account we have of the state of the seven Asiatic Churches is in a letter from the Rev. Henry Lindsay, chaplain to the British embassy at Constantinople, to a member of the British and Foreign Bible Society, by which society Mr. Lindsay had been solicited to distribute some copies of the New Testament in modern Greek among the Christians in Asia Minor. The following is his communication, dated:- “Constantinople, January 10, 1816.

“When I last wrote to you, I was on the point of setting out on a short excursion into Asia Minor. Travelling hastily, as I was constrained to do from the circumstances of my situation, the information I could procure was necessarily superficial and unsatisfactory. As, however, I distributed the few books of the society which I was able to carry with me, I think it necessary to give some account of the course I took:

“1. The regular intercourse of England with SMYRNA will enable you to procure as accurate intelligence of its present state as any I can pretend to offer. From the conversations I had with the Greek bishop and his clergy, as well as various well-informed individuals, I am led to suppose that, if the population of Smyrna be estimated at one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, there are from fifteen to twenty thousand Greeks, six thousand Armenians, five thousand Catholics, one hundred and forty Protestants, and eleven thousand Jews.

“2. After Smyrna, the first place I visited was EPHESUS, or rather (as the site is not quite the same) Aiasalick, which consists of about fifteen poor cottages. I found there but three Christians, two brothers who keep a small shop, and a gardener. They are all three Greeks, and their ignorance is lamentable indeed. In that place, which was blessed so long with an apostle’s labors, and those of his zealous assistants are Christians who have not so much as heard of that apostle, or seem only to recognize the name of Paul as one in the calendar of their saints. One of them I found able to read a little, and left with him the New Testament, in ancient and modern Greek, which he expressed a strong desire to read, and promised me he would not only study it himself, but lend it to his friends in the neighboring villages.

“3. My next object was to see LAODICEA; in the road to this is Guzel-hisar, a large town, with one church, and about seven hundred Christians. In conversing with the priests here, I found them so little acquainted with the Bible, or even the New Testament in an entire form, that they had no distinct knowledge of the books it contained beyond the four gospels, but mentioned them indiscriminately with various idle legends and lives of saints. I have sent thither three copies of the modern Greek Testament since my return. About three miles from Laodicea is Denizli, which has been styled (but I am inclined to think erroneously) the ancient Colosse; it is a considerable town, with about four hundred Christians, Greeks, and Armenians, each of whom has a church. I regret however to say that here also the most extravagant tales of miracles, and fabulous accounts of angels, saints, and relics, had so usurped the place of the Scriptures as to render it very difficult to separate in their minds Divine truths from human inventions. I felt that here that unhappy time was come when men should ‘turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.’ I had with me some copies of the gospels in ancient Greek which I distributed here, as in some other places through which I had passed. Eski-hisar, close to which are the remains of ancient Laodicea, contains about fifty poor inhabitants, in which number are but two Christians, who live together in a small mill; unhappily neither could read at all; the copy therefore of the New Testament, which I intended for this Church, I left with that of Denizli, the offspring and poor remains of Laodicea and Colosse. The prayers of the mosque are the only prayers which are heard near the ruins of Laodicea, on which the threat seems to have been fully executed in its utter rejection as a Church.

“4. I left it for PHILADELPHIA, now Alah-shehr. It was gratifying to find at last some surviving fruits of early zeal; and here, at least, whatever may be the loss of the spirit of Christianity, there is still the form of a Christian Church; this has been kept from the ‘hour of temptation,’ which came upon all the Christian world. There are here about one thousand Christians, chiefly Greeks, who for the most part speak only Turkish; there are twenty-five places of public worship, five of which are large regular churches; to these there is a resident bishop, with twenty inferior clergy. A copy of the modern Greek Testament was received by the bishop with great thankfulness.

“5. I quitted Alah-shehr, deeply disappointed at the statement I received there of the Church of SARDIS. I trusted that in its utmost trials it would not have been suffered to perish utterly, and I heard with surprise that not a vestige of it remained. With what satisfaction then did I find on the plains of Sardis a small Church establishment; the few Christians who dwell around modern Sart were anxious to settle there and erect a church, as they were in the habit of meeting at each other’s houses for the exercise of religion. From this design they were prohibited by Kar Osman Oglu, the Turkish governor of the district; and in consequence, about five years ago they built a church upon the plain, within view of ancient Sardis, and there they maintain a priest. The place has gradually risen into a little village, now called Tatar-keny; thither the few Christians of Sart, who amount to seven, and those in its immediate vicinity, resort for public worship, and form together a congregation of about forty. There appears then still a remnant, ‘a few names even in Sardis,’ which have been preserved. I cannot repeat the expressions of gratitude with which they received a copy of the New Testament in a language with which they were familiar. Several crowded about the priest to hear it on the spot, and I left them thus engaged.

“6. Ak-hisar, the ancient THYATIRA, is said to contain about thirty thousand inhabitants, of whom three thousand are Christians, all Greeks except about two hundred Armenians. There is, however, but one Greek church and one Armenian. The superior of the Greek Church to whom I presented the Romaic Testament esteemed it so great a treasure that he earnestly pressed me, if possible, to spare another, that one might be secured to the Church and free from accidents, while the other went round among the people for their private reading. I have, therefore, since my return hither, sent him four copies.

“7. The Church of PERGAMOS, in respect to numbers, may be said to flourish still in Bergamo. The town is less than Ak-hisar, but the number of Christians is about as great, the proportion of Armenians to Greeks nearly the same, and each nation also has one church. The bishop of the district, who occasionally resides there, was at that time absent, and I experienced with deep regret that the resident clergy were totally incapable of estimating the gift I intended them; I therefore delivered the Testament to the lay vicar of the bishop at his urgent request, he having assured me

that the bishop would highly prize so valuable an acquisition to the Church. He seemed much pleased that the benighted state of his nation had excited the attention of strangers.

“Thus, sir, I have left at least one copy of the unadulterated word of God at each of the seven Asiatic Churches of the Apocalypse, and I trust they are not utterly thrown away; but whoever may plant, it is God only who can give the increase, and from his goodness we may hope they will in due time bring forth fruit, ‘some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.’  
“HENRY LINDSAY.”

In my note on Acts 19:24, I have given an account of the celebrated temple of Diana at Ephesus, to which building, called one of the seven wonders of the world, St. Paul is supposed to allude in his epistle to this Church, particularly at Ephesians 3:18, where I have again given the measurement of this temple.

## CHAPTER 4

*John sees the throne of God in heaven surrounded by twenty-four elders; and four living creatures, full of eyes; which all join in giving glory to the Almighty, 1-11.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 4.

**Verse 1. *A door was opened in heaven*** This appears to have been a visible aperture in the sky over his head.

**Verse 2. *I was in the Spirit*** Rapt up in an ecstasy.

**Verse 3. *And he that sat*** There is here no description of the Divine Being, so as to point out any similitude, shape, or dimensions. The description rather aims to point out the surrounding glory and effulgence than the person of the almighty King. See a similar description Numbers 24:10, etc., and the notes there.

**Verse 4. *Four and twenty elders*** Perhaps this is in reference to the smaller Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, which was composed of twenty-three elders; or to the princes of the twenty-four courses of the Jewish priests which ministered at the tabernacle and the temple, at first appointed by David.

***Clothed in white raiment*** The garments of the priests.

***On their heads crowns of gold.*** An emblem of their dignity. The Jewish writers represent human souls as being created first; and before they enter the body, each is taken by an angel into paradise, where it sees the righteous sitting in glory with crowns upon their heads. Rab. Tanchum, fol. 39, 4.

**Verse 5. *Seven lamps of fire*** Seven angels, the attendants and ministers of the supreme King. See Revelation 1:4, and the note there.

**Verse 6. *Four beasts* τεσσαρα ζωα.** Four living creatures or four animals. The word beast is very improperly used here and elsewhere in this

description. Wiclif first used it, and translators in general have followed him in this uncouth rendering. A beast before the throne of God in heaven sounds oddly.

**Verse 7. *The first beast was like a lion*** It is supposed that there is a reference here to the four standards or ensigns of the four divisions of the tribes in the Israelitish camp, as they are described by Jewish writers.

The first living creature was like a lion; this was, say the rabbins, the standard of JUDAH on the east, with the two tribes of Issachar and Zabulon. The second, like a calf or ox, which was the emblem of EPHRAIM who pitched on the west, with the two tribes of Manasseh and Benjamin. The third, with the face of a man, which, according to the rabbins, was the standard of REUBEN who pitched on the south, with the two tribes of Simeon and Gad. The fourth which was like a flying (spread) eagle, was, according to the same writers, the emblem on the ensign of DAN who pitched on the north, with the two tribes of Asher and Naphtali. This traditionary description agrees with the four faces of the cherub in Ezekiel's vision. See my notes and diagrams on Num. 2.

Christian tradition has given these creatures as emblems of the four evangelists. To John is attributed the EAGLE; to Luke the OX, to Mark the LION, and to Matthew the MAN, or angel in human form. As the former represented the whole Jewish Church or congregation, so the latter is intended to represent the whole Christian Church.

**Verse 8. *The four beasts had each of them six wings*** I have already observed, in the preface to this book, that the phraseology is rabbinical; I might have added, and the imagery also. We have almost a counterpart of this description in Pirkey Elieser. chap. 4. I shall give the substance of this from Schoettgen. "Four troops of ministering angels praise the holy blessed God: the first is Michael, at the right hand; the next is Gabriel, at the left; the third is Uriel, before; and the fourth is Raphael, behind him. The shechinah of the holy, blessed God is in the midst, and he himself sits upon a throne high and elevated, hanging in the air; and his magnificence is as amber **השָׁמַל**, (chashmal,) in the midst of the fire, Ezekiel 1:4, On his head is placed a crown and a diadem, with the incommunicable name (**יהוה** Yehovah) inscribed on the front of it. His eyes go throughout the whole

earth; a part of them is fire, and a part of them hail. At his right hand stands Life, and at his left hand Death; and he has a fiery scepter in his hand. Before him is the veil spread, that veil which is between the temple and the holy of holies; and seven angels minister before him within that veil: the veil and his footstool are like fire and lightning; and under the throne of glory there is a shining like fire and sapphire, and about his throne are justice and judgment.

“The place of the throne are the seven clouds of glory; and the chariot wheels, and the cherub, and the living creatures which give glory before his face. The throne is in similitude like sapphire; and at the four feet of it are four living creatures, each of which has four faces and four wings. When God speaks from the east, then it is from between the two cherubim with the face of a MAN; when he speaks from the south, then it is from between the two cherubim with the face of a LION; when from the west, then it is from between the two cherubim with the face of an OX; and when from the north, then it is from between the two cherubim with the face of an EAGLE.

“And the living creatures stand before the throne of glory; and they stand in fear, in trembling, in horror, and in great agitation; and from this agitation a stream of fire flows before them. Of the two seraphim one stands at the right hand of the holy blessed God, and one stands at the left; and each has six wings: with two they cover their face lest they should see the face of the shechina; with two they cover their feet lest they should find out the footstool of the shechinah; and with two they fly, and sanctify his great name. And they answer each other, saying Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the living creatures stand near his glory, yet they do not know the place of his glory; but wheresoever his glory is, they cry out and say, Blessed be the glory of the Lord in his place.”

In Shemoth Rabba, sec. 23, fol. 122, 4, Rabbi Abin says: “There are four which have principality in this world: among intellectual creatures, MAN; among birds, the EAGLE; among cattle, the OX; and among wild beasts, the LION: each of these has a kingdom and a certain magnificence, and they are placed under the throne of glory, Ezekiel 1:10, to show that no creature is

to exalt itself in this world, and that the kingdom of God is over all." These creatures may be considered the representatives of the whole creation.

**Verse 10. *Cast their crowns before the throne*** Acknowledge the infinite supremacy of God, and that they have derived their being and their blessings from him alone. This is an allusion to the custom of prostrations in the east, and to the homage of petty kings acknowledging the supremacy of the emperor.

**Verse 11. *Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive*** Thus all creation acknowledges the supremacy of God; and we learn from this song that he made all things for his pleasure; and through the same motive he preserves. Hence it is most evident, that he hateth nothing that he has made, and could have made no intelligent creature with the design to make it eternally miserable. It is strange that a contrary supposition has ever entered into the heart of man; and it is high time that the benevolent nature of the Supreme God should be fully vindicated from aspersions of this kind.



## CHAPTER 5

*The book sealed with seven seals, which no being in heaven or earth could open, 1-3. Is at last opened by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, 4-8. He receives the praises of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, 9, 10. And afterwards of an innumerable multitude, who acknowledge that they were redeemed to God by his blood, 11, 12. And then, of the whole creation, who ascribe blessing, honor, glory, and power to God and the Lamb for ever, 13, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 5.

**Verse 1.** *A book written within and on the back side* That is, the book was full of solemn contents within, but it was sealed; and on the back side was a superscription indicating its contents. It was a labelled book, or one written on each side of the skin, which was not usual.

*Sealed with seven seals.* As seven is a number of perfection, it may mean that the book was so sealed that the seals could neither be counterfeited nor broken; i.e., the matter of the book was so obscure and enigmatical and the work it enjoined and the facts it predicted so difficult and stupendous, that they could neither be known nor performed by human wisdom or power.

**Verse 2.** *A strong angel* One of the chief of the angelic host.

*Proclaiming* As the herald of God.

*To open the book, and to loose the seals* To loose the seals that he may open the book. Who can tell what this book contains? Who can open its mysteries? The book may mean the purposes and designs of God relative to his government of the world and the Church; but we, whose habitation is in the dust, know nothing of such things. We are, however, determined to guess.

**Verse 3.** *And no man* οὐδεις· No person or being.

***In heaven*** Among all the angels of God.

***Nor in the earth*** No human being.

***Neither under the earth*** No disembodied spirit, nor any demon. Neither angels, men, nor devils, can fathom the decrees of God.

***Neither to look thereon.*** None can look into it unless it be opened, and none can open it unless the seals be unloosed.

**Verse 4. *I wept much*** Because the world and the Church were likely to be deprived of the knowledge of the contents of the book.

**Verse 5. *The Lion of the tribe of Juda*** Jesus Christ, who sprang from this tribe, as his genealogy proves; see on Matthew 1:2, 3 and Luke 3:33. There is an allusion here to Genesis 49:9, Judah is a lion's whelp; the lion was the emblem of this tribe, and was supposed to have been embroidered on its ensigns.

***The Root of David*** See Isaiah 11:1. Christ was the root of David as to his Divine nature; he was a branch out of the stem of Jesse as to his human nature.

***Hath prevailed*** By the merit of his incarnation, passion, and death.

***To open the book*** To explain and execute all the purposes and decrees of God, in relation to the government of the world and the Church.

**Verse 6. *Stood a Lamb*** Christ, so called because he was a sacrificial offering; **ἀρνίον** signifies a little or delicate lamb.

***As it had been slain*** As if now in the act of being offered. This is very remarkable; so important is the sacrificial offering of Christ in the sight of God that he is still represented as being in the very act of pouring out his blood for the offenses of man. This gives great advantage to faith: when any soul comes to the throne of grace, he finds a sacrifice there provided for him to offer to God. Thus all succeeding generations find they have the continual sacrifice ready, and the newly-shed blood to offer.

***Seven horns*** As horn is the emblem of power, and seven the number of perfection, the seven horns may denote the all-prevailing and infinite might of Jesus Christ. He can support all his friends; he can destroy all his

enemies; and he can save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him.

**Seven eyes** To denote his infinite knowledge and wisdom: but as these seven eyes are said to be the seven Spirits of God, they seem to denote rather his providence, in which he often employs the ministry of angels; therefore, these are said to be sent forth into all the earth. See on Revelation 1:4.

**Verse 7. *He came and took the book*** This verse may be properly explained by John, John 1:18. No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath DECLARED him. With Jesus alone are all the counsels and mysteries of God.

**Verse 8. *The four beasts-fell down before the Lamb*** The whole Church of God, and all his children in heaven and earth, acknowledge that Jesus Christ is alone worthy and able to unfold and execute all the mysteries and counsels of God. See on Revelation 5:9.

***Having every one of them harps*** There were harps and vials; and each of the elders and living creatures had one.

***Odours, which are the prayers of saints.*** The frankincense and odours offered at the tabernacle were emblems of the prayers and praises of the Lord. That prayers are compared to incense, see Psalm 141:2: Let my PRAYER be set forth before thee as INCENSE. Hence that saying in Synopsis Sohar, p. 44, n. 37: “The odour of the prayers of the Israelites is equal to myrrh and frankincense; but on the Sabbath it is preferred to the scent of all kinds of perfumes.” The words which are the prayers of saints are to be understood as this is my body, this signifies or represents my body; these odours represent the prayers of the saints.

**Verse 9. *A new song*** Composed on the matters and blessings of the Gospel, which was just now opened on earth. But new song may signify a most excellent song; and by this the Gospel and its blessings are probably signified. The Gospel is called a new song, Psalm 96:1. And perhaps there is an allusion in the harps here to Psalm 144:9: I will sing a NEW SONG unto thee, O God: upon a PSALTERY, and an INSTRUMENT of TEN STRINGS, etc. The same form of speech is found, Isaiah 42:10: Sing unto the Lord a

NEW SONG, etc.; and there the prophet seems to have the Gospel dispensation particularly in view.

***Thou-hast redeemed us to God-out of every-nation*** It appears, therefore, that the living creatures and the elders represent the aggregate of the followers of God; or the Christian Church in all nations, and among all kinds of people, and perhaps through the whole compass of time: and all these are said to be redeemed by Christ's blood, plainly showing that his life was a sacrificial offering for the sins of mankind.

**Verse 10. *Kings and priests*** See Exodus 19:6; 1 Peter 2:5, 9, and the notes there.

**Verse 11. *The voice of many angels*** These also are represented as joining in the chorus with redeemed mortals.

***Ten thousand times ten thousand*** "Myriads of myriads and chiliads of chiliads;" that is, an infinite or innumerable multitude. This is in reference to Daniel 7:10.

**Verse 12. *To receive power*** That is, Jesus Christ is worthy to take, λαβεῖν, to have ascribed to him, power — omnipotence; riches — beneficence; wisdom — omniscience; strength — power in prevalent exercise; honor — the highest reputation for what he has done; glory — the praise due to such actions; and blessing — the thankful acknowledgments of the whole creation. Here are seven different species of praise; and this is exactly agreeable to the rabbinical forms, which the author of this book keeps constantly in view. See Sepher Rasiel, fol. 39, 2: "To thee belongs כבוד cabod, glory; גדולה gedulah, magnitude; גבורה geburah, might; הממלכה hammamlakah, the kingdom; התפארה hattiphereth, the honor; הנצח hannetsach, the victory; וההוד vehahod, and the praise."

**Verse 13. *Every creature*** All parts of the creation, animate and inanimate, are represented here, by that figure of speech called prosopopoeia or personification, as giving praise to the Lord Jesus, because by him all things were created. We find the whole creation gives precisely the same praise, and in the same terms, to Jesus Christ, who is undoubtedly meant here by the Lamb just slain as they give to GOD who sits upon the throne.

Now if Jesus Christ were not properly GOD this would be idolatry, as it would be giving to the creature what belongs to the Creator.

**Verse 14. *The four beasts said, Amen.*** Acknowledged that what was attributed to Christ was his due.

***The four and twenty elders*** The word **εικοσιτεσσαρες**, twenty-four, is wanting in the most eminent MSS. and versions.

***Fell down and worshipped*** **επεσαν και προσεκυνησαν**· Fell down on their knees, and then prostrated themselves before the throne. This is the eastern method of adoration: first, the person worshiping fell down on his knees; and then, bowing down touched the earth with his forehead. This latter act was prostration.

***Him that liveth for ever*** This clause is wanting in ABC, thirty-seven others, Syriac, Arabic, Coptic, AÆthiopic, some copies of the Slavonic, Itala, and Vulgate; and in Andreas, and Arethas, ancient commentators on this book. It is also wanting in some editions, and is undoubtedly spurious. Griesbach has left this and the above twenty-four out of the text.

Now follow the least intelligible parts of this mysterious book, on which so much has been written, and so much in vain. It is natural for man to desire to be wise; and the more difficult the subject the more it is studied, and the hope of finding out something by which the world and the Church might be profited, has caused the most eminently learned men to employ their talents and consume their time on these abstruse prophecies. But of what use has all this learned and well-meant labor been to mankind? Can hypothesis explain prophecy, and conjecture find a basis on which faith can rest? And what have we better in all attempts hitherto made to explain the mysteries of this book?

## CHAPTER 6

*What followed on the opening of the seven seals. The opening of the first seal; the white horse, 1, 2. The opening of the second seal; the red horse, 3, 4. The opening of the third seal; the black horse and the famine, 5, 6. The opening of the fourth seal; the pale horse, 7, 8. The opening of the fifth seal; the souls of men under the altar, 9-11. The opening of the sixth seal; the earthquake, the darkening of the sun and moon, and falling of the stars, 12-14. The terrible consternation of the kings and great men of the earth, 15-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 6.

**Verse 1. *When the Lamb opened one of the seals*** It is worthy of remark that the opening of the seals is not merely a declaration of what God will do, but is the exhibition of a purpose then accomplished; for whenever the seal is opened, the sentence appears to be executed. It is supposed that, from Revelation 6:1-11:19, the calamities which should fall on the enemies of Christianity, and particularly the Jews, are pointed out under various images, as well as the preservation of the Christians under those calamities.

***One of the four beasts*** Probably that with the face of a lion. See Revelation 4:7.

***Come and see.*** Attend to what is about to be exhibited. It is very likely that all was exhibited before his eyes as in a scene, and he saw every act represented which was to take place, and all the persons and things which were to be the chief actors.

**Verse 2. *A white horse*** Supposed to represent the Gospel system, and pointing out its excellence, swiftness, and purity.

***He that sat on him*** Supposed to represent Jesus Christ.

***A bow*** The preaching of the Gospel, darting conviction into the hearts of sinners.

**A crown** The emblem of the kingdom which Christ is to establish on earth.

**Conquering, and to conquer.** Overcoming and confounding the Jews first, and then the Gentiles; spreading more and more the doctrine and influence of the cross over the face of the earth.

**Verse 3. The second beast** That which had the face of an ox.

**Verse 4. Another horse-red** The emblem of war; perhaps also of severe persecution, and the martyrdom of the saints.

**Him that sat thereon** Some say, Christ; others, Vespasian; others, the Roman armies; others, Artabanus, king of the Parthians, etc., etc.

**Take peace from the earth** To deprive Judea of all tranquillity.

**They should kill one another** This was literally the case with the Jews, while besieged by the Romans.

**A great sword.** Great influence and success, producing terrible carnage.

**Verse 5. The third beast** That which had the face of a man.

**A black horse** The emblem of famine. Some think that which took place under Claudius. See Matthew 24:7; the same which was predicted by Agabus, Acts 11:28.

**A pair of balances** To show that the scarcity would be such, that every person must be put under an allowance.

**Verse 6. A measure of wheat for a penny** The chaenix here mentioned was a measure of dry things; and although the capacity is not exactly known, yet it is generally agreed that it contained as much as one man could consume in a day; and a penny, the Roman denarius, was the ordinary pay of a laborer. So it appears that in this scarcity each might be able to obtain a bare subsistence by his daily labor; but a man could not, in such cases, provide for a family.

**Three measures of barley** This seems to have been the proportion of value between the wheat and the barley. Barley was allowed to afford a poor

aliment, and was given to the Roman soldiers instead of wheat, by way of punishment.

***Hurt not the oil and the wine.*** Be sparing of these: use them not as delicacies, but for necessity; because neither the vines nor the olives will be productive.

**Verse 7. *The fourth beast*** That which had the face of an eagle.

**Verse 8. *A pale horse*** The symbol of death. Pallida mors, pale death, was a very usual poetic epithet; of this symbol there can be no doubt, because it is immediately said, His name that sat on him was DEATH.

***And hell followed with him*** The grave, or state of the dead, received the slain. This is a very elegant prosopopoeia, or personification.

***Over the fourth part of the earth*** One fourth of mankind was to feel the desolating effects of this seal.

***To kill with sword*** WAR; with hunger — FAMINE; with death — PESTILENCE; and with the beasts of the earth — lions, tigers, hyaenas, etc., which would multiply in consequence of the devastations occasioned by war, famine, and pestilence.

**Verse 9. *The fifth seal*** There is no animal nor any other being to introduce this seal, nor does there appear to be any new event predicted; but the whole is intended to comfort the followers of God under their persecutions, and to encourage them to bear up under their distresses.

***I saw under the altar*** A symbolical vision was exhibited, in which he saw an altar; and under it the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God — martyred for their attachment to Christianity, are represented as being newly slain as victims to idolatry and superstition. The altar is upon earth, not in heaven.

**Verse 10. *And they cried with a loud voice*** That is, their blood, like that of Abel, cried for vengeance; for we are not to suppose that there was any thing like a vindictive spirit in those happy and holy souls who had shed their blood for the testimony of Jesus. We sometimes say Blood cries for blood; that is, in the order of Divine justice, every murderer, and every murdering persecutor, shall be punished.



**O Lord** ὁ δεσποτης; Sovereign Lord, supreme Ruler; one having and exercising unlimited and uncontrolled authority.

**Holy** In thy own nature, hating iniquity;

**And true** In all thy promises and threatenings;

**Dost thou not judge** The persecutors;

**And avenge our blood** Inflict signal punishment;

**On them that dwell on the earth?** Probably meaning the persecuting Jews; they dwelt ἐπι της γης, upon that land, a form of speech by which Judea is often signified in the New Testament.

**Verse 11. White robes** The emblems of purity, innocence, and triumph.

**They should rest yet for a little season** This is a declaration that, when the cup of the iniquity of the Jews should be full, they should then be punished in a mass. They were determined to proceed farther, and God permits them so to do; reserving the fullness of their punishment till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity. If this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as is most likely, then this destruction is that which was to fall upon the Jews; and the little time or season was that which elapsed between their martyrdom, or the date of this book, and the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, under Vespasian and his son Titus, about A.D. 70. What follows may refer to the destruction of the heathen Roman empire.

**Verse 12. The sixth seal** This seal also is opened and introduced by Jesus Christ alone.

**A great earthquake** A most stupendous change in the civil and religious constitution of the world. If it refer to Constantine the Great, the change that was made by his conversion to Christianity might be very properly represented under the emblem of an earthquake, and the other symbols mentioned in this and the following verses.

The sun — the ancient pagan government of the Roman empire, was totally darkened; and, like a black hair sackcloth, was degraded and humbled to the dust.

The moon — the ecclesiastical state of the same empire, became as blood — was totally ruined, their sacred rites abrogated, their priests and religious institutions desecrated, their altars cast down, their temples destroyed, or turned into places for Christian worship.

**Verse 13. *The stars of heaven*** The gods and goddesses, demi-gods, and deified heroes, of their poetical and mythological heaven, were prostrated indiscriminately, and lay as useless as the figs or fruit of a tree shaken down before ripe by a tempestuous wind.

**Verse 14. *And the heaven departed as a scroll*** The whole system of pagan and idolatrous worship, with all its spiritual, secular, and superstitious influence, was blasted, shrivelled up, and rendered null and void, as a parchment scroll when exposed to the action of a strong fire.

***And every mountain*** All the props, supports, and dependencies of the empire, whether regal allies, tributary kings, dependent colonies, or mercenary troops, were all moved out of their places, so as to stand no longer in the same relation to that empire, and its worship, support, and maintenance, as they formerly did.

***And island*** The heathen temples, with their precincts and enclosures, cut off from the common people, and into which none could come but the privileged, may be here represented by islands, for the same reasons.

**Verse 15. *The kings of the earth, etc.*** All the secular powers who had endeavored to support the pagan worship by authority, influence, riches, political wisdom, and military skill; with every bondman — all slaves, who were in life and limb addicted to their masters or owners.

***And every freeman*** Those who had been manumitted, commonly called freedmen, and who were attached, through gratitude, to the families of their liberators. All hid themselves — were astonished at the total overthrow of the heathen empire, and the revolution which had then taken place.

**Verse 16. *Said to the mountains and rocks*** Expressions which denote the strongest perturbation and alarm. They preferred any kind of death to that which they apprehended from this most awful revolution.

***From the face of him that sitteth on the throne*** They now saw that all these terrible judgments came from the Almighty; and that Christ, the

author of Christianity, was now judging, condemning, and destroying them for their cruel persecutions of his followers.

**Verse 17. *For the great day of his wrath*** The decisive and manifest time in which he will execute judgment on the oppressors of his people.

***Who shall be able to stand?*** No might can prevail against the might of God. All these things may literally apply to the final destruction of Jerusalem, and to the revolution which took place in the Roman empire under Constantine the Great. Some apply them to the day of judgment; but they do not seem to have that awful event in view. These two events were the greatest that have ever taken place in the world, from the flood to the eighteenth century of the Christian era; and may well justify the strong figurative language used above.

Through I do not pretend to say that my remarks on this chapter point out its true signification, yet I find others have applied it in the same way. Dr. Dodd observes that the fall of Babylon, Idumea, Judah, Egypt, and Jerusalem, has been described by the prophets in language equally pompous, figurative, and strong. See Isaiah 13:10; 34:4, concerning Babylon and Idumea; Jeremiah 4:23, 24, concerning Judah; Ezekiel 32:7, concerning Egypt; Joel 2:10, 31, concerning Jerusalem; and our Lord himself, Matthew 24:29, concerning the same city. "Now," says he, "it is certain that the fall of any of these cities or kingdoms was not of greater concern or consequence to the world, nor more deserving to be described in pompous figures, than the fall of the pagan Roman empire, when the great lights of the heathen world, the sun, moon, and stars, the powers civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed and obscured, the heathen emperors and Caesars were slain, the heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the heathen officers and magistrates were removed, the temples were demolished, and their revenues were devoted to better uses. It is customary with the prophets, after they have described a thing in the most symbolical and figurative manner, to represent the same again in plainer language; and the same method is observed here, Revelation 6:15-17: And the kings of the earth, etc. That is, Maximin, Galerius, Maxentius, Licinius, etc., with all their adherents and followers, were so routed and dispersed that they hid themselves in dens, etc.; expressions used to denote the utmost terror and confusion. This is, therefore, a triumph of Christ over

his heathen enemies, and a triumph after a severe persecution; so that the time and all the circumstances, as well as the series and order of the prophecy, agree perfectly with this interpretation. Galerius, Maximin, and Licinius, made even a public confession of their guilt, recalled their decrees and edicts against the Christians, and acknowledged the just judgments of God and of Christ in their own destruction.” See Newton, Lowman, etc., and Dr. Dodd on this chapter, with the works of several more recent authors.

## CHAPTER 7

*The four angels holding the four winds of heaven, 1. The angel with the seal of the living God, and sealing the servants of God out of the twelve tribes, whose number amounted to one hundred and forty-four thousand, 2-8. Besides these, there was an innumerable multitude from all nations, who gave glory to God and the Lamb, 9-12. One of the elders shows who these are, and describes their most happy state, 13-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 7.

**Verse 1. *And after these things*** Immediately after the preceding vision.

***I saw four angels*** Instruments which God employs in the dispensation of his providence; we know not what.

***On the four corners of the earth*** On the extreme parts of the land of Judea, called **η γη**, the land, or earth, by way of eminence.

***Holding the four winds*** Preventing evil from every quarter. Earth-sea, nor on any tree; keeping the whole of the land free from evil, till the Church of Christ should wax strong, and each of his followers have time to prepare for his flight from Jerusalem, previously to its total destruction by the Romans.

**Verse 2. *The seal of the living God*** This angel is represented as the chancellor of the supreme King, and as ascending from the east, **απο ανατολης ηλιου**, from the rising of the sun. Some understand this of Christ, who is called **ανατολη**, the east, Luke 1:78.

***Four angels, to whom it was given to hurt*** Particular agents employed by Divine providence in the management of the affairs of the earth; but whether spiritual or material we know not.

**Verse 3. *Till we have sealed the servants of our God*** There is manifestly an allusion to Ezekiel 9:4 here. By sealing we are to understand consecrating the persons in a more especial manner to God, and showing,

by this mark of God upon them, that they were under his more immediate protection, and that nothing should hurt them. It was a custom in the east, and indeed in the west too, to stamp with a hot iron the name of the owner upon the forehead or shoulder of his slave.

It is worthy of remark that not one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem; all had left the city, and escaped to Pella. This I have often had occasion to notice.

**Verse 4.** *I heard the number of them which were sealed* In the number of 144, 000 are included all the Jews converted to Christianity; 12, 000 out of each of the twelve tribes: but this must be only a certain for an uncertain number; for it is not to be supposed that just 12, 000 were converted out of each of the twelve tribes.

**Verse 5. — 8.** *Of the tribe of Juda, etc.* First, we are to observe that the tribe of Levi is here mentioned, though that tribe had no inheritance in Israel; but they now belonged to the spiritual priesthood. Secondly, That the tribe of Dan, which had an inheritance, is here omitted; as also the tribe of Ephraim. Thirdly, That the tribe of Joseph is here added in the place of Ephraim. Ephraim and Dan, being the principal promoters of idolatry, are left out in this enumeration.

**Verse 6.** See Clarke on “Revelation 7:5”.

**Verse 7.** See Clarke on “Revelation 7:5”.

**Verse 8.** See Clarke on “Revelation 7:5”.

**Verse 9.** *A great multitude* This appears to mean the Church of Christ among the Gentiles, for it was different from that collected from the twelve tribes; and it is here said to be of all nations, kindreds, people, and tongues.

*Clothed with white robes* As emblems of innocence and purity. With palms in their hands, in token of victory gained over the world, the devil, and the flesh.

**Verse 10.** *Salvation to our God* That is, God alone is the author of the salvation of man; and this salvation is procured for and given to them through the Lamb, as their propitiatory sacrifice.

**Verse 11. *All the angels, etc.*** As there is joy in the presence of God among these holy spirits when one sinner repents, no wonder that they take such an interest in the gathering together of such innumerable multitudes who are fully saved from their sins.

**Verse 12. *Saying, Amen*** Giving their most cordial and grateful assent to the praises attributed to God and the Lamb.

***Blessing, and glory, etc.*** There are here seven different species of praise attributed to God, as in Revelation 5:12, where see the note.

**Verse 13. *One of the elders answered*** A Hebraism for spoke. The question is here asked, that the proposer may have the opportunity of answering it.

**Verse 14. *Sir, thou knowest*** That is, I do not know, but thou canst inform me.

***Came out of great tribulation*** Persecutions of every kind.

***And have washed their robes*** Have obtained their pardon and purity, through the blood of the Lamb.

Their white robes cannot mean the righteousness of Christ, for this cannot be washed and made white in his own blood. This white linen is said to be the righteousness of the saints, Revelation 19:8, and this is the righteousness in which they stand before the throne; therefore it is not Christ's righteousness, but it is a righteousness wrought in them by the merit of his blood, and the power of his Spirit.

**Verse 15. *Therefore*** Because they are washed in the blood of the Lamb, are they before the throne — admitted to the immediate presence, of God.

***And serve him day and night*** Without ceasing; being filled with the spirit of prayer, faith, love, and obedience.

***Shall dwell among them.*** He lives in his own Church, and in the heart of every true believer.

**Verse 16. *They shall hunger no more*** They shall no longer be deprived of their religious ordinances, and the blessings attendant on them, as they were when in a state of persecution.

***Neither shall the sun light on them*** Their secular rulers, being converted to God, became nursing fathers to the Church.

***Nor any heat.*** Neither persecution nor affliction of any kind. These the Hebrews express by the term heat, scorching, etc.

**Verse 17. *The Lamb*** The Lord Jesus, enthroned with his Father in ineffable glory.

***Shall feed them*** Shall communicate to them every thing calculated to secure, continue, and increase their happiness.

***Living fountains of water*** A spring in the Hebrew phraseology is termed living water, because constantly boiling up and running on. By these perpetual fountains we are to understand endless sources of comfort and happiness, which Jesus Christ will open out of his own infinite plenitude to all glorified souls. These eternal living fountains will make an infinite variety in the enjoyments of the blessed. There will be no sameness, and consequently no cloying with the perpetual enjoyment of the same things; every moment will open a new source of pleasure, instruction, and improvement; they shall make an eternal progression into the fullness of God. And as God is infinite, so his attributes are infinite; and throughout infinity more and more of those attributes will be discovered; and the discovery of each will be a new fountain or source of pleasure and enjoyment. These sources must be opening through all eternity, and yet, through all eternity, there will still remain, in the absolute perfections of the Godhead, an infinity of them to be opened! This is one of the finest images in the Bible.

***God shall wipe away*** In the most affectionate and fatherly manner, all tears from their eyes — all causes of distress and grief. They shall have pure, unmixed happiness. Reader, this is the happiness of those who are washed from their sins. Art thou washed? O, rest not till thou art prepared to appear before God and the Lamb.

If these saints had not met with troubles and distresses, in all likelihood they had not excelled so much in righteousness and true holiness. When all avenues of worldly comfort are shut up, we are obliged to seek our all in God; and there is nothing sought from him that is not found in him.



## CHAPTER 8

*The opening of the seventh seal, 1. The seven angels with the seven trumpets, 2-6. The first sounds, and there is a shower of hail, fire, and blood, 7. The second sounds, and the burning mountain is cast into the sea, 8, 9. The third sounds, and the great star Wormwood falls from heaven, 10, 11. The fourth sounds, and the sun, moon, and stars are smitten; and a threefold wo is denounced against the inhabitants of the earth, because of the three angels who are yet to sound, 12, 13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP 8.

**Verse 1. *The seventh seal*** This is ushered in and opened only by the Lamb.

***Silence in heaven*** This must be a mere metaphor, silence being put here for the deep and solemn expectation of the stupendous things about to take place, which the opening of this seal had produced. When any thing prodigious or surprising is expected, all is silence, and even the breath is scarcely heard to be drawn.

***Half an hour.*** As heaven may signify the place in which all these representations were made to St. John, the half hour may be considered as the time during which no representation was made to him, the time in which God was preparing the august exhibition which follows.

There is here, and in the following verses, a strong allusion to different parts of the temple worship; a presumption that the temple was still standing, and the regular service of God carried on. The silence here refers to this fact-while the priest went in to burn incense in the holy place, all the people continued in silent mental prayer without till the priest returned. See Luke 1:10. The angel mentioned here appears to execute the office of priest, as we shall by and by see.

**Verse 2. *The seven angels which stood before God*** Probably the same as those called the seven Spirits which are before his throne, Revelation 1:4,

where see the note. There is still an allusion here to the seven ministers of the Persian monarchs. See Tobit 12:15.

**Verse 3. *Another angel*** About to perform the office of priest.

***Having a golden censer*** This was a preparation peculiar to the day of expiation. “On other days it was the custom of the priest to take fire from the great altar in a silver censer, but on the day of expiation the high priest took the fire from the great altar in a golden censer; and when he was come down from the great altar, he took incense from one of the priests, who brought it to him, and went with it to the golden altar; and while he offered the incense the people prayed without in silence, which is the silence in heaven for half an hour.” See Sir Isaac Newton.

***Much incense, that he should offer it*** Judgments of God are now about to be executed; the saints — the genuine Christians, pray much to God for protection. The angelic priest comes with much incense, standing between the living and those consigned to death, and offers his incense to God WITH the prayers of the saints.

**Verse 4. *The smoke of the incense-with the prayers*** Though incense itself be an emblem of the prayers of the saints, Psalm 141:2; yet here they are said to ascend before God, as well as the incense. It is not said that the angel presents these prayers. He presents the incense, and the prayers ascend WITH it. The ascending of the incense shows that the prayers and offering were accepted.

**Verse 5. *Cast it into the earth*** That is, upon the land of Judea; intimating the judgments and desolations which were now coming upon it, and which appear to be farther opened in the sounding of the seven trumpets.

***There were voices*** All these seem to point out the confusion, commotions, distresses, and miseries, which were coming upon these people in the wars which were at hand.

**Verse 6. *Prepared themselves to sound.*** Each took up his trumpet, and stood prepared to blow his blast. Wars are here indicated; the trumpet was the emblem of war.

**Verse 7. *Hail and fire mingled with blood*** This was something like the ninth plague of Egypt. See Exodus 9:18-24: “The Lord sent thunder and

hail-and fire mingled with the hail-and the fire ran along upon the ground.” In the hail and fire mingled with blood, some fruitful imaginations might find gunpowder and cannon balls, and canister shot and bombs.

*They were cast upon the earth* εἰς τὴν γῆν· Into that land; viz., Judea, thus often designated.

*And the third part of trees* Before this clause the Codex Alexandrinus, thirty-five others, the Syriac, Arabic, AÆthiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Andreas, Arethas, and some others, have καὶ τὸ τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατέκαη· And the third part of the land was burnt up. This reading, which is undoubtedly genuine, is found also in the Complutensian Polyglot. Griesbach has received it into the text.

The land was wasted; the trees — the chiefs of the nation, were destroyed; and the grass — the common people, slain, or carried into captivity. High and low, rich and poor, were overwhelmed with one general destruction. This seems to be the meaning of these figures.

Many eminent men suppose that the irruption of the barbarous nations on the Roman empire is here intended. It is easy to find coincidences when fancy runs riot. Later writers might find here the irruption of the Austrians and British, and Prussians, Russians, and Cossacks, on the French empire!

**Verse 8. *A great mountain burning with fire*** Supposed to signify the powerful nations which invaded the Roman empire. Mountain, in prophetic language, signifies a kingdom; Jeremiah 51:25, 27, 30, 58. Great disorders, especially when kingdoms are moved by hostile invasions, are represented by mountains being cast into the midst of the sea, Psalm 46:2. Seas and collections of waters mean peoples, as is shown in this book, Revelation 17:15. Therefore, great commotions in kingdoms and among their inhabitants may be here intended, but to whom, where, and when these happened, or are to happen, we know not.

*The third part of the sea became blood* Another allusion to the Egyptian plagues, Exodus 7:20, 21. Third part is a rabbinism, expressing a considerable number. “When Rabbi Akiba prayed, wept, rent his garments, put off his shoes, and sat in the dust, the world was struck with a curse; and then the third part of the olives, the third part of the wheat, and the

third part of the barley, was smitten “Rab. Mardocheaus, in Notitia Karaeorum, p. 102.

**Verse 9. *The third part of the ships were destroyed.*** These judgments seem to be poured out upon some maritime nation, destroying much of its population, and much of its traffic.

**Verse 10. *There fell a great star from heaven*** This has given rise to various conjectures. Some say the star means Attila and his Huns, others, Genseric with his Vandals falling on the city of Rome; others, Eleazer, the son of Annus, spurning the emperor’s victims, and exciting the fury of the Zealots; others, Arius; infecting the pure Christian doctrine with his heresy, etc., etc. It certainly cannot mean all these; and probably none of them. Let the reader judge.

**Verse 11. *The star is called Wormwood*** So called from the bitter or distressing effects produced by its influence.

**Verse 12. *The third part of the sun-moon-stars, was smitten*** Supposed to mean Rome, with her senates, consuls, etc., eclipsed by Odoacer, king of the Heruli, and Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, in the fifth century. But all this is uncertain.

**Verse 13. *I-heard an angel flying*** Instead of *αγγελου πετωμενου*, an angel flying, almost every MS. and version of note has *αετου πετωμενον*, an eagle flying. The eagle was the symbol of the Romans, and was always on their ensigns. The three woes which are here expressed were probably to be executed by this people, and upon the Jews and their commonwealth. Taken in this sense the symbols appear consistent and appropriate; and the reading eagle instead of angel is undoubtedly genuine, and Griesbach has received it into the text.

## CHAPTER 9

*The fifth angel sounds, and a star falls from heaven to earth, 1. The bottomless pit is opened, and locusts come out upon the earth, 2, 3. Their commission, 4-6. Their form, 7-10. Their government, 11, 12. The sixth angel sounds, and the four angels bound in the Euphrates are loosed, 13-15. The army of horsemen, and their description, 16-19. Though much evil is inflicted upon men for their idolatry, etc., they do not repent, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 9.

**Verse 1. *A star fall from heaven*** An angel encompassed with light suddenly descended, and seemed like a star falling from heaven.

***The key of the bottomless pit.*** Power to inundate the earth with a flood of temporal calamities and moral evils.

**Verse 2. *He opened the bottomless pit*** το φρεαρ της αβυσσου. The pit of the bottomless deep. Some think the angel means Satan, and the bottomless pit hell. Some suppose Mohammed is meant; and Signior Pastorini professes to believe that Luther is intended!

***There arose a smoke*** False doctrine, obscuring the true light of heaven.

**Verse 3. *Locusts*** Vast hordes of military troops: the description which follows certainly agrees better with the Saracens than with any other people or nation, but may also apply to the Romans.

***As the scorpions of the earth have power.*** Namely, to hurt men by stinging them. Scorpions may signify archers; and hence the description has been applied to Cestius Gallus, the Roman general, who had many archers in his army.

**Verse 4. *They should not hurt the grass*** Neither the common people, the men of middling condition, nor the nobles. However, this appears rather to

refer to the prudent counsels of a military chief, not to destroy the crops and herbage of which they might have need in their campaigns.

***Which have not the seal of God*** All false, hypocritical, and heterodox Christians.

**Verse 5. *To them it was given*** That is, they were permitted.

***That they should be tormented five months*** Some take these months literally, and apply them to the conduct of the Zealots who, from May to September, in the year of the siege, produced dreadful contests among the people; or to the afflictions brought upon the Jews by Cestius Gallus, when he came against Jerusalem, before which he lay one whole summer, or nearly five months. — See Joseph., Bell. Jud., l. ii. c. 19.

Others consider the months as being prophetic months, each day being reckoned for a year; therefore this period must amount to one hundred and fifty years, counting thirty days to each month, as was the general custom of the Asiatics.

***Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion*** The phraseology here is peculiar, and probably refers to the warlike weapon called a scorpion, several of which, or men armed with them, Cestius Gallus brought with him in his army.

Isidore describes this scorpion thus: *Scorpio est sagitta venenata arcu vel tormentis excussa, quæ, dum ad hominem venerit, virus qua figit infundit; unde et scorpio nomen accepit.* “The scorpion is a poisoned arrow shot from a bow or other instrument, which, when it wounds a man, deposits the poison with which it is covered in the wound; whence it has the name of scorpion.” Seneca, in his *Hercules Oetaeus*, act iv., ver. 1218, describes the torment which is occasioned by this species of poisoned arrow:—

*Heu qualis intus scorpius, quis fervida  
Plaga revulsus cancer infixus meas  
Urit medullas?*

**Verse 6. *In those days shall men seek death*** So distressing shall be their sufferings and torment that they shall long for death in any form, to be rescued from the evils of life. There is a sentiment much like this in Maximianus, *Eleg. i.*, ver. 111, commonly attributed to Cornelius Gallus:—

*Nunc quia longa mihi gravis est et inutilis aetas,  
Vivere cum nequeam, sit mihi posse mori?  
O quam dura premit miseros conditio vitae!  
Nec mors humano subjacet arbitrio.  
Dulce mori miseris; sed mors optata recedit:  
At cum tristis erit, praecipitata venit.*

“Seeing that long life is both useless and burdensome When we can no longer live comfortably, shall we be permitted to die? O how hard is the condition on which we hold life! For death is not subjected to the will of man. To die is sweet to the wretched; but wished-for death flees away. Yet when it is not desired, it comes with the hastiest strides.”

Job expresses the same sentiment, in the most plaintive manner:—

*Why is light given to the miserable,  
And life to the bitter of soul?  
Who wait for death, but it is not;  
And dig for it more than hid treasures.  
They rejoice for it, and are glad,  
And exult when they find the grave.*

*Job 3:20-22.*

**Verse 7. *The locusts were like unto horses*** This description of the locusts appears to be taken from Joel 2:4. The whole of this symbolical description of an overwhelming military force agrees very well with the troops of Mohammed. The Arabs are the most expert horsemen in the world: they live so much on horseback that the horse and his rider seem to make but one animal. The Romans also were eminent for their cavalry.

***Crowns like gold*** Not only alluding to their costly tiaras or turbans, but to the extent of their conquests and the multitude of powers which they subdued.

***Their faces were as the faces of men.*** That is, though locusts symbolically, they are really men.

**Verse 8. *Hair as the hair of women*** No razor passes upon their flesh. Their hair long, and their beards unshaven.

***Their teeth were as the teeth of lions.*** They are ferocious and cruel.

**Verse 9. *They had breastplates-of iron*** They seemed to be invulnerable, for no force availed against them.

***The sound of their wings*** Their hanging weapons and military trappings, with the clang of their shields and swords when they make their fierce onsets. This simile is borrowed from Joel 2:5-7.

**Verse 10. *They had tails like unto scorpions*** This may refer to the consequences of their victories. They infected the conquered with their pernicious doctrines.

***Their power was to hurt men five months.*** The locusts make their principal ravages during the five summer months. But probably these may be prophetic months, as above, in Revelation 9:5 — 150 years.

**Verse 11. *A king over them*** A supreme head; some think Mohammed, some think Vespasian.

***The angel of the bottomless pit*** The chief envoy of Satan.

***Abaddon*** From אבד *abad*, he destroyed.

***Apollyon.*** From απο, intensive, and ολλυω, to destroy. The meaning is the same both in the Hebrew and Greek.

**Verse 12. *One wo is past*** That is, the wo or desolation by the symbolical scorpions.

***There came two woes more*** In the trumpets of the sixth and seventh angels.

**Verse 13. *The four horns of the golden altar*** This is another not very obscure indication that the Jewish temple was yet standing.

**Verse 14. *Loose the four angels*** These four angels bound — hitherto restrained, in the Euphrates, are by some supposed to be the Arabs, the Saracens, the Tartars, or the Turks; by others, Vespasian's four generals, one in Arabia, one in Africa, one in Alexandria, and one in Palestine.

**Verse 15. *For an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year*** We have in this place a year resolved into its component parts. Twenty-four hours constitute a day, seven days make a week, four weeks make a month, and



twelve months make a year. Probably no more is meant than that these four angels were at all times prepared and permitted to inflict evil on the people against whom they had received their commission. There are some who understand these divisions of time as prophetic periods, and to these I must refer, not professing to discuss such uncertainties.

**Verse 16. *Two hundred thousand thousand* δυο μυριαδες μυριαδων·** Two myriads of myriads; that is, two hundred millions; an army that was never yet got together from the foundation of the world, and could not find forage in any part of the earth. Perhaps it only means vast numbers, multitudes without number. Such a number might be literally true of the locusts. Those who will have their particular system supported by the images in this most obscure book, tell us that the number here means all the soldiers that were employed in this war, from its commencement to its end! Those who can receive this saying let them receive it.

**Verse 17. *Breastplates of fire-jacinth, and brimstone*** That is, red, blue, and yellow; the first is the color of fire, the second of jacinth, and the third of sulphur.

***And the heads of the horses*** Is this an allegorical description of great ordnance? Cannons, on the mouths of which horses' heads were formed, or the mouth of the cannon cast in that form? Fire, smoke, and brimstone, is a good allegorical representation of gunpowder. The Ottomans made great use of heavy artillery in their wars with the Greeks of the lower empire.

**Verse 18. *By these three was the third part of men killed*** That is, By these was great carnage made.

**Verse 19. *Their power is in their mouth*** From these the destructive balls are projected; and in their tails, the breech where the charge of gunpowder is lodged.

***Their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads*** If cannons are intended, the description, though allegorical, is plain enough; for brass ordnance especially are frequently thus ornamented, both at their muzzles and at their breech.

**Verse 20. *Yet repented not*** The commission which these horsemen had was against idolaters; and though multitudes of them were destroyed, yet

the residue continued their senseless attachment to dumb idols, and therefore heavier judgments might be expected. These things are supposed to refer to the desolation brought upon the Greek Church by the Ottomans, who entirely ruined that Church and the Greek empire. The Church which was then remaining was the Latin or western Church, which was not at all corrected by the judgments which fell upon the eastern Church, but continued its senseless adoration of angels, saints, relics, etc., and does so to the present day. If, therefore, God's wrath be kindled against such, this Church has much to fear.

**Verse 21. *Neither repented they of their murders*** Their cruelties towards the genuine followers of God, the Albigenses, and Waldenses, and others, against whom they published crusades, and hunted them down, and butchered them in the most shocking manner. The innumerable murders by the horrible inquisition need not be mentioned.

***Their sorceries*** Those who apply this also to the Romish Church understand by it the various tricks, sleights of hand, or legerdemain, by which they impose on the common people in causing images of Christ to bleed, and the various pretended miracles wrought at the tombs, etc., of pretended saints, holy wells, and such like.

***Fornication*** Giving that honor to various creatures which is due only to the Creator.

***Their thefts.*** Their exactions and impositions on men for indulgences, pardons, etc. These things may be intended, but it is going too far to say that this is the true interpretation. And yet to express any doubt on this subject is with some little else than heresy. If such men can see these things so clearly in such obscure prophecies, let them be thankful for their sight, and indulgent to those who still sit in darkness.

## CHAPTER 10

*The description of a mighty angel with a little book in his hand, 1, 2. The seven thunders, 3, 4. The angel swears that there shall be time no longer, 5-7. John is commanded to take the little book and eat it; he does so, and receives a commission to prophesy to many peoples, 8-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 10.

**Verse 1. *Another mighty angel*** Either Christ or his representative; clothed with a cloud; a symbol of the Divine majesty.

***A rainbow was upon his head*** The token of God's merciful covenant with mankind.

***His face was as it were the sun*** So intensely glorious that it could not be looked on.

***His feet as pillars of fire*** To denote the rapidity and energy of his motions, and the stability of his counsels.

**Verse 2. *A little book open*** Meaning probably some design of God long concealed, but now about to be made manifest. But who knows what it means?

***His right foot upon the sea, and his left-on the earth*** To show that he had the command of each, and that his power was universal, all things being under his feet.

**Verse 3. *Seven thunders*** Seven being a number of perfection, it may here mean many, great, loud, and strong peals of thunder, accompanied with distinct voices; but what was said, St. John was not permitted to reveal, Revelation 10:4.

**Verse 5. *Lifted up his hand to heaven*** As one making an appeal to the supreme Being.

**Verse 6. *By him that liveth for ever and ever*** The eternal, self-existent Jehovah, the Maker of all things.

***That there should be time no longer*** That the great counsels relative to the events already predicted should be immediately fulfilled, and that there should be no longer delay. This has no reference to the day of judgment.

**Verse 7. *The mystery of God should be finished*** What this mystery refers to who knows? Nor have we more knowledge concerning the sounding of the seventh angel. On these points there is little agreement among learned men. Whether it mean the destruction of Jerusalem, or the destruction of the papal power, or something else, we know not. And yet with what confidence do men speak of the meaning of these hidden things!

***Declared to his servants the prophets.*** It is most likely, therefore, that this trumpet belongs to the Jewish state.

**Verse 8. *Take the little book which is open*** Learn from this angel what should be published to the world.

**Verse 9. *Take it, and eat it up*** Fully comprehend its meaning; study it thoroughly.

**Verse 10. *It was in my mouth sweet as honey*** There was in it some pleasing, some unpleasing, intelligence. I read of the consolations and protection of the true worshippers of God, and did rejoice; I read of the persecutions of the Church, and was distressed.

**Verse 11. *Thou must prophesy again*** Thou must write, not only for the instruction of the Jews in Palestine, but of those in the different provinces, as well as the heathens and heathen emperors and potentates in general.

THE reader will find, on comparing this chapter with Daniel 8:1-27; 12:1-13, and Ezekiel 2:1-3:27, that there are several things similar in both; and the writer of the Apocalypse appears to keep these two prophets continually in view. I must once more say that I do not understand these prophecies, therefore I do not take upon me to explain them. I see with regret how many learned men have mistaken their way here.

Commentators, and even some of the most modern, have strangely trifled in these solemn things; all trumpets, vials, woes, etc., are perfectly easy to

them; yet from their descriptions, none get wise either to common sense or to the things that make for their peace.

On the same ground I cannot admit the interpretation that is given of the word **χρονος**, translated time in Revelation 10:6, which some have construed into an artificial period of 1, 111 years, which they term

## CHAPTER 11

*The command to measure the temple, 1, 2. The two witnesses which should prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, 3. The description, power, and influence of these witnesses, 4-6. They shall be slain by the beast which shall arise out of the bottomless pit, and shall arise again after three days and a half, and ascend to heaven, 7-12. After which shall be a great earthquake, 13. The introduction to the third wo, 14. The sounding of the seventh angel, and the four and twenty elders give glory to God, 15-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 11.

**Verse 1.** *And there was given me a reed* See Ezekiel 40:3, etc.

*Measure the temple of God* This must refer to the temple of Jerusalem; and this is another presumptive evidence that it was yet standing.

**Verse 2.** *But the court-is given unto the Gentiles* The measuring of the temple probably refers to its approaching destruction, and the termination of the whole Levitical service; and this we find was to be done by the Gentiles, (Romans,) who were to tread it down forty-two months; i.e., just three years and a half, or twelve hundred and sixty days. This must be a symbolical period.

**Verse 3.** *My two witnesses* This is extremely obscure; the conjectures of interpreters are as unsatisfactory as they are endless on this point. Conjecturas conjecturis superstruunt, parum verosimiles, says Rosenmuller: quorum sententias enarrare, meum non est. I say the same. Those who wish to be amused or bewildered, may have recourse both to ancients and moderns on this subject.

**Verse 4.** *These are the two olive trees* Mentioned Zechariah 4:14, which there represent Zerubbabel and Joshua the high priest. The whole account seems taken from Zechariah 4:1-14. Whether the prophet and the apostle mean the same things by these emblems, we know not.

**Verse 5. *Fire proceedeth out of their mouth*** That is, they are commissioned to denounce the judgments of God against all who would attempt to prevent them from proceeding in their ministry.

**Verse 6. *These have power to shut heaven*** As Elijah did, 1 Kings 17:1-18:46.

***To turn them to blood*** As Moses did, Exodus 7:19-25. They shall have power to afflict the land with plagues, similar to those which were inflicted on the Egyptians.

**Verse 7. *The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit*** This may be what is called antichrist; some power that is opposed to genuine Christianity. But what or whence, except from the bottomless pit, i.e., under the influence and appointment of the devil, we cannot tell; nor do we know by what name this power or being should be called. The conjectures concerning the two witnesses and the beast have been sufficiently multiplied. If the whole passage, as some think, refer to the persecution raised by the Jews against the Christians, then some Jewish power or person is the beast from the bottomless pit. If it refer to the early ages of Christianity, then the beast may be one of the persecuting heathen emperors. If it refer to a later age of Christianity, then the beast may be the papal power, and the Albigenses and Waldenses the two witnesses, which were nearly extinguished by the horrible persecutions raised up against them by the Church of Rome. Whatever may be here intended, the earth has not yet covered their blood.

**Verse 8. *The great city*** Some say Rome, which may be spiritually called Sodom for its abominations, Egypt for its tyrannous cruelty, and the place where our Lord was crucified, because of its persecution of the members of Christ; but Jerusalem itself may be intended. All these things I must leave to others.

**Verse 9. *Shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.*** They shall be treated with the greatest barbarity. Refusal of burial to the dead was allowed to be the sum of brutality and cruelty. In popish lands they will not suffer a Protestant to have Christian burial, or to have a grave in a churchyard! Contemptible wretches!

**Verse 10. *Shall send gifts*** This was a custom in days of public rejoicing. They sent gifts to each other, and gave portions to the poor. See Esther 9:19, 22.

**Verse 11. *They stood upon their feet*** Were restored to their primitive state.

**Verse 12. *They ascended up to heaven*** Enjoyed a state of great peace and happiness.

**Verse 13. *A great earthquake*** Violent commotions among the persecutors, and revolutions of states.

***Slain of men seven thousand*** Many perished in these popular commotions.

***The remnant were affrighted*** Seeing the hand of God's judgments so remarkably stretched out.

***Gave glory*** Received the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and glorified God for his judgments and their conversion.

**Verse 14. *The seconds wo is past*** That which took place under the sixth trumpet, and has been already described.

***The third wo cometh*** Is about to be described under the seventh trumpet, which the angel is now prepared to sound.

Of the three woes which were denounced, Revelation 8:13, the first is described, Revelation 9:1-12; the second, Revelation 9:13-21. These woes are supposed by many learned men to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. The first wo — the seditions among the Jews themselves. The second wo — the besieging of the city by the Romans. The third wo — the taking and sacking of the city, and burning the temple. This was the greatest of all the woes, as in it the city and temple were destroyed, and nearly a million of men lost their lives.

**Verse 15. *There were great voices in heaven*** All the heavenly host-angels and redeemed human spirits, joined together to magnify God; that he had utterly discomfited his enemies and rendered his friends glorious. This will be truly the case when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, But when shall this be? Some say, that is meant by



these words has already taken place in the destruction of the Jewish state, and sending the Gospel throughout the Gentile world. Others say that it refers to the millennium, and to the consummation of all things.

**Verse 16. *The four and twenty elders*** The representatives of the universal Church of Christ. See on Revelation 5:8-10.

**Verse 17. *O Lord God Almighty, which art*** This gives a proper view of God in his eternity; all times are here comprehended, the present, the past, and the future. This is the infinitude of God.

***Hast taken to thee*** Thou hast exercised that power which thou ever hast; and thou hast broken the power of thy enemies, and exalted thy Church.

**Verse 18. *The nations were angry*** Were enraged against thy Gospel, and determined to destroy it.

***Thy wrath is come*** The time to avenge thy servants and to destroy all thy enemies.

***The time of the dead, that they should be judged*** The word κρινειν, to judge, is often used in the sense of to avenge. The dead, here, may mean those who were slain for the testimony of Jesus, and the judging is the avenging of their blood.

***Give reward unto thy servants*** Who have been faithful unto death.

***The prophets*** The faithful teachers in the Church, the saints — the Christians.

***And them that fear thy name*** All thy sincere followers.

***Destroy them which destroy the earth.*** All the authors, fomenters, and encouragers of bloody wars.

**Verse 19. *The temple of God was opened in heaven*** The true worship of God was established and performed in the Christian Church; this is the true temple, that at Jerusalem being destroyed.

***And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.*** These great commotions were intended to

introduce the following vision; for the 12th chapter is properly a continuation of the 11th, and should be read in strict connection with it.

I Now come to a part of this book that is deemed of the greatest importance by the Protestant Church, but is peculiarly difficult and obscure. I have often acknowledged my own incapacity to illustrate these prophecies. I might have availed myself of the labors of others, but I know not who is right; or whether any of the writers on this book have hit the sense is more than I can assert, and more than I think. The illustration of the xiith, xiiiith, and xviith chapters, which I have referred to in the preface, drawn up and displayed with great industry and learning, I shall insert in its place, as by far the most probable I have yet seen; but I leave the learned author responsible for his own particular views of the subject.

## CHAPTER 12

*The woman clothed with the sun, and in travail, 1, 2. The great red dragon waiting to devour the child as soon as born, 3, 4. The woman is delivered of a son, who is caught up unto God; and she flees to the wilderness, 5, 6. The war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, 7, 8. The dragon and his angels are overcome and cast down to the earth; whereupon the whole heavenly host give glory to God, 9-11. The dragon, full of wrath at his defeat, persecutes the woman, 12, 13. She flees to the wilderness, whither he attempts to pursue her; and he makes war with her seed, 14-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 12.

Before I introduce the comment mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter, I think it necessary to state that the phraseology of the whole chapter is peculiarly rabbinical, and shall insert a few selections which may serve to illustrate some of the principal figures.

In Sohar Exod., fol. 47, col. 187, we find a mystical interpretation of Exodus 21:22: If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart—he shall be surely punished, as the woman’s husband will lay upon him. “If men strive, i.e. Michael and Samael, and hurt a woman with child, i.e. the Israelitish Church, so that her fruit depart, hoc fit in exilio, he shall surely be punished, i.e., Samael. As the woman’s husband, that is, the holy and blessed God.”

### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

**Verse 1.** *There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun* That the woman here represents the true Church of Christ most commentators are agreed. In other parts of the Apocalypse, the pure Church of Christ is evidently portrayed by a woman. In Revelation 19:7, a great multitude are represented as saying, “Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honor to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his WIFE hath made herself ready.” In Revelation 21:9, an angel talks with St. John,

saying, “Come hither, I will show thee the BRIDE, the Lamb’s wife.” That the Christian Church is meant will appear also from her being clothed with the sun, a striking emblem of Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the light and glory of the Church; for the countenance of the Son of God is as the sun shineth in his strength. The woman has:—

***The moon under her feet.*** Bishop Newton understands this of the Jewish typical worship and indeed the Mosaic system of rites and ceremonies could not have been better represented, for it was the shadow of good things to come. The moon is the less light, ruling over the night, and deriving all its illumination from the sun; in like manner the Jewish dispensation was the bright moonlight night of the world, and possessed a portion of the glorious light of the Gospel. At the rising of the sun the night is ended, and the lunar light no longer necessary, as the sun which enlightens her shines full upon the earth; exactly in the same way has the whole Jewish system of types and shadows has been superseded by the birth, life, crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Jesus Christ. Upon the head of the woman is:—

***A crown of twelve stars.*** A very significant representation of the twelve apostles, who were the first founders of the Christian Church, and by whom the Gospel was preached in great part of the Roman empire with astonishing success. “They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the STARS for ever and ever.” Daniel 12:3.

**Verse 2. *And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, etc.*** This, when taken in connection with the following verses, is a striking figure of the great persecution which the Church of Christ should suffer under the heathen Roman emperors, but more especially of that long and most dreadful one under Diocletian. The woman is represented as BEING with child, to show that the time would speedily arrive when God’s patient forbearance with the heathen would be terminated, and that a deliverer should arise in the Christian world who would execute the Divine vengeance upon paganism.

**Verse 3. *There appeared another wonder—a great red dragon*** The dragon here is a symbol, not of the Roman empire in general, but of the HEATHEN Roman empire. This great pagan power must have, therefore, been thus

represented from the religion which it supported. But what is a dragon? An entirely fabulous beast of antiquity, consequently, in this respect, a most proper emblem of the heathen worship, which consisted in paying adoration to numerous imaginary beings, termed gods, goddesses, etc. The very foundation of the heathen religious system is mostly built upon fable; and it is very difficult to trace many of their superstitions to any authentic original; and even those which appear to derive their origin from the sacred writings are so disguised in fable as literally to bear no more resemblance to the truth than the dragon of the ancients does to any animal with which we are acquainted. But it may be asked why the Spirit of God should represent the heathen Roman empire as a dragon, rather than by any other of the fabulous animals with which the mythology of the ancient Romans abounded. The answer is as follows; In the eighth chapter of the Prophet Daniel, God has represented the kingdom of the Greeks by a he-goat, for no other apparent reason than this, that it was the national military standard of the Grecian monarchy; we may therefore expect that the pagan Roman empire is called a DRAGON on a similar account. In confirmation of this point it is very remarkable that the dragon was the principal standard of the Romans next to the eagle, in the second, third, fourth, and fifth centuries of the Christian era. Of this we have abundant evidence in the writings of both heathens and Christians. Arrian is the earliest writer who has mentioned that dragons were used as military standards among the Romans. See his *Tactics*, c. 51. Hence Schwebelius supposes that this standard was introduced after Trajan's conquest of the Daci. See *Vegetius de Revelatione Militari* a Schwebelio, p. 191, Argentorati, 1806; and *Graevii Thesaur., Antiq. Roman.*, tom. x., col. 1529. Vegetius, who flourished about A.D. 386, says, lib. ii. c. 13: *Primum signum totius legionis est aquila, quam aquilifer portat. DRACONES etiam per singulas cohortes a draconariis feruntur ad praelium.* "The first standard of the whole legion is the eagle, which the aquilifer carries. DRAGONS are also borne to battle by the Draconarii." As a legion consisted of ten cohorts, there were therefore ten draconarii to one aquilifer; hence, from the great number of draconarii in an army, the word signarii or signiferi, standard-bearers, came at last to mean the carriers of the dragon standards only, the others retaining the name of aquiliferi. — See *Veget.*, lib. ii. c. 7, and his commentators. The heathen Roman empire is called a RED dragon; and accordingly we find from the testimony of ancient writers

that the dragon standards of the Romans were painted red. We read in Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xvi., c. 12, of PURPUREUM signum draconis, “the purple standard of the dragon.” See also Claudianus in Rufinum, lib. ii., l. 177, 178. Pitiscus, in his *Lexicon Antiq. Rom.*, and Ducange, in his *Glossarium Mediae et Infimae Latinitatis*, sub voc. Draco, have considered this subject at great length, especially the latter writer, who has made several quotations from Claudianus, Sidonius, Prudentius, and others, in which not only the standard, but also the image of the dragon itself, is stated to be of a red or purple color. Of what has been said above respecting the dragon, this is then the sum: a huge fabulous beast is shown to St. John, by which some GREAT PAGAN power is symbolically represented; and the RED dragon is selected from among the numerous imaginary animals which the fancies of mankind have created to show that this great pagan power is the heathen ROMAN empire.

*Having seven heads* As the dragon is an emblem of the heathen Roman power, its heads must denote heathen forms of government. — See the note on Revelation 17:10, where the heads of the beast are explained in a similar way. These were exactly seven, and are enumerated by Tacitus (*Annal.*, lib. i., in principio) in words to the following effect: “The city of Rome was originally governed by kings. L. Brutus instituted liberty and the consulate. The dictatorship was only occasionally appointed; neither did the decemviral power last above two years; and the consular power of the military tribunes was not of long continuance. Neither had Cinna nor Sylla a long domination: the power of Pompey and Crassus was also soon absorbed in that of Caesar; and the arms of Lepidus and Antony finally yielded to those of Augustus.” From this passage it is evident to every person well acquainted with the Roman history, that the seven forms of government in the heathen Roman world were, 1. The regal power; 2. The consulate; 3. The dictatorship; 4. The decemvirate; 5. The consular power of the military tribunes; 6. The triumvirate; and, 7. The imperial government.

It is singular that commentators in general, in their citation of this passage, have taken no notice of the triumvirate, a form of government evidently as distinct from any of the others as kings are from consuls, or consuls from emperors. For the triumvirate consisted in the division of the Roman republic into three parts, each governed by an officer possessed with

consular authority in his own province; and all three united together in the regulation of the whole Roman state. Consequently, it differed entirely from the imperial power, which was the entire conversion of the Roman state from a republic to a monarchy.

***And ten horns*** That these ten horns signify as many kingdoms is evident from the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the angel, speaking of the fourth beast, says, that “the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise;” and in this view of the passage many commentators are agreed, who also admit that the ten kingdoms are to be met with “amid the broken pieces of the Roman empire.” And it is evident that nothing less than the dismemberment of the Roman empire, and its division into ten independent kingdoms, can be intended by the angel’s interpretation just quoted. If, therefore, the ten horns of Daniel’s fourth beast point out as many kingdoms, for the very same reason must the horns of the dragon have a similar meaning. But the Roman empire was not divided into several independent kingdoms till a considerable time after it became Christian. In what sense then can it be said that the different kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided by the barbarous nations are horns of the dragon? They were so because it was the Roman monarchy, in its seventh DRACONIC form of government, which was dismembered by the barbarians. For though the Roman empire was not completely dismembered till the fifth century, it is well known that the depression of the heathen idolatry, and the advancement of Christianity to the throne, elected not the least change in the form of government: the Romans continued still to be under subjection to the imperial power; and, consequently, when the heathen barbarous nations divided the Roman empire among themselves, they might very properly be denominated horns of the dragon, as it was by means of their incursions that the imperial power, FOUNDED by the heathen Caesars, was abolished. Machiavel and Bishop Lloyd enumerate the horns of the dragon thus: 1. The kingdom of the Huns; 2. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths; 3. The kingdom of the Visigoths; 4. The kingdom of the Franks; 5. The kingdom of the Vandals; 6. The kingdom of the Sueves and Alans; 7. The kingdom of the Burgundians; 8. The kingdom of the Heruli, Rugii, Scyrri, and other tribes which composed the Italian kingdom of Odoacer; 9. The kingdom of the Saxons; and 10. The kingdom of the Lombards.

***And seven crowns upon his head.*** In the seven Roman forms of government already enumerated, heathenism has been the crowning or dominant religion.

**Verse 4. *And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven*** It is not unusual in Scripture, as Dr. Mitchell observes, to call the hindmost of an enemy the tail, as in Joshua 10:19: Ye shall cut off the hindmost of them, which is literally in Hebrew, וַיִּנְבְּתֵם אֹתָם “Ye shall cut off their tail.” See also Deuteronomy 25:18. It is also observable that the word *ουρα*, in this verse, has been used by the Greeks in the same sense with the Hebrew word *זנב* already referred to. Thus *ουρα στρατου*, which we would translate the rear of an army, is literally the tail of an army. See the Thesaurus of Stephens, in loc. The tail of the dragon is therefore the heathen Roman power in its seventh or last form of government, viz., the imperial power; and is not, as Dr. Mitchell supposes, to be restricted to the last heathen Roman emperors. The heathen imperial power is said to draw the third part of the stars of heaven, by which has generally been understood that the Roman empire subjected the third part of the princes and potentates of the earth. But that this is not a correct statement of the fact is evident from the testimony of ancient history. The Roman empire was always considered and called the empire of the world by ancient writers. See Dionys. Halicar., Antiq. Rom. lib. i., prope principium; Pitisci Lexicon Antiq. Roman., sub voc. imperium; Ovidii Fast., lib. ii. l. 683; Vegetius de Revelation Militari, lib. i. c. 1., etc., etc. And it is even so named in Scripture, for St. Luke, in the second chapter of his gospel, informs us that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus that THE WHOLE WORLD should be taxed, by which is evidently meant the Roman empire. The whole mystery of this passage consists in the misapprehension of its symbolical language. In order therefore to understand it, the symbols here used must be examined. By heaven is meant the most eminent or ruling part of any nation. This is evident from the very nature of the symbol, for “heaven is God’s throne;” they therefore who are advanced to the supreme authority in any state are very properly said to be taken up into heaven, because they are raised to this eminence by the favor of the Lord, and are ministers of his to do his pleasure. And the calamity which fell upon Nebuchadnezzar was to instruct him in this important truth, that the heavens do rule; that is, that



all monarchs possess their kingdoms by Divine appointment, and that no man is raised to power by what is usually termed the chances of war, but that “the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men.” The meaning of heaven being thus ascertained, it cannot be difficult to comprehend the meaning of earth, this being evidently its opposite, that is, every thing in subjection to the heaven or ruling part. Stars have already been shown to denote ministers of religion; and this is more fully evident from Revelation 1:16 of this book, where the seven stars which the Son of God holds in his right hand are explained to signify the seven angels (or messengers) of the seven Churches, by whom must be meant the seven pastors or ministers of these Churches. The resemblance of ministers to stars is very striking; for as the stars give light upon the earth, so are ministers the lights of the cause they advocate; and their position in heaven, the symbol of domination, very fitly betokens the spiritual authority of priests or ministers over their flocks. Hence, as the woman, or Christian Church, has upon her head a crown of twelve stars, which signifies that she is under the guidance of the twelve apostles, who are the twelve principal lights of the Christian world, so has the dragon also his stars or ministers. The stars therefore which the dragon draws with his tail must represent the whole body of pagan priests, who were the stars or lights of the heathen world. But in what sense can it be said that the heathen Roman empire, which ruled over the whole known world, only draws a third part of the stars of heaven? The answer is: The religious world in the time of St. John was divided into three grand branches, viz., the Christian world, the Jewish world, and the heathen and pagan world: consequently, as a dragon, a fabulous animal, is an emblem of a civil power supporting a religion founded in fable; it necessarily follows that the stars or ministers of the Jews and Christians cannot be numbered among those which he draws with his tail, as they were not the advocates of his idolatry, but were ministers of a religion founded by the God of heaven, and consequently formed no part of the pagan world, though they were in subjection in secular matters to the pagan Roman empire. The tail of the dragon therefore draweth after him the whole heathen world.

***And did cast then to the earth*** That is, reduced all the pagan priests under the Roman yoke. The words of the prophecy are very remarkable. It is

said the tail of the dragon draweth, (for so **συρει** should be translated,) but it is added, and HATH CAST then upon the earth, to show that at the time the Apocalypse was written the world was divided into the three grand religious divisions already referred to; but that the tail of the dragon, or the pagan Roman power under its last form of government, had brought the whole heathen world (which was a third part of the religious world in the apostolic age) into subjection previously to the communication of the Revelation to St. John. It is the dragon's tail that draws the third part of the stars of heaven, therefore it was during the dominion of his last form of government that Christianity was introduced into the world; for in the time of the six preceding draconic forms of government, the world was divided religiously into only two grand branches, Jews and Gentiles. That the sense in which the third part is here taken is the one intended in the prophecy is put beyond all controversy, when it is considered that this very division is made in the first and third verses, in which mention is made of the woman clothed with the sun — the Christian Church, the moon under her feet, or Jewish Church, and the dragon, or heathen power. Thus the heathen IMPERIAL government is doubly represented, first, by one of the seven draconic heads, to show that it was one of those seven heathen forms of government which have been successively at the head of the Roman state; and secondly, by the dragon's tail, because it was the last of those seven. For a justification of this method of interpretation, see on the angel's double explanation of the heads of the beast, Revelation 17:9, 10, 16.

*And the dragon stood before the woman, etc.* Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine, abandoned the absurdities of paganism, and treated the Christians with great respect. This alarmed the pagan priests, whose interests were so closely connected with the continuance of the ancient superstitions, and who apprehended that to their great detriment the Christian religion would become daily more universal and triumphant throughout the empire. Under these anxious fears they moved Diocletian to persecute the Christians. Hence began what is termed the tenth and last general persecution, which was the most severe of all, and continued nearly ten years; (see Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History of the Third Century;) and as it was the Divine pleasure that, at this time, a great deliverer should

Church, is very appropriately represented as overtaken with the pangs of labor, and ready to be delivered. Before the death of Constantius, the heathen party, aware that Constantine would follow the example of his father, who so much favored the Christians, beheld him with a watchful and malignant eye. Many were the snares that, according to Eusebius, were laid for him by Maximin and Galerius: he relates the frequent and dangerous enterprises to which they urged him, with the design that he might lose his life. When Galerius heard of the death of Constantius, and that he had appointed Constantine his successor, he was filled with the most ungovernable rage and indignation, notwithstanding he did not dare to take any steps contrary to the interest of Constantine. The dread of the armies of the west, which were mostly composed of Christians, was a sufficient check to all attempts of that kind. Thus the dragon, or heathen power, stood before the woman, or Christian Church, to devour her son, or deliverer, as soon as he was born. See Dr. Mitchell's Exposition of the Revelation, in loc.

**Verse 5. *And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*** In Yalcut Rubeni are these words: "Rachael, the niece of Methusala, was pregnant, and ready to be delivered in Egypt. They trod upon her, and the child came out of her bowels, and lay under the bed; Michael descended, and took him up to the throne of glory. On that same night the first born of Egypt were destroyed."

**Verse 5. *And she brought forth a man child*** The Christian Church, when her full time came, obtained a deliverer, who, in the course of the Divine providence, was destined:—

***To rule all nations*** The heathen Roman empire,

***With a rod of iron*** A strong figure to denote the very great restraint that should be put upon paganism, so that it should not be able longer to persecute the Christian Church. The man child mentioned in this verse is the dynasty of Christians emperors, beginning with Constantine's public acknowledgment of his belief in the divinity of the Christian religion, which happened in the latter part of A.D. 312, after the defeat of the Emperor Maxentius.

***And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.*** A succession of Christian emperors was raised up to the Church; for the Roman throne, as Bishop Newton observes, is here called the throne of God, because there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

**Verse 6. *And the woman fled into the wilderness*** The account of the woman's flying into the wilderness immediately follows that of her child being caught up to the throne of God, to denote the great and rapid increase of heresies in the Christian Church after the time that Christianity was made the religion of the empire.

***Where she hath a place prepared of God*** See on Revelation 12:14.

**Verse 7. *There was war in heaven*** In the same treatise, fol. 87, 2, on Exodus 14:7, Pharaoh took six hundred chariots, we have these words: "There was war among those above and among those below, **בשמים והמלחמה היתה חזקה** vehammilchamah, hayethah chazakah bashshamayim, and there was great war in heaven."

Of Michael the rabbins are full. See much in Schoettgen, and see the note on Jude, Jude 9.

***The dragon-and his angels*** The same as Rab. Sam. ben David, in Chasad Shimuel, calls **סמאל וחיילותיו** Samael vechayilothaiv, "Samael and his troops;" fol. 28, 2.

**Verse 7. *And there was war in heaven*** As heaven means here the throne of the Roman empire, the war in heaven consequently alludes to the breaking out of civil commotions among the governors of this empire.

***Michael and his angels fought against the dragon*** Michael was the man child which the woman brought forth, as is evident from the context, and therefore signifies, as has been shown already, the dynasty of Christian Roman emperors. This dynasty is represented by Michael, because he is "the great prince which standeth for the children of God's people." Daniel 12:1.

***And the dragon fought and his angels*** Or ministers.

**Verse 8. *And prevailed not*** Against the cause of Christianity.

*Neither was their place found any more in heaven.* The advocates of the heathen idolatry were prevented from having any farther share in the government of the empire. The wonderful success of Constantine over all his enemies, and his final triumph over Licinius, correspond exactly to the symbolical language in this verse.

**Verse 9.** *That old serpent* The rabbins speak much of this being, sometimes under the notion of **יצר הרע** yetser hara, the evil principle, and sometimes Samael.

*He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.* This is very like a saying in the book Bahir, in Sohar Gen., fol. 27, col. 107: “And God cast out Samael and his troops from the place of their holiness.”

**Verse 9.** *And the great dragon was cast out, etc.* By the terms Devil and Satan mentioned in this verse, Pareus, Faber, and many other commentators, understand literally the great spiritual enemy of mankind. But this view of the passage cannot be correct, from the circumstance that it is the dragon which is thus called. Now, if by the dragon be meant the devil, then use are necessarily led to this conclusion, that the great apostate spirit is a monster, having seven heads and ten horns; and also that he has a tail, with which he drags after him the third part of the stars of heaven. The appellations, old serpent, devil, and Satan, must, therefore, be understood figuratively. The heathen power is called that old serpent which deceived the whole world, from its subtlety against the Christians, and its causing the whole Roman world, as far as it was in its power, to embrace the absurdities of paganism. It is called the devil, from its continual false accusations and slanders against the true worshippers of God, for the devil is a liar from the beginning; and it is also called Satan, **שטן**, which is a Hebrew word signifying an adversary, from its frequent persecutions of the Christian Church. The dragon and his angels are said to be cast out, which is more than was said in the preceding verse. There mention is made of his being found no longer in heaven, or on the throne of the Roman empire, here he is entirely cast out from all offices of trust in the empire; his religion is first only tolerated, and then totally abolished, by the imperial power. This great event was not the work of a reign; it took up many years, for it had to contend with the deep-rooted prejudices

of the heathen, who to the very last endeavored to uphold their declining superstition. Paganism received several mortal strokes in the time of Constantine and his sons Constans and Constantius. It was farther reduced by the great zeal of Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens; and was finally suppressed by the edicts of Gratian, Theodosius I., and his successors. It was not till A.D. 388 that Rome itself, the residence of the emperor, was generally reformed from the absurdities of paganism; but the total suppression of paganism soon followed the conversion of the metropolitan city, and about A.D. 395 the dragon may be considered, in an eminent sense, to have been cast into the earth, that is, into a state of utter subjection to the ruling dynasty of Christian emperors.

**Verse 10. *The accuser of our brethren*** There is scarcely any thing more common in the rabbinical writings than Satan as the accuser of the Israelites. And the very same word **κατηγορος**, accuser, or, as it is in the Codex Alexandrinus, **κατηγορ**, is used by them in Hebrew letters, **קטיוגור** katigor; e. gr., Pirkey Eliezer, c. 46, speaking of the day of expiation; “And the holy blessed God hears their testimony from their accuser, **הקטיוגור** **הקטיוגור** min hakkatigor; and expiates the altar, the priests, and the whole multitude, from the greatest to the least.”

In Shemoth Rabba, sec. 31, fol. 129, 2, are these words; “If a man observes the precepts, and is a son of the law, and lives a holy life, then Satan stands and accuses him.”

“Every day, except the day of expiation Satan is the accuser of men.” — Vayikra Rabba, sec. 21, fol. 164.

“The holy blessed God said to the seventy princes of the world, Have ye seen him who always accuses my children?” — Yalcut Chadash, fol. 101, 3.

“The devil stands always as an accuser before the King of Israel.” — Sohar Levit., fol. 43, col. 171. See much more in Schoettgen.

**Verse 10. *And I heard a loud voice, saying,-Now is come salvation, etc.*** This is a song of triumph of the Christian Church over the heathen idolatry, and is very expressive of the great joy of the Christians upon this most stupendous event. The loud voice of triumph is said to be heard in

heaven, to show that the Christian religion was now exalted to the heaven or throne of the Roman empire. “It is very remarkable,” as Bishop Newton observes, “that Constantine himself, and the Christians of his time, describe his conquests under the image of a dragon, as if they had understood that this prophecy had received its accomplishment in him. Constantine himself, in his epistle to Eusebius and other bishops concerning the re-edifying and repairing of the churches, saith that ‘liberty being now restored, and that the dragon being removed from the administration of public affairs, by the providence of the great God and by my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest to all.’ Moreover, a picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with the cross over his head, and under his feet the great enemy of mankind, who persecuted the Church by means of impious tyrants, in the form of a dragon, transfixed with a dart through the midst of his body, and falling headlong into the depth of the sea.” See Eusebius de Vita Constantini, lib. ii. c. 46; and lib. iii. c. 3, and Socratis Hist. Eccles., lib. i. c. 9. Constantine added to the other Roman ensigns the labarum, or standard of the cross, and constituted it the principal standard of the Christian Roman empire. To this labarum Prudentius refers, when speaking of the Christian soldiers, in his first hymn *περι στεφανων*,

*Caesaris vexilla linquunt, eligunt SIGNUM CRUCIS,  
Proque ventosis Draconum, quae gerebant, palliis,  
Præferunt INSIGNE LIGNUM, quod Draconem subdidit.*

*“They leave the ensigns of Caesar;  
they choose the standard of the cross;  
and instead of the dragon flags which they carried,  
moved about with the wind, they bring forward the illustrious  
wood that subdued the dragon.”*

When the apostle saw the woman in heaven, well might he call it, in the spirit of prophecy, a great wonder.

**Verse 11. *And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*** Here is given the reason why the followers of Christ prevailed at this time against all their adversaries. It was because they fought against the dragon in the armor of God. They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb — by proclaiming salvation to sinners through Christ crucified, and by their

continual intercession at the throne of grace for the conversion of the heathen world.

***And by the word of their testimony*** By constantly testifying against the errors and follies of mankind.

***And they loved not their lives unto the death.*** They regarded not their present temporal estate, but even gladly delivered up their lives to the fury of their persecutors, and thus sealed the truth of what they spake with their blood.

**Verse 12. *Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.*** Let the Christians, who are now partakers of the present temporal prosperity, and advanced to places of trust in the empire, praise and magnify the Lord who has thus so signally interfered in their behalf. But it is added:—

***Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you*** By the inhabitants of the earth are meant the people in subjection to the Roman empire; and by the sea, those parts of the Roman dominions appear to be intended that were reduced to a state of anarchy by the incursions of the barbarous nations. It is not without precedent to liken great hosts of nations combined together to the sea. See Ezekiel 26:3. Here then is a wo denounced against the whole Roman world which will be excited by the devil, the father of lies, the heathen party being thus denominated from the method they pursued in their endeavors to destroy the religion of Jesus. See on Revelation 12:15.

***Having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.*** The Christian religion, the pagan party see with great regret, is rapidly gaining ground everywhere; and, if not timely checked, must soon brave all opposition.

**Verse 13. *And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth*** When the heathen party saw that they were no longer supported by the civil power:—

***He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.*** The heathens persecuted the Christian Church in the behalf of which Divine Providence had raised up a dynasty of Christian Roman emperors.



**Verse 14.** *And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle* του αετου του μεγαλου. Of THE great eagle. The great eagle here mentioned is an emblem of the Roman empire in general, and therefore differs from the dragon, which is a symbol of the HEATHEN ROMAN empire in particular. The Roman power is called an eagle from its legionary standard, which was introduced among the Romans in the second year of the consulate of C. Marius; for before that time minotaurs, wolves, leopards, horses, boars, and eagles were used indifferently, according to the humor of the commander. The Roman eagles were figures in relievo of silver or gold, borne on the tops of pikes, the wings being displayed, and frequently a thunderbolt in their talons. Under the eagle, on the pike, were piled bucklers, and sometimes crowns. The two wings of the great eagle refer to the two grand independent divisions of the Roman empire, which took place January 17, A.D. 395, and were given to the woman, Christianity being the established religion of both empires.

*That she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, etc.* The apparent repetition here of what is said in Revelation 12:6 has induced Bishop Newton to consider the former passage as introduced by way of prolepsis or anticipation; for, says he, the woman did not fly into the wilderness till several years after the conversion of Constantine. But that there is no such prolepsis as the bishop imagines is evident from the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century; for the woman, or true Church, began to flee into the wilderness a considerable time before the division of the great Roman empire into two independent monarchies. The word translated fled is not to be taken in that peculiar sense as if the woman, in the commencement of her flight, had been furnished with wings, for the original word is εφυγεν. The meaning therefore of verses 6 and 14, {Revelation 12:6, 14} when taken in connection with their respective contexts, is, that the woman began to make rapid strides towards the desert almost immediately after her elevation to the heaven or throne of the Roman empire, and in the course of her flight was furnished with the wings of the great eagle ινα πετηται, that she might FLY, into that place prepared of God, where she should be fed a thousand two hundred and threescore days. It is said here that the period for which the woman should be nourished in the wilderness would be a time, times, and a half; consequently this period is the same with the twelve hundred and sixty days of Revelation 12:6. But in no other

sense can they be considered the same than by understanding a time to signify a year; times, two years; and half a time, half a year; i.e., three years and a half. And as each prophetic year contains three hundred and sixty days, so three years and a half will contain precisely twelve hundred and sixty days. The Apocalypse being highly symbolical, it is reasonable to expect that its periods of time will also be represented symbolically, that the prophecy may be homogeneous in all its parts. The Holy Spirit, when speaking of years symbolically, has invariably represented them by days, commanding, e. gr., the Prophet Ezekiel to lie upon his left side three hundred and ninety days, that it might be a sign or symbol of the house of Israel bearing their iniquity as many years; and forty days upon his right side, to represent to the house of Judah in a symbolical manner, that they should bear their iniquity forty years, The one thousand two hundred and threescore days, therefore, that the woman is fed in the wilderness, must be understood symbolically, and consequently denote as many natural years. The wilderness into which the woman flies is the Greek and Latin worlds, for she is conveyed into her place by means of the two wings of the great eagle. We must not understand the phrase flying into her place of her removing from one part of the habitable world into another, but of her speedy declension from a state of great prosperity to a forlorn and desolate condition. The woman is nourished for one thousand two hundred and threescore years from the face of the serpent, The empires in the east and west were destined, in the course of the Divine providence, to support the Christian religion, at least nominally while the rest of the world should remain in pagan idolatry or under the influence of this dragon, here called the serpent, because he deceiveth the whole world. The words of the prophecy are very remarkable, The Christian Church is said to be supported by the eastern and western empires, two mighty denominations; and at the same time situated in the wilderness, strongly denoting that, though many professed Christianity, there were but very few who “kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

**Verse 15.** *And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood* The water here evidently means great multitudes of nations and peoples; for in Revelation 17:15, the interpreting angel says, The waters which thou sawest-are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues. This water,

then, which the dragon cast out of his mouth, must be an inundation of heathen barbarous nations upon the Roman empire; and the purpose which the dragon has in view by this inundation is, that he might cause the woman, or Christian Church:—

*To be carried away of the flood.* Entirely swept away from the face of the earth. Dr. Mosheim, in the commencement of his second chapter upon the fifth century, observes “that the Goths, the Heruli, the Franks, the Huns, and the Vandals, with other fierce and warlike nations, for the most part strangers to Christianity, had invaded the Roman empire, and rent it asunder in the most deplorable manner. Amidst these calamities the Christians were grievous, nay, we may venture to say the principal, sufferers. It is true these savage nations were much more intent upon the acquisition of wealth and dominion than upon the propagation or support of the pagan superstitions, nor did their cruelty and opposition to the Christians arise from any religious principle, or from an enthusiastic desire to ruin the cause of Christianity; it was merely by the INSTIGATION of the pagans who remained yet in the empire, that they were excited to treat with such severity and violence the followers of Christ.” Thus the wo which was denounced, Revelation 12:12, against the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea, came upon the whole Roman world; for, in consequence of the excitement and malicious misrepresentations of the pagans of the empire, “a transmigration of a great swarm of nations” came upon the Romans, and ceased not their ravages till they had desolated the eastern empire, even as far as the gates of Byzantium, and finally possessed themselves of the western empire. “If,” says Dr. Robertson, in the introduction to his History of Charles V., vol. i., pp. 11, 12, edit. Lond. 1809, “a man was called to fix upon the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most calamitous and afflicted, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius the Great to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, a period of one hundred and seventy-six years. The contemporary authors who beheld that scene of desolation, labor and are at a loss for expressions to describe the horror of it. The scourge of God, the destroyer of nations, are the dreadful epithets by which they distinguish the most noted of the barbarous leaders; and they compare the ruin which they had brought on the world to the havoc occasioned by earthquakes,

conflagrations, or deluges, the most formidable and fatal calamities which the imagination of man can conceive.” But the subtle design which the serpent or dragon had in view, when he vomited out of his mouth a flood of waters, was most providentially frustrated; for:—

**Verse 16. *The earth helped the woman*** “Nothing, and indeed,” as Bishop Newton excellently observes, “was more likely to produce the ruin and utter subversion of the Christian Church than the irruptions of so many barbarous nations into the Roman empire. But the event proved contrary to human appearance and expectation: the earth swallowed up the flood; the barbarians were rather swallowed up by the Romans, than the Romans by the barbarians; the heathen conquerors, instead of imposing their own, submitted to the religion of the conquered Christians; and they not only embraced the religion, but affected even the laws, the manners, the customs, the language, and the very name, of Romans, so that the victors were in a manner absorbed and lost among the vanquished.” See his *Dissertations on the Prophecies*, in loc.

**Verse 17. *And the dragon was wroth with the woman*** The heathen party, foiled in their subtle attempt to destroy Christianity, were greatly enraged, and endeavored to excite the hatred of the multitude against the religion of Jesus. “They alleged that before the coming of Christ the world was blessed with peace and prosperity; but that since the progress of their religion everywhere, the gods, filled with indignation to see their worship neglected and their altars abandoned, had visited the earth with those plagues and desolations which increased every day.” See Mosheim’s *Ecclesiastical History*, cent. V., part 1, and other works on this subject.

***Went to make war with the remnant of her seed*** The dragon ἀπηλθε, departed, i.e., into the wilderness, whither the woman had fled; and in another form commenced a new species of persecution, directed only against the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ. See on verse 13 of the following chapter for an illustration of this remarkable passage. {Revelation 13:13}

## CHAPTER 13

*The beast rising out of the sea with seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, 1. His description, power, blasphemy, cruelty, etc., 2-10. The beast coming out of the earth with two horns, deceiving the world by its false miracles, and causing every one to receive his mark in their right hand, 11-17. His number, 666. 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 13., BY J. E. C.

**Verse 1.** *And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea* Before we can proceed in the interpretation of this chapter, it will be highly necessary to ascertain the meaning of the prophetic symbol beast, as the want of a proper understanding of this term has probably been one reason why so many discordant hypotheses have been published to the world. In this investigation it is impossible to resort to a higher authority than Scripture, for the Holy Ghost is his own interpreter. What is therefore meant by the term beast in any one prophetic vision, the same species of thing must be represented by the term whenever it is used in a similar manner in any other part of the sacred oracles. Having therefore laid this foundation, the angel's interpretation of the last of Daniel's four beasts need only be produced, an account of which is given in the seventh chapter of this prophet. Daniel being very desirous to "know the truth of the fourth beast which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful, and of the ten horns that were on his head," the angel thus interprets the vision: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise," etc. In this scripture it is plainly declared that the fourth beast should be the fourth kingdom upon earth; consequently, the four beasts seen by Daniel are four kingdoms: hence the term beast is the prophetic symbol for a kingdom.

As to the nature of the kingdom which is represented by the term beast, we shall obtain no inconsiderable light in examining the most proper

meaning of the original word חַיָּה chayah. This Hebrew word is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word θηριον, and both words signify what we term a wild beast; and the latter is the one used by St. John in the Apocalypse. Taking up the Greek word θηριον in this sense, it is fully evident, if a power be represented in the prophetic writings under the notion of a wild beast, that the power so represented must partake of the nature of a wild beast. Hence an earthly belligerent power is evidently designed. And the comparison is peculiarly appropriate; for as several species of wild beasts carry on perpetual warfare with the animal world, so most governments, influenced by ambition, promote discord and depopulation. And, also, as the carnivorous wild beast acquires its strength and magnitude by preying upon the feebler animals; so most earthly monarchies are raised up by the sword, and derive their political consequence from the unsuccessful resistance to the contending nations. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is represented as “a stone cut out of the mountain without hands;” and is never likened to a beast, because it is not raised up by the sword as all other secular powers are, but sanctifies the persons under its subjection; in which last particular it essentially differs from all other dominations.

This beast is said to rise up out of the sea, in which particular it corresponds with the four beasts of Daniel; the sea is therefore the symbol of a great multitude of nations, as has already been proved; and the meaning is, that every mighty empire is raised upon the ruins of a great number of nations, which it has successfully contended against and incorporated with its dominions. The sea, here, is doubtless the same against the inhabitants of which a wo was denounced, Revelation 12:12; for St. John was standing upon the sand of the sea when the vision changed from the woman and the dragon to that recorded in this chapter. It therefore follows that the kingdom or empire here represented by the beast, is that which sprung up out of the ruins of the WESTERN Roman empire.

***Having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns*** The beast here described is the Latin empire, which supported the Romish or Latin Church; for it has upon his horns ten crowns, i.e., is an empire composed of ten distinct monarchies in the interest of the Latin Church.

See the heads and horns fully explained in the notes on Revelation 17:10, 12, 16.

As the phrases Latin Church, Latin empire, etc., are not very generally understood at present, and will occur frequently in the course of the notes on this and the xviiith chapter, it will not be improper here to explain them. During the period from the division of the Roman empire into those of the east and west, till the final dissolution of the western empire, the subjects of both empires were equally known by the name of Romans. Soon after this event the people of the west lost almost entirely the name of Romans, and were denominated after their respective kingdoms which were established upon the ruins of the western empire. But as the eastern empire escaped the ruin which fell upon the western, the subjects of the former still retained the name of Romans, and called their dominion ἡ ῥωμαικη βασιλεια, the Roman empire; by which name this monarchy was known among them till its final dissolution in 1453, by Mohammed II., the Turkish sultan. But the subjects of the eastern emperor, ever since the time of Charlemagne or before, (and more particularly in the time of the crusades and subsequently,) called the western people, or those under the influence of the Romish Church, Latins, and their Church the Latin Church. And the western people, in return, denominated the eastern Church the Greek Church, and the members of it Greeks. Hence the division of the Christian Church into those of the Greek and Latin. For a confirmation of what has just been said the reader may consult the Byzantine writers, where he will find the appellations ῥωμαιοι and λατινοι, Romans and Latins, used in the sense here mentioned in very numerous instances. The members of the Romish Church have not been named Latins by the Greeks alone; this term is also used in the public instruments drawn up by the general popish councils, as may be instanced in the following words, which form a part of a decree of the council of Basil, dated Sept. 26, 1437: Copiosissimam subventionem pro unione GRAECORUM cums LATINIS, “A very great convention for the union of the Greeks with the Latins.” Even in the very papal bulls this appellation has been acknowledged, as may be seen in the edict of Pope Eugenius IV., dated Sept. 17, 1437, where in one place mention is made of Ecclesiae LATINORUM quaesita unio, “the desired union of the Church of the Latins;” and in another place we read, Nec superesse modum alium prosequendi

operis tam pii, et servandi LATINAE ECCLESIAE honoris, “that no means might be left untried of prosecuting so pious a work, and of preserving the honor of the Latin Church.” See Corps Diplomatique, tom. iii., pp. 32, 35. In a bull of the same pontiff, dated Sept., 1439, we have Sanctissima LATINORUM et GRAECORUM unio, “the most holy union of the Greeks with the Latins.” See Bail’s Summa Conciliorum, in loc. By the Latin empire is meant the whole of the powers which support the Latin Church.

*And upon his heads the name of blasphemy.* ονομα βλασφημιας· A name of blasphemy. This has been variously understood. Jerome and Prosper give it as their opinion that the name of blasphemy consists in the appellation urbs aeterna, eternal city, applied to Rome; and modern commentators refer it to the idolatrous worship of the Romans and papists. Before we attempt to ascertain the meaning of this passage, it must be first defined what the Holy Spirit means by a name of blasphemy. Blasphemy, in Scripture, signifies impious speaking when applied to GOD, and injurious speaking when directed against our neighbor. A name of blasphemy is the prostitution of a sacred name to an unholy purpose. This is evident from the 9th verse of the second chapter of the Apocalypse, {Revelation 2:9,} where God says, “I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan.” These wicked men, by calling themselves Jews, blasphemed the name, i.e., used it in an injurious sense; for he ONLY is a Jew who is one inwardly. Hence the term Jews applied to the synagogue of Satan is a name of blasphemy, i.e. a sacred name blasphemed. A name of blasphemy, or a blasphemous appellation, is said to be upon all the seven heads of the beast. To determine what this name is, the meaning of the seven heads in this place must be ascertained. If the reader refer to the notes on Revelation 17:9-11, he will find that the heads are explained to have a double meaning, viz., that they signify the seven electorates of the German empire, and also seven forms of Latin government. As this is the first place in which the heads of the beast are mentioned with any description, it is reasonable to expect that that signification of the heads which is first in order in the angel’s interpretation, Revelation 17:9, must be what is here intended. This is, “the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth;” the name of blasphemy will consequently be found upon the seven electorates of Germany. This, therefore, can be no other than that which was



common, not only to the electorates but also to the whole empire of Germany, or that well known one of SACRUM Imperium Romanum, “The SACRED (or HOLY) Roman Empire.” Here is a sacred appellation blasphemed by its application to the principal power of the beast. No kingdom can properly be called holy but that of Jesus; therefore it would be blasphemy to unite this epithet with any other power. But it must be horribly blasphemous to apply it to the German empire, the grand supporter of antichrist from his very rise to temporal authority. Can that empire be holy which has killed the saints, which has professed and supported with all its might an idolatrous system of worship? It is impossible. Therefore its assumption of sacred or holy (which appellation was originally given to the empire from its being the main support of what is termed the holy catholic Church, the emperor being styled, on this account, Christ’s temporal vicar upon earth: see Caesarini Furstenerii Tractatus Deuteronomy Suprematu Principum Germaniae, cc. 31, 32) is, in the highest sense the word can be taken, a name of blasphemy. The name of blasphemy is very properly said to be upon the seven heads of the beast, or seven electorates of the German empire, because the electors are styled SACRI Imperii Principes Electores, Princes, Electors of the Holy Empire; SACRI Romani Imperii Electores, Electors of the Holy Roman Empire.

**Verse 2.** *And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard* This similitude of the beast to a leopard appears to be an allusion to the third beast of Daniel, which is well known to represent the empire of the Greeks. The Latin empire greatly resembled the modern empire of the Greeks; for that the power of the Greeks was still said to be like a leopard, even after its subjugation by the Romans, is evident from Daniel 7:12: “As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time.” The Latin empire was, in the first place, like to its contemporary, because both adhered to an idolatrous system of worship, professedly Christian, but really antichristian; and it is well known that the Greek and Latin Churches abound in monstrous absurdities. Secondly, Both empires were similar in their opposition to the spread of pure Christianity; though it must be allowed that the Latins far outstripped the Greeks in this particular. Thirdly, Both empires were similar in respect to the civil authority being

powerfully depressed by the ecclesiastical; though it must be granted the authority of the Latin Church was more strongly marked, and of much longer continuance. The excommunication of the Greek emperor by the Patriarch Arsenius, and the consequences of that excommunication, afford a remarkable example of the great power of the Greek clergy. But the beast of St. John, though in its general appearance it resembles a leopard, yet differs from it in having feet like those of a bear. The second beast of Daniel was likened to a bear, and there can be no doubt that the kingdom of the Medes and Persians was intended; and it is very properly likened to this animal, because it was one of the most inhuman governments that ever existed, and a bear is the well known Scripture emblem of cruelty. See 2 Samuel 17:8, and Hosea 13:8. Is not cruelty a striking characteristic of the papal Latin empire? Have not the subjects of this empire literally trampled to death all those in their power who would not obey their idolatrous requisitions? In Fox's Book of Martyrs, and other works which treat upon this subject, will be found a melancholy catalogue of the horrid tortures and most lingering deaths which they have obliged great numbers of Christians to suffer. In this sense the feet of the beast were as the feet of a bear. Another particular in which the beast differed from a leopard was, in having a mouth like a lion. "It is," says Dr. More, "like the Babylonish kingdom (the first beast of Daniel, which is likened to a lion) in its cruel decrees against such as will not obey their idolatrous edicts, nor worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Their stubbornness must be punished by a hot fiery furnace; fire and fagot must be prepared for them that will not submit to this new Roman idolatry."

*And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.* It was said of the dragon, in Revelation 12:8, that his place was found no more in heaven; the dragon here cannot therefore be the heathen Roman empire, as this was abolished previously to the rising up of the beast. It must then allude to the restoration of one of the DRACONIC heads of the beast, as will be seen in the explanation of the following verse, and more fully in the notes on Revelation 17:1-18.

**Verse 3.** *And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death* This is the second and last place where the heads of the beast are mentioned with any description; and therefore the meaning here must be forms of government, as these were noticed last in the angel's double explanation.

The head that was wounded to death can be no other than the seventh draconic head, which was the sixth head of the beast, viz., the imperial power; for “this head,” as Bishop Newton observes, “was, as it were, wounded to death when the Roman empire was overturned by the northern nations, and an end was put to the very name of emperor in Momyllus Augustulus.” It was so wounded that it was wholly improbable that it could ever rise again to considerable power, for the western empire came into the possession of several barbarous nations of independent interests.

***And his deadly wound was healed*** This was effected by Charlemagne, who with his successors assumed all the marks of the ancient emperors of the west, with the titles of Semper Augustus, Sacred Majesty, First Prince of the Christian World, Temporal Chief of the Christian People, and Rector or Temporal Chief of the Faithful in Germany; Mod. Universal History, vol. xxxii., p. 79. But it is said in Revelation 13:2 that the dragon gave the beast his power, **δυναμιν**, his armies or military strength; i.e., he employed all his imperial power in defense of the Latin empire, which supported the Latin Church. He also gave his seat, **θρονον**, literally his throne, to him: that is, his whole empire formed an integral part of the Latin empire, by its conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. He also gave him great authority. This is literally true of the Roman empire of Germany, which, by its great power and influence in the politics of Europe, extended the religion of the empire over the various states and monarchies of Europe, thus incorporating them as it were in one vast empire, by uniting them in one common faith.

***And all the world wondered after the beast.*** **ολη η γη** All the earth. As the original word signifies earth, and not world as in our translation, the Latin world, which is the earth of the beast, is here intended; and the meaning of the passage consequently is, that the whole body of the Roman Catholics were affected with great astonishment at the mighty sway of the Latin empire, considering it as a great and holy power.

**Verse 4. *And they worshipped the dragon*** Worshipping the dragon here evidently means the voluntary religious subjection of the members of the Latin Church to the revived western empire, because of the eminent part it has taken in the support of their faith.

***And they worshipped the beast*** Not only the dragon or revived western empire was worshipped; the beast, the whole Latin empire, is a partaker in the adoration. The manner in which it is worshipped consists in the subjects of it:—

***Saying, Who is like unto the beast?*** Is it not the only holy power in the universe? Is it possible for any person not a subject of it to be saved?

***Who is able to make war with him?*** Can any nation successfully fight with it? Is not the Roman empire, which is its principal bulwark, invictissimum, most invincible? Invictissimus, most invincible, was the peculiar attribute of the emperors of Germany. See modern Universal History, vol. xxxii., p. 197.

**Verse 5. *And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things*** That is, There was given to the rulers of the Latin empire, who are the mouth of the beast, (and particularly the Roman emperors of Germany,) power to assume great and pompous titles, indicative of their mighty sway over many subjugated countries, (see the imperial instruments of the middle centuries in the Corps Diplomatique,) and also to utter against their opponents the most terrible edicts.

***And blasphemies*** The system of worship supported by the beast is a system of blasphemy, as there will be occasion to show presently.

***And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.*** As these forty-two months are prophetic, they must mean so many years as there are days contained in them; viz., 1260, each month containing 30 days. The beast, therefore, will continue in existence at least 1260 years; but when the termination of this period will take place is difficult to say, as the beginning cannot be at present indubitably ascertained.

**Verse 6. *And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name*** The Latin empire is here represented as a blasphemous power in three respects. First, he blasphemes the name of God. This has been most notoriously the case with the different popish princes, who continually blaspheme the sacred names of God by using them in their idolatrous worship. The mouth of blasphemy against God cannot be more evident than in the following impious words which form a part of the Golden Bull published by Charles IV. in January, 1356: “But

thou, envy, how often hast thou attempted to ruin by division the Christian empire, which God hath founded upon the three cardinal virtues, faith, hope, and charity, as upon a holy and indivisible Trinity, vomiting the old venom of discord among the seven electors, who are the pillars and seven principal members of the holy empire; by the brightness of whom

“or even frame any conception, of the numbers of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the bigotry and cruelty of Rome? Mede upon the place hath observed, from good authorities, that in the war with the Albigenses and Waldenses there perished of these poor creatures in France alone a million. From the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1580, that is, in little more than thirty years, nine hundred thousand orthodox Christians were slain, and these all by the common executioner. In the space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of torture, a hundred and fifty thousand Christians. Sanders himself confesses that an innumerable multitude of Lollards and Sacramentarians were burnt throughout all Europe, who yet, he says, were not put to death by the pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates.” The dragon in a new shape, or Roman empire of Germany, acted a very conspicuous part in this nefarious warfare against the remnant of the woman’s seed, who kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ. See the imperial edict of Frederic II. against heretics, in Limborch’s History of the Inquisition.

***And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.***

As the book of the Revelation is a prophecy of all that should come upon the Christian world till the end of time, all kindreds, and tongues, and nations, must imply the whole Christian world. That the Latin empire in the course of its reign has had the extensive power here spoken of, is evident from history. It is well known that the profession of Christianity was chiefly confined within the limits of the Greek and Latin empires, till the period of the Reformation. By means of the crusades the Latins extended their empire over several provinces of the Greeks. In 1097 Baldwin extended his conquests over the hills of Armenia and the plain of Mesopotamia, and founded the first principality of the Franks or Latins, which subsisted fifty-four years, beyond the Euphrates. In 1204 the Greeks were expelled from Constantinople by the Latins, who set up an empire there which continued about fifty-seven years. The total overthrow of the Latin states in the east soon followed the recovery of Constantinople by the Greeks; and in 1291 the Latin empire in the east was entirely dissolved. Thus the Latins have had power over the whole world professedly Christian: but it is not said that the whole world was in utter subjection to him, for we read in the following verse:—

**Verse 8.** *And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb* The earth here is the Latin world, as has been observed before in similar cases. The meaning therefore is, that all the corrupt part of mankind who are inhabitants of the Latin world shall submit to the religion of the empire, except, as Bishop Newton expresses it, “those faithful few whose names, as citizens of heaven, were enrolled in the registers of life.”

*Slain from the foundation of the world.* That is, of the Christian world; for this has been shown to be the meaning of all kindreds, and tongues, and nations. The year of the crucifixion is properly the commencement of Christianity, as the apostles then first began to promulgate the religion of Christ with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But as Jesus Christ was in the Divine purpose appointed from the foundation of the world to redeem man by his blood, he therefore is, in a very eminent sense, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, i.e., from the creation.

**Verse 9.** *If any man have an ear, let him hear.* These words are evidently introduced to impress the reader with the awfulness of what has just been spoken—all shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life, as well as to fix his attention upon the following words:—

**Verse 10.** *He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity* The Latin empire here spoken of must go into captivity, because it has led into captivity, by not only propagating among the various nations its abominable antichristian system, but also in compelling them to embrace it under the penalty of forfeiting the protection of the empire.

*He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.* The Latin empire must be also broken to pieces by the sword, because it has killed the saints of God. This prophecy will not receive its full accomplishment till the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.

*Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.* By these words, as Dr. Mitchell observes, “God calls upon his saints to keep in view, under all their persecutions, his retributive justice; there is no violence that has been exercised upon them but what shall be retaliated upon the cruel and persecuting government and governors of the Latin empire.”

**Verse 11. *And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth*** As a beast has already been shown to be the symbol of a kingdom or empire, the rising up of this second beast must consequently represent the rising up of another empire. This beast comes up out of the earth; therefore it is totally different from the preceding, which rose up out of the sea. Earth here means the Latin world, for this word has been shown to import this already in several instances; the rising up of the beast out of this earth must, consequently, represent the springing up of some power out of a state of subjection to the Latin empire: therefore the beast, here called another beast, is another LATIN empire. This beast is the spiritual Latin empire, or, in other words, the Romish hierarchy; for with no other power can the prophetic description yet to be examined be shown to accord. In the time of Charlemagne the ecclesiastical power was in subjection to the civil, and it continued to be so for a long time after his death; therefore the beast, whose deadly wound was healed, ruled over the whole Latin world, both clergy and laity; these, consequently, constituted but one beast or empire. But the Latin clergy kept continually gaining more and more influence in the civil affairs of the empire, and in the tenth century their authority was greatly increased. In the subsequent centuries the power of the Romish hierarchy ascended even above that of the emperors, and led into captivity the kings of the whole Latin world, as there will be occasion to show in commenting upon the following verses. Thus the Romish hierarchy was at length entirely exempted from the civil power, and constituted another beast, as it became entirely independent of the secular Latin empire. And this beast came up out of the earth; that is, the Latin clergy, which composed a part of the earth or Latin world, raised their authority against that of the secular powers, and in process of time wrested the superintendence of ecclesiastical affairs from the secular princes.

***And he had two horns*** As the seven-headed beast is represented as having ten horns, which signify so many kingdoms leagued together to support the Latin Church, so the beast which rises out of the earth has also two horns, which must consequently represent two kingdoms; for if horns of a beast mean kingdoms in one part of the Apocalypse, kingdoms must be intended by this symbol whenever it is used in a similar way in any other part of this book. As the second beast is the spiritual Latin empire, the



two horns of this beast denote that the empire thus represented is composed of two distinct spiritual powers. These, therefore, can be no other, as Bishop Newton and Faber properly observe, than the two grand independent branches of the Romish hierarchy, viz., the Latin clergy, REGULAR and SECULAR. “The first of these comprehends all the various monastic orders, the second comprehends the whole body of parochial clergy.” These two grand branches of the hierarchy originally constituted but one dominion, as the monks as well as the other clergy were in subjection to the bishops: but the subjection of the monks to their diocesans became by degrees less apparent; and in process of time, through the influence and authority of the Roman pontiffs, they were entirely exempted from all episcopal jurisdiction, and thus became a spiritual power, entirely independent of that of the secular clergy.

*Like a lamb* As lamb, in other parts of the Apocalypse, evidently means Christ, who is the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world, it must have a similar import in this passage; therefore the meaning here is evidently that the two horns of the beast, or the regular and secular clergy, profess to be the ministers of Christ, to be like him in meekness and humility, and to teach nothing that is contrary to godliness. The two-horned beast, or spiritual Latin empire, has in reality the name, and in the eyes of the Latin world the appearance, of a CHRISTIAN power. But he is only so in appearance, and that alone among his deluded votaries; for when he spake:—

*He spake as a dragon.* The doctrines of the Romish hierarchy are very similar to those contained in the old heathen worship; for he has introduced “a new species of idolatry, nominally different, but essentially the same, the worship of angels and saints instead of the gods and demi-gods of antiquity.”

**Verse 12.** *And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him* In the preceding verse the two-horned beast was represented as rising out of the earth, that is, obtaining gradually more and more influence in the civil affairs of the Latin world. Here he is represented as having obtained the direction and management of all the power of the first beast or secular Latin empire before him, *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, in his presence. That the Romish hierarchy has had the extensive power here spoken of, is evident

from history; for the civil power was in subjection to the ecclesiastical. The parochial clergy, one of the horns of the second beast, have had great secular jurisdiction over the whole Latin world. Two-thirds of the estates of Germany were given by the three Othos, who succeeded each other, to ecclesiastics; and in the other Latin monarchies the parochial clergy possessed great temporal power. Yet extraordinary as the power of the secular clergy was in all parts of the Latin world, it was but feeble when compared with that of the monastic orders which constituted another horn of the beast. The mendicant friars, the most considerable of the regular clergy, first made their appearance in the early part of the thirteenth century. These friars were divided by Gregory X., in a general council which he assembled at Lyons in 1272, into the four following societies or denominations, viz., the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Hermits of St. Augustine. "As the pontiffs," observes Mosheim, "allowed these four mendicant orders the liberty of travelling wherever they thought proper, of conversing with persons of all ranks, of instructing the youth and the multitude wherever they went; and as these monks exhibited, in their outward appearance and manner of life, more striking marks of gravity and holiness than were observable in the other monastic societies; they arose all at once to the very summit of fame, and were regarded with the utmost esteem and veneration throughout all the countries of Europe. The enthusiastic attachment to these sanctimonious beggars went so far that, as we learn from the most authentic records, several cities were divided, or cantoned out, into four parts, with a view to these four orders; the first part was assigned to the Dominicans, the second to the Franciscans, the third to the Carmelites, and the fourth to the Augustinians. The people were unwilling to receive the sacraments from any other hands than those of the mendicants, to whose churches they crowded to perform their devotions while living, and were extremely desirous to deposit there also their remains after death; all which occasioned grievous complaints among the ordinary priests, to whom the cure of souls was committed, and who considered themselves as the spiritual guides of the multitude. Nor did the influence and credit of the mendicants end here: for we find in the history of this (thirteenth century) and the succeeding ages, that they were employed, not only in spiritual matters, but also in temporal and political affairs of the greatest consequence; in composing the differences of princes, concluding treaties

of peace, concerting alliances, presiding in cabinet councils, governing courts, levying taxes, and other occupations not only remote from, but absolutely inconsistent with, the monastic character and profession. We must not, however, imagine that all the mendicant friars attained to the same degree of reputation and authority; for the power of the Dominicans and Franciscans surpassed greatly that of the two other orders, and rendered them singularly conspicuous in the eyes of the world. During three centuries these two fraternities governed, with an almost universal and absolute sway, both state and Church, filled the most eminent posts, ecclesiastical and civil; taught in the universities and churches with an authority before which all opposition was silent; and maintained the pretended majesty and prerogatives of the Roman pontiffs against kings, princes, bishops, and heretics, with incredible ardour and equal success. The Dominicans and Franciscans were, before the Reformation, what the Jesuits have been since that happy and glorious period, the very soul of the hierarchy, the engines of state, the secret springs of all the motions of the one and the other, and the authors and directors of every great and important event in the religious and political world.” Thus the Romish hierarchy has exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight, both temporal and spiritual, and therefore, with such astonishing influence as this over secular princes, it was no difficult matter for him to cause:—

*The earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.* That is, he causes the whole Latin world to submit to the authority of the Latin empire, with the revived western empire at its head, persuading them that such submission is beneficial to their spiritual interests, and absolutely necessary for their salvation. Here it is observable that both beasts have dominion over the same earth; for it is expressly said that the second beast causeth THE EARTH and them that dwelt therein, to worship the first beast; therefore it is, as Bishop Newton and others have observed, imperium in imperio, “an empire within an empire.” We have, consequently, the fullest evidence that the two beasts consist in the division of the great Latin empire, by the usurpation of the Latin clergy, into two distinct empires, the one secular, the other spiritual, and both united in one antichristian design, viz., to diffuse their most abominable system of idolatry over the whole earth, and to extend the sphere of their domination. Here we have also an illustration of that

remarkable passage in Revelation 16:10, the kingdom of the beasts, i.e., the kingdom of the Latin kingdom; which is apparently a solecism, but in reality expressed with wonderful precision. The fifth vial is poured out upon the throne of the beast, and HIS KINGDOM is darkened, i.e., the Latin kingdom in subjection to the Latin kingdom or the secular Latin empire.

**Verse 13.** *And he doeth great wonders* That we may have the greatest assurance possible that the two-horned beast is the spiritual Latin empire, it is called in Revelation 19:20, a passage illustrative of the one now under consideration, the false prophet, “than which,” as Bishop Newton observes, “there cannot be a stronger or plainer argument to prove that false doctors or teachers were particularly designed;” for prophet, in the Scripture style, is not unfrequently used for a preacher or expounder of God’s word. See 1 Corinthians 14:1-5. It hence follows that the two-horned beast is an empire of false doctors or teachers.

In order to establish the Latin Church upon a foundation that can never fail, the false prophet doth great wonders — he attempts the most wonderful and prodigious exploits, and is crowned with incredible success. He has the art to persuade his followers that the clergy of the Church of Rome are the only true ministers of Christ; that they have such great influence in the court of heaven as to be able not only to forgive sins, but also to grant indulgences in sin, by paying certain stipulated sums. He persuades them too that they can do works of supererogation. He pretends that an incredible number of miracles have been wrought and are still working by the Almighty, as so many evidences of the great sanctity of the Latin Church; and the false prophet has such an astonishing influence over his flock, as to cause them to believe all his fabulous legends and lying wonders. He pretends also (and is believed!) that his power is not confined to this world; that he is able by his prayers to deliver the souls of the deceased from what he calls purgatory, a place which he has fabled to exist for the purification of sinful souls after their departure from this world. His wonderful exploits, in being able to induce men possessed of reasoning faculties to believe his monstrous absurdities, do not end here; he even:—

*Maketh fire come down from heaven-in the sight of men* Fire, in Scripture, when it signifies wrath, represents that species of indignation which is attended with the destruction of whatever is the cause of it. Thus

the wrath of God is likened to fire, Psalm 18:7, 8; Jeremiah 4:4. Therefore the fire which the false prophet bringeth down from heaven upon the earth, is the fiery indignation which he causes to come down from the heaven or throne of the Latin empire upon all those of the earth or Latin world who rebel against his authority. All this has been fulfilled in the Romish hierarchy; the Latin clergy have denominated all those that oppose their authority heretics, they have instituted tribunals to try the cause of heresy, and all those that would not submit to their idolatry they have condemned to various kinds of tortures and deaths. It is said of the false prophet that he bringeth fire FROM HEAVEN upon the earth; that is to say, he will only try the cause of heresy, and pass the sentence of condemnation; he will not suffer an ecclesiastic to execute the sentence of the court; the destroying fire he causeth to come down from the heaven or throne of the Latin empire; secular princes and magistrates must execute the sentence of death upon all that are capitally condemned by the spiritual power. He MAKETH fire come down from heaven; he compels secular princes to assist him against heretics; and if any rebel against his authority he immediately puts them under the ban of the anathema, so that they are deprived of their offices, and exposed to the insults and persecution of their brethren. Thus the false prophet deceives the Latin world by the means of those miracles which he had power try do in the sight of the beast. Under the appearance of great sanctity he persuades men to believe all his lying doctrines, and enforces his canons and decretals with the sword of the civil magistrate.

**Verse 14.** *Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.*

The image of the beast must designate a person who represents in himself the whole power of the Latin empire, therefore it cannot be the emperor; for though he was, according to his own account, *supremum caput Christianitatis*, the supreme head of Christendom, yet he was only the chief of the Germanic confederation, and consequently was only sovereign of the principal power of the Latin empire. The image of the beast must be the supreme ruler of the Latin empire, and as it is through the influence of the false prophet that this image is made for the first beast, this great chief must be an ecclesiastic. Who this is has been ably shown by Bishop Newton in his comment on the following verse.

**Verse 15.** *And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.* I would just

observe that the Brahmins, by repeating incantations, profess to give eyes and a soul to an image recently made, before it is worshipped; afterwards, being supposed to be the residence of the god or goddess it represents, it has a legal right to worship. On this verse the learned bishop observes: "The influence of the two-horned beast, or corrupted clergy, is farther seen in persuading and inducing mankind to make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live. This image and representative of the beast is the pope. He is properly the idol of the Church. He represents in himself the whole power of the beast, and is the head of all authority, temporal as well as spiritual. He is nothing more than a private person, without power and without authority, till the two-horned beast or corrupted clergy, by choosing him pope, give life unto him, and enable him to speak and utter his decrees, and to persecute even to death as many as refuse to submit to him and to worship him. As soon as he is chosen pope he is clothed with the pontifical robes, and crowned and placed upon the altar, and the cardinals come and kiss his feet, which ceremony is called adoration. They first elect and then they worship him, as in the medals of Martin V., where two are represented crowning the pope, and two kneeling before him, with this inscription, *Quem creant adorant*; 'Whom they create they adore.' He is THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY TO THE TEN KINGDOMS OF THE BEAST, and causeth, as far as he is able, all who will not acknowledge his supremacy to be put to death." The great ascendancy which the popes have obtained over the kings of the Latin world by means of the Romish hierarchy is sufficiently marked in the history of Europe. As long as the great body of the people were devoted to the Roman Catholic idolatry, it was in vain for the kings of the different Roman Catholic countries to oppose the increasing usurpations of the popes. They ascended, in spite of all opposition, to the highest pinnacle of human greatness; for even the authority of the emperors themselves was established or annulled at their pleasure. The high sounding tone of the popes commenced in Gregory VII., A.D. 1073, commonly known by the name of Hildebrand, who aimed at nothing less than universal empire. He published an anathema against all who received the investiture of a bishopric or abbacy from the hands of a layman, as also against those by

whom the investiture should be performed. This measure being opposed by Henry IV., emperor of Germany, the pope deposed him from all power and dignity, regal or imperial. See Corps Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 53. Great numbers of German princes siding with the pope, the emperor found himself under the necessity of going, (in January, 1077,) to the bishop of Rome to implore his forgiveness, which was not granted him till he had fasted three days, standing from morning to evening barefooted, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather! In the following century the power of the pope was still farther increased; for on the 23d of September, 1122, the Emperor Henry V. gave up all right of conferring the regalia by the ceremony of the ring and crosier, so that the chapters and communities should be at liberty to fill up their own vacancies. In this century the election of the Roman pontiffs was confined by Alexander III. to the college of cardinals. In the thirteenth century the popes (Dr. Mosheim observes) “inculcated that pernicious maxim, that the bishop of Rome is the supreme lord of the universe, and that neither princes nor bishops, civil governors nor ecclesiastical rulers, have any lawful power in Church or state but what they derive from him. To establish their authority both in civil and ecclesiastical matters upon the firmest foundation, they assumed to themselves the power of disposing of the various offices of the Church, whether of a higher or more subordinate nature, and of creating bishops, abbots, and canons, according to their fancy. The first of the pontiffs who usurped such an extravagant extent of authority was Innocent III., (A.D. 1198-1216,) whose example was followed by Honorius III., (A.D. 1216,) Gregory IX., (A.D. 1227,) and several of their successors.” Thus the plenitude of the papal power (as it is termed) was not confined to what was spiritual; the Romish bishops “dethroned monarchs, disposed of crowns, absolved subjects from the obedience due to their sovereigns, and laid kingdoms under interdicts. There was not a state in Europe which had not been disquieted by their ambition. There was not a throne which they had not shaken, nor a prince who did not tremble at their presence.” The point of time in which the Romish bishops attained their highest elevation of authority was about the commencement of the fourteenth century. Boniface VIII., who was pope at this time, outstripped all his predecessors in the high sounding tone of his public decrees. According to his famous bull *Unam Sanctam*, published Nov. 16, 1302, “the secular power is but a simple emanation from the ecclesiastical; and the double

power of the pope, founded upon Holy Scripture, is even an article of faith. God,” said he, “has confided to Saint Peter, and to his successors, two swords, the one spiritual, the other temporal. The first ought to be exercised by the Church itself; and the other, by secular powers for the service of the Church, and according to the will of the pope. The latter, that is to say, the temporal sword, is in subjection to the former, and the temporal authority depends indispensably on the spiritual power which judges it, while God alone can judge the spiritual power. Finally,” he adds, “it is necessary to salvation for every human creature to be in subjection to the Roman pontiff.” The false prophet SAID “to them that dwell upon the earth, that they should make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword, and did live;” that is, the Romish priesthood PREACHED UP the pope’s supremacy over temporal princes; and, through their astonishing influence on the minds of the people, the bishop of Rome at last became the supreme sovereign of the secular Latin empire, and thus was at the head of all authority, temporal and spiritual.

The papists have in their various superstitions professed to worship God. But they are said, in the unerring words of prophecy, to worship the dragon, beast, and image of the beast, and to blaspheme God; for they received as holy those commandments of men that stand in direct opposition to the sacred Scriptures, and which have been imposed on them by the Romish bishops, aided by the secular powers. “God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in SPIRIT and in TRUTH.”

**Verse 16.** *And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark* To ascertain the meaning of the mark which the two-horned beast causes all orders and degrees of men in the Latin world to receive, we need only refer to Revelation 14:11, where the mark imposed by the two-horned beast is called the mark of his name. The name of the beast is the Latin empire: the mark of his name must therefore be his LATIN worship: for this very reason, that it is the two-horned beast, or false prophet, who causes all descriptions of persons to receive it. Now it is well known that the continual employment of the Latin clergy is to enforce the Latin idolatry upon their flocks. The mass and offices of the Church, which are in Latin, and contain the sum and substance of their idolatrous worship, are of different kinds, and abound in impious prayers to the Virgin Mary, and the saints and angels. In a word, the LATIN



worship is the universal badge of distinction of the LATIN Church, from all other Churches on the face of the earth; and is therefore the only infallible MARK by which a genuine papist can be distinguished from the rest of mankind. But the two-horned beast causes all to receive this mark:—

*In their right hand, or in their foreheads* Right hand in Scripture language, when used figuratively, represents the physical power of the person of whom it is spoken; and when applied to God designates a signal manifestation of Divine power against his enemies, and in behalf of his people. See Psalm 17:7; 20:6; 21:8; 45:3, 4, etc. The reception of the mark in the right hand must therefore mean, that all so receiving it devote the whole powers of their mind and body to the propagation of the Latin worship, and to the eradication of all they denominate heresies out of their Church. But some receive the mark in their foreheads. By any thing being impressed upon the forehead, is meant the public profession of whatever is inscribed or marked upon it. See Revelation 9:4; 14:1; 22:4, etc. The mark of the beast being received on the forehead, therefore, means that all those so marked make a public profession of the Latin worship; whereby it is evident to all that they form a part of the Latin Church. Many may be marked in the right hand who are also marked on their foreheads, but it does not follow that those marked on their foreheads are also marked in their right hand; that is to say, it is not every individual that complies with the Latin worship who, to the utmost of his power, endeavors to propagate his religious system. Hence the propriety of the words, “He causeth all-to receive a mark in their right hand, OR in their foreheads.”

**Verse 17.** *And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark* “If any,” observes Bishop Newton, “dissent from the stated and authorized forms; they are condemned and excommunicated as heretics; and in consequence of that they are no longer suffered to buy or sell; they are interdicted from traffic and commerce, and all the benefits of civil society. So Roger Hoveden relates of William the Conqueror, that he was so dutiful to the pope that he would not permit any one in his power to buy or sell any thing whom he found disobedient to the apostolic see. So the canon of the council of Lateran, under Pope Alexander III., made against the Waldenses and Albigenses, enjoins, upon pain of anathema, that no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or exercise traffic with them. The synod of Tours, in France, under the same

pope, orders, under the like intermination, that no man should presume to receive or assist them, no, not so much as hold any communion with them, in selling or buying; that, being deprived of the comfort of humanity they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way.” In the tenth and eleventh centuries the severity against the excommunicated was carried to so high a pitch, that nobody might come near them, not even their own wives, children, or servants; they forfeited all their natural legal rights and privileges, and were excluded from all kinds of offices. The form of excommunication in the Romish Church is to take lighted torches, throw them upon the ground with curses and anathemas, and trample them out under foot to the ringing of the bells. It is in this and similar ways that the false prophet has terrified the Latin world, and kept it in subjection to the secular and spiritual powers. Those interdicted by the two-horned beast from all offices of civil life are also such as have not:—

*The name of the beast, or the number of his name.* See on the following verse.

**Verse 18.** *Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.* In this verse we have the very name of the beast given under the symbol of the number 666. Before the invention of figures by the Arabs, in the tenth century, letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. The Greeks in the time of Homer, or soon after, are thought by some to have assigned to their letters a numerical value corresponding to their order in the alphabet: thus,  $\alpha$  was 1, because the first letter; and  $\omega$  24, being the last. It is in this manner that the books of the Iliad and Odyssey are numbered, which have been thus marked by Homer himself, or by some person who lived near his time. A system of representing numbers of great antiquity was used by the Greeks, very much resembling that afterwards adopted by the Romans. This consisted in assigning to the initial letter of the name of the number a value equal to the number. Thus  $\chi$ , the initial of  $\chi\lambda\iota\alpha$ , stood for a thousand;  $\delta$ , the initial of  $\delta\epsilon\kappa\alpha$ , for ten;  $\pi$ , the initial of  $\pi\epsilon\nu\tau\epsilon$ , for five, etc. Herodotus, the grammarian, is the only writer of antiquity who has noticed this system, and the chronological table of remarkable events on the Arundelian marbles the only work extant in which this method of representing numbers is exhibited. The system now in use cannot be traced to any very ancient

source. What can be proved is, that it was in use before the commencement of the Christian era. Numerical letters, denoting the year of the Roman emperor's reign, exist on great numbers of the Egyptian coins, from the time of Augustus Caesar through the succeeding reigns. See *Numi Aegyptii Imperatorii*, a Geo. Zoega, edit. Rom. 1787. There are coins extant marked of the 2d, 3d, 14th, 30th, 35th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42d years of Augustus Caesar, with the numerical letters preceded by L or λ for *λυκαβας*, year, thus: LB, Λγ, Λιδ, Λλ, Λλε, Λλη, Λλθ, Λμ, Λμα, and Λμβ. The following is the Greek alphabet, with the numerical value of each letter affixed, according to the generally received system:—

α — 1	Ι — 10	ρ — 100
β — 2	κ — 20	σ — 200
γ — 3	λ — 30	τ — 300
δ — 4	μ — 40	υ — 400
ε — 5	ν — 50	φ — 500
ζ — 7	ξ — 60	χ — 600
η — 8	ο — 70	ψ — 700
θ — 9	π — 80	ω — 80

The method just described of representing numbers or letters of the alphabet, gave rise to a practice among the ancients of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians. Where the practice of counting the number in names or phrases began first to be used, cannot be ascertained; it is sufficient for the illustration of the passage under consideration, if it can be shown to have been in existence in the apostolic age. Seneca, who was contemporary with St. Paul, informs us, in his eighty-eighth epistle, that Apion, the grammarian, maintained Homer to have been the author of the division of his poems of the Iliad and Odyssey into forty-eight books; for a proof of which Apion produces the following argument: that the poet commenced his Iliad with the word *μηνιν*, that the two first letters, whose sum is 48, might indicate such division. Leonidas of Alexandria, who flourished in the reigns of Nero, Vespasian, etc., carried the practice of computing the number in words so far as to construct equinumeral distichs; that is, epigrams of four lines, whose first hexameter and pentameter contain the same number with the other two. We will only notice two examples; the

first is addressed to one of the emperors, the other to Poppaea, the wife of Nero.

θυει σοι τοδε γραμμα γενεθλαιοκαισιν εν ωραις,  
 καισαρ, νειλαιη μουσα λεωνιδεω.  
 καλλιοπης γαρ ακαπνον αιει θυος· εις δε νεωτα  
 ην εθελης, θυσει τουδε περισσοτερα.

“The muse of Leonidas of the Nile offers up to thee, O Caesar, this writing, at the time of thy nativity; for the sacrifice of Calliope is always without smoke: but in the ensuing year he will offer up, if thou wilt, better things than this.”

From the numerical table already given, the preceding epigram may be shown to contain equinumeral distichs, as follows: **θυει** 424, i.e., **θ** 9, **υ** 400, **ε** 5, **ι** 10; in all 424: **σοι** contains 280, i.e., **σ** 200, **ο** 70, **ι** 10. In like manner **τοδε** will be found to contain 379, **γραμμα** 185, **γενεθλιακαισιν** 404, **εν** 55, **ωραις** 1111, **καισαρ** 332, **νειλαιη** 114, **μουσα** 711, **λεωνιδεω** 1704. The sum of all these is 5699, the number in the first distich. In the second distich, **καλλιοπης** contains 449, **γαρ** 104, **ακαπνον** 272, **αιει** 16, **θυος** 679, **εις** 215, **δε** 9, **νεωτα** 1156, **ην** 58, **εθελης** 267, (the subscribed iota being taken into the account,) **θυσει** 624, **τουδε** 779, **περισσοτερα** 1071. The sum of all 5699, which is precisely the same with that contained in the first distich.

ουρανιον μειμημα γενεθλιακαισιν εν ωραις  
 τουτ' απο νειλογενους δεξο λεωνιδεω,  
 ποππαια, διος ευνι, σεβαστιας· ευαδε γαρ σοι  
 δωρα, τα και λεκτρων αξια και σοφης.

“O Poppaea, wife of Jupiter (Nero) Augusta, receive from Leonidas of the Nile a celestial globe on the day of thy nativity; for gifts please thee which are suited to thy imperial dignity and wisdom.”

In this epigram each of the distichs contains the number 6422, viz., **ουρανιον** 751, (i.e., **ο** 70, **υ** 400, **ρ** 100, **α** 1, **ν** 50, **ι** 10, **ο** 70, **ν** 50, the sum of which is 751,) **μειμημα** 144, **γενεθλιακαισιν** 404, **εν** 55, **ωραις** 1111, **τουτ'** 1070, **απο** 151, **νειλογενους** 893, **δεξο** 139, **λεωνιδεω** 1704; the sum of all 6422. The numbers corresponding to the words of the

second distich are, respectively, 322, 284, 465, 919, 415, 104, 280, 905, 301, 31, 1305, 72, 31, 988; the sum of which is also 6422.

This poet did not restrict himself to the construction of equinumeral distichs. The following is one of his distichs in which the hexameter line is made equal in number to its corresponding pentameter:—

εις προς ενα ψηφοισιν ισαζεται, ου δυο δοιοις, ου γαρ ετι στεργω  
την δολιχογραφιην.

“One line is made equal in number to one, not two to two; for I no longer approve of long epigrams.”

In this distich the words of the hexameter line contain, respectively, the numbers 215, 450, 56, 1548, 534, 470, 474, and 364; the sum of which is 4111. The numbers corresponding to the words of the pentameter line are, respectively, 470, 104, 315, 1408, 358, and 1456; the sum of which is also 4111. The equinumeral distichs of Leonidas are contained in the second volume of Brunck and Jacob’s edition of the Greek Anthology. It appears from ancient records that some of the Greeks in the early part of the second century, if not in the apostolic age, employed themselves in counting the numbers contained in the verses of Homer to find out what two consecutive lines were *ισοψηφοι* or equinumeral. Aulus Gellius, the grammarian, who lived in the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, gives us an account (lib. xiv., cap. 6) of a person who presented him with a book filled with a variety of information collected from numerous sources, of which he was at liberty to avail himself in writing his *Attic Nights*. Among the subjects treated of in this book, we are informed by Gellius, was that of Homeric equinumeral verses. None of the examples are given by the grammarian; but Labbeus says, in his *Bibl. Nov. MSS.*, p. 284, that the equinumeral verses are marked in the Codex 2216, in the French king’s library. Gronovius, in his notes on Gellius, p. 655, has copied what he found in a MS. (No. 1488) upon this subject, viz., two examples out of the *Iliad*, and one in the *Odyssey*. The examples in the *Iliad* are lines 264 and 265 of book vii., each line containing 3508; and lines 306 and 307 of book xix., each containing 2848. The verses in the *Odyssey* (ω, 110, 111) stated to be equinumeral in the MS. cited by Gronovius have not now this property, owing possibly to some corruption that may have taken place in the lines from frequent transcription.

For other examples of the computation of the number in words or phrases, the reader is referred to the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus, lib. ii. c. 75; lib. iii. c. 34; and lib. iv. c. 26. See also Martiani Minei Felicis Capelhae *Africarthaginensis, Deuteronomy Nuptiis Philologiae et Mercurii*, lib. ii. and vii.; Irenaeus *adversus Haereses*, lib. i., ii., and v.; Tertullian. *de Praescriptionibus Haeret.*, tom. ii., p. 487; Wirceburgi, 1781; Sibyll. *Oracul.*, lib. i., etc.

Having thus shown that it was a practice in the apostolic age, and subsequently, to count the number in words and phrases, and even in whole verses, it will be evident that what is intended by 666 is, that the Greek name of the beast (for it was in the Greek language that Jesus Christ communicated his revelation to St. John) contains this number. Many names have been proposed from time to time as applicable to the beast, and at the same time containing 666. We will only notice one example, viz., that famous one of Irenaeus, which has been approved of by almost all commentators who have given any sort of tolerable exposition of the Revelation. The word alluded to is *λατεινος*, the letters of which have the following numerical values: λ 30, α 1, τ 300, ε 5, ι 10, ν 50, ο 70, ς 200; and if these be added together, the sum will be found to be equivalent to the number of the beast. This word was applied by Irenaeus, who lived in the second century, to the then existing Roman empire; “for,” says he, “they are *LATINS* who now reign.” Though it is evident, from the notes on the preceding part of this chapter, that the conjecture of Irenaeus respecting the number 666 having some way or other a reference to the empire of the Latins is well founded; yet his production of the word *λατεινος*, as containing 666, is not a proof that it has any such reference. Bellarmin the Jesuit objected against *λατεινος* being the name intended in the prophecy from its orthography; for, says he, it should be written *λατινος*. That the objection of the learned Jesuit has very great force is evident from every Greek writer extant, who has used the Greek word for Latinus, in all of whom it is uniformly found without the diphthong. See Hesiod, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Photius, the Byzantine historians, etc., etc. It hence follows that if the Greek word for Latinus had been intended, the number contained in *λατινος*, and not that in *λατεινος*, would have been called the number of the beast. We have already observed that the beast is the Latin kingdom or

empire; therefore, if this observation be correct, the Greek words signifying the Latin kingdom must have this number. The most concise method of expressing this among the Greeks was as follows, ἡ λατινη βασιλεια, which is thus numbered:-

η == 8 }	THE
λ == 30 }	L
α == 1 }	A
τ == 300 }	T
ι == 10 }	I
ν == 50 }	N
β == 2 }	K
α == 1 }	I
σ == 200 }	N
ι == 10 }	G
λ == 30 }	D
ε == 5 }	O
ι == 10 }	M
α == 1 }	

— 666

No other kingdom on earth can be found to contain 666. This is then ἡ σοφια, the wisdom or demonstration. A beast is the symbol of a kingdom; THE beast has been proved, in the preceding part of this chapter, to be the LATIN kingdom; and ἡ λατινη βασιλεια, being shown to contain, exclusively, the number 666, is the demonstration.

Having demonstrated that ἡ λατινη βασιλεια, The Latin kingdom, is the name of the beast, we must now examine what is intended by the phrase in the 17th verse, {Revelation 13:17,} the name of the beast, or the number of his name. Bishop Newton supposes that the name of the beast, and the number of his name, mean the same thing; but this opinion is totally irreconcilable with Revelation 15:2, where St. John informs us that he “saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God.” In this passage it is evident that the beast, his image, and the number of his name,

are perfectly distinct; and therefore no two of them can mean the same thing. Hence what is meant by the name of the beast is entirely different from that intended by the number of his name. But how can this be, when it is expressly declared that the number of the beast is 666, which number is declared to be that of his name? The solution of the whole mystery is as follows: Both beasts of the Apocalypse, we have already shown, have the same appellation; that is to say, the name of the first and second beast is equally ἡ λατινὴ βασιλεία, the Latin kingdom; therefore, by the name of the beast is meant the Latin kingdom, and by the number of his name is also meant the Latin kingdom. Hence only one of the beasts is numbered; the name of that which is not numbered is termed the name of the beast, and the numbered Latin empire is denominated the number of his name, or 666, exactly agreeable to an ancient practice already noticed, of representing names by the numbers contained in them. Therefore the meaning of the whole passage is, that those whom the false prophet does not excommunicate, or put out of the pale of his Church, have the mark of the beast, that is, are genuine papists, or such as are actively or passively obedient to his Latin idolatry. Those also escape his ecclesiastical interdicts who have the name of the beast, or the number of his name. By a person having the name of the beast is evidently meant his being a Latin, i.e., in subjection to the Latin empire, and, consequently an individual of the Latin world; therefore those that have the name of the beast, or the number of his name, are those that are subjects of the Latin empire, or of the numbered Latin empire, viz., who are in subjection to the Latin empire, secular or spiritual. All that were in subjection to the secular or spiritual power were not papists in heart; hence the propriety of distinguishing those which have the mark from those which have the name of the beast or the number of his name. But which of the two beasts it is which God has numbered has been not a little contested. That it is the first beast which is numbered has been the prevailing opinion. On this side are Lord Napier, Whiston, Bishop Newton, Faber, and others. Among those that have supposed the second beast to be the one which is numbered are, Dr. Henry More, Pyle, Kershaw, Galloway, Bicheno, Dr. Hales, etc. Drs. Gill and Reader assert that both beasts have the same number, and that the name is λατεινος. Though it has been demonstrated that the name of the beast is the Latin kingdom, it is impossible from the mere name to say whether it is the Latin empire, SECULAR or SPIRITUAL; hence the necessity of



determining which of the two beasts God has computed. That it is the second beast which is numbered is evident from three different passages in the Apocalypse. The first is in Revelation 13:17, where it is said, “that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.” Here the name of the beast is mentioned before the number of his name, which is a presumptive evidence that the name of the beast refers to the first beast, and the number of his name to the second. The second passage is in Revelation 15:2, where mention is made of “them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name.” That here styled the beast is evidently the secular Latin empire, for it was to this that the two-horned beast made an image; consequently there can be no doubt that the number of his name, or the numbered Latin empire, is the two-horned beast or false prophet. To feel the full force of this argument, it must be considered that the saints of God are represented as getting the victory over the beast as well as over the number of his name, which is a proof that two distinct antichristian empires are here spoken of, for otherwise it would be tautology. That the two-horned beast is the one which is numbered, is farther evident from a comparison of this passage with Revelation 19:20. In the latter passage the words are: “And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image.” Here nothing is said of the number of his name, which is so particularly mentioned in Revelation 15:2, and in that chapter nothing is mentioned of the false prophet, the reason of which can only be, that what is termed in one passage the number of his name, is in its parallel one called the false prophet. Hence the two-horned beast, or false prophet, is also designated by the phrase the number of his name; and consequently it is this beast which is numbered. But what adds the last degree of certainty to this argument is the passage in Revelation 13:18: “Here is wisdom. Let him that hath a mind count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is six hundred threescore and six.” Here is the solution of this mystery: let him that hath a mind for investigations of this kind, find out a kingdom which contains precisely the number 666, for this must be infallibly the name of the beast. ἡ λατινη βασιλεια, THE LATIN KINGDOM, has exclusively this number. But both beasts are called by this name; which is, therefore, the one that is

numbered? It is said the number of the beast is the number of a man; consequently the numbered beast must be A MAN, that is, it must be represented elsewhere in the Revelation under this emblem, for in no other sense can an empire be denominated a man. Therefore, it is not the ten-horned beast, for this is uniformly styled The Beast in every part of the Apocalypse where there has been occasion to mention this power. It can therefore be no other than the two-horned beast, or Romish hierarchy; which, on account of its preaching to the world its most antichristian system of doctrines, and calling it Christianity, is likewise named in Revelation 16:13; 19:20; and Revelation 20:10, THE FALSE PROPHET.

JOHN EDWARD CLARK.

## CHAPTER 14

*The Lamb on mount Sion, and his company and their character, 1-5. The angel flying in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, 6, 7. Another angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, 8. A third angel denounces God's judgments against those who worship the beast or his image, 9-11. The patience of the saints, and the blessedness of them who die in the Lord, 12, 13. The man on the white cloud, with a sickle, reaping the earth, 14-16. The angel with the sickle commanded by another angel, who had power over fire, to gather the clusters of the vines of the earth, 17, 18. They are gathered and thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath, which is trodden without the city, and the blood comes out 1600 furlongs, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 14.

**Verse 1.** *A Lamb stood on the mount Sion* This represents Jesus Christ in his sacrificial office; mount Sion was a type of the Christian Church.

*And with him a hundred forty and four thousand* Representing those who were converted to Christianity from among the Jews. See Revelation 7:4.

*His Father's name written in their foreheads.* They were professedly, openly, and practically, the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Different sects of idolaters have the peculiar mark of their god on their foreheads. This is practised in the east to the present day, and the mark is called the sectarial mark. Between eighty and ninety different figures are found on the foreheads of different Hindoo deities and their followers.

Almost every MS. of importance, as well as most of the versions and many of the fathers, read this clause thus: Having HIS NAME and his Father's name written upon their foreheads. This is undoubtedly the true reading, and is properly received by Griesbach into the text.

**Verse 2. *The voice of many waters*** That is, of multitudes of various nations.

***The voice of harpers*** Though the sounds were many and apparently confused, yet both harmony and melody were preserved.

**Verse 3. *They sung-a new song*** See on Revelation 5:9.

***No man could learn that song*** As none but genuine Christians can worship God acceptably, because they approach him through the only Mediator, so none can understand the deep things of God but such; nor can others know the cause why true believers exult so much in God through Christ, because they know not the communion which such hold with the Father and the Son through the Holy Ghost.

**Verse 4. *These are they which were not defiled with women*** They are pure from idolatry, and are presented as unspotted virgins to their Lord and Savior Christ. See 2 Corinthians 11:2. There may be an allusion here to the Israelites committing idolatry, through the means of their criminal connection with the Midianitish women. See Numbers 25:1-4; 31:16.

***Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth*** They go through good and through evil report, bear his reproach, and love not their lives even to the death.

***The first fruits unto God*** The reference appears to be to those Jews who were the first converts to Christianity.

**Verse 5. *In their mouth was found no guile*** When brought before kings and rulers they did not dissemble, but boldly confessed the Lord Jesus.

**Verse 6. *Another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel*** Whether this angel mean any more than a particular dispensation of providence and grace, by which the Gospel shall be rapidly sent throughout the whole world; or whether it mean any especial messenger, order of preachers, people, or society of Christians, whose professed object it is to send the Gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth, we know not. But the vision seems truly descriptive of a late institution, entitled THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, whose object it is to print and circulate the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through all the habitable world, and in all the languages spoken on the face of the

earth. Already they have been the instruments, by actually printing (or by affording the means to different nations to print for themselves) the Bible in a vast number of languages and dialects, so that it has been sent in hundreds of thousands of copies, in whole or in part, to almost every part of the globe: viz., in their native language to the Welsh; in Erse to the Irish; in Gaelic to the Highlands of Scotland; in Manks to the Isle of Man; in French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish, to those countries and Switzerland; in Low Dutch to Holland, etc.; in High Dutch to Germany, Prussia, etc. Through them a similar society has been established at St. Petersburg, by which the Bible has been sent in Slavonic to the Russians; and in different dialects to the people of that vast empire; besides the Turkish, Tartaric, and Calmuck. They have also sent the Holy Scriptures in ancient and modern Greek to Asia Minor and the different isles of the Mediterranean Sea; in Arabic and Aethiopic to Egypt and Abyssinia; in Syriac to the Holy Land, and to the Christians at Travancore. They have also greatly and effectually assisted a very worthy society in the East Indies, whose indefatigable and incomparable missionaries, the Rev. Messrs. Carey, Marshman, and Ward, have translated the Scriptures into the principal languages of India; and they have furnished the means of printing a complete translation of the New Testament in the Chinese language at Canton, by the Rev. Mr. Morrison. In short, almost every nation in the universe has, through this society, directly or indirectly received, or is receiving, the words of eternal life; so that it appears to answer the description of the Apocalyptic “angel, flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people.”

**Verse 7. *Fear God, and give glory to him*** This is the general language of the sacred writings. Worship the true God, the creator and governor of all things; and give him glory, for to him alone, not to idols or men, all glory and honor belong.

**Verse 8. *Babylon is fallen, is fallen*** This is generally understood to be a prediction concerning Rome; and it is certain that Rome, in the rabbinical writings, is termed Babylon.

***That great city*** Among the same writers this city is styled קרתא רבתיא karta rabbetha, the great city; and רומי רבתיא Romi rabbetha, the great

Rome. But which Rome is meant? Pagan or Papal Rome? Some parts of the description apply best to the former.

***The wine of the wrath of her fornication.*** There is an allusion here to a custom of impure women, who give philtres or love potions to those whom they wish to seduce and bind to their will; and these potions are generally of an intoxicating nature, greatly inflaming the blood, and disturbing the intellect.

Fornication and adultery are frequently used in Scripture as emblems of idolatry and false worship.

The wine of the wrath is another expression for the envenomed or poisoned cup given by such women.

No nation of the earth spread their idolatries so far as the ancient Romans; they were as extensive as their conquests. And papal Rome has been not less active in disseminating her superstitions. She has given her rituals, but not the everlasting Gospel, to most nations of the earth.

**Verse 9. *And the third angel followed*** Bishop Bale considers these three angels as three descriptions of preachers, who should bear their testimony against the corruptions of the papal Church.

***The beast and his image*** See the notes on Revelation 13:1-18.

***Mark in his forehead*** Such as the sectarial marks of the idolatrous Hindoos, as has been observed before.

**Verse 10. *The wine of the wrath of God*** As they have drunk the intoxicating wine of idolatry or spiritual fornication, they shall now drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured out into the cup of his indignation. This is an allusion to the poisoned cup, which certain criminals were obliged to drink, on which ensued speedy death. See on Hebrews 2:9.

***Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone*** An allusion to the punishment of Sodom and Gomorrha for their unnatural crimes.

***Presence of the holy angels, and-of the Lamb*** These being the instruments employed in their destruction; the Lamb — the Lord Jesus Christ, acting as judge.

**Verse 11. *The smoke of their torment*** Still an allusion to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha.

**Verse 12. *Here is the patience of the saints*** Here the faith of the true Christians shall be proved; they will follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, they keep the commandments of God, and are steadfast in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes **η υπομονη**, patience or perseverance, is taken for the reward of these virtues; the text therefore may be thus understood: Here is the reward of the perseverance of the true Christians; for although they die for the testimony of Jesus, yet they shall be unutterably blessed. See the next verse.

**Verse 13. *I heard a voice from heaven*** As the information now to be given was of the utmost importance, it is solemnly communicated by a voice from heaven; and the apostle is commanded to write or record what is said.

***Blessed are the dead*** Happy are they. They are happy in two respects: 1. They do not see the evil that shall come upon the world, and are exempted from any farther sufferings. 2. They actually and conscientiously enjoy happiness in a state of blessedness.

In the first sense, Happy are the dead! is a proverb frequently to be met in the Greek and Roman poets. Ex. gr.

τρεις μακαρες δαναοι και τετρακις, οι τοτ' ολοντο  
τροιη εν ευρειη, χαριν ατρειδησι φεροντες.  
'ως δη εγω' οφελον θανεειν και ποτμον επισπειν  
ηματι τω, οτε μοι πλειστοι χαλκηρεα δουρα  
τρως επερριψαν περι πηλειωνι θανοντι.

ODYSS., lib. v. ver. 306.

*Happy, thrice happy; who, in battle slain,  
Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain:  
O, had I died before that well fought wall;  
Had some distinguished day renown'd my fall,  
Such as was that when showers of javelins fled,  
From conquering Troy, around Achilles dead.*

POPE.

Thus imitated by the prince of the Roman poets:—

*Extemplo AEneae solvuntur frigore membra.  
Ingemit, et, duplices tendens ad sidera palmas,  
Talia voce refert: O terque quaterque beati,  
Queis ante ora patrum Trojae sub moenibus altis  
Contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis  
Tydide, mene Iliacis occumbere campis  
Non potuisse? tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra?  
Saevus ubi AEacidæ telo jacet Hector, ubi ingens  
Sarpedon: ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis  
Scuta virum, galeasque, et fortis corpora volvit.*

VIRG., AEN. i., ver. 93.

*“In horror fix’d the Trojan hero stands,  
He groans, and spreads to heaven his lifted hands.  
Thrice happy those whose fate it was to fall,  
Exclaims the chief, before the Trojan wall!  
O, ‘twas a glorious fate to die in fight!  
To die so bravely in their parents’ sight!  
O, had I there, beneath Tydides’ hand,  
That bravest hero of the Grecian band,  
Pour’d out this soul, with martial glory fired,  
And in the plain triumphantly expired,  
Where Hector fell, by fierce Achilles’ spear,  
And great Sarpedon, the renown’d in war;  
Where Simois’ stream, encumber’d with the slain,  
Rolls shields and helms and heroes to the main.”*

PITT.

**Which die in the Lord** These are the only glorious dead. They die, not in the field of battle, in either what are called lawful or unlawful wars against their fellow men; but they die in the cause of God, they die under the smile and approbation of God, and they die to live and reign with God for ever and ever.

**From henceforth** ἀπαρτι· From this time; now; immediately. This word is joined to the following by many MSS. and some versions. It was a maxim among the Jews, that as soon as the souls of the just departed from this life they ascended immediately to heaven.

**Yea, saith the Spirit** The Holy Spirit confirms the declaration from heaven, and assigns the reasons of it.



*That they may rest from their labors* Have no more tribulation and distress.

*And their works do follow there.* εργα αυτων ακολουθει μετ' αυτων· And their works follow WITH them. They are in company. Here is an elegant prosopopoeia or personification; their good works, sufferings, etc., are represented as so many companions escorting them on their way to the kingdom of God.

There are some good and pertinent things in the Jewish writers on this subject. "Rabbi Jonathan taught, If a man perform one righteous action in this life, it goes before him into the world to come. But if a man commit one crime, it cleaves to him, and drags him to the day of judgment." Sota, fol. 3, 2. Avoda Sara, fol. 5, 1.

"Come and see, If any man observe a precept, that work ascends to God, and says, Such a one performed me. But if a man transgress the law, that sin ascends to the holy blessed God, and says, I came from such a one, who has performed me." Sohar Levit., fol. 34, col. 136. Here the same personification is observed as that in the text.

"In that hour in which a man passes from this life into eternity, all his works precede him; and there they say unto him, 'This and that thou hast done in such a place on such a day.' This he shall acknowledge. They shall require that he shall subscribe this with his own hand, as it is written, Job 37:7; each man shall subscribe with his own hand; and not only this, but he shall acknowledge that the sentence brought against him is most just." Taanith, fol. 11, 1.

The following elegant similitude Schoettgen gives from Sepher Hachayim, Part II., fol. 47, 1, 2. "A certain man had three friends, two of whom he loved; but the third he did not highly esteem. On a time the king commanded him to be called before him; and being alarmed, he sought to find an advocate. He went to that friend whom he loved most, but he utterly refused to go with him. The second offered to go with him as far as the door of the king's palace, but refused to speak a word in his behalf. The third, whom he loved least, not only went with him, but pleaded his cause so well before the king that he was cleared from all blame. In like manner, every man has three friends, when he is cited by death to appear

before God. The first friend, whom he loved most, viz., his money, cannot accompany him at all. His second, viz., his relations and neighbors, accompanied him only to the grave, and then returned; but could not deliver him from the Judge. The third friend, whom he held but in little esteem, viz., the law and his good works, went with him to the king, and delivered him from judgment.” The meaning of this most plainly is, that nothing except the deeds of good and evil men shall accompany them to the judgment-seat of God, and that a man’s lot will be in the other world as his conduct has been in this; Their works follow with them.

**Verse 14. *A white cloud*** It is supposed that, from this verse to the end of the chapter, the destruction of Rome is represented under the symbols of harvest and vintage; images very frequent among the ancient prophets, by which they represented the destruction and excision of nations. See Joel 3:12-14; Isaiah 17:5; 63:1; and Matthew 13:37.

***A golden crown*** In token of victory and regal power.

**Verse 15. *Thrust in thy sickle*** Execute the judgments which God has decreed.

***For the harvest of the earth is ripe.*** The cup of the people’s iniquity is full.

**Verse 16. *The earth was reaped.*** The judgments were executed. But where, or on whom, who can tell?

**Verse 18. *Power over fire*** Probably meaning the same angel which is mentioned, Revelation 8:3; 9:13, who stood by the altar of burnt-offering, having authority over its fire to offer that incense to God which represents the prayers of the saints.

**Verse 19. *The great winepress of the wrath of God.*** The place or kingdom where God executes his judgments on the workers of iniquity, whether pagans or persecuting Christians; Rome pagan, or Rome papal.

**Verse 20. *Even unto the horse bridles*** A hyperbolic expression, to denote a great effusion of blood. The Jews said, “When Hadrian besieged the city called Bitter, he slew so many that the horses waded in blood up to their mouths.” The same kind of hyperbole with that above. See Wetstein on this verse.

*The space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.* It is said that the state of the Church, or St. Peter's patrimony, extends from Rome to the Po, two hundred Italian miles, which make exactly one thousand six hundred furlongs! If this be really so, the coincidence is certainly surprising, and worthy of deep regard.

On these two last verses pious Quesnel thus speaks: "As the favorable sickle of Jesus Christ reaps his wheat when ripe for heaven, so that of the executioners of his justice cuts off from this life the tares which are only fit for the fire of hell. Then shall the blood of Christ cease to be trampled on by sinners; and that of the wicked shall be eternally trodden down in hell, which is the winepress of the wrath of God.

"And the winepress was trodden without the city, eternally without the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, and far from the presence of God; eternally crushed and trodden down by his justice; eternally tormented in body and soul, without any hope either of living or dying! This is the miserable lot and portion of those who shall have despised the law of God, and died in impenitence. My God, pierce my heart with a salutary dread of thy judgments!"

Whatever these passages may mean, this is a prudent and Christian use of them.

## CHAPTER 15

*The seven angels with the seven last plagues, 1. The sea of glass, and those who had a victory over the beast, 2. The song of Moses and the Lamb, 3, 4. The temple in heaven opened, 5. Seven angels come out of the temple, who receive from one of the four living creatures seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, 6-8.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 15.

**Verse 1. *Seven angels having the seven last plagues*** Under the emblems of harvest and vintage God's judgments on the enemies of his Church have already been pointed out: but these are farther signified by the seven vials, which are called the seven last plagues of God. The seven last plagues appear to fall under the seventh and last trumpet. As the seventh seal contained the seven trumpets, so the seventh trumpet contains the seven vials. And as seven angels sounded the seven trumpets, so seven angels are appointed to pour out the seven vials, angels being always the ministers of Providence. This chapter contains the opening vision which is preparatory to the pouring out of the vials.

The Targum of Jonathan on Isaiah 51:17, Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury, uses the same words employed by the evangelist here: "Jerusalem, thou hast received from the face of the Lord the cup of his wrath; כסא דלוטא ית פילי yath pailey casa dilvata, "the PHIALS of the cup of malediction" find again on Isaiah 51:22: I will take out of thy hand the cup of malediction; ית פילי כסא דחמתי yath PAILEY casa dechemti, "the PHIALS of the cup of my indignation."

**Verse 2. *A sea of glass*** A spacious lucid plain around the throne, from which fiery coruscations were continually emitted: or, the reflection of the light upon this lucid plain produced the prismatic colors of the most vivid rainbow.

***Over the beast, and over his image*** See the notes on Revelation 13:1-18.

**Verse 3. *They sing the song of Moses*** That which Moses sang, Exodus 15:1, when he and the Israelites, by the miraculous power of God, had got safely through the Red Sea, and saw their enemies all destroyed.

***And the song of the Lamb*** The same song adapted to the state of the suffering, but now delivered Christians.

***Great and marvellous are thy works*** God's works are descriptive of his infinite power and wisdom.

***Lord God Almighty*** Nearly the same as Jehovah, God of hosts.

***Just and true are thy ways*** Every step God takes in grace or providence is according to justice, and he carefully accomplishes all his threatenings and all his promises; to this he is bound by his truth.

**Verse 4. *Who shall not fear thee*** That is, All should fear and worship this true God, because he is just and true and holy; and his saints should love and obey him, because he is their King; and they and all men should acknowledge his judgments, because they are made manifest.

**Verse 5. *The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony*** The temple which succeeded the tabernacle, in which was the testimony, viz., the two tables, Aaron's rod, pot of manna, holy anointing oil, etc. All bearing testimony to the truth of God and his miraculous interposition in their behalf.

**Verse 6. *The seven angels came out of the temple*** To show that they were sent from God himself.

***Clothed in pure and white linen*** Habited as priests. For these habits see Exodus 28:6, 8; and see the note on Revelation 1:13.

**Verse 8. *The temple was filled with smoke*** So was the tabernacle when consecrated by Moses, Exodus 40:34, 35, and the temple when consecrated by Solomon, 1 Kings 8:10, 11; 2 Chronicles 5:14. See Isaiah 6:4. This account seems at least partly copied from those above.

When the high priest entered into the holy of holies, and the ordinary priest into the holy place, they always carried with them a great deal of smoking incense, which filled those places with smoke and darkness, which prevented them from considering too attentively the parts and ornaments of those holy places, and thus served to produce an air of

majesty in the temple, which none dared to approach without the deepest reverence. To this Calmet thinks the allusion may be here.

## CHAPTER 16

*The angels are commanded to pour out their vials upon the earth, 1. The first pours out his vial on the earth, by which a grievous sore is produced, 2. The second angel pours out his trial on the sea, and it is turned into blood, 3. The third angel pours out his vial on the rivers and fountains, and they are turned also into blood, 4-7. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the sun, and men are scorched with fire, 8, 9. The fifth angel pours out his vial on the throne of the beast, 10, 11. The sixth angel pours out his vial on the river Euphrates, 12. Three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the beast, dragon and false prophet: and go forth to gather all the kings of the world to battle, in the place called Armageddon, 13-16. The seventh angel pours out his vial on the air, on which followed thunders, lightnings, earth-quakes, and extraordinary hail, 17-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 16.

**Verse 1. *Go your ways, and pour out*** These ministers of the Divine justice were ready to execute vengeance upon transgressors, having full power; but could do nothing in this way till they received especial commission. Nothing can be done without the permission of God; and in the manifestation of justice or mercy by Divine agency, there must be positive command.

**Verse 2. *A noisome and grievous sore*** This is a reference to the sixth Egyptian plague, boils and blains, Exodus 9:8, 9, etc.

**Verse 3. *As the blood of a dead man*** Either meaning blood in a state of putrescency, or an effusion of blood in naval conflicts; even the sea was tinged with the blood of those who were slain in these wars. This is most probably the meaning of this vial. These engagements were so sanguinary that both the conquerors and the conquered were nearly destroyed; every living soul died in the sea.

**Verse 4. *Upon the rivers and fountains of waters*** This is an allusion to the first Egyptian plague, Exodus 7:20; and to those plagues in general there are allusions throughout this chapter. It is a sentiment of the rabbins that “whatever plagues God inflicted on the Egyptians in former times, he will inflict on the enemies of his people in all later times.” See a long quotation on this subject from Rabbi Tanchum in Schoettgen.

**Verse 5. *The angel of the waters*** The rabbins attribute angels, not only to the four elements so called, but to almost every thing besides. We have already seen the angel of the bottomless pit, Revelation 9:11, and the angel of the fire, Revelation 14:18. The angel of the earth is spoken of in Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 13, 2, and is called Admael. They have also an angel that presides over the grass; another that presides over the cattle which feed upon the grass.

They say that God employed the angel of the sea to swallow up the waters at the creation, that the dry land might appear. He disobeyed, and God slew him; the name of the angel of the sea is Rahab. See Baba bathra, fol. 74, 2. It is plain from several places that the writer of the Apocalypse keeps these notions distinctly in view.

**Verse 6. *Thou hast given them blood to drink*** They thirsted after blood and massacred the saints of God; and now they have got blood to drink! It is said that when Tomyris, queen of the Scythians, had vanquished Cyrus, she cut off his head and threw it into a vessel of blood, saying these words: *Satia te sanguine, quem sitisti, cujusque insatiabilis semper fuisti*; “Satisfy thyself with blood, for which thou hast thirsted, and for which thy desire has been insatiable.” See Justin. Hist., lib. i. c. 8. This figure of speech is called sarcasm in rhetoric.

“Sarcasmus with this biting taunt doth kill:

Cyrus, thy thirst was blood; now drink thy fill.”

**Verse 8. *Poured out his vial upon the sun*** Mr. Robert Fleming, more than one hundred years ago, in his View of Scripture Prophecy, supposed that the sun here meant the French empire, and conjectured that this vial would be poured out on that empire about the year 1794. And it is remarkable that in 1793 the French king was beheaded by the National Assembly; and great and unparalleled miseries fell upon the French nation,



which nearly extinguished all their nobility, and brought about a war that lasted twenty-three years, and nearly ruined that country and all the nations of Europe.

**Verse 9. *They repented not*** No moral national amendment has taken place in consequence of the above calamities in that unhappy country, nor indeed any of those nations engaged against her in that long and ruinous contest, which has now terminated, (1817,) without producing one political, moral, or religious advantage to herself or to Europe.

**Verse 10. *The seat of the beast*** *επι τον θρονον του θηριου* Upon the throne of the wild beast. The regal family was smitten by the fourth vial; they did not repent: then the fifth angel pours out his vial on the throne of the wild beast, or antichristian idolatrous power.

***Was full of darkness*** Confusion, dismay, and distress.

**Verse 11. *Blasphemed the God of heaven*** Neither did they repent; therefore other judgments must follow. Some think that the sun was Vitellius, the Roman emperor, and that his throne means Rome; and the darkening refers to the injuries she sustained in her political consequence by the civil wars which then took place, from which she never entirely recovered. Others apply it all to papal Rome, and in this respect make out a very clear case! Thus have men conjectured, but how much nearer are we to the truth?

**Verse 12. *Upon the great river Euphrates*** Probably meaning the people in the vicinity of this river; though some think that the Tiber is intended.

***The water thereof was dried up*** The people discomfited, and all impediments removed.

***The kings of the east*** There seems to be an allusion here to the ruin of Babylon by Cyrus, predicted by the Prophet Jeremiah, Jeremiah 50:1-51:64. But what city or people is pointed out by this Babylon it is in vain to conjecture.

**Verse 13. *Three unclean spirits*** Perhaps false teachers, called afterwards spirits of devils, which persuade the kings of the earth by lying miracles to come forth to the place of general slaughter, Revelation 16:14, 16,

Some good critics apply this to Vespasian, and his pretended miracles. See the account in Tacitus, lib. iv. c. 81.

**Verse 15. *Behold, I come as a thief.*** Here is a sudden but timely warning to put every man on his guard, when this sudden and generally unexpected tribulation should take place.

***Keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked*** Here is a plain allusion to the office of him who was called the prefect or overseer, of the mountain of the temple. His custom was to go his rounds during the watches of the night; and if he found any of the Levites sleeping on his watch, he had authority to beat him with a stick, and burn his vestments. See Middoth, fol. 34, 1, and Tamid. fol. 27, 2; 28, 1. Such a person being found on his return home naked, it was at once known that he had been found asleep at his post, had been beaten, and his clothes burnt; thus his shame was seen—he was reproached for his infidelity and irreligion.

**Verse 16. *Armageddon.*** The original of this word has been variously formed, and variously translated. It is **הַר מְגִדּוֹ** har-megiddon, “the mount of the assembly;” or **חֹרְמַה גְּדֵהוּ** chormah gedehon, “the destruction of their army;” or it is **הַר מְגִדּוֹ** har-megiddo, “Mount Megiddo,” the valley of which was remarkable for two great slaughters: one of the Israelites, 2 Kings 23:29, the other of the Canaanites, Judges 4:16; 5:19. But Mount Megiddo, that is Carmel, is the place, according to some, where these armies should be collected.

But what is the battle of Armageddon? How ridiculous have been the conjectures of men relative to this point! Within the last twenty years this battle has been fought at various places, according to our purblind seers and self-inspired prophets! At one time it was Austerlitz, at another Moscow, at another Leipsic, and now Waterloo! And thus they have gone on, and will go on, confounding and being confounded.

**Verse 17. *Poured out his vial into the air*** To signify that this plague was to be widely diffused, and perhaps to intimate that pestilences and various deaths would be the effect of this vial. But possibly air in this place may have some emblematical meaning.

***It is done.*** It is said, Revelation 10:7, that in the days of the seventh trumpet the mystery of God should be finished; so here we find it completed. **γεγονε**· All's over! Fuimus Troes! Ilium fuit! Once there were Trojans, and they had a city; but now all are extinct.

**Verse 18. *A great earthquake*** Most terrible commotions, both civil and religious. Or a convulsion, shaking, or revolution.

**Verse 19. *The great city*** Some say Jerusalem, others Rome pagan, others Rome papal.

***The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.*** Alluding to the mode of putting certain criminals to death, by making them drink a cup of poison. See on Hebrews 2:9.

**Verse 20. *Every island fled away*** Probably meaning the capture of seaport towns, and fortified places.

**Verse 21. *A great hail-about the weight of a talent*** Has this any reference to cannon balls and bombs? It is very doubtful; we are all in the dark in these matters.

The words **ως ταλαντιαια**, as a talent, are used to express something great, excessively oppressive; as **νοσηματων ταλαντιαιων**, terrible diseases, not diseases of the weight of a talent. See Rosenmuller.

## CHAPTER 17

*The judgment of the great whore, which sits on many waters, 1, 2. Her description, name, and conduct, 3-6. The angel explains the mystery of the woman, of the beast, etc., 7-18.*

This chapter is, on several accounts, very important, and particularly as it appears to explain several of the most remarkable symbols in the book. The same author who has written so largely on the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, has also obliged me with his interpretation of this chapter. Not pretending to explain these things myself, I insert this as the most elaborate and learned exposition I have yet seen, leaving my readers at perfect liberty to reject it, and adopt any other mode of interpretation which they please. God alone knows all the secrets of his own wisdom.

**Verse 1.** *And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters* That idolatrous worship is frequently represented in Scripture under the character of a whore or whoredom, is evident from numerous passages which it is unnecessary to quote. See 1 Chronicles 5:25; Ezekiel 16:1-63; 23:1-49, etc. The woman mentioned here is called a great whore, to denote her excessive depravity, and the artful nature of her idolatry. She is also represented as sitting upon many waters, to show the vast extent of her influence. See on Revelation 17:13.

**Verse 2.** *With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.* What an awful picture this is of the state of the religion of the world in subjection to this whore! Kings have committed spiritual fornication with her, and their subjects have drunk deep, dreadfully deep, into the doctrine of her abominable errors.

**Verse 3.** *So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness* This wilderness into which the apostle was carried is the desolate state of the true Church of Christ, in one of the wings of the once mighty Roman

empire. It was a truly awful sight, a terrible desert, a waste howling wilderness; for when he came hither he:—

***Saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.*** No doubt can now be entertained that this woman is the Latin Church, for she sits upon the beast with seven heads and ten horns, which has been already proved to be the Latin empire, because this empire alone contains the number 666. See on Revelation 13:18. This is a representation of the Latin Church in her highest state of antichristian prosperity, for she SITS UPON the scarlet coloured beast, a striking emblem of her complete domination over the secular Latin empire. The state of the Latin Church from the commencement of the fourteenth century to the time of the Reformation may be considered that which corresponds to this prophetic description in the most literal and extensive sense of the words; for during this period she was at her highest pitch of worldly grandeur and temporal authority. The beast is full of names of blasphemy; and it is well known that the nations, in support of the Latin or Romish Church, have abounded in blasphemous appellations, and have not blushed to attribute to themselves and to their Church the most sacred titles, not only blaspheming by the improper use of sacred names, but even by applying to its bishop those names which alone belong to God; for God hath expressly declared that he will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images.

***Verse 4. And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet color, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication*** This strikingly represents the most pompous and costly manner in which the Latin Church has held forth to the nations the rites and ceremonies of its idolatrous and corrupt worship.

***Verse 5. And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.*** This inscription being written upon her forehead is intended to show that she is not ashamed of her doctrines, but publicly professes and glories in them before the nations: she has indeed a whore's forehead, she has refused to be ashamed. The inscription upon her forehead is exactly the portraiture of the Latin Church. This Church is, as Bishop Newton well expresses it, A

MYSTERY of iniquity. This woman is also called Babylon the Great; she is the exact antitype of the ancient Babylon in her idolatry and cruelty, but the ancient city called Babylon is only a drawing of her in miniature. This is indeed Babylon THE GREAT. “She affects the style and title of our HOLY MOTHER, the CHURCH; but she is, in truth, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth.”

**Verse 6.** *And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.* How exactly the cruelties exercised by the Latin Church against all it has denominated heretics correspond with this description, the reader need not be informed.

**Verse 7.** *And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel! I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carried her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.* The apostle was greatly astonished, as well he might be, at the woman’s being drunk with the blood of the saints, when the beast which carried her abounded with sacred appellations, such as holy, most holy, most Christian, sacred, most sacred. The angel undertakes to explain to St. John the vision which had excited in him so great astonishment; and the explication is of such great importance, that, had it not been given, the mystery of the dragon and the beast could never have been satisfactorily explained in all its particulars. The angel begins with saying:—

**Verse 8.** *The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition* The beast is the Latin kingdom; (ἡ λατινὴ βασιλεία;) consequently the beast was, that is, was in existence previously to the time of St. John; (for Latinus was the first king of the Latins, and Numitor the last;) is not now, because the Latin nation has ceased long ago to be an independent power, and is now under the dominion of the Romans; but shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, that is, the Latin kingdom, the antichristian power, or that which ascendeth out of the abyss or bottomless pit, is yet in futurity. But it is added:—

*And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names there not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.* By the earth is here meant the Latin world; therefore the meaning is, that all who dwell in the

Latin world shall adhere to the idolatrous and blasphemous religion of the Latin Church, which is supported by the Latin empire, except those who abide by the sacred Scriptures, receiving them as the only rule of faith and practice. These believe in the true Sacrifice, and keep themselves unspotted from the corruption that is in the world. But the inhabitants of the Latin world, under the dominion of the Romish religion, shall wonder when they behold the beast, or Latin empire; that is, as Lord Napier remarks, “shall have in great admiration, reverence, and estimation, this great monarchie.” They shall wonder at it, by considering it the most sacred empire in the world, that in which God peculiarly delights; but those that so wonder have not their names written in the book of life, but are such as prefer councils to Divine revelation, and take their religion from missals, rituals, and legends, instead of the sacred oracles: hence they are corrupt and idolatrous, and no idolater hath inheritance in the kingdom of God. In the preceding part of the verse the beast is considered in three states, as that which was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit; here a fourth is introduced, and yet is. This is added to show that, though the Latins were subjugated by the Romans, nevertheless the Romans themselves were Latins; for Romulus the founder of their monarchy, was a Latin; consequently that denominated in St. John’s days the Roman empire was, in reality, the Latin kingdom; for the very language of the empire was the Latin, and the Greek writers, who lived in the time of the Roman empire, expressly tell us that those formerly called Latins are now named Romans. The meaning of the whole verse is therefore as follows: The corrupt part of mankind shall have in great admiration the Latin empire yet in futurity, which has already been, but is now extinct, the Romans having conquered it; and yet is still in being; for, though the Latin nation has been subjugated, its conquerors are themselves Latins. But it may be objected against the interpretation here given, that these phrases are spoken of the beast upon which the apostle saw the woman, or Latin Church, sit; for the angel says, The beast that THOU SAWEST was, and is not, etc.; what reference, therefore, can the Latin empire, which supports the Latin Church, have to the Latin kingdom which subsisted before St. John’s time, or to the Roman empire which might properly be so denominated! This objection has very great weight at first sight, and cannot be answered satisfactorily till the angel’s explanation of the heads and horns of the beast have been examined; therefore it is added:—

**Verse 9. *Here is the mind which hath wisdom.*** It was said before, Revelation 13:18, Here is wisdom. Let him that hath A MIND, or understanding, (*vovv*,) count the number of the beast. Wisdom, therefore, here means a correct view of what is intended by the number 666; consequently the parallel passage, Here is THE MIND which hath WISDOM, is a declaration that the number of the beast must first be understood, before the angel's interpretation of the vision concerning the whore and the beast can admit of a satisfactory explanation.

***The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.*** This verse has been almost universally considered to allude to the seven hills upon which Rome originally stood. But it has been objected that modern Rome is not thus situated, and that, consequently, pagan Rome is intended in the prophecy. This is certainly a very formidable objection against the generally received opinion among Protestants, that papal Rome is the city meant by the woman sitting upon seven mountains. It has been already shown that the woman here mentioned is an emblem of the Latin Church in her highest state of antichristian prosperity; and therefore the city of Rome, seated upon seven mountains, is not at all designed in the prophecy. In order to understand this scripture aright, the word mountains must be taken in a figurative and not a literal sense, as in Revelation 6:14; 16:20. See also Isaiah 2:2, 14; Jeremiah 51:25; Daniel 2:35, etc.; in which it is unequivocally the emblem of great and mighty power. The mountains upon which the woman sitteth must be, therefore, seven great powers; and as the mountains are heads of the beast, they must be the seven GREATEST eminences of the Latin world. As no other power was acknowledged at the head of the Latin empire but that of Germany, how can it be said that the beast has seven heads? This question can only be solved by the feudal constitution of the late Germanic league, the history of which is briefly as follows: At first kings alone granted fiefs. They granted them to laymen only, and to such only who were free; and the vassal had no power to alienate them. Every freeman, and particularly the feudal tenants, were subject to the obligation of military duty, and appointed to guard their sovereign's life, member, mind, and right honor. Soon after, or perhaps a little before, the extinction of the Carolingian dynasty in France, by the accession of the Capetian line, and in Germany by the accession of the house of Saxony, fiefs, which had been entirely at the disposal of the



sovereign, became hereditary. Even the offices of duke, count, margrave, etc., were transmitted in the course of hereditary descent; and not long after, the right of primogeniture was universally established. The crown vassals usurped the sovereign property of the land, with civil and military authority over the inhabitants. The possession thus usurped they granted out to their immediate tenants; and these granted them over to others in like manner. Thus the principal vassals gradually obtained every royal prerogative; they promulgated laws, exercised the power of life and death, coined money, fixed the standard of weights and measures, granted safeguards, entertained a military force, and imposed taxes, with every right supposed to be annexed to royalty. In their titles they styled themselves dukes, etc., *Dei gratis*, by the grace of God; a prerogative avowedly confined to sovereign power. It was even admitted that, if the king refused to do the lord justice, the lord might make war upon him. The tenants, in their turn, made themselves independent of their vassal lords, by which was introduced an ulterior state of vassalage. The king was called the sovereign lord, his immediate vassal was called the suzerain, and the tenants holding of him were called the arrere vassals. See Butler's *Revolutions of the Germanic Empire*, pp. 54-66. Thus the power of the emperors of Germany, which was so very considerable in the ninth century, was gradually diminished by the means of the feudal system; and during the anarchy of the long interregnum, occasioned by the interference of the popes in the election of the emperors, (from 1256 to 1273,) the imperial power was reduced almost to nothing. Rudolph of Hapsburg, the founder of the house of Austria, was at length elected emperor, because his territories and influence were so inconsiderable as to excite no jealousy in the German princes, who were willing to preserve the forms of constitution, the power and vigor of which they had destroyed. See Robertson's *Introduction to his History of Charles V.* Before the dissolution of the empire in 1806, Germany "presented a complex association of principalities more or less powerful, and more or less connected with a nominal sovereignty in the emperor, as its supreme feudal chief." "There were about three hundred princes of the empire, each sovereign in his own country, who might enter into alliances, and pursue by all political measures his own private interest, as other sovereigns do; for if even an imperial war were declared he might remain neuter, if the safety of the empire were not at stake. Here then was an empire of a

construction, without exception, the most singular and intricate that ever appeared in the world; for the emperor was only the chief of the Germanic confederation." Germany was, therefore, speaking in the figurative language of Scripture, a country abounding in hills, or containing an immense number of distinct principalities. But the different German states (as has been before observed) did not each possess an equal share of power and influence; some were more eminent than others. Among them were also a few which might, with the greatest propriety, be denominated mountains, or states possessing a very high degree of political importance. But the seven mountains on which the woman sits must have their elevations above all the other eminences in the whole Latin world; consequently, they can be no other than the SEVEN ELECTORATES of the German empire. These were, indeed, mountains of vast eminence; for in their sovereigns was vested the sole power of electing the head of the empire. But this was not all; for besides the power of electing an emperor, the electors had a right to capitulate with the new head of the empire, to dictate the conditions on which he was to reign, and to depose him if he broke those conditions. They actually deposed Adolphus of Nassau in 1298, and Wenceslaus in 1400. They were sovereign and independent princes in their respective dominions, had the privilegium de non appellando illimitatum, that of making war, coining, and exercising every act of sovereignty; they formed a separate college in the diet of the empire, and had among themselves a particular covenant or league called Kurverein; they had precedence of all the other princes of the empire, and even ranked with kings. The heads of the beast understood in this way, is one of the finest emblems of the German constitution which can possibly be conceived; for as the Roman empire of Germany had the precedence of all the other monarchies of which the Latin empire was composed, the seven mountains very fitly denote the seven PRINCIPAL powers of what has been named the holy Roman empire. And also, as each electorate, by virtue of its union with the Germanic body, was more powerful than any other Roman Catholic state of Europe not so united; so was each electorate, in the most proper sense of the word, one of the highest elevations in the Latin world. The time when the seven electorates of the empire were first instituted is very uncertain. The most probable opinion appears to be that which places their origin some time in the thirteenth century. The uncertainty, however, in this respect, does not in the least weaken the

evidence of the mountains being the seven electorates, but rather confirms it; for, as we have already observed, the representation of the woman sitting upon the beast is a figure of the Latin Church in the period of her greatest authority, spiritual and temporal; this we know did not take place before the commencement of the fourteenth century, a period subsequent to the institution of the seven electorates. Therefore the woman sits upon the seven mountains, or the German empire in its elective aristocratical state; she is said to sit upon them, to denote that she has the whole German empire under her direction and authority, and also that it is her chief support and strength. Supported by Germany, she is under no apprehension of being successfully opposed by any other power: she sits upon the seven mountains, therefore she is higher than the seven highest eminences of the Latin world; she must therefore have the secular Latin empire under her complete subjection. But this state of eminence did not continue above two or three centuries; the visible declension of the papal power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, occasioned partly by the removal of the papal see from Rome to Avignon, and more particularly by the great schism from 1377 to 1417, though considered one of the remote causes of the Reformation, was at first the means of merely transferring the supreme power from the pope to a general council, while the dominion of the Latin Church remained much the same. At the council of Constance, March 30, 1415, it was decreed “that the synod being lawfully assembled in the name of the Holy Ghost, which constituted the general council, and represented the whole Catholic Church militant, had its power immediately from Jesus Christ; and that every person, of whatsoever state or dignity, **EVEN THE POPE HIMSELF** is obliged to obey it in what concerns the faith, the extirpation of schism, and the general reformation of the Church in its head and members.” The council of Basil of 1432 decreed “that every one of whatever dignity or condition, **NOT EXCEPTING THE POPE HIMSELF**, who shall refuse to obey the ordinances and decrees of this general council, or any other, shall be put under penance, and punished. It is also declared that the pope has no power to dissolve the general council without the consent and decree of the assembly.” See the third tome of Du Pin’s Ecclesiastical History. But what gave the death blow to the temporal sovereignty of the Latin Church was the light of the glorious reformation which first broke out in Germany in 1517, and in a very few years gained its way, not only over several of the great principalities in Germany, but

was also made the established religion of other popish countries. Consequently, in the sixteenth century, the woman no longer sat upon the seven mountains, the electorates not only having refused to be ruled by her, but some of them having also despised and abandoned her doctrines. The changes, therefore, which were made in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, in the number of the electorates, will not affect in the least the interpretation of the seven mountains already given. The seven electors were the archbishops of Mentz, Cologne, and Triers, the count palatine of the Rhine, the duke of Saxony, the marquis of Brandenburg, and the king of Bohemia. But the heads of the beast have a double signification; for the angel says:—

**Verse 10.** *And there are seven kings* και βασιλεις επτα εισιν· They are also seven kings. Before, it was said, they are seven mountains; here, they are also seven kings, which is a demonstration that kingdoms are not here meant by mountains: and this is a farther argument that the seven electorates are represented by seven mountains, for though the sovereigns of these states ranked with kings, they were not kings: that is to say, they were not absolute and sole lords of the territories they possessed, independently of the emperor, for their states formed a part of the Germanic body. But the seven heads of the beast are also seven kings, that is to say, the Latin empire has had seven supreme forms of government; for king is used in the prophetic writings for any supreme governor of a state or people, as is evident from Deuteronomy 33:5, where Moses is called a king. Of these seven kings, or supreme forms of Latin government, the angel informs St. John:—

***Five are fallen, and one is*** It is well known that the first form of Latin government was that of kings, which continued after the death of Latinus 428 years, till the building of Rome, B.C. 753. After Numitor's decease the Albans or Latins instituted the form of a republic, and were governed by dictators. We have only the names of two, viz., Cluilius and Metius Fufetius or Suffetius; but as the dictatorship continued at least eighty-eight years, there might have been others, though their names and actions are unknown. In the year before Christ 665 Alba, the metropolis of the Latin nation, was destroyed by Tullus Hostilius, the third king of the Romans, and the inhabitants carried to Rome. This put an end to the monarchical republic of the Latins; and the Latins elected two annual magistrates,

whom Licinius calls dictators, but who are called praetors by other writers. This form of government continued till the time of P. Decius Mus, the Roman consul; for Festus, in his fourteenth book, informs us “that the Albans enjoyed prosperity till the time of King Tullus; but that, Alba being then destroyed, the consuls, till the time of P. Decius Mus, held a consultation with the Latins at the head of Ferentina, and the empire was governed by the council of both nations.” The Latin nation was entirely subjugated by the Romans B.C. 336, which put an end to the government by praetors, after it had continued upwards of three hundred years. The Latins from this time ceased to be a nation, as it respects the name; therefore the three forms of government already mentioned were those which the Latins had during that period which the angel speaks of, when he says, The beast which thou sawest WAS. But as five heads, or forms of government, had fallen before St. John’s time, it is evident that the two other forms of government which had fallen must be among those of the Romans; first, because though the Latin nation so called, was deprived of all authority by the Romans, yet the Latin power continued to exist, for the very conquerors of the Latin nation were Latins; and, consequently the Latins, though a conquered people, continued to have a LATIN government. Secondly, the angel expressly says, when speaking to St. John, that one is, that is, the sixth head, or Latin form of government, was then in existence; which could be no other than the imperial power, this being the only independent form of Latin government in the apostolic age. It therefore necessarily follows, that the Roman forms of government by which Latium was ruled must be the remaining heads of the beast. Before the subjugation of the Latins by the Romans four of the Roman or draconic forms of government had fallen, the regal power, the dictatorship, the decemvirate, and the consular power of the military tribunes, the last of which was abolished about 366 years before the commencement of the Christian era; none of these, therefore, ruled over the WHOLE Latin nation. But as the Latins were finally subdued about 336 B.C., the consular government of the Romans, which was then the supreme power in the state, must be the fourth head of the beast. This form of government continued, with very little interruption, till the rising up of the triumvirate, the fifth head of the beast, B.C. 43. The dictatorship of Sylla and Julius Caesar could not be considered a new head of the beast, as the Latins had already been ruled by it in the persons of Cluilius and Fufetius. The sixth head of the beast, or

that which existed in the time of St. John, was consequently, as we have already proved, the imperial power of the heathen Caesars, or the seventh draconic form of government.

*And the other is not yet come* Bishop Newton considers the Roman dutchy, under the eastern emperor's lieutenant, the exarch of Ravenna, the seventh head of the beast. But this cannot be the form of government signified by the seventh head, for a head of the beast as we have already shown, is a supreme, independent form of Latin government; consequently the Roman dutchy cannot be the seventh head, as it was dependent upon the exarchate of Ravenna; and the exarchate cannot be the head, as it was itself in subjection to the Greek empire. The Rev. G. Faber has ascertained the truth exactly in denominating the Carlovingian patriciate the seventh head of the beast. That this was a supreme, independent form of government, is evident from history. Gibbon, in speaking of the patriciate, observes that "the decrees of the senate and people successively invested Charles Martel and his posterity with the honors of patrician of Rome. The leaders of a powerful nation would have disdained a servile title and subordinate office; but the reign of the Greek emperors was suspended, and in the vacancy of the empire they derived a more glorious commission from the pope and the republic. The Roman ambassadors presented these patricians with the keys of the shrine of St. Peter as a pledge and symbol of sovereignty, and with a holy banner, which it was their right and duty to unfurl in defense of the Church and city. In the time of Charles Martel and of Pepin, the interposition of the Lombard kingdom covered the freedom, while it threatened the safety of Rome; and the patriciate represented only the title, the service, the alliance, of these distant protectors. The power and policy of Charlemagne annihilated an enemy, and imposed a master. In his first visit to the capital he was received with all the honors which had formerly been paid to the exarch, the representative of the emperor; and these honors obtained some new decorations from the joy and gratitude of Pope Adrian I. In the portico Adrian expected him at the head of his clergy; they embraced as friends and equals; but in their march to the altar, the king, or patrician, assumed the right hand of the pope. Nor was the Frank content with these vain and empty demonstrations of respect. In the twenty-six years that elapsed between the conquest of Lombardy and his imperial coronation, Rome,

which had been delivered by the sword, was subject, as his own, to the scepter of Charlemagne. The people swore allegiance to his person and family, in his name money was coined and justice was administered, and the election of the popes was examined and confirmed by his authority. Except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining which the title of emperor could add to the patrician of Rome.” The seven heads of the beast are therefore the following: The regal power, the dictatorship, the power of the praetors, the consulate, the triumvirate, the imperial power, and the patriciate.

*And when he cometh, he must continue a short space.* The seventh form of government was only to remain a short time, which was actually the case; for from its first rise to independent power to its utter extinction, there passed only about forty-five years, a short time in comparison to the duration of several of the preceding forms of government; for the primitive regal government continued at least four hundred and twenty-eight years, the dictatorship was in power about eighty-eight years, the power of the praetors was in being for upwards of three hundred years, the consulate lasted about two hundred and eighty years, and the imperial power continued upwards of five hundred years.

**Verse 11.** *And the beast, that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.* That is to say, the Latin kingdom that has already been, but is now no longer nominally in existence, shall immediately follow the dissolution of the seventh form of Latin government; and this dominion is called *ογδοος*, an eighth, because it succeeds to the seventh. Yet it is not an eighth head of the beast, because the beast has only seven heads; for to constitute a new head of the beast the form of government must not only differ in nature, but also in name. This head of the beast is, therefore, *εκ των επτα*, ONE of the seven. Consequently the form of government represented by this head is the restoration of one of the preceding seven. The restored head can be therefore no other than the regal state of the Latins, or in other words the Latin kingdom, (*ἡ λατινη βασιλεια*,) which followed the patriciate or seventh head of Latin government. But the beast in his eighth state, or under his first head restored, goeth into perdition. No other form of Latin government shall succeed; but the beast in his last or antichristian condition shall be taken together with the false prophet that wrought

miracles in his sight, “and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone.”

It is observable that the eighth Latin power is called by the angel the beast, and also one of his heads. This apparent discordance arises from the double signification of the heads, for if we take the beast upon which the woman sits to be merely a representation of that secular power which supports the Latin Church, then the seven heads will represent the seven electorates of the Germanic empire; but if by the beast we understand the general Latin empire from first to last, then what is, according to the angel’s first interpretation of the heads, called the beast, is in this case only one of his heads. See on Revelation 17:18.

**Verse 12.** *And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.* The meaning of horns has already been defined when speaking of those of the dragon. The meaning is therefore as follows: Though the Latin empire be now in existence, the ten horns refer to ten Latin kingdoms yet in futurity, and consequently they have received no dominion AS YET; for that part of the Latin domination now in power is the sixth head, or imperial government of the heathen Caesars. But the ten states of the Latins receive dominion as monarchies  $\mu\iota\alpha\nu\ \omega\rho\alpha\nu$ , one time, (as it may be properly translated,) i.e., at the same time with the beast, or that which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit; consequently, the Latin empire here intended is the one which was in futurity in the apostolic age.

**Verse 13.** *These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.* Therefore the ten horns must constitute the principal strength of the Latin empire; that is to say, this empire is to be composed of the dominions of ten monarchs independent of each other in every other sense except in their implicit obedience to the Latin Church. The beast in this and the preceding verse is distinguished from its horns, as the WHOLE Latin empire is distinguished in history from its constituent powers. See on Revelation 17:16.

**Verse 14.** *These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and, faithful.* The ten powers of the beast must compose the secular kingdom of antichrist, for they make



war with the Lamb, who is Christ Jesus. This is perfectly true of all popish states, for they have constantly opposed, as long as they have had any secular power, the progress of pure Christianity. They make war with the Lamb by persecuting his followers; but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings — all lords have their authority from him, and no king can reign without him; therefore the ten Latin kings are God's ministers to execute his vengeance upon the idolatrous nations. But when these antichristian monarchies have executed the Divine purpose, those that are with the Lamb—the called, the chosen, and the faithful, those who have kept THE TRUTH in the love of it, shall prevail against all their adversaries, because their battles are fought by the Lamb, who is their God and Deliverer. See Revelation 19:19, 20.

**Verse 15.** *And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.* “So many words,” Bishop Newton observes, “in the plural number, fitly denote the great extensiveness of her power and jurisdiction. She herself glories in the title of the Catholic Church, and exults in the number of her votaries as a certain proof of the true religion. Cardinal Bellarmin's first note of the true Church is, the very name of the Catholic Church; and his fourth note is, amplitude, or multitude, and variety of believers; for the truly Catholic Church, says he, ought not only to comprehend all ages, but likewise all places, all nations, all kinds of men.”

**Verse 16.** *And the ten horns which thou sowest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.* Here is a clue to lead us to the right interpretation of the horns of the beast. It is said the TEN horns shall hate the whore; by which is evidently meant, when connected with what follows, that the whole of the ten kingdoms in the interest of the Latin Church shall finally despise her doctrines, be reformed from popery, assist in depriving her of all influence and in exposing her follies, and in the end consign her to utter destruction. From this it follows that no Roman Catholic power which did not exist so late as the Reformation can be numbered among the horns of the beast; the horns must, therefore, be found among the great states of Europe at the commencement of the Reformation. These were exactly ten, viz., France, Spain, England, Scotland, The Empire, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Portugal.

In these were comprehended most of the minor states not styled monarchies, and which, from their first rise to the period of the Reformation, had been subdued by one or more of the ten grand Roman Catholic powers already named. Consequently, these ten constituted the power and strength of the beast; and each minor state is considered a part of that monarchy under the authority of which it was finally reduced previously to the Reformation.

But it may be asked, How could the empire, which was the revived head of the beast, have been at the same time one of its horns? The answer is as follows: Horns of an animal, in the language of prophecy, represent the powers of which that empire or kingdom symbolized by the animal is composed. Thus the angel, in his interpretation of Daniel's vision of the ram and he-goat expressly informs us that "the ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." One of the horns of the ram, therefore, represented the kingdom of Media, and the other the kingdom of Persia; and their union in one animal denoted the united kingdom of Media and Persia, viz., the Medo-Persian empire. In like manner the beast with ten horns denotes that the empire represented by the beast is composed of ten distinct powers, and the ten horns being united in one beast very appropriately show that the monarchies symbolized by these horns are united together to form one empire; for we have already shown, in the notes on Revelation 13:1, that a beast is the symbol of an empire. Therefore, as the horns of an animal, agreeably to the angel's explanation, (and we can have no higher authority,) represent all the powers of which that domination symbolized by the animal is composed, the Roman empire of Germany, as one of those monarchies which gave their power and strength to the Latin empire, must consequently have been A HORN of the beast. But the Germanic empire was not only a LATIN power, but at the same time was acknowledged by all Europe to have precedency of all the others. Therefore, as it is not possible to express these two circumstances by one symbol, it necessarily follows, from the nature of symbolical language, that what has been named the holy Roman empire must have a double representation. Hence the empire, as one of the powers of the Latin monarchy, was a horn of the beast, and in having precedency of all the others was its revived head. See a similar explanation of the tail of the dragon in the notes on Revelation 12:4.

**Verse 17.** *For God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.* Let no one imagine that these ten Latin kingdoms, because they support an idolatrous worship, have been raised up merely by the power of man or the chances of war. No kingdom or state can exist without the will of God; therefore let the inhabitants of the world tremble when they see a wicked monarchy rise to power, and let them consider that it is raised up by the Lord to execute his vengeance upon the idolatries and profligacies of the times. It is said of the kings in communion with the Church of Rome, that God hath put in their hearts to fulfill his will. How is this Divine will accomplished? In the most awful and afflictive manner! In causing ten Latin kings to unite their dominions into one mighty empire for the defense of the Latin Church. Here is a dreadful dispensation of Jehovah; but it is such as the nations have most righteously deserved, because when they had the truth they lived not according to its most holy requisitions, but loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Therefore hath “the Lord sent them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness.” But this deplorable state of the world is not perpetual, it can only continue till every word of God is fulfilled upon his enemies; and when this time arrives, (which will be that of Christ’s second advent,) then shall the Son of God slay that wicked “with the spirit of his mouth, and shall consume him with the brightness of HIS COMING.”

**Verse 18.** *And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.* It has already been shown that the woman sitting upon the seven-headed beast is a representation of the Latin Church; here we have the greatest assurance that it is so, because the woman is called a city, which is a much plainer emblem of a Church, as the word is used unequivocally in this sense in so many parts of Scripture that we cannot well mistake its meaning. See Revelation 3:12; 11:2; 21:10; 22:19; and also Psalm 46:4; 87:3; Hebrews 12:22, etc. The woman therefore must be the Latin Church; and as the apostle saw her sitting upon the beast, this must signify that **ἡ ἐχουσα βασιλειαν**, she hath A KINGDOM over the kings of the earth, i.e., over the kings of the Latin world, for that this is the meaning of earth has been shown before in numerous instances. That KINGDOM which the woman has over the kings

of the Latin world, or secular Latin empire, or in other words THE KINGDOM of the Latin Church, is the numbered Latin kingdom or Romish hierarchy. See on Revelation 13:18. The woman is also called a GREAT city, to denote the very great extent of her jurisdiction; for she has comprehended within her walls the subjects of the mighty dominations of France, Spain, England, Scotland, The Empire, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Portugal. What an extensive city was this! Surely such as to justify the prophetic denomination, that GREAT city.

HAVING now gone through the whole of the angel's interpretation of St. John's vision of a whore sitting upon the seven-headed and ten-horned beast, it will be essentially necessary to examine a little more attentively the eighth verse of this chapter. {Revelation 17:8} It has already been shown that the phrases, was, is not, shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and yet is, refer to the Latin kingdom which existed before the building of Rome, to the Roman empire in the time of St. John, and to the Latin empire which was in futurity in the apostolic age. But as the words was, is not, etc., are spoken of the beast upon which the apostle saw the woman, or Latin Church, sit; how can it be said of this beast that it had an existence before the date of the Apocalypse, when the woman whom it carried was not in being till long after this period? And what connection has the Latin empire of the middle ages with that which derived its name from Latinus, king of the Aborigines, and was subjugated by the ancient Romans; or even with that which existed in the time of the apostle? The answer is as follows: St. John saw the beast upon which the woman sat with all his seven heads and ten horns. Consequently, as the angel expressly says that five of these seven heads had already fallen in the time of the vision, it therefore necessarily follows that the apostle must have seen that part of the Latin empire represented by the seven-headed beast which had already been under the emblem of five heads. Therefore the woman sat upon the beast that WAS. But it is plain from the angel's interpretation that the whole of the seven heads fell, before the beast upon which the woman sat arose; and yet the woman is represented as sitting upon the seven-headed beast to denote, as we have before observed, that it is the Latin kingdom in its last estate, or under one of its heads restored, which is the secular kingdom of antichrist. The beast is also said not to have any existence in the time of the vision; from which it is evident that the monarchy of the

Latins, and not that of the Romans, is here intended; because the latter was in the time of the vision. Again, the beast which St. John saw had not ascended out of the bottomless pit in his time; consequently the whole seven heads and ten horns were in futurity, for all these heads and horns rose up out of the abyss at the same time with the beast. How is this apparent contradiction reconciled? In the most plain and satisfactory manner, by means of the angel's double interpretation of the heads; for if the seven heads be taken in the sense of seven mountains, (head in the Scripture style being a symbol of precedency as well as supremacy,) then the beast with all its heads and horns was altogether in futurity in the apostle's time, for the seven heads are the seven electorates of the German empire, and the ten horns the ten monarchies in the interest of the Latin Church. Finally, the beast is said to exist in the time of the vision; therefore the Roman empire, which governed the world, must be here alluded to; and consequently the phrase and yet is is a proof that, as the beast is the Latin kingdom, and this beast is said to have an existence in the time of the apostle, the empire of the Caesars, though generally known by the name of the Roman, is in a very proper sense the Latin kingdom, as the Latin was the language which prevailed in it. Hence the seven-headed and ten-horned beast is at once the representation of the ancient Latin power, of the Roman empire which succeeded it, and of the Latin empire which supports the Latin Church. Here is then the connection of the ancient Latin and Roman powers with that upon which the woman sits. She sits upon the beast that was and is not, because three of his heads represent the three forms of government which the ancient Latins had before they were subjugated by the Romans, viz., the regal power, the dictatorship, and the power of the praetors. She sits upon the beast which SHALL ASCEND out of the bottomless pit, because all his seven heads, taken in the sense of mountains were in futurity in the apostolic age. She sits upon the beast that yet is, because four of his heads represent four forms of government of the Roman or Latin empire now in existence, viz., the consulate, the triumvirate, the imperial power, and the patriciate. It is hence evident that the beast, in the largest acceptation of this term, is a symbol of the Latin power in general, from its commencement in Latinus to the end of time; his seven heads denoting seven kings or supreme forms of Latin government, during this period, king or kingdom, as we have already observed, being a general term in the prophetic writings for any

kind of supreme governor or government, no matter by what particular name such may have been designated among men. Thus the Latin power from the time of Latinus to the death of Numitor was the beast under the dominion of his first head; from the death of Numitor to the destruction of Alba it was the beast under the dominion of his second head; from the destruction of Alba to the final subjugation of the Latins by the Romans the beast under the dominion of his third head. And as the four Roman forms of government which were subsequent to the final conquest of the Latins, were also Latin dominations, the Latin power under these forms of government was the beast under the dominion of his fourth, fifth, sixth and seventh heads. The beast of the bottomless pit, which followed the fall of all the heads of the sea beast or general Latin empire, is, according to the angel's interpretation, **ογδοος, (βασιλευς,)** an EIGHTH king, i.e., an eighth species of Latin power, or, in other words, a supreme form of Latin government essentially differing from all the foregoing; yet, as it is nominally the same with one of the preceding seven, it is not accounted an eighth head of the beast. The first beast of Revelation 13:1 is a description of the eighth or last condition of the GENERAL Latin empire, and is said to arise **εκ της θαλασσης,** out of the sea, because the heads are there taken in a double sense, sea being a general term to express the origin of every great empire which is raised up by the sword; but when (as in Revelation 17:11) one of the heads of the sea beast (viz., that secular power which is still in being, and has supported the Latin Church for more than a thousand years) is peculiarly styled The Beast, the Holy Ghost, speaking of this secular Latin empire exclusively, declares it to be **εκ της αβυσσου,** FROM the bottomless pit.

JOHN EDWARD CLARKE.

## CHAPTER 18

*A luminous angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, and the cause of it, 1-3. The followers of God are exhorted to come out of it, in order to escape her approaching punishment, 4-8. The kings of the earth lament her fate, 9, 10. The merchants also bewail her, 11. The articles in which she trafficked enumerated, 12-16. She is bewailed also by shipmasters, sailors, etc., 17-19. All heaven rejoices over her fall, and her final desolation is foretold, 20-24.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 18.

**Verse 1.** *The earth was lightened with his glory.* This may refer to some extraordinary messenger of the everlasting Gospel, who, by his preaching and writings, should be the means of diffusing the light of truth and true religion over the earth.

**Verse 2.** *Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen* This is a quotation from Isaiah 21:9: And he said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground. This is applied by some to Rome pagan; by others to Rome papal; and by others to Jerusalem.

*Is become-the hold of every foul spirit* See the parallel passages in the margin. The figures here point out the most complete destruction. A city utterly sacked and ruined, never to be rebuilt.

**Verse 3.** *The wine of the wrath* The punishment due to her transgressions, because they have partaken with her in her sins. See the note on Revelation 14:8.

**Verse 4.** *Come out of her, my people* These words appear to be taken from Isaiah 48:20; Jeremiah 1:8; 51:6, 45. The poet Mantuanus expresses this thought well:—

*Vivere qui sancte cupitis, discelite; Romae  
Omnia quum liceant, non licet esse bonum.*

“Ye who desire to live a godly life, depart; for, although all things are lawful at Rome, yet to be godly is unlawful.

**Verse 5. *Her sins have reached unto heaven*** They are become so great and enormous that the long-suffering of God must give place to his justice.

**Verse 6. *Reward her even as she rewarded you*** These words are a prophetic declaration of what shall take place: God will deal with her as she dealt with others.

**Verse 7. *How much she hath glorified herself*** By every act of transgression and sinful pampering of the body she has been preparing for herself a suitable and proportionate punishment.

**Verse 8. *Therefore shall her plagues come*** Death, by the sword of her adversaries; mourning on account of the slaughter; and famine, the fruits of the field being destroyed by the hostile bands.

***Utterly burned with fire*** Of what city is this spoken? Rome pagan has never been thus treated; Alaric and Totilas burnt only some parts with fire. Rome papal has not been thus treated; but this is true of Jerusalem, and yet Jerusalem is not generally thought to be intended.

**Verse 9. *The kings of the earth*** Those who copied her superstitions and adopted her idolatries.

**Verse 10. *Standing afar off*** Beholding her desolations with wonder and astonishment, utterly unable to afford her any kind of assistance.

**Verse 11. *The merchants of the earth*** These are represented as mourning over her, because their traffic with her was at an end.

Bishop Bale, who applies all these things to the Church of Rome, thus paraphrases the principal passages:—

“The mighty kings and potentates of the earth, not havinge afore their eyes the love and feare of God, have committed with this whore moste vile filthynesse; abusinge themselves by many straunge or uncommanded worshippings, and bynding themselves by othe to observe hyr lawes and customs. At the examples, doctrines, counsels, and perswasions of hyr holy whoremongers, have they broken the covenants of peace; battailed,



oppressed, spoyled, ravished, tyrannously murdered innocents; yea, for vain foolish causes, and more vaine titles, as though there were neither heaven nor hel, God nor accounts to be made.

“And her mitred marchantes, hyr shorne souldiers, hir massemongers, hyr soulesellers, and hir martbrokers, waxed very riche, through the sale of hir oyles, creme, salt, water, bread, orders, hallowings, houselinges, ashes, palme, waxe, frankensence, beades, crosses, candlesticks, copes, belles, organes, images, reliques, and other pedlary wares.

“They have gotten in unto them pallaces and princely houses, fat pastors and parkes, meadowes and warrens, rivers and pondes, villages and towns, cities and whole provinces, with the divill and all els; besides other men’s wives, daughters, mayde servantes, and children, whom they have abhominably corrupted. What profite they have drawen unto them also by the sale of great bishopricks, prelacies, promocions, benefices, tot quoties, pardons, pilgrymages, confessions, and purgatory; besides the yearely rents of cathedrall churches, abbayes, colleges, covents, for sutes and suche other. — Specially shal they be sore discontented with the matter, which have with hir committed the whordom of the spyrite, by many externe worshipings of drye waffer cakes, oyles, roods, relyques, ladyes, images, sculles, bones, chippes, olde ragges, showes, (shoes,) bootes, spurres, hattes, breches, whodes, night capes, and such like.

“And they that have lived wantonly with hir, (Revelation 18:9,) in following hir idle observacions, in mattenses, houres, and masses; in sensinges, halowings, and font halowing; in going processions with canapye, crosse, and pyx; with banneres, stremers, and torche light; with such other gaudes to folish for children.

“Alas, alas, that great cyty (Revelation 18:10) that beautiful Babilon, that blessed holy mother the Church, which sometime had so many popes pardons, so many bishoppes blessinges, so many holye stations, so many cleane remissions a pena et culpa, so many good ghostly fathers, so many religious orders, so much holy water for spirites, and Saint John’s gospel, with the five woundes and the length of our Lord for drowning, is nowe decayed for ever!

‘Alas, alas, who shall pray for us now? Who shall sing dirges and trentoles? Who shall spoile us of our sinnes? Who shall give us ashes and palmes? Who shall blesse us with a spade, and singe us out of purgatory when we are deade? If we lacke these things we are like to want heaven. These are the desperate complaints of the wicked.’

**Verse 12. *The merchandise of gold, and silver, etc.*** The same author, Bishop Bale, who was once a priest of the Romish Church, goes on to apply all these things to that Church; and whether the text have this meaning or not, they will show us something of the religious usages of his time, and the real mockery of this intolerant and superstitious Church. Speaking in reference to the Reformation, and the general light that had been diffused abroad by the word of God, which was then translated into the vulgar tongue, and put into the hands of the people at large, he says:—

“They will pay no more money for the housell sippings, bottom blessings; nor for ‘seest me and seest me not,’ above the head and under of their chalices, which in many places be of fine gold. Neyther regarde they to kneele anye more downe, and to kisse their pontificall rings which are of the same metal. They will be no more at coste to have the ayre beaten, and the idols perfumed with their sensers at pryncipall feastes; to have their crucifixes layde upon horses, or to have them solemply borne aloft in their gaddings abroade; with the religious occupyings of their paxes, cruettes, and other jewels which be of silver.

“Neyther passe they greatly to beholde precyous stones any more in their two-horned miters, whan they hollow their churches, give theyr whorishe orders, and tryumphantly muster in processions. Nor in costuous pearles in theyr copes perroures, and chysibilles, whan they be in their prelately pompous sacrifices. Men, knowing the worde of God, supposeth that their ornaments of silk, wherewith they garnishe their temples and adorne their idolles, is very blasphemous and divillish. They thinke also, that their fayre white rockets of raynes, or fine linnen cloath; their costly gray amices, of calaber and cattes tayles; theyr fresh purple gownes, whan they walke for their pleasures; and their read scarlet frockes, whan they preach lyes in the pulpit, are very superfluous and vayne.

“In their thynen wood (whom some men call algume trees, some basil, some corall) may be understande all theyr curious buildings of temples,

abbeys, chappels, and chambers; all shrines, images, church stooles, and pews that are well payed for; all banner staves, paternoster scores, and peeces of the holy crosse.

“The vessels of ivory comprehendeth all their maundy dyshes, their offering platters, their relique chestes, their god boxes, their drinking horns, their sipping cuppes for the hiccough, their tables whereupon are charmed their chalises and vestiments; their standiches, their combes, their muske balles, their pomaunder pottes, and their dust boxes, with other toys.

“The vessels of precious stone; which after some interpretours, are of precious stone, or after some are of most precious wood; betokeneth their costuous cuppes, or cruses of jasper, jacinct, amel, and fine beral; and their alabaster boxes, wherwith they annointe kinges, confirme children, and minister their holy whorish orders. Their pardon masers, or drinking dishes, as St. Benit’s bole, St. Edmond’s bole, St. Giles’s bole, St. Blythe’s bole, and Westminster bole, with such other holy re-liquies.

“Of brasse, which containeth latten, copper, alcumine, and other harde metals, are made all their great candlesticks, holy water kettles, lampes, desks, pyllers, butterasses, bosses, bells, and many other thinges more.

“Of strong yron are the braunches made that holde up the lightes before their false gods; the tacks that sustayne them for fallinge; the lockes that save them from the robberye of thieves; their fyre pans, bars, and poolyes, with many other straunge ginnes besides.

“With marble most commonlye pave they their temples, and build strong pillers and arches in their great cathedrale churches and monastries; they make thereof also their superalities, their tumbs, and their solemne grave-stones; besides their other buildinges, with free-stone, flint, ragge, and brick, comprehended in the same.

**Verse 13. *And cinnamon*** “By the sinamon is ment all maner of costly spyces, wherwith they bury their byshops and founders, lest they shoulde stinke when they translate them agayne to make them saintes for advauntage.

“By the smellynge odours, the swete herbes that they strew abroad at theyr dedications and burials; besydes the damaske waters, bawmes,

muskes, pomaunder, civet, and other curious confections they yet bestow upon theyr owne precious bodies.

“The oyntments are such oyles as they mingle with rose water, aloes, and spike, with other mery conceits, wherwith they anynt their holy savours and roods, to make them to sweat, and to smell sweete when they are borne abroad in procession upon their high feastfull dayes.

“Frankinsence occupye they ofte as a necessarie thinge in the sensyng of their idols, hallowinge of their paschal, conjuringe of their ploughes; besydes the blessing of their palmes, candles, ashes, and their dead men’s graves, with requiescant in pace.

“With wine syng they theyr masses for money, they housell the people at Easter, they wash their aultar stones upon Maundy Thursday; they fast the holy imber dayes, besydes other banketinges all the whole years, to kepe theyr flesh chaste.

“With oyle smere they yonge infantes at bapthisme and bishopping; they grease their massmongers, and gere them the mark of madian; they anele their cattell that starveth; and do many other feates els.

“Fyne floure is suche a merchandyse of theirs as far exceedeth all other, and was first geven them by Pope Alexander the first, thinkinge Christes institution not sufficient, nor comly in using the common breade in that ministerie. For that ware hath brought them in their plentifull possessions, their lordshippes, fatte benefices, and prebendaries, with innumerable plesures els.

“Wheat have thei of their farms, whereof they make pardon bread and cakes, to draw people to devocion towards them.

“Cattell receive they, offered unto their idols by the idiots of the countries, for recover of sondrye diseases; besides that they have of their tithes.

“Shepe have they, sometime of their owne pastures, sometime of begginge, sometime of bequestes for the dead, to cry them out of their feareful purgatorye, when they be asleepe at midnight.

“Great horses have they, for mortuaries, for offices, for favers, giftes, and rewardes, to be good lords unto them, that they may holde still their

farmes, and to have saunder waspe their sonne and their heire a priest; or to admitte him unto a manerly benefice, that he may be called ‘maister person,’ and suche lyke.

“Charets have they also, or horse litters, of al manner of sorts, specially at Rome, with foote men runninge on both sides of them, to make roome for the holy fathers. Of whom some carye their owne precious bodyes, some their treasure, some the blessed sacramente, some holy reliques and ornamentes, some their whores, and some their bastardes. The bodyes of men must needes be judged to be at their pleasure, so long as Christen provinces be tributaries unto them, princes obediente, people subject, and their lawes at their commaundement to slea and to kyll. And to make this good, who hath not in England payd his Peter peny, sometime to acknowledge hymselfe a bondman of theirs, at the receit of his yerely howsell? Furthermore yet, besides their market muster of monkes, fryars, and priestes, they have certayne bondmen, of whom some they sell to the Venicians, some to the Genues, some to the Portingales, and some to the Turks, to row in their galleis. And laste of all, to make up their market, least any thing should escape their hands, these unmercifull bribers maketh marchaundise of the soules of men, to deprive Christe of his whole right, sending many unto hell, but not one unto heaven, (unlesse they maliciously murder them for the truths sake,) and all for mony. After many other sortes els, abuse they these good creatures of God, whom the Holy Ghost heere nameth. Much were it to shew here by the cronicles severally of what Pope they have received authorytie, power, and charge, to utter these wares to advauntage, and how they came firste by the old idolatrous.”

Several of the most reputable MSS. versions, and some of the fathers, after cinnamon, add *καὶ ἀμόμῳν*, and amomum. What this shrub was is not easy to say, though mentioned and partially described by Pliny and Dioscorides. Some think it was a species of geranium; others, the rose of Jericho. It was an odoriferous plant supposed to be a native of Assyria; and is thus mentioned by Virgil, *Eclog. iv.*, ver. 25:—

— *Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum.*

“*The Assyrian amomum shall grow in every soil.*”

This is translated by some spikenard; by others lady’s rose.

**Thyine wood** The Thyne or Thyin is said to be a tree whose boughs, leaves, stalks, and fruit, resemble the cypress. It is mentioned by Homer, *Odyss*, lib. v., ver. 60; by Theophrastes, *Hist. Plant*, v. 5; and by Pliny, *Hist. Nat.* lib. xiii. c. 16. How much the different articles mentioned in the 12th and 13th verses were in request among the ancients, and how highly valued, every scholar knows.

**Slaves** σωμάτων· The bodies of men; probably distinguished here from ψυχας, souls of men, to express bondmen and freemen.

**Verse 14. *And the fruits that thy soul lusted after.*** και η οπωρα της επιθυμιας της ψυχης σου. As οπωρα signifies autumn, any and all kinds of autumnal fruits may be signified by the word in the above clause.

**Dainty and goodly** τα λιπαρα· Delicacies for the table. τα λαμπρα,, what is splendid and costly in apparel.

**Verse 15. *Stand afar off*** See Revelation 18:10.

**Verse 16. *Clothed in fine linen, and purple, etc.*** The verb περιβαλλεσθαι, which we here translate clothed, signifies often to abound, be enriched, laden with, and is so used by the best Greek writers; see many examples in *Kypke*. These articles are not to be considered here as personal ornaments, but as articles of trade or merchandise, in which this city trafficked.

**Verse 17. *Every shipmaster*** Captains of vessels; some think pilots are meant, and this is most likely to be the meaning of the original word κυβερνητης. This description appears to be at least partly taken from Ezekiel 27:26-28.

***And all the company in ships*** και πας επι των πλοιων ο ομιλος· The crowd or passengers aboard. But the best MSS, and versions have και πας ο επι τοπον πλεων, those who sail from place to place, or such as stop at particular places on the coast, without performing the whole

voyage. This sufficiently marks the traffic on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some might debark (in sailing from Rome) at the island of Sicily, others at different ports in Greece; some at Corinth, others at Crete, or the various islands of the AEgean Sea; some at Rhodes, Pamphylia, etc., etc.; as in those times in which the compass was unknown, every voyage was performed coastwise, always keeping, if possible, within sight of the land.

**Verse 18. *What city is like unto this great city!*** Viz. in magnitude, power, and luxury.

**Verse 19. *They cast dust on their heads*** They showed every sign of the sincerest grief. The lamentation over this great ruined city, Revelation 18:9-19, is exceedingly strong and well drawn. Here is no dissembled sorrow; all is real to the mourners, and affecting to the spectators.

**Verse 20. *Rejoice over her, thou heaven*** This is grand and sublime; the fall of this bad city was cause of grief to bad men. But as this city was a persecutor of the godly, and an enemy to the works of God, angels, apostles, and prophets are called to rejoice over her fall.

**Verse 21. *Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down*** This action is finely and forcibly expressed by the original words: *οὕτως ὀρηματι βληθησεται βαβυλων η μεγαλη πολις*. The millstone will in falling have not only an accelerated force from the law of gravitation, but that force will be greatly increased by the projectile force impressed upon it by the power of the destroying angel.

***Shall be found no more at all.*** In her government, consequence, or influence. This is true of ancient Babylon; we are not certain even of the place where it stood. It is also true of Jerusalem; her government, consequence, and influence are gone. It is not true of Rome pagan; nor, as yet, of Rome papal: the latter still exists, and the former is most intimately blended with it; for in her religions service Rome papal has retained her language, and many of her heathen temples has she dedicated to saints real or reputed, and incorporated many of her superstitions and absurdities in a professedly Christian service. It is true also that many idols are now restored under the names of Christian saints!

**Verse 22. *The voice of harpers, etc.*** This seems to indicate not only a total destruction of influence, etc., but also of being. It seems as if this city was to be swallowed up by an earthquake, or burnt up by fire from heaven.

**Verse 23. *By thy sorceries*** Political arts, state tricks, counterfeit miracles, and deceptive manoeuvres of every kind. This may be spoken of many great cities of the world, which still continue to flourish!

**Verse 24. *In her was found the blood of prophets, etc.*** She was the persecutor and murderer of prophets and of righteous men.

***And of all that were slain upon the earth.*** This refers to her counsels and influence, exciting other nations and people to persecute and destroy the real followers of God. There is no city to which all these things are yet applicable, therefore we may presume that the prophecy remains yet to be fulfilled.

Bishop Bale, who applies this, as before, to the Romish Church, has, on Revelation 18:22, given some information to the curious antiquary.

“But be certaine,” says he, “and sure, thou miserable Church, that thou shalt no longer enjoy the commodious pleasures of a free cittye. — The merry noyes of them that play upon harpes, lutes, and fidels; the sweet voice of musicians that sing with virginals, vials, and chimes; the armony of them that pipe in recorders, flutes, and drums; and the shirle showt of trumpets, waits, and shawmes, shall no more be heard in thee to the delight of men. Neyther shall the sweet organs containing the melodious noyse of all maner of instruments and byrdes be plaied upon, nor the great belles be rong after that, nor yet the fresh discant, prick-song, counter-point, and faburden be called for in thee, which art the very sinagog of Sathan. Thy lascivious armony, and delectable musique, much provoking the weake hartes of men to meddle in thy abhominable whordom, by the wantonnes of idolatry in that kinde, shall perish with thee for ever. No cunning artificer, carver, paynter, nor gilder, embroiderer, goldsmith, nor silk-worker; with such other like of what occupacion soever they be, or have bene to thy commodity, shall never more be found so agayne.

“Copes, cruettes, candelstickes, miters, crosses, sensers, crismatoris, corporasses, and chalices, which for thy whorishe holines might not



somtime be touched, will than for thy sake be abhorred of all men. Never more shall be builded for marchants of thi livery and mark, palaces, temples, abbeys, collages, covents, chauntries, fair houses, and horcherds of plesure. The clapping noise of neyther wyndmil, horsemil, nor watermil, shal any more be heard to the glutenous feeding of thy puffed up porklings, for the maintenaunce of thine idle observacions and ceremonies. For thy mitred marchaunts were sumtimes princes of the earth, whan they reigned in their roialty. Thy shorn shavelinges were lordes over the multitude whan they held their priestly authority over the soules and bodies of men. Yea, and with thy privy legerdemain, with thy juggling castes, with thy craftes and inchauntmentes of thy subtile charmes, were all nacions of the world deceyved.”

This is very plain language, and thus on all hands a monstrous system of superstition and idolatry was attacked by our Reformers; and with these unfurnished weapons, directed by the Spirit of the living God, popery was driven from the throne, from the bench, from the universities, and from the churches of this favored kingdom. And by a proper application of Scripture, and by the universal diffusion of the word of God, it may be soon driven from the face of the universe. And when the inventions of men are separated from that Church, and it becomes truly regenerated, (and of this it is highly capable, as, among its monstrous errors and absurdities, it contains all the essential truths of God,) it will become a praise and a glory in the earth. Protestants wish not its destruction, but its reformation.

Some there may be, who, in their zeal for truth, would pull the whole edifice to pieces; but this is not God’s method: he destroys what is evil, and saves what is good. It is reformation, not annihilation, that this Church needs.

## CHAPTER 19

*The whole heavenly host give glory to God, because he has judged the great whore, and avenged the blood of his saints, 1-6. The marriage of the Lamb and his bride, 7-9. John offers to worship the angel, but is prevented, 10. Heaven is opened, and Jesus the Word of God appears on a white horse; he and his armies described, 11-16. An angel in the sun invites all the fowls of heaven to come to the supper of the great God, 17, 18. The beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, gather together to make war with him who sits on the white horse; but they are all discomfited, and utterly destroyed, 19-21.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. 19.

**Verse 1.** *I heard a great voice of much people in heaven* The idolatrous city being destroyed, and the blood of the martyred saints being avenged, there is a universal joy among the redeemed of the Lord, which they commence with the word הללו יה Hallelu-Yah, praise ye Jah or Jehovah; which the Septuagint, and St. John from them, put into Greek letters thus: αλληλουια, Allelou-ia, a form of praise which the heathens appear to have borrowed from the Jews, as is evident from their paeans, or hymns in honor of Apollo, which began and ended with ελελευ ιη, eleleu ie; a mere corruption of the Hebrew words. It is worthy of remark that the Indians of North America have the same word in their religious worship, and use it in the same sense. “In their places of worship, or beloved square, they dance sometimes for a whole night always in a bowing posture, and frequently singing halleluyah Ye ho wah; praise ye Yah, Ye ho vah:” probably the true pronunciation of the Hebrew יהוה, which we call Jehovah. See Adair’s History of the American Indians.

**Salvation** He is the sole author of deliverance from sin; the glory of this belongs to him, the honor should be ascribed to him, and his power is that alone by which it is effected.

**Verse 2. *For true and righteous*** His judgments displayed in supporting his followers, and punishing his enemies, are true — according to his predictions; and righteous, being all according to infinite justice and equity.

**Verse 3. *Her smoke rose up*** There was, and shall be, a continual evidence of God's judgments executed on this great whore or idolatrous city; nor shall it ever be restored.

**Verse 4. *The four and twenty elders*** The true Church of the Lord Jesus converted from among the Jews. See Revelation 4:10; 5:14.

**Verse 5. *Praise our God, etc.*** Let all, whether redeemed from among Jews or Gentiles, give glory to God.

**Verse 6. *The voice of a great multitude*** This is the catholic or universal Church of God gathered from among the Gentiles.

***The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.*** εβασιλευσε κυριος ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ. Many excellent MSS., most of the versions, with Andreas and Arethas, the two most ancient commentators on this book, add ημων, our, after ο θεος; and according to this the text reads emphatically thus: OUR Lord God, the Almighty, reigneth. What consolation to every genuine Christian that HIS Lord and God is the Almighty, and that this Almighty never trusts the reins of the government of the universe out of his hands! What therefore has his Church to fear?

**Verse 7. *The marriage of the Lamb is come*** The meaning of these figurative expressions appears to be this: After this overthrow of idolatry and superstition, and the discomfiture of antichrist, there will be a more glorious state of Christianity than ever was before.

**Verse 8. *Arrayed in fine linen*** A prediction that the Church should become more pure in her doctrines, more pious in her experience, and more righteous in her conduct, than she had ever been from her formation.

The fine linen here spoken of is not the righteousness of Christ imputed to believers, for it is here called the righteousness of the saints — that which the grace and Spirit of Christ has wrought in them.

**Verse 9. *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper*** This is an evident allusion to the marriage of the king's son, Matthew 22:2,

etc., where the incarnation of our Lord, and the calling of Jews and Gentiles, are particularly pointed out. See the notes there. Blessed are all they who hear the Gospel, and are thus invited to lay hold on everlasting life.

**Verse 10. *I fell at his feet to worship him.*** Great as this angel was, St. John could not mistake him either for Jesus Christ, or for God the Father; nor was his prostration intended as an act of religious worship. It was merely an act of that sort of reverence which any Asiatic would pay to a superior. His mistake was, the considering that he was under obligation to the angel for the information which he had now received. This mistake the angel very properly corrects, showing him that it was from God alone this intelligence came, and that to him alone the praise was due.

***I am thy fellow servant*** No higher in dignity than thyself; employed by the same God, on the same errand, and with the same testimony; and therefore not entitled to thy prostration: worship God — prostrate thyself to him, and to him give thanks.

***The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.*** As this is a reason given by the angel why he should not worship him, the meaning must be this: I, who have received this spirit of prophecy, am not superior to thee who hast received the testimony of Christ, to preach him among the Gentiles; for the commission containing such a testimony is equal to the gift of the spirit of prophecy. Or, the spirit of prophecy is a general testimony concerning Jesus, for he is the scope and design of the whole Scripture; to him gave all the prophets witness. Take Jesus, his grace, Spirit, and religion out of the Bible, and it has neither scope, design, object, nor end.

**Verse 11. *A white horse*** This is an exhibition of the triumph of Christ after the destruction of his enemies. The white horse is the emblem of this, and FAITHFUL and TRUE are characters of Christ. See Revelation 3:14.

***In righteousness he doth judge and make war.*** The wars which he wages are from no principle of ambition, lust of power, or extension of conquest and dominion; they are righteous in their principle and in their object. And this is perhaps what no earthly potentate could ever say.

**Verse 12. *His eyes were as a flame of fire*** To denote the piercing and all-penetrating nature of his wisdom.

***On his head were many crowns*** To denote the multitude of his conquests, and the extent of his dominion.

***A name written, that no man knew*** This is a reference to what the rabbins call the shem hammephorash, or tetragrammaton, יהוה YHVH; or what we call Jehovah. This name the Jews never attempt to pronounce: when they meet with it in the Bible, they read אֲדֹנָי Adonai for it; but, to a man, they all declare that no man can pronounce it; and that the true pronounciation has been lost, at least since the Babylonish captivity; and that God alone knows its true interpretation and pronounciation. This, therefore, is the name which no man knew but he himself.

**Verse 13. *He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood*** To show that he was just come from recent slaughter. The description is taken from Isaiah 63:2, 3, where Judas Maccabaeus, or some other conqueror, is described.

***The Word of God.*** Written in the Targum, and in other Jewish writings, מֵימְרָא דַיָּי meimera daiya, “the word of Jehovah;” by which they always mean a person, and not a word spoken. See the notes on John 1:1, etc.

**Verse 14. *The armies which were in heaven*** Angels and saints over whom Jesus Christ is Captain,

***Clothed in fine linen*** All holy, pure, and righteous.

**Verse 15. *Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword*** See on Revelation 1:16. This appears to mean the word of the Gospel, by which his enemies are confounded, and his friends supported and comforted.

***With a rod of iron*** He shall execute the severest judgment on the opposers of his truth.

***He treaded the winepress*** As the grapes are trodden to express the juice, so his enemies shall be bruised and beaten, so that their life's blood shall be poured out.

**Verse 16. *On his vesture and on his thigh a name written*** Dr. Dodd has well observed on this passage, that “it appears to have been an ancient custom among several nations to adorn the images of their deities, princes, victors at public games, and other eminent persons, with inscriptions,

expressing either the character of the persons, their names, or some other circumstance which might contribute to their honor; and to that custom the description here given of Christ may possibly have some allusion.

“There are several such images yet extant, with an inscription written either on the garment, or on one of the thighs, or on that part of the garment which was over the thigh; and probably this is the meaning of the apostle. And as these inscriptions are placed on the upper garment, Grotius seems very justly to have explained the words *ἐπι το ιματιον*, by his imperial robe, that his power in this victory might be conspicuous to all. But as a farther confirmation of this sense of the passage it may not be improper here to describe briefly several remarkable figures of this sort, which are still extant.” This description I shall give from my own examination.

1. HERODOTUS, Euterpe, lib. ii. p. 127, edit. Gale, speaking of the actions of Sesostris, and of the images he set up in the countries which he conquered, has the following words: *εἰσι περι ἰωνιην δυο τυποι εν πετρησι εγκεκολαμμενοι τουτου του ανδρος, κ. τ. λ.* “Two images likewise of this man are seen in Ionia, on the way that leads from Ephesus to Phocaea, and from Sardis to Smyrna. The figure is five palms in height; in his right hand he holds a dart, in his left a bow, armed after the manner of the Egyptians and Ethiopians. On a line drawn across the breast, from one shoulder to the other, are these words, written in Egyptian hieroglyphics: *εγο τηνδε την χωρην ωμοισι τοισι εμοισι εκτησαμην*· ‘I obtained this country by these my shoulders;’” i.e., by my own power.

2. In the Etruria Regalis of Dempster, in the appendix at the end of vol. ii., there is a beautiful female figure of brass, about twelve inches high, the hair gracefully plaited, and the head adorned with a diadem. She has a tunic without sleeves, and over that a sort of pallium. On the outside of the right thigh, close to the tunic, and probably on it, in the original, is an inscription in Etruscan characters. What these import I cannot say. Dempster has given a general explanation of the image in the appendix to the above volume, p. 108. The plate itself is the eighty-third of the work.

3. There are two other images found in the same author, vol. i., p. 91, tab. xxiv.; the first is naked, with the exception of a short loose jupe, or petticoat, which goes round the loins, and over the left arm. On the left

thigh of this image there is an inscription in Etruscan characters. The second has a similar jupe, but much longer, which extends to the calf of the leg, and is supported over the bended left arm. Over the right thigh, on this vesture, there is an Etruscan inscription in two lines.

4. MONTFAUCON, *Antiquite Expliquee*, vol. iii., part 2, p. 268, has introduced an account of two fine images, which are represented tab. CLVII. The first is a warrior entirely naked, except a collar, one bracelet, and boots. On his left thigh, extending from the groin to a little below the knee, is an inscription in very ancient Etruscan characters, in two lines, but the import is unknown.

The second is a small figure of brass, about six inches long, with a loose tunic, which is suspended from the left shoulder down to the calf of the legs. On this tunic, over the left thigh, is an inscription (perhaps) in very ancient Latin characters, but in the Etruscan language, as the learned author conjectures. It is in one line, but what it means is equally unknown.

5. In the same work, p. 269, tab. CLVIII., another Etruscan warrior is represented entirely naked; on the left thigh is the following words in uncial Greek letters, *καφισοδωρος*, and on the right thigh, *αισχλαμιου*, i.e., “Kaphisodorus, the son of Aischlamius.” All these inscriptions are written longitudinally on the thigh.

6. GRUTER, vol. iii., p. DCCCCLXXXIX, sub. tit. *Affectus Servorum et Libertinorum inter se, et in suos*, gives us the figure of a naked warrior, with his left hand on an axe, the end of whose helve rests on the ground, with the following inscription on the inside of his left thigh, longitudinally written, as in all other cases:—

A. POBLICIUS. D. L. ANTIOC.  
TI. BARBIUS. Q. P. L. TIBER.

7. The rabbins say, that “God gave to the Israelites a sword, on which the ineffable name יהוה Yehovah was inscribed; and as long as they held that sword the angel of death had no power over them.” *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 51, fol. 143, 2. *Bemidbar Rabba*, sec. 12, fol. 214, 2.

In the latter tract, sec. 16, fol. 232, 3, and in *Rab. Tanchum*, fol. 66, mention is made of the guardian angels of the Israelites, who were clothed

with purple vestments, on which was inscribed שם המפורש shem hammephorash, the ineffable name. See more in Schoettgen.

8. But what comes nearer to the point, in reference to the title given here to Christ, is what is related of Sesostris by DIODORUS Siculus, lib. i. c. 55, p. 166, edit. Bipont, of whom he says: “Having pushed his conquests as far as Thrace, he erected pillars, on which were the following words in Egyptian hieroglyphics: **τηνδε την χωραν οπλοις κατεστρεψατο τοις εαυτου βασιλευς βασιλεων, και δεσποτης δεσποτων, σεσοωσις.**” This province, Sesosis, (Sesostris,) KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, conquered by his own arms. This inscription is conceived almost in the words of St. John. Now the Greek historian did not borrow the words from the apostle, as he died in the reign of Augustus, about the time of our Lord’s incarnation. This cannot be the same inscription mentioned above by Herodotus, the one being in Ionia, the other in Thrace: but as he erected several of those pillars or images, probably a nearly similar inscription was found on each.

9. This custom seems to have been common among the ancient Egyptians. Inscriptions are frequently found on the images of Isis, Osiris, Anubis, etc., at the feet, on the head, on the back, on the girdle, etc., etc. Eight of those ancient images in my own collection abound with these inscriptions.

1. Osiris, four inches and a quarter high, standing on a thrones all covered over with hieroglyphics exquisitely engraved.

2. Anubis, six inches high, with a tiara, on the back of which is cut **λεγορνυθ**, in uncial Greek characters.

3. The Cercopithecus, seven inches long, sitting on a pedestal, and at his feet, in the same characters, **χαδεο**.

4. An Isis, about eight inches high, on her back **δρυγο**.

5. Ditto, seven inches, beautifully cut, standing, holding a serpent in her left hand, and at her feet **εταπυγι**.

6. Ditto, five inches and a quarter, round whose girdle is **πιευχυδι**; but part of this inscription appears to be hidden under her-arms, which are extended by her side.



7. Ditto, five inches high, hooded, with a loose stola, down the back of which are seven lines of Greek uncial characters, but nearly obliterated.

8. Ditto, four inches high, with a girdle going round the back immediately under the arms, the front of which is hidden under a sort of a stomacher; on the part that appears are these characters, *χενλα*. These may be all intended as a kind of abrasaxas or tutelary deities; and I give this notice of them, and the inscriptions upon them, partly in illustration of the text, and partly to engage my learned and antiquarian readers in attempts to decipher them. I would have given the Etruscan characters on the other images described above, but have no method of imitating them except by an engraving.

As these kinds of inscriptions on the thigh, the garments, and different parts of the body, were in use among different nations, to express character, conduct, qualities, and conquests, we may rest assured that to them St. John alludes when he represents our sovereign Lord with an inscription upon his vesture and upon his thigh; and had we not found it a custom among other nations, we should have been at a loss to account for its introduction and meaning here.

**Verse 17. *An angel standing in the sun*** Exceedingly luminous; every part of him emitting rays of light. From this representation, Milton has taken his description of Uriel, the angel of the sun. *Paradise Lost*, b. iii. l. 648:—

“The Archangel Uriel, one of the seven Who, in God’s presence, nearest to his throne Stands ready at command and are his eyes That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth Bears his swift errands over moist and dry, Over sea and land.”

***All the fowls that fly*** The carcasses of God’s enemies shall be food for all the fowls of heaven. This is according to a Jewish tradition, *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 114, n. 25: “In the time when God shall execute vengeance for the people of Israel, he shall feed all the beasts of the earth for twelve months with their flesh and all the fowls for seven years.” It is well known that both beasts and birds of prey are accustomed to frequent fields of battle, and live upon the slain.

**Verse 18. *That ye may eat the flesh of kings*** There shall be a universal destruction; the kings, generals, captains, and all their host, shall be slain.

**Verse 19. *I saw the beast*** See the notes on chapters xii., xiii., and xvii. {Revelation 12:1-13:18; 17:1-18}

**Verse 20. *And the beast was taken, and-the false prophet*** See the notes on Revelation 17:8, etc.

***That worshipped his image.*** The beast has been represented as the Latin empire; the image of the beast, the popes of Rome; and the false prophet, the papal clergy.

***Were cast alive into a lake of fire*** Were discomfited when alive — in the zenith of their power, and destroyed with an utter destruction.

**Verse 21. *With the sword of him that sat upon the horse*** He who sat on the white horse is Christ; and his sword is his word — the unadulterated Gospel.

## CHAPTER 20

*An angel binds Satan a thousand years, and shuts him up in the bottomless pit, 1-3. They who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, who have part in the first resurrection, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, 4-6. When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, shall go forth and deceive the nations, and shall gather Gog and Magog from the four corners of the earth, 7, 8. These shall besiege the holy city; but fire shall come down from heaven and consume them, and they and the devil be cast into a lake of fire, 9, 10. The great white throne, and the dead, small and great, standing before God, and all judged according to their works, 11, 12. The sea, death, and hades, give up their dead, and are destroyed; and all not found in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 20.

**Verse 1.** *An angel came down from heaven* One of the executors of the Divine justice, who receives criminals, and keeps them in prison, and delivers them up only to be tried and executed.

The key of the prison and the chain show who he is; and as the chain was great, it shows that the culprit was impeached of no ordinary crimes.

**Verse 2.** *The dragon* See the notes on Revelation 12:9.

*That old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan* He who is called the old serpent is the DEVIL-the calumniator, and SATAN-the opposer. He who supposes that the term old serpent here plainly proves that the creature that tempted our first parents was actually a snake, must enjoy his opinion; and those who can receive such a saying, why let them receive it. Selah.

*A thousand years* In what this binding of Satan consists, who can tell? How many visions have been seen on this subject both in ancient and modern times! This, and what is said Revelation 20:3-5, no doubt refers to

a time in which the influence of Satan will be greatly restrained, and the true Church of God enjoy great prosperity, which shall endure for a long time. But it is not likely that the number, a thousand years, is to be taken literally here, and year symbolically and figuratively in all the book beside. The doctrine of the millennium, or of the saints reigning on earth a thousand years, with Christ for their head, has been illustrated and defended by many Christian writers, both among the ancients and moderns. Were I to give a collection of the conceits of the primitive fathers on this subject, my readers would have little reason to applaud my pains. It has long been the idle expectation of many persons that the millennium, in their sense, was at hand; and its commencement has been expected in every century since the Christian era. It has been fixed for several different years, during the short period of my own life! I believed those predictions to be vain, and I have lived to see them such. Yet there is no doubt that the earth is in a state of progressive moral improvement; and that the light of true religion is shining more copiously everywhere, and will shine more and more to the perfect day. But when the religion of Christ will be at its meridian of light and heat, we know not. In each believer this may speedily take place; but probably no such time shall ever appear, in which evil shall be wholly banished from the earth, till after the day of judgment, when the earth having been burnt up, a new heaven and a new earth shall be produced out of the ruins of the old, by the mighty power of God: righteousness alone shall dwell in them. The phraseology of the apostle here seems partly taken from the ancient prophets, and partly rabbinical; and it is from the Jewish use of those terms that we are to look for their interpretation.

**Verse 3. *He should deceive the nations no more*** Be unable to blind men with superstition and idolatry as he had formerly done.

**Verse 4. *I saw thrones*** Christianity established in the earth, the kings and governors being all Christians.

***Reigned with Christ a thousand years.*** I am satisfied that this period should not be taken literally. It may signify that there shall be a long and undisturbed state of Christianity; and so universally shall the Gospel spirit prevail, that it will appear as if Christ reigned upon earth; which will in effect be the case, because his Spirit shall rule in the hearts of men; and in

this time the martyrs are represented as living again; their testimony being revived, and the truth for which they died, and which was confirmed by their blood, being now everywhere prevalent. As to the term thousand years, it is a mystic number among the Jews. Midrash Tillin, in Psalm 90:15, Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us, adds, “by Babylon, Greece, and the Romans; and in the days of the Messiah. How many are the days of the Messiah? Rab. Elieser, the son of R. Jose, of Galilee, said, The days of the Messiah are a thousand years.”

Sanhedrin, fol. 92, 1, cited by the Aruch, under the word אֵיךְ says: “There is a tradition in the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God shall raise from the dead, shall not return again to the dust; but for the space of a thousand years, in which the holy blessed God shall renew the world, they shall have wings like the wings of eagles, and shall fly above the waters.” It appears therefore that this phraseology is purely rabbinical. Both the Greeks and Latins have the same form of speech in speaking on the state of the righteous and wicked after death. There is something like this in the Republic of Plato, book x., p. 322, edit. Bip., where, speaking of Erus, the son of Armenius, who came to life after having been dead twelve days, and who described the states of departed souls, asserting “that some were obliged to make a long peregrination under the earth before they arose to a state of happiness, εἶναι δὲ τὴν πορείαν χίλιετη, for it was a journey of a thousand years,” he adds, “that, as the life of man is rated at a hundred years, those who have been wicked suffer in the other world a ten-fold punishment, and therefore their punishment lasts a thousand years.”

A similar doctrine prevailed among the Romans; whether they borrowed it from the Greeks, or from the rabbinical Jews, we cannot tell.

Thus Virgil, speaking of the punishment of the wicked in the infernal regions, says:—

Has omnes, ubi MILLE rotam volvere per annos, Lethaeum ad fluvium  
Deus evocat agmine magno: Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,  
Rursus et incipiant in corpora velle reverti AEN., lib. vi., 748.

“But when a thousand rolling years are past, So long their dreary  
punishment shall last, Whole droves of spirits, by the driving god, Are led

to drink the deep Lethean flood In large, forgetful draughts, to sleep the cares Of their past labors and their irksome years; That, unremembering of its former pain, The soul may clothe itself with flesh again.”

How the apostle applies this general tradition, or in what sense he may use it, who can tell?

**Verse 5. *The rest of the dead lived not again*** It is generally supposed from these passages that all who have been martyred for the truth of God shall be raised a thousand years before the other dead, and reign on earth with Christ during that time, after which the dead in general shall be raised; but this also is very doubtful.

**Verse 6. *Blessed μακαριος*** Happy. And holy; he was holy, and therefore he suffered for the testimony of Jesus in the time when nothing but holiness was called to such a trial.

***The first resurrection*** Supposed to be that of the martyrs, mentioned above.

***The second death*** Punishment in the eternal world; such is the acceptation of the phrase among the ancient Jews.

***Hath no power ουκ εχει εξουσιαν*** Hath no authority-no dominion over him. This is also a rabbinical mode of speech. In Erubin, fol. 19, 1; Chagiga, fol. 27, 1: “Res Lakish said, The fire of hell hath no power over an Israelite who sins. Rab. Elieser says; The fire of hell hath no power over the disciples of the wise men.”

**Verse 7. *Satan shall be loosed*** How can this bear any kind of literal interpretation? Satan is bound a thousand years, and the earth is in peace; righteousness flourishes, and Jesus Christ alone reigns. This state of things may continue for ever if the imprisonment of Satan be continued. Satan, however, is loosed at the end of the thousand years, and goes out and deceives the nations, and peace is banished from the face of the earth, and a most dreadful war takes place, etc., etc. These can be only symbolical representations, utterly incapable of the sense generally put upon them.

**Verse 8. *Gog and Magog*** This seems to be almost literally taken from the Jerusalem Targum, and that of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on Numbers 11:26. I shall give the words at length: “And there were two men left in the

camp, the name of the one was Eldad, the name of the other was Medad, and on them the spirit of prophecy rested. Eldad prophesied and said, ‘Behold, Moses the prophet, the scribe of Israel, shall be taken from this world; and Joshua the son of Nun, captain of the host, shall succeed him.’ Medad prophesied and said, ‘Behold quails shall arise out of the sea, and be a stumbling block to Israel.’ Then they both prophesied together, and said, ‘In the very end of time Gog and Magog and their army shall come up against Jerusalem, and they shall fall by the hand of the King Messiah; and for seven whole years shall the children of Israel light their fires with the wood of their warlike engines, and they shall not go to the wood nor cut down any tree.’” In the Targum of Jonathan ben Uzziel, on the same place, the same account is given; only the latter part, that is, the conjoint prophecy of Eldad and Medad, is given more circumstantially, thus: “And they both prophesied together, and said, ‘Behold, a king shall come up from the land of Magog in the last days, and shall gather the kings together, and leaders clothed with armor, and all people shall obey them; and they shall wage war in the land of Israel against the children of the captivity, but the hour of lamentation has been long prepared for them, {or they shall be slain by the flame of fire which shall proceed from under the throne of glory, and their dead carcasses shall fall on the mountains of the land of Israel; and all the wild beasts of the field, and the wild fowl of heaven, shall come and devour their carcasses; and afterwards all the dead of Israel shall rise again to life, and shall enjoy the delights prepared for them from the beginning, and shall receive the reward of their worlds.’”

This account seems most evidently to have been copied by St. John, but how he intended it to be applied is a question too difficult to be solved by the skill of man; yet both the account in the rabbins and in St. John is founded on Ezekiel, Ezekiel 38:1-39:29. The rabbinical writings are full of accounts concerning Gog and Magog, of which Wetstein has made a pretty large collection in his notes on this place. Under these names the enemies of God’s truth are generally intended.

**Verse 9. *The beloved city*** Primarily, Jerusalem, typically, the Christian Church.

**Verse 10. *And the devil-was cast onto the lake*** Before Satan was bound, that is, his power was curtailed and restrained; now, he is cast into the lake of fire, his power being totally taken away.

**Verse 11. *A great white throne*** Refulgent with glorious majesty.

***Him that sat on it*** The indescribable Jehovah.

***From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away*** Even the brightness of his countenance dissolved the universe, and annihilated the laws by which it was governed. This is a very majestic figure, and finely expressed.

***There was found no place for them.*** The glorious majesty of God filling all things, and being all in all.

**Verse 12. *The dead, small and great*** All ranks, degrees, and conditions of men. This description seems to refer to Daniel 7:9, 10.

***And the books were opened*** See Daniel 12:1. “Rab. Jehuda said: All the actions of men, whether good or bad, are written in a book, and of all they shall give account.” — Sohar Gen., fol. 79, col. 298. “How careful should men be to shun vice, and to act uprightly before the holy blessed God, seeing there are so many which go throughout the earth, see the works of men, testify of them, and write them in a book!” — Ibid., fol. 105, col. 417.

“In the first day of the new year the holy blessed God sits that he may judge the world; and all men, without exception, give an account of themselves; and the books of the living and the dead are opened.” Sohar Chadash, fol. 19, 1.

The books mentioned here were the books of the living and the dead, or the book of life and the book of death: that is, the account of the good and evil actions of men; the former leading to life, the latter to death. St. John evidently alludes here to Daniel 7:10, on which the rabbinical account of the books appears to be founded. The expressions are figurative in both.

***According to their works.*** And according to their faith also, for their works would be the proof whether their faith were true or false; but faith exclusively could be no rule in such a procedure.



**Verse 13. *The sea gave up the dead*** Those who had been drowned in it, and those millions slain in naval contests, who had no other grave.

***And death*** All who died by any kind of disease. Death is here personified, and represented as a keeper of defunct human beings; probably no more than earth or the grave is meant, as properly belonging to the empire of death.

***And hell*** Ἅιδης, Hades, the place of separate spirits. The sea and death have the bodies of all human beings; hades has their spirits. That they may be judged, and punished or rewarded according to their works, their bodies and souls must be reunited; hades, therefore, gives up the spirits; and the sea and the earth give up the bodies.

**Verse 14. *And death and hell were cast into the lake*** Death himself is now abolished, and the place for separate spirits no longer needful. All dead bodies and separated souls being rejoined, and no more separation of bodies and souls by death to take place, consequently the existence of these things is no farther necessary.

***This is the second death.*** The first death consisted in the separation of the soul from the body for a season; the second death in the separation of body and soul from God for ever. The first death is that from which there may be a resurrection; the second death is that from which there can be no recovery. By the first the body is destroyed during time; by the second, body and soul are destroyed through eternity.

**Verse 15. *Written in the book of life*** Only those who had continued faithful unto death were taken to heaven. All whose names were not found in the public registers, who either were not citizens, or whose names had been erased from those registers because of crimes against the state, could claim none of those emoluments or privileges which belong to the citizens; so those who either did not belong to the new and spiritual Jerusalem, or who had forfeited their rights and privileges by sin, and had died in that state, were cast into the lake of fire.

THIS is the way in which God, at the day of judgment, will proceed with sinners and apostates. Reader, see that thy name be written in the sacred register; and, if written in, see that it never be blotted out.



## CHAPTER 21

*The new heaven and the new earth, 1. The new Jerusalem, 2. God dwells with men; the happy state of his followers, 3-7. The wretched state of the ungodly, 8. An angel shows John the holy city, the New Jerusalem, 9, 10. Her light, wall, gates, and foundations, described, 11-21. God and the Lamb are the temple and light of it, 22, 23. The nations and kings of the earth bring their glory and honor to it; the gates shall never be shut, nor shall any defilement enter into it, 24-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 21.

**Verse 1. *A new heaven and a new earth*** See the notes on 2 Peter 3:13: The ancient Jews believed that God would renew the heavens and the earth at the end of seven thousand years. The general supposition they founded on Isaiah 65:17.

***There was no more sea.*** The sea no more appeared than did the first heaven and earth. All was made new; and probably the new sea occupied a different position and was differently distributed, from that of the old sea.

However, with respect to these subjects as they stand in this most figurative book, I must express myself in the words of Calmet: Vouloir dire quels seront ce nouveau ciel, et cette nouvelle terre, quels seront leurs ornemens et leur qualite, c'est a mon avis la plus grande de toutes les presumptions. En general, ces manieres de parler marquent de tres grands changemens dans l'univers. "To pretend to say what is meant by this new heaven and new earth, and what are their ornaments and qualities, is in my opinion the greatest of all presumptions. In general these figures of speech point out great alternations in the universe."

**Verse 2. *And I John*** The writer of this book; whether the evangelist and apostle, or John the Ephesian presbyter, has been long doubted in the Church.

***New Jerusalem*** See the notes on Galatians 4:24-27. This doubtless means the Christian Church in a state of great prosperity and purity; but some think eternal blessedness is intended.

***Coming down from God*** It is a maxim of the ancient Jews that both the tabernacle, and the temple, and Jerusalem itself, came down from heaven. And in Midrash Hanaalem, Sohar Gen. fol. 69, col. 271, Rab. Jeremias said, “The holy blessed God shall renew the world, and build Jerusalem, and shall cause it to descend from heaven.” Their opinion is, that there is a spiritual temple, a spiritual tabernacle, and a spiritual Jerusalem; and that none of these can be destroyed, because they subsist in their spiritual representatives. See Schoettgen.

**Verse 3. *The tabernacle of God is with men*** God, in the most especial manner, dwells among his followers, diffusing his light and life everywhere.

**Verse 4. *There shall be no more death*** Because there shall be a general resurrection. And this is the inference which St Paul makes from his doctrine of a general resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:26, where he says, “The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death.” But death cannot be destroyed by there being simply no farther death; death can only be destroyed and annihilated by a general resurrection; if there be no general resurrection, it is most evident that death will still retain his empire. Therefore, the fact that there shall be no more death assures the fact that there shall be a general resurrection; and this also is a proof that, after the resurrection, there shall be no more death. See the whole of the note on 1 Corinthians 15:27.

**Verse 5. *Behold, I make all things new.*** As the creation of the world at the beginning was the work of God alone, so this new creation.

***These words are true and faithful.*** Truth refers to the promise of these changes; faithfulness, to the fulfillment of these promises.

**Verse 6. *It is done.*** All is determined, and shall be fulfilled in due time. The great drama is finished, and what was intended is now completed; referring to the period alluded to by the angel.

***I am Alpha and Omega*** See on Revelation 1:8.

***The fountain of the water of life*** See on John 4:10, 14; 7:37, etc.

The rabbins consider the fountain of the world to come as one of the particular blessings of a future state. In Sanhedrim, Aboth R. Nathan, c. 31, it is said, “He will show them the excellency of the fountain of the future world, that they may accurately see and consider, and say, Wo to us! what good have we lost! and our race is cut off from the face of the earth.”

**Verse 7. *Inherit all things*** Here he had no inheritance; there he shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and be with God and Christ, and have every possible degree of blessedness.

**Verse 8. *But the fearful* δειλοις** Those who, for fear of losing life or their property, either refused to receive the Christian religion, though convinced of its truth and importance; or, having received it, in times of persecution fell away, not being willing to risk their lives.

***And unbelieving*** Those who resist against full evidence. And sinners, **και αμαρτωλοις**, is added here by about thirty excellent MSS., and is found in the Syrian, Arabic, some of the Slavonic, and in Andreas and Arethas. On this evidence Griesbach has admitted it into the text.

***The abominable* εβδελυγμενοις** Those who are polluted with unnatural lust.

***And murderers* φονευσι** Those who take away the life of man for any cause but the murder of another, and those who hate a brother in their heart.

***And whoremongers* πορνοις** Adulterers, fornicators, whores, prostitutes, and rakes of every description.

***Sorcerers* φαρμακοις** Persons who, by drugs, philtres, fumigations, etc., pretend to produce supernatural effects, chiefly by spiritual agency.

***Idolaters* ειδωλολατραις** Those who offer any kind of worship or religious reverence to any thing but God. All image worshippers are idolaters in every sense of the word.

***And all liars* και πασι τοις ψευδεσι** Every one who speaks contrary to the truth when he knows the truth, and even he who speaks the truth with the intention to deceive; i.e., to persuade a person that a thing is

different from what it really is, by telling only a part of the truth, or suppressing some circumstance which would have led the hearer to a different end to the true conclusion. All these shall have their portion, **το μέρος**, their share, what belongs to them, their right, in the lake which

In Synopsis Sohar, p. 115, n. 27, it is said: “In the palace of the world to come there are twelve gates, each of which is inscribed with one of the twelve tribes, as that of Reuben, of Simeon, etc.: he, therefore, who is of the tribe of Reuben is received into none of the twelve gates but his own; and so of the rest.”

**Verse 13. *On the east three gates*** The city is here represented as standing to the four cardinal points of heaven, and presenting one side to each of these points.

**Verse 14. *The wall-had twelve foundations*** Probably twelve stones, one of which served for a foundation or threshold to each gate; and on these were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles, to intimate that it was by the doctrine of the apostles that souls enter into the Church, and thence into the New Jerusalem.

**Verse 15. *Had a golden reed*** Several excellent MSS. add *μετρον*, a measure; he had a measuring rod made of gold. This account of measuring the city seems to be copied, with variations, from Ezekiel 40:3, etc.

**Verse 16. *The city lieth foursquare*** Each side was equal, consequently the length and breadth were equal; and its height is here said to be equal to its length. It is hard to say how this should be understood. It cannot mean the height of the buildings, nor of the walls, for neither houses nor walls could be twelve thousand furlongs in height; some think this means the distance from the plain country to the place where the city stood. But what need is there of attempting to determine such measures in such a visionary representation? The quadrangular form intimates its perfection and stability, for the square figure was a figure of perfection among the Greeks; *αντη τετραγωνος*, the square or cubical man, was, with them, a man of unsullied integrity, perfect in all things.

**Verse 17. *The wall-a hundred and forty and four cubits*** This is twelve, the number of the apostles, multiplied by itself: for twelve times twelve make one hundred and forty-four.

***The measure of a man, that is, of the angel.*** The cubit, so called from cubitus, the elbow, is the measure from the tip of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, and is generally reckoned at one foot and a half, or eighteen inches; though it appears, from some measurements at the

pyramids of Egypt, that the cubit was, at least in some cases, twenty-one inches.

By the cubit of a man we may here understand the ordinary cubit, and that this was the angel's cubit who appeared in the form of a man. Or suppose we understand the height of the man as being here intended, and that this was the length of the measuring rod. Now allowing this height and rod to be six feet, and that this was intended to have some kind of symbolical reference to the twelve tribes, mentioned Revelation 21:12, represented by the twelve gates; and to the twelve apostles, represented by the twelve thresholds or foundations; then twenty-four, the number of the tribes and apostles, multiplied by six, make precisely the number one hundred and forty-four.

**Verse 18. *The building of the wall of it was of jasper*** The oriental jasper is exceedingly hard, and almost indestructible. Pillars made of this stone have lasted some thousands of years, and appear to have suffered scarcely any thing from the tooth of time.

***Pure gold, like unto clear glass.*** Does not this imply that the walls were made of some beautifully bright yellow stone, very highly polished? This description has been most injudiciously applied to heaven; and in some public discourses, for the comfort and edification of the pious, we hear of heaven with its golden walls, golden pavements, gates of pearl, etc., etc., not considering that nothing of this description was ever intended to be literally understood; and that gold and jewels can have no place in the spiritual and eternal world. But do not such descriptions as these tend to keep up a fondness for gold and ornaments? In symbols they are proper; but construed into realities, they are very improper.

The ancient Jews teach that "when Jerusalem and the temple shall be built, they will be all of precious stones, and pearls, and sapphire, and with every species of jewels." — *Sepher Rasiel Haggadol*, fol. 24, 1.

The same authors divide paradise into seven parts or houses; the third they describe thus: "The third house is built of gold and pure silver, and all kinds of jewels and pearls. It is very spacious, and in it all kinds of the good things, either in heaven or earth, are to be found. All kinds of precious things, perfumes, and spiritual virtues, are there planted. In the



midst of it is the tree of life, the height of which is five hundred years; (i.e., it is equal in height to the journey which a man might perform in five hundred years,) and under it dwell Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and all that came out of Egypt, and died in the wilderness. Over these Moses and Aaron preside, and teach them the law," etc. — Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 13, 4. In the same tract, fol. 182, 1, we find these words: "Know that we have a tradition, that when the Messiah, with the collected captivity, shall come to the land of Israel, in that day the dead in Israel shall rise again; and in that day the fiery walls of the city of Jerusalem shall descend from heaven, and in that day the temple shall be builded of jewels and pearls."

**Verse 19. *The foundations of the wall*** Does not this mean the foundations or thresholds of the gates? The gates represented the twelve tribes, Revelation 21:12; and these foundations or thresholds, the twelve apostles, Revelation 21:14. There was no entrance into the city but through those gates, and none through the gates but over these thresholds. The whole of the Mosaic dispensation was the preparation of the Gospel system: without it the Gospel would have no original; without the Gospel, it would have no reference nor proper object. Every part of the Gospel necessarily supposes the law and the prophets. They are the gates, it is the threshold; without the Gospel no person could enter through those gates. The doctrine of Christ crucified, preached by the apostles, gives a solid foundation to stand on; and we have an entrance into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, Hebrews 10:19, etc. And in reference to this we are said to be built on the FOUNDATION of the APOSTLES and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone, Ephesians 2:20.

***The first foundation was jasper*** A stone very hard, some species of which are of a sea-green color; but it is generally a bright reddish brown.

***The second, sapphire*** This is a stone of a fine blue color, next in hardness to the diamond.

***The third, a chalcedony*** A genus of the semipellucid gems, of which there are four species:—

1. A bluish white; this is the most common sort.
2. The dull milky veined; this is of little worth.

3. The brownish black; the least beautiful of all.

4. The yellow and red; the most beautiful, as it is the most valuable of all. Hitherto this has been found only in the East Indies.

***The fourth, an emerald*** This is of a bright green color without any mixture, and is one of the most beautiful of all the gems, The true oriental emerald as very scarce, and said to be found only in the kingdom of Cambay.

**Verse 20. *The fifth, sardonyx*** The onyx is an accidental variety of the agate kind; it is of a dark horny color, in which is a plate of a bluish white, and sometimes of red. When on one or both sides of the white there happens to lie also a plate of a reddish color, the jewellers call the stone a sardonyx.

***The sixth, sardius*** The sardius, sardel, or sardine stone, is a precious stone of a blood-red color.

***The seventh, chrysolite*** The gold stone. It is of a dusky green with a cast of yellow. It is a species of the topaz.

***The eighth, beryl*** This is a pellucid gem of a bluish green color.

***The ninth, a topaz*** A pale dead green, with a mixture of yellow. It is considered by the mineralogists as a variety of the sapphire.

***The tenth, a chrysoprasus*** A variety of the chrysolite, called by some the yellowish green and cloudy topaz. It differs from the chrysolite only in having a bluish hue.

***The eleventh, a jacinth*** A precious stone of a dead red color, with a mixture of yellow. It is the same as the hyacenet or cinnamon stone.

***The twelfth, an amethyst.*** A gem generally of a purple or violet color, composed of a strong blue and deep red.

These stones are nearly the same with those on the breastplate of the high priest, Exodus 28:17, etc., and probably were intended to express the meaning of the Hebrew words there used. See the notes on the above passages, where these gems are particularly explained.

**Verse 21. *The twelve gates were twelve pearls*** This must be merely figurative, for it is out of all the order of nature to produce a pearl large enough to make a gate to such an immense city. But St. John may refer to some relations of this nature among his countrymen, who talk much of most prodigious pearls. I shall give an example: “When Rabbi Juchanan (John) once taught that God would provide jewels and pearls, thirty cubits every way, ten of which should exceed in height twenty cubits, and would place them in the gates of Jerusalem, according to what is said Isaiah 54:12, I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, one of his disciples ridiculed him, saying, Where can such be found, since at present there is none so large as a pigeon’s egg? Afterwards, being at sea in a ship, he saw the ministering angels cutting gems and pearls; and he asked them for what purpose they were preparing those. They answered, to place them in the gates of Jerusalem. On his return he found Rabbi Juchanan teaching as usual; to whom he said, Explain, master, what I have seen. He answered, Thou knave, unless thou hadst seen, thou wouldst not have believed; wilt thou not receive the saying of the wise men? At that moment he fixed his eyes upon him, and he was reduced into a heap of bones.” — Bava bathra, fol. 77, 1, and Sanhedrim, fol. 100, 1, page 393. Edit. Cocceii. See Schoettgen.

**Verse 22. *I saw no temple*** There was no need of a temple where God and the Lamb were manifestly present.

**Verse 23. *No need of the sun*** This is also one of the traditions of the ancient Jews, that “in the world to come the Israelites shall have no need of the sun by day, nor the moon by night.” — Yalcut Rubeni, fol. 7, 3. God’s light shines in this city, and in the Lamb that light is concentrated, and from him everywhere diffused.

**Verse 24. *The nations of them which are saved*** This is an illusion to the promise that the Gentiles should bring their riches, glory, and excellence, to the temple at Jerusalem, after it should be rebuilt. See Revelation 21:26.

**Verse 25. *The gates of it shall not be shut at all*** The Christian Church shall ever stand open to receive sinners of all sorts, degrees, and nations.

***There shall be no night there.*** No more idolatry, no intellectual darkness; the Scriptures shall be everywhere read, the pure word everywhere preached, and the Spirit of God shall shine and work in every heart.

**Verse 26. *The glory and honor of the nations into it.*** Still alluding to the declarations of the prophets, (see the passages in the margin, Revelation 21:24, etc.,) that the Gentiles would be led to contribute to the riches and glory of the temple by their gifts, etc.

**Verse 27. *There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth*** See Isaiah 35:8; 52:1. Neither an impure person — he who turns the grace of God into lasciviousness, nor a liar — he that holds and propagates false doctrines.

***But they which are written*** The acknowledged persevering members of the true Church of Christ shall enter into heaven, and only those who are saved from their sins shall have a place in the Church militant.

ALL Christians are bound by their baptism to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to keep God's holy word and commandments; and to walk in the same all the days of their life. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O God of Jacob! Reader, art thou of this number? Or art thou expecting an eternal glory while living in sin? If so, thou wilt be fearfully disappointed. Presuming on the mercy of God is as ruinous as despairing of his grace. Where God gives power both to will and to do, the individual should work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

## CHAPTER 22

*The river of the water of life, 1. The tree of life, 2. There is no curse nor darkness in the city of God, 3-5. The angel assures John of the truth of what he has heard, and states that the time of the fulfillment is at hand, 6, 7. He forbids John to worship him, 8, 9. Again he states that the time of the fulfillment of the prophecies of this book is at hand, 10-12. Christ is Alpha and Omega, 13. The blessedness of those who keep his commandments; they enter through the gates into the city, 14. All the unholy are excluded, 15. Christ sent his angel to testify of those things in the Churches, 16. The invitation of the Spirit and the bride, 17. A curse denounced against those who shall either add to or take away from the prophecies of this book, 18, 19. Christ cometh quickly, 20. The apostolical benediction, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. 22.

**Verse 1. *Pure river of water of life*** This is evidently a reference to the garden of paradise, and the river by which it was watered; and there is also a reference to the account, Ezekiel 47:7-12. Water of life, as we have seen before, generally signifies spring or running water; here it may signify incessant communications of happiness proceeding from God.

**Verse 2. *In the midst of the street of it*** That is, of the city which was described in the preceding chapter.

***The tree of life*** An allusion to Genesis 2:9. As this tree of life is stated to be in the streets of the city, and on each side of the river, tree must here be an enallage of the singular for the plural number, trees of life, or trees which yielded fruit by which life was preserved. The account in Ezekiel is this: "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade-it shall bring forth new fruit, according to his months-and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine;" Ezekiel 47:12.

**Twelve manner of fruits** καρπους δωδεκα· Twelve fruits; that is, fruit twelve times in the year, as is immediately explained, yielded her fruit every month. As this was a great and spacious city, one fountain was not sufficient to provide water for it, therefore a river is mentioned; a great river, by which it was sufficiently watered. Some think that by this tree of life the Gospel is indicated; the twelve fruits are the twelve apostles; and the leaves are Gospel doctrines by which the nations-the Gentiles, are healed of the disease of sin. But this seems to be a fanciful interpretation.

**Verse 3. No more curse** Instead of καταναθεμα, curse, the best MSS., versions, etc., read καταθεμα cursed person. As there shall be no more sinning against God, so there shall be no more curse of God upon the people; for they shall be all his servants, and serve him. Our first parents came under the curse by sinning against their Maker in paradise; these shall never apostatize, therefore neither they nor the earth shall be cursed.

**Verse 4. See his face** Enjoy what is called the beatific vision; and they shall exhibit the fullest evidence that they belong entirely to him, for his name shall be written on their foreheads.

**Verse 5. There shall be no night there** See the 23d and 25th verses of the preceding chapter. {Revelation 21:23, 25}

**Verse 6. These sayings are faithful and true** See the preceding chapter, Revelation 21:5. From this verse to the end of the chapter is reckoned the epilogue of this book. 1. The angel affirms the truth of all that had been spoken, Revelation 22:6-11. 2. Jesus Christ confirms what has been affirmed, and pledges himself for the fulfillment of all the prophecies contained in it, Revelation 22:12-17. 3. John cautions his readers against adding or diminishing, and concludes with the apostolical blessing, Revelation 22:18-21.

**The things which must shortly be done.** There are many sayings in this book which, if taken literally, would intimate that the prophecies delivered in the whole of the Apocalypse were to be fulfilled in a short time after their delivery to John; and this is a strong support for the scheme of Wetstein, and those who maintain that the prophecies of this book all referred to those times in which the apostle lived, and to the disturbances which then took place, not only among the Jews, but in the Roman empire.

What they all mean, and when and how they are to be fulfilled, God in heaven alone knows.

**Verse 8. *I fell down to worship*** I prostrated myself before him as before a superior being, to express my gratitude, and give him thanks for the communications he had made. See on Revelation 19:10.

**Verse 10. *Seal not the sayings*** Do not lay them up for future generations; they concern the present times; they must shortly come to pass, for the time is at hand. See above, Revelation 22:6. What concerned the Jews was certainly at hand.

**Verse 11. *He that is unjust, let him be unjust still*** The time of fulfillment will come so suddenly that there will be but little space for repentance and amendment. What is done must be done instantly; and let him that is holy persevere, and hold fast what he has received.

**Verse 12. *Behold, I come quickly*** I come to establish my cause, comfort and support my followers, and punish the wicked.

**Verse 13. *I am Alpha and Omega*** See on Revelation 1:8, 18.

**Verse 14. *Blessed are they that do his commandments*** They are happy who are obedient.

***That they may have right to the tree of life*** The original is much more expressive, ἵνα εἴται ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς. That they may have authority over the tree of life; an authority founded on right, this right founded on obedience to the commandments of God, and that obedience produced by the grace of God working in them. Without grace no obedience; without obedience no authority to the tree of life; without authority no right; without right no enjoyment: God's grace through Christ produces the good, and then rewards it as if all had been our own.

**Verse 15. *Without are dogs*** All those who are uncircumcised in heart. The Jews call all the uncircumcised dogs. "Who is a dog? Ans. He who is not circumcised." Pirkey Elieser, chap. 29.

***And sorcerers*** See the note on Revelation 21:8.

**Verse 16. *I Jesus*** The Maker, the Redeemer, and Judge of all men.

***Have sent mine angel*** An especial messenger from heaven.

***I am the root and the offspring of David*** Christ is the root of David as to his Divine nature; for from that all the human race sprang, for he is the Creator of all things, and without him was nothing made which is made. And he is the offspring of David as to his human nature; for that he took of the stock of David, becoming thereby heir to the Jewish throne, and the only heir which then existed; and it is remarkable that the whole regal family terminated in Christ: and as HE liveth for ever, he is the alone true David and everlasting King.

***The bright and morning star.*** I am splendor and glory to my kingdom; as the morning star ushers in the sun, so shall I usher in the unclouded and eternal glories of the everlasting kingdom.

**Verse 17. *The Spirit and the bride*** All the prophets and all the apostles; the Church of God under the Old Testament, and the Church of Christ under the New.

***Say, Come.*** Invite men to Jesus, that by him they may be saved and prepared for this kingdom.

***Let him that heareth*** Let all who are privileged with reading and hearing the word of God, join in the general invitation to sinners.

***Him that is athirst*** He who feels his need of salvation, and is longing to drink of the living fountain.

***And whosoever will*** No soul is excluded: Jesus died for every man; every man may be saved; therefore let him who wills, who wishes for salvation, come and take the water of life freely — without money or price!

**Verse 18. *If any man shall add*** Shall give any other meaning to these prophecies, or any other application of them than God intends, he, though not originally intended, shall have the plagues threatened in this book for his portion.

**Verse 19. *If any man shall take away*** If any man shall lessen this meaning, curtail the sense, explain away the spirit and design, of these prophecies, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, etc. Thus Jesus Christ warns all those who consider this book to beware of indulging



their own conjectures concerning it. I confess that this warning has its own powerful influence upon my mind, and has prevented me from indulging my own conjectures concerning its meaning, or of adopting the conjectures of others. These visions and threatenings are too delicate and awful a subject to trifle with, or even to treat in the most solemn manner, where the meaning is obscure. I must leave these things to time and event, the surest interpreters. No jot or tittle of Christ's word shall fall to the ground; all shall have its fulfillment in due time.

This is termed a revelation, but it is a revelation of symbols; an exhibition of enigmas, to which no particular solution is given, and to which God alone can give the solution.

**Verse 20. *Surely I come quickly***

This may be truly said to every person in every age; Jesus the Judge is at the door!

*Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*

The wish and desire of the suffering Church, and of all the followers of God, who are longing for the coming of his kingdom.

**Verse 21. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ***

May the favor and powerful influence of Jesus Christ be with you all; you of the seven Churches, and the whole Church of Christ in every part of the earth, and through all the periods of time.

Instead of *παντων υμων*, you all, the most excellent MSS. and versions have *παντων των αγιων*, all the saints. This reading Griesbach has received into the text as indisputably genuine.

*Amen.*

So be it! and so shall it be for ever and ever. The opinion of Dr. Priestley, concerning the authenticity of this book, and the manner in which it is written, should not be withheld from either the learned or pious reader. "I think it impossible for any intelligent and candid person to peruse this book without being struck in the most forcible manner with the peculiar dignity and sublimity of its composition, superior to that of any other writing whatever; so as to be convinced that, considering the age in which

it appeared, none but a person divinely inspired could have written it. These prophecies are also written in such a manner as to satisfy us that the events announced to us were really foreseen, being described in such a manner as no person writing without that knowledge could have done. This requires such a mixture of clearness and obscurity as has never yet been imitated by any forgers of prophecy whatever. Forgeries, written of course after the events, have always been too plain. It is only in the Scriptures, and especially in the book of Daniel, and this of the Revelation, that we find this happy mixture of clearness and obscurity in the accounts of future events.” — Notes on Revelation.

The Subscriptions to this book are both few and unimportant:—

The CODEX ALEXANDRINUS has simply—The Revelation of John.

The SYRIAC doubles the Amen.

The AETHIOPIC. — Here is ended the vision of John, the Apocalypse; Amen: this is, as one might say, the vision which he saw in his life; and it was written by the blessed John, the evangelist of God.

VULGATE and COPTIC nothing.

ANCIENT ARABIC. — By the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ, the vision of John, the apostle and evangelist, the beloved of the Lord, is finished: this is the Apocalypse which the Lord revealed to him for the service of men. To Him be glory for ever and ever.

HAVING now brought my short notes on this very obscure book to a conclusion, it may be expected that, although I do not adopt any of the theories which have been delivered concerning it, yet I should give the most plausible scheme of the ancients or moderns which has come to my knowledge. This I would gladly do if I had any scheme to which I could give a decided preference. However, as I have given in the preface the scheme of Professor Wetstein, it is right that I should, at the conclusion, give the scheme of Mr. Lowman, which is nearly the same with that of Bishop Newton, and which, as far as I can learn, is considered by the most rational divines as being the most consistent and probable.

The scheme of the learned and pious Bengel may be found in the late Rev. John Wesley's notes on this book; that of Mr. Lowman, which now follows, may be found at the end of Dr. Dodd's notes.

Among other objections to this and all such schemes, I have this, which to me appears of vital consequence; its dates are too late. I think the book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, and not in 95 or 96, the date which I follow in the margin; which date I give, not as my own opinion, but the opinion of others.

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