

EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

The city of Ephesus is, by Pliny ^{f1}, called the other light of Asia; Miletus was one, and Ephesus the other: it was the metropolis of the lesser Asia, and one of the twelve cities of Ionia, and the first and chief of them: it is said to be built by the Amazons ^{f2}: it was famous for the magnificent temple of Diana; and the inhabitants of it were very much given to superstition and idolatry, and even to devilish arts, (~~499~~ Acts 19:19). It abounded with orators and philosophers, and men of great wisdom and learning ^{f3}; and was formerly a very rich, trading, flourishing city, but now a village, and a poor desolate place; it retains the name of Efeso, though the Turks call it Aia Salik. Hither the Apostle Paul first went after he had been at Corinth, though he then made but a short stay; when he came thither again, he found twelve disciples, and was the instrument of making a great many more: here he continued two or three years and formed a Gospel church, very large and flourishing, to whom he writes this epistle; and which was written by him when he was a prisoner at Rome, as appears by several passages in it, (~~401~~ Ephesians 3:1 4:1 6:20), and seems to have been written much about the same time as were the epistles to the Philippians, and to the Colossians, and to Philemon. Dr. Hammond thinks it was written about the year 58, and Dr. Lightfoot places it in 59, and the fifth year of Nero. The occasion of it was the foresight the apostle had of false teachers that would spring up in this church, after his death, and spread their pernicious doctrines, and draw away disciples after them, and do great mischief in the church; wherefore the design of this epistle is to establish the saints in the doctrines of the Gospel, that so they might not be carried away with the errors of the wicked: the subject matter of it is most excellent; it treats of the most sublime doctrines of grace, of divine predestination, and eternal election, of redemption by Christ, and of peace and pardon by his blood, of conversion by the power of efficacious grace, and of salvation by the free grace of God, in opposition to works: it also very largely treats of the nature and usefulness of the Gospel ministry, and of gifts qualifying for it, and of the several duties of religion incumbent on Christians; and the method which is used is exceeding apt and beautiful, for the apostle first

begins with the doctrines of the Gospel, which he distinctly handles and explains, and then proceeds to enforce the duties belonging to men, both as men and Christians.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 1

In this chapter are contained the inscription of the epistle, the salutation of the persons to whom it is written, the apostle's thanksgiving for blessings received by him, and them; in which the efficient, moving, procuring, and final causes of salvation are taken notice of, and the several parts and branches of it observed; and the whole is concluded with prayers for the Ephesians; in which mention is made of various things to the comfort of the saints, and to the glory of Christ. The inscription is in (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:1), in which the author of the epistle puts his name, declares his office, and how he came into it; and describes the persons to whom he wrote it, by their religious characters, and the place of their abode. The salutation is in (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:2), which is common to all his epistles: and in (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:3), is the thanksgiving to God, as the God and Father of Christ, for spiritual blessings in Christ in general; and then he proceeds to particulars, and begins with election, which is represented as an act of God the Father, as of particular persons, as done in Christ, and from the foundation of the world, the end of which is perfect holiness and love, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:4), and which is further illustrated under the name of predestination; the blessing which that is an appointment to, is the adoption of children; the moving cause of it, is the good pleasure of the divine will; the instrumental cause, or means, is Christ Jesus; the end with God is for himself, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:5), and which, in the next verse, is explained of the glory of his grace; to which grace, acceptance with him in Christ is owing; and which is another spiritual blessing, or a branch of election and predestination, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:6). To which is added another, and that is redemption; the author of which is Christ; the price, or procuring and meritorious cause of it is his blood; a branch of which is forgiveness of sins; and the whole is according to the plenteous and free grace of God, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:7), the entire plan and scheme of which is the produce of abundant wisdom and prudence, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:8), and is no other than the mystery of the will of God revealed in the Gospel, according to his sovereign will and purpose, (~~<BOOK>~~Ephesians 1:9), which lay hid within himself until the fulness of times, or the Gospel dispensation, in which

Christ being sent, has gathered all together in himself, (^{<4010>}Ephesians 1:10), through whom the saints enjoy the inheritance they are adopted to in predestination, which is the effect of an unfrustrable purpose, and a wise counsel and will, (^{<4011>}Ephesians 1:11). The end of which is, that those predestinated, redeemed, and adopted ones, should be to the praise and glory of God, (^{<4012>}Ephesians 1:12), and who are described as such, who first trusted in Christ upon hearing the Gospel; and after they had believed in him, were sealed by the Holy Spirit, said to be the Spirit of promise, (^{<4013>}Ephesians 1:13), and who is also spoken of as the earnest and pledge of the saints' inheritance, and who will continue so until all the people of God are redeemed from the grave in the resurrection morn, which will also issue in the praise and glory of God, (^{<4014>}Ephesians 1:14), and now on account of all these blessings of predestination, adoption, redemption, calling, and the sealing of the Spirit; as also, because of their faith in Christ, and love to the saints, these believers were possessed of, the apostle gave thanks, and continued to give thanks to God in his prayers to him, (^{<4015>}Ephesians 1:15,16). The object of his prayers is described as the God of Christ, and Father of glory; the petitions to him are for an increase of knowledge of Christ from the Spirit, as a spirit of wisdom and revelation, (^{<4017>}Ephesians 1:17), and that they might have a clearer view of the nature of that glory they were called unto, and were hoping for, (^{<4018>}Ephesians 1:18), and observe the wonderful display of the power of God in their conversion and faith; which is illustrated by comparing it with that power which was shown in raising Christ from the dead, (^{<4019>}Ephesians 1:20), which leads the apostle to take notice of the exaltation of Christ at the right hand of God in heaven, consequent on his resurrection; where he is advanced above angels and men, and has all things in subjection to him for the good of his church, of which he is the head, and which is his body and fulness, (^{<4021>}Ephesians 1:21-23).

Ver. 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, &c.*] (See Gill on “^{<4000>}Romans 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4000>}1 Corinthians 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4000>}2 Corinthians 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4000>}Galatians 1:1”).

To the saints which are at Ephesus; of this place, see the note above upon the title of the epistle, and (See Gill on “^{<4189>}Acts 18:19”). The persons residing there, to whom the epistle is written, are described by their character, as “saints”; being separated by the grace of God the Father in eternal election; whose sins were expiated by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and to whom he himself was made sanctification; and who were

internally sanctified by the Spirit of God, and lived holy lives and conversations. The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “to all the saints”; whether officers of the church, or private members, whether rich or poor, bond or free, strong or weak believers, of greater or lesser abilities.

And to the faithful in Christ Jesus: who were in Christ, not only by electing grace, but were openly and manifestly in him, through converting grace; and abode in him as branches in the vine; continued constant, and persevered in faith and holiness; and were faithful to the cause and interest of Christ, and to his Gospel and ordinances; and were hearty and sincere in the profession of their faith in Christ, and love to him and his: or, as the Arabic version renders it, “and to them that believe in Jesus Christ”; with all their hearts, to the saving of their souls; who look unto him, venture on him, rely upon him, and trust in him for life and salvation, and who shall certainly be saved; of such the church at Ephesus consisted, to whom this epistle was written: of the church there, (see Gill on “~~407~~Acts 20:17”).

Ver. 2. *Grace be to you, and peace from God, &c.]* (See Gill on “~~600~~Romans 1:7”).

Ver. 3. *Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.]* God, the first person in the Trinity, is the God of Christ, as Christ is man and Mediator; he chose and appointed him to be the Mediator, and made a covenant with him as such; he formed and prepared an human nature for him, and anointed it with the Holy Ghost above measure, and supported it under all his trials and sufferings, and at last glorified it: and Christ, as man, prayed to him as his God, believed, hoped, and trusted in him as such, and loved him as in such a relation to him, and cheerfully obeyed his commands. And the same is the Father of Christ, as Christ is God; as such he is the Son of God; not by creation, as angels and Adam, nor by adoption, as saints, but by natural generation; he being the only begotten of the Father, his own proper Son, of the same nature and perfections with him, and equal to him. Now to “bless” God is neither to invoke nor confer a blessing on him; for there is none greater than he to be called upon; nor does he need anything, nor can he receive anything from his creature; but it is either to congratulate his greatness and goodness, to ascribe blessing, glory, and honour to him, or to give thanks unto him, both for temporal and spiritual mercies. And the reasons why he is blessed, or praised by the saints as the God and Father of Christ, are; because these are his New

Testament titles, under which he is more clearly made known, and in which he delights; and because he is their God and Father in Christ; nor can they come to him in any other way, but through him; and because it is through him that all their blessings come to them, and therefore all their praises must go this way, as follows:

who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: God is the author and giver of all blessings; and he blesses his people with them, as he is the God and Father of Christ, and as he is their covenant God and Father in Christ; and he only can bless; if he blesses not, none can; and if he blesses, they are blessed indeed: the “us” that are blessed, are such who deserve, according to the tenor of the law, to be cursed; and are not all men, but some distinct from others; and who are before described as saints, and faithful in Christ Jesus; and include both Jews and Gentiles, who belong to the election of grace. And the blessings such are blessed with are spiritual, so called to distinguish them from temporal blessings. The Jews have the like distinction of *twynmz twbwj*, “temporal blessings”, and *twynj wr twbwj*, “spiritual blessings”^{f4}; which latter are solid, substantial, and lasting blessings; and which concern the good of the soul or spirit of man; and are agreeable to, and desired by a spiritual man; and are applied by the Holy Spirit of God; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “with every blessing of the Holy Spirit”: and which are very comprehensive, and take in all the fulness of grace in Christ; all the blessings and sure mercies of the everlasting covenant; all things pertaining to life and godliness, such as justification, peace, pardon, adoption, sanctification, and eternal life: and with these the saints are blessed “in heavenly” places; God that blesses them is in heaven, and so is Christ, in whom they are blessed; and the completion of their blessedness will be in heaven, where their hope is laid up, and their inheritance is reserved: and this phrase may denote the safety of them, being out of the reach of any enemy, sin, Satan, or the world, to deprive them of them, as well as the nature of them; for it may be read, “in heavenly things”, and so distinguishes these blessings from such as are of an earthly kind; and points at the original of them, being such as descend from above, come down from heaven; and also the tendency of them, which is to heaven; and being what give a right unto, and a meetness for the kingdom of heaven: and these they are blessed with “in Christ”; as he is their head and representative, and as they are members in him, and partakers of him; through whom, and for whose sake, they are conveyed unto them, and who

himself is the sum and substance of them. Agreeably to this way of speaking, the Targumist, Jonathan ben Uzziel, on (⁴⁰⁶⁷Numbers 6:27) paraphrases the last clause thus, “I will bless them”, *yr mymb*, “in my word”. The date of these blessings, “hath blessed us”, may respect either first conversion, when the discovery and application of the blessings of grace are made to God's people; or the making of the covenant with Christ, their head, to whom all grace was then given, and to them in him, and their election was in Christ, as follows.

Ver. 4. *According as he hath chosen us in him*, &c.] This choice cannot be understood of a national one, as Israel of old were chosen by the Lord; for the persons the apostle writes to were not a nation; nor does he address all the inhabitants of Ephesus, only the saints and faithful in Christ that resided there; nor are they all intended here, if any of them. However, not they only, since the apostle includes himself, and perhaps some others, who did not belong to that place, nor were of that country: nor does this choice regard them as a church; for though the saints at Ephesus were in a church state, yet the apostle does not write to them under that formal consideration, but as saints and faithful; nor are these persons said to be chosen to church privileges, but to grace and glory, to be holy and blameless: besides, from (^{400B}Ephesians 1:3-12), the apostle seems to speak of himself, and some others, who first trusted in Christ, as distinct from the believers at Ephesus, (^{401B}Ephesians 1:13), nor is this choice of persons to an office, for all that are here intended were not apostles, or pastors, or deacons: nor can it design the effectual calling, or the call of persons in time by efficacious grace; because this was before the foundation of the world, as follows: but it intends an eternal election of particular persons to everlasting life and salvation; and which is the first blessing of grace, and the foundation one, upon which all the rest proceed, and

according to which they are dispensed; for according to predestination are calling, justification, and glorification. The author of this choice is God, God the Father, who is distinguished from Christ, in whom this act is made; and it is according to his foreknowledge, and is an act of his grace, and is entirely sovereign: the objects of it, us, are not angels, but men, considered as unfallen with respect to the end, and as fallen with respect to the means; and these not all mankind: to choose, implies the contrary; and they that are chosen are distinguished from others, and are represented as few; nor do all men partake either of the means or end appointed in the decree of election; and yet some of all nations, Jews and Gentiles, are

included in it; though none for any previous qualifications in them, as not for their good works, faith, holiness, or perseverance therein; for these are fruits and effects of election, and therefore cannot be causes or conditions of it: and this choice is made in Christ; and the persons chosen are chosen in him, and by being chosen they come to be in him; for this refers not to their openly being in him at conversion, as believers, but to their secretly being in him before time. Christ, as Mediator, is the object of election himself; and all the elect were chosen in him as their head, in whose hands their persons, grace, and glory are, and so are safe and secure in him: the Arabic version renders it, “by him”; not as the meritorious cause, for Christ's merits are not the cause of election, though they are of redemption and salvation; but as the means, in order to the end: the Ethiopic version renders it, “to him”; to salvation by him, and to the obtaining of his glory; as if he and his benefits, being the end of this choice, were intended; which was made

before the foundation of the world: and that it was so early, is certain, from the love of God to his people, which this is the effect of, and which is an everlasting love; and from the covenant which was made with Christ from everlasting, on account of these chosen ones, when Christ was set up as the head and representative of them; and from the provision of all spiritual blessings for them in it, which proceeds according to this choice; and from the preparation of a kingdom for them from the foundation of the world; and from the nature of God's decrees, which are eternal; for no new will, or act of will, can arise in God, or any decree be made by him, which was not from eternity: God's foreknowledge is eternal, and so is his decree, and is no other than himself decreeing. The end of this choice follows,

that we should be holy, and without blame, before him in love; the objects of it are not chosen because they were holy, but that they might partake of the sanctification of the Spirit; that they might be sanctified by him here, and be perfectly holy hereafter; and be without fault and blame, both in this life, as instilled by the righteousness of Christ, and as washed in his blood; and in the life to come, being entirely freed from all sin, and without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; and appear so in the sight of Christ, who will present them to himself, and in the sight of his Father, to whom they will also be presented by him, even in the sight of divine justice: and this will be all “in love”, or “through love”, as the Syriac version renders it; or “through his love”, as the Arabic version; for the love of God is the source and spring of election itself, and of holiness and happiness, the end of it;

and which is shed abroad in the hearts of God's people now, and will be more fully comprehended and enjoyed in the other world; and which causes love again in them to him. A phrase somewhat like this is used by the Targumist on (²¹¹⁰⁶Ecclesiastes 11:6) where, speaking of a man's children, he says;

“it is not known unto thee which of them **bj ywhml rj bta**, “is chosen to be good”, this, or that, or both of them, to be alike good.”

Some copies put the stop at before him; and read the phrase, “in love”; in connection with the words following, thus, “in love”, or “by love hath predestinated us”; so the Syriac version.

Ver. 5. *Having predestinated us, &c.*] Predestination, taken in a large sense, includes both election and reprobation, and even reaches to all affairs and occurrences in the world; to the persons, lives, and circumstances of men; to all mercies, temporal or spiritual; and to all afflictions, whether in love or in wrath: and indeed providence, or the dispensations of providence, are no other than the execution of divine predestination; but here it is the same with election, and is concerned with the same persons, and has regard to a special blessing, the elect are appointed to, as follows;

unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ unto himself; by which is meant, either the grace of adoption, which is an act of the Father's love, a blessing provided and secured in the covenant of grace; and is of persons to an inheritance, to which they have no legal right; and is entirely free, there being no need on the adopter's part, and no worth on the part of the adopted: or rather the inheritance they are adopted to; which exceeds all others, is incorruptible, undefiled, and fades not away; and lies among the saints in light, and belongs to all the children of God: and this they are predestinated unto by God the Father, who takes them into his family, puts them among the children, and gives them a goodly heritage: and that “by Jesus Christ”; or through him; for both the grace of adoption, and the kingdom and glory they are adopted to, come by and through him as Mediator; through his espousing their persons, assuming their nature, and redeeming them from under the law and its curses; through his giving them a power and privilege openly to be the sons of God; and through faith in him, whereby they are manifestly such: the phrase “unto himself”, either

refers to God the Father, who has chosen, set apart, formed and reserved his people and children for himself, for his peculiar treasure, and for his own glory; or to Jesus Christ, that he might have some brethren, and they be conformed to him, and he be the firstborn among them, and in all things have the pre-eminence; and that they might be with him, and behold his glory, and he be glorified in them: and this act of divine predestination was

according to the good pleasure of his will: the will of God is the rule of all his actions, and of all his acts of grace and goodness; and the good pleasure of it appears in the predestination of men to grace and glory: and from hence it is manifest, that foreseen faith, holiness, and good works, are excluded from being the moving cases of predestinating grace; and that it is wholly to be resolved into the good will and pleasure of God; the view in it being entirely as follows,

Ver. 6. *To the praise of the glory of his grace*, &c.] The grace of God manifestly appears in the predestination of men to adoption; in that God had no need of sons, he having a dear and well beloved one; in whom he is well pleased; and in that those he adopts are so unworthy of the relation; and in that men, and not angels, should be taken by him into his family; and that some, and not others of the same race; and that this should be before the world was; and in providing Christ as a Redeemer, to open the way for the reception of this grace and happiness; and in appointing the grace of faith to be the receiver of it: and the glory of the grace of God appears herein; the glory of God is the supreme end of all he does; and the glory of his grace, and not his power, or other perfections of his, and the manifestative glory of that is here intended; yea, the “praise” of that glory: and this end is answered, when the children of God ascribe their adoption to the free grace of God; and when they admire it, and are thankful for it, and walk worthy of the relation they are brought into:

wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “his own beloved Son”, and so the Claromontane exemplar; the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the beloved of God the Father; and was so from everlasting, and will be so to everlasting; which has appeared by his nearness to him, lying in his bosom; by his being privy to all his counsels, purposes, and designs; in putting all things into his hands, and in showing him all that he does; and by his giving him honour and glory, as man and Mediator: and he is the beloved of the saints, for the transcendent excellencies that are in him, and for his love to them, and for what he has

done for them, and is unto them; and in him is their acceptance: which is to be understood of the acceptance of their persons, as founded in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and so of their services in him; of God's act of delight and complacency in them, as considered in Christ; who looks upon them, and is well pleased with them, and rests in his love towards them; which is an amazing instance of grace: it was grace that gave them a being in Christ, and which has provided in predestination everything to make them grateful to God; and the very act of acceptance is of mere grace; for internal grace, or grace infused, is not here meant, but the free favour of God: some read not "in which", but "which" *εχαριτωσεν*, "he freely gave us in the beloved"; so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Syriac and Arabic versions.

Ver. 7. *In whom we have redemption through his blood, &c.*] Redemption supposes captivity and slavery, and is a deliverance out of it; God's elect by nature are in bondage to sin, Satan, and the law; through the grace of Christ, they are redeemed from all iniquity; ransomed out of the hands of him that is stronger than they; and are freed from the law, its bondage, curse, and condemnation, and from every other enemy: and this benefit Christ is the author of; he was called to be the Redeemer of his people from all eternity; and he was sent in the fulness of time, to procure the redemption of them; to which he had a right, being their near kinsman; and for which he was every way fit, being God as well as man; and which he has obtained by his obedience, sufferings, and death: and in whom it resides, as in its proper subject and author; who, by imputation, is made redemption to all the chosen ones; for not angels, but men, share in this redemption; and not all men, but elect men; such as are chosen in Christ, predestinated to the adoption of children by him, and who are accepted in the beloved: and this comes to them through the blood of Christ, which was freely shed on the cross to procure it; and was a sufficient ransom, or redemption price; it being not only the same blood with those who are redeemed, but the blood of an innocent person; and not of a mere man, but of one who is truly and properly God, as well as man; see more of this (See Gill on "⁵⁰¹⁴Colossians 1:14"). A branch of this redemption follows, or a blessing that comes by it, and along with it,

the forgiveness of sins; of all sins, original and actual, past, present, and to come; and this is through the blood of Christ, which was shed for the same: and yet is

according to the riches of his grace; for God of his rich grace found the ransom price, and gave his Son, as well as he gave himself, his life, a ransom for many; and how much soever it cost Christ to procure redemption and pardon, they are free to his people; who are redeemed without money and price of theirs, and whose sins are forgiven freely for Christ's sake.

Ver. 8. *Wherein he hath abounded toward us*, &c.] That is, in the grace which is so abundantly displayed in redemption and forgiveness of sin, through the blood of Christ:

in all wisdom and prudence; this may be understood, either of the aboundings of grace in the Gospel; which may be called all wisdom and prudence, because it is the wisdom of God; it is the product of his wisdom, and a display of it; the doctrines it contains are full of wisdom, and are the means of communicating it to men, and of making them wise unto salvation; and it may be so called, to set forth the excellency and perfection of it, as greatly transcending all human wisdom; and in this the grace of God has much abounded, for the Gospel is a declaration of the free grace of God, in the salvation of sinners by Christ; in the free justification of them by his righteousness; and in the full pardon of their sins through his blood; and is a kind invitation and free promise of grace to all sensible sinners: or else of the aboundings of grace in conversion; all men by nature are foolish and unwise; in conversion God makes men to know wisdom in the hidden part, which he puts there; and for which purpose the Spirit is given as a spirit of wisdom; and some part of the work of sanctification lies in spiritual light, knowledge, and understanding; and the Syriac version reads the last clause, “and in all spiritual understanding”; and faith particularly may be intended, which is sometimes expressed by knowledge; and now the grace of God is exceeding abundant with faith and love, in regeneration, sanctification, and conversion; or rather this may be understood of the display of divine wisdom, in the work of redemption and salvation by Christ; and which is to be seen, in pitching upon a proper person to be the Mediator, to become a sacrifice, and make intercession, who is the Son of God, truly God and man, and so every way able to perform the business of salvation; and in the manner of its being effected, in a way wherein grace and mercy are highly exalted, and yet in no wise reproachful to the holiness of God, or injurious to his justice, but to the honour of them, in which Satan is greatly mortified, and sin is condemned, and yet the sinner saved; and in the several parts of it, in the justification of

the ungodly without works, by the righteousness of another, in pardoning their sins in a way of justice and faithfulness, and yet according to the riches of grace, and in the security of the persons of God's elect, and of their grace and glory in Christ; and in the subjects of this salvation, who are the foolish things of this world, ungodly sinners, the chief of sinners; and lastly, in making faith the receiver of all the blessings of salvation, that so it might appear to be all of grace.

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

according to his good pleasure, which he hath purposed in himself; both with respect to the persons to whom it is made known, and with respect to the time when he makes it known; both these are as he pleases, and as he has purposed in his own breast; the Gospel is sent when and where he has determined within himself it shall go; and persons are called by it according to his purpose and grace.

Ver. 10. *That in the dispensation of the fulness of times, &c.*] Or “according to the dispensation”, &c. as the Alexandrian copy reads; the fulness of time appointed by God, and fixed in the prophets; after many times and seasons were elapsed, from the creation of the world; at the most suitable and convenient time, when a new economy or dispensation began, within which all this was to be effected, hereafter mentioned:

he might gather together in one all things in Christ; this supposes, that all things were once united together in one; angels and men were united to God by the ties of creation, and were under the same law of nature, and

there were peace and friendship between them; and this union was in Christ, as the beginning of the creation of God, in whom all things consist: and it supposes a disunion and scattering of them; as of men from God, and from good angels, which was done by sin; and of Jews and Gentiles from one another; and of one man from another, everyone turning to his own way; and then a gathering of them together again: the word here used signifies to restore, renew, and reduce to a former state; and so the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions render it; and according to this sense, it may seem to have respect to the times of the restitution of all things, the restoration and renovation of the universe; when there will be new heavens and a new earth, and new inhabitants in them: the word is also used to recapitulate, or sum up the heads of a discourse; and according to this sense, it may intend the meeting together, and summing up of all things in Christ, that had been before; as of all the promises and blessings of the covenant; of all the prophecies and promises of the Old Testament; of all the types and shadows, and sacrifices of the former dispensation; yea, all the sins of Old Testament saints, and all the curses of the law, met on him: the word is likewise used for the collection of numbers into one sum total; and Christ is the sum total of elect angels and men; or the whole number of them is in him; God has chosen a certain number of persons unto salvation; these he has put into the hands of Christ, who has a particular and personal knowledge of them; and the exact number of them will be gathered and given by him: once more, it signifies to reduce, or bring under one head; and Christ is an head of eminence and of influence, both to angels and men: and there is a collection of these together in one, in Christ; by virtue of redemption by Christ, and grace from him, there is an entire friendship between elect angels and elect men; they are social worshippers now, and shall share in the same happiness of the vision of God and of Christ hereafter: hence it follows,

both which are in heaven, and which are on earth, even

in him; by things in heaven are not meant the souls of saints in heaven; though it is true that the souls of departed saints are in heaven; and that the saints in heaven and on earth were gathered together in Christ, and represented by him, when he hung upon the cross; and that they all make up one body, of which Christ is the head; and that they will be all collected together one day; and that their souls which are in heaven, and their bodies which are in the earth, will come together and be reunited, and dwell with Christ for ever; but rather the angels are meant, whose origin is heaven;

where they have their residence, and from whence they never fell; and whose employment is in heaven, and of an heavenly nature: and by things on earth, are not intended every creature on earth, animate and inanimate; nor all men, but all elect men, whether Jews or Gentiles, and some of all sorts, ranks, and degrees; whose origin is of the earth, and who are the inhabitants of it: all these angels in heaven, and elect men on earth, are brought together under one head, even in him, in Christ Jesus, and by him; and none but he was able to do it, and none so fit, who is the Creator of all, and is above all; and was typified by Jacob's ladder, which reached heaven and earth, and joined them together, and on which the angels of God ascended and descended.

Ver. 11. *In whom also we have obtained an inheritance*, &c.] Or a part and lot; that is, have obtained one in Christ, in his person, and in his fulness of grace, in the blessings and promises which are in him; or have obtained to be the Lord's clergy, or heritage, to be his portion and inheritance; or rather to have an inheritance in him by lot, meaning the incorruptible and eternal inheritance of glory and happiness in heaven; to which elect men are chosen in Christ, and are begotten to a lively hope of through his resurrection from the dead; and which his righteousness gives a right unto, and his grace a meetness for; and which is now in his hands, and will be given to them through him: and this is said to be obtained by lot, as the word signifies, in allusion to the land of Canaan, which was divided by lot to the children of Israel; and to show that it is not by works of righteousness done by men, but by the sovereign disposal of God; and that everyone shall have his share, and that certainly; for this is not designed to represent it as a casual, or contingent thing. The Alexandrian copy reads, "in whom also we are called"; and so the Vulgate Latin version, "in whom also we are called by lot"; and the Syriac version, "in him", or "by him we are chosen", which agrees with the next clause:

being predestinated according to the purpose of him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will: predestination is not only to sonship, but to an inheritance; it not only secures the grace of adoption, but prepares and provides an heavenly portion: and this act of predestination proceeds according to a purpose; according to a purpose of God, which can never be frustrated; and according to the purpose of "that God", as one of Stephens's copies reads, that is the author of all things but sin; of the works of creation and of providence, and of grace and salvation; and who works all these according to his will, just as he pleases, and according to

the counsel of it, in a wise and prudent manner, in the best way that can be devised; for he is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working; wherefore his counsel always stands, and he does all his pleasure: and hence the inheritance which the saints obtain in Christ, and are predestinated to, is sure and certain.

Ver. 12. *That we should be to the praise of his glory, &c.*] This is the end of predestination to the inheritance; and the sense is, either that the praise of the glory of God, in his grace and goodness, might be discovered and made known unto the saints, as it is displayed in election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal salvation; or that they should praise and glorify him on account of these things, by ascribing all to his grace, and nothing to themselves; by giving him thanks for all his benefits; by ordering their conversations aright as become the Gospel; and by doing all things with a view to his glory:

who first trusted in Christ; the Jews, the apostle, and others of the Jewish nation;

who before hoped in Christ, as the words may be rendered; who hoped in Christ before the Gentiles did; and indeed the people of Israel hoped for Christ before he came; the promises of the Messiah were made to them, and he was the peculiar hope and expectation of that people; and to them he first came, and to them the Gospel was first preached; and some of them first believed in Christ, and trusted in him, and not in their own righteousness, strength, wisdom, and riches, nor in their own hearts, nor in any mere creature, nor in their carnal privileges; all which they renounced confidence in, and dependence on, when they came to the knowledge of Christ; in whose person they trusted for acceptance, and in his righteousness for justification, and in his blood for pardon, and in his fulness for supply, and in his power for protection and perseverance: this supposes knowledge of him, and a sense of the frailty and vanity of all other objects; and was a betaking themselves to him, a leaning and staying on him, a committing all unto him, and an expectation of all good things from him.

Ver. 13. *In whom ye also trusted, &c.*] The Gentile believers, the Ephesians, whom the apostle now particularly addresses; and who participated of the same grace and privileges with the believing Jews; the promise belonged to all that God called, whether afar off or nigh; and the same common salvation was sent to one as to another; and the same faith

was wrought in one as in the other; and they were interested in the same Christ, and were heirs of the same inheritance; the Alexandrian copy reads “we”:

after that ye heard the word of truth; the Gospel; and which is so called, on account of its divine original, coming from the God of truth, who cannot lie; and because of the concern which Christ has in it, who is truth itself, and was the author, subject, and preacher of it, and who confirmed it by his miracles, and his death; and on account of the Spirit of God, the dictator of it, and who leads into all truths, and owns and blesses them for conversion and comfort; and because it contains nothing but truth, and particularly that eminent one, salvation alone by Christ, for the chief of sinners; and in contradistinction from the law, which was typical and shadowy; **ⲓ ⲱϥⲓⲩⲁⲛⲁ** **ⲙ**, “the word of truth”, is a phrase used by the Jews^{f5}, for sublime and heavenly doctrine: now, by the hearing of this, faith came; and this the Ephesians heard, not only externally, but internally; so as to understand, approve, and believe it, and to put it in practice: and which is also called

the Gospel of your salvation: because it is a declaration and publication of salvation by Christ; and gives an account of the author of salvation, of his ability and willingness to save, and of the nature of this salvation, and describes the persons who shall be saved; and because it is the means of salvation, when attended with the Spirit and power of God; and the instrument, in God's hand, of showing to souls their special and particular interest in salvation:

in whom also after that ye believed; which may refer either to the Gospel of salvation, in which they believed upon hearing it; or rather to Christ, the Saviour revealed, in whom they believed to the saving of their souls: and this shows, that the sealing work of the Spirit after mentioned, and with which this stands in connection, is a distinct thing from faith, or indeed any other work of the Spirit; as illumination, regeneration, sanctification, &c. it is what follows believing, and is a work that passes upon the soul after it; and so is something over and above, and more than faith, at least than first believing: and from hence it also appears, that there may be true faith, where this is not as yet; and that none but believers in Christ enjoy the following privilege:

ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise. This cannot have respect to the Father's sealing his people in election, with the seal of his

foreknowledge, (⁵¹²⁹2 Timothy 2:19) for that is before faith, and is within himself, and not on them, and is distinct from the Spirit's work; and for the same reasons it cannot design the Son's affection to them, setting them as a seal on his arm and heart, (²¹⁸⁶Song of Solomon 8:6), or his asserting his property in them, and the security and protection of them, (²¹⁴²Song of Solomon 4:12 ⁴⁰¹³Revelation 7:3), nor the Spirit's finishing and completing his own work of grace upon the soul, in which sense the word is used, (⁶¹⁵³Romans 15:28) for this as yet was not done upon these believing Ephesians; nor the confirming the Gospel, and the saints in it, by the extraordinary effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, or by his extraordinary works which attended the ministry of the word, to the establishing of it, and the faith of men in it; since these were not common to believers, nor did they continue; whereas the believing Ephesians, in common, were sealed; and the Spirit of God continues still as a sealer of his people, and as an earnest and pledge of their inheritance until the day of redemption; but it is to be understood of the confirming, certifying, and assuring the saints, as to their interest in the favour of God, and in the blessings of grace, of every kind, and their right and title to the heavenly glory; (see Gill on "⁴⁰¹²2 Corinthians 1:22"), and the seal of these things is not circumcision, nor baptism, nor the Lord's supper, nor even the graces of the Spirit; but the Spirit himself, who witnesses to the spirits of believers the truth of these things, and that as a "spirit of promise": so called, both because he is the Spirit promised, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions render it, whom the Father and Christ had promised, and who was sent by them; and because he usually seals, or certifies believers of the truth of the above things, by opening and applying a word of promise to them: and which he does also, as the "Holy" Spirit; for this sealing work of his leaves a greater impress of holiness upon the soul, and engages more to acts of holiness; wherefore the doctrine of assurance is no licentious doctrine; no persons are so holy as those who are truly possessed of that grace; and as for such who pretend unto it, and live in sin, it is a certain thing that they in reality know nothing of it.

Ver. 14. *Which is the earnest of our inheritance*, &c.] The incorruptible and never fading one in heaven, or the heavenly kingdom; this is the Father's gift, his bequest, and belongs only to children; it comes to them through the death of the testator, Christ, and is for ever; and of this the Spirit of God is the pledge and earnest: an earnest, is what confirms an agreement, and assures the right to the thing agreed to, and is a part of it,

and lesser than it, and is never returned; so the Spirit of God certifies the right to the heavenly inheritance, as well as gives a meetness for it; he is the firstfruits of eternal glory and happiness, and of the same kind with it; and as he is enjoyed in measure by the saints now, is lesser than the communion which they shall have with him, and with the Father, and the Son, hereafter, for the best things are reserved till last; and being once given into the heart as an earnest, he always continues, he never removes more, or is ever taken away:

until the redemption of the purchased possession, or “of the peculiar people”; (see ^{<400>}1 Peter 2:9), for this is not to be understood of heaven, which is never said to be purchased, nor can it with any propriety be said to be redeemed; but of saints, of the church of God, who are bought with a price, and are purchased with his blood; and who, as they were redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, when they were purchased, so will be redeemed again in the resurrection morn, which is called the day of redemption, (^{<400>}Ephesians 4:30 ^{<421>}Luke 21:28), and which will be a redemption of them from the weakness, corruption, and mortality of the body; from their present state of absence and pilgrimage; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions, both inward and outward; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from a tempting devil, and an unbelieving heart; from all doubts and fears; and from death and the grave; and so the Syriac version very justly renders it, “until the redemption of them that are saved”. Now till such time, the Spirit of God abides as an earnest, even until the whole felicity is enjoyed both in soul and body; and this shows the perpetuity of the Spirit's inhabitation, and grace, the final perseverance of the saints, and the security of the inheritance to them.

Unto the praise of his glory; as to the glory of the Father, by whom the saints are chosen and predestinated, (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:6) and to the glory of the Son, by whom they are redeemed, in whom they obtain the inheritance, and in whom they trust, (^{<400>}Ephesians 1:12), so to the glory of the Holy Spirit, by whom they are sealed, and who is their earnest; for he must have his share of glory in the salvation of the elect, as well as the other two persons.

Ver. 15. *Wherefore I also*, &c.] As well as others:

after I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus; who is the immediate object of faith, and a very proper and suitable one; having every thing in him that is agreeable to the case and circumstances of those that trust in him. And

the grace of faith, which terminates on him, is a seeing him, a beholding the glory of his person, and the fulness of his grace; a going to him, and venturing on him; a laying hold upon him, and embracing of him; a committing all unto him, and a leaning and depending on him, and a living upon him, and a walking on in him.

And love unto all the saints: whether Jew or Gentile, rich or poor, greater or lesser believers, of meaner gifts, or larger abilities; and which love was unfeigned, fervent, active, and laborious; and which is the evidence of regeneration, and without which a profession is in vain. These two graces, faith and love, are inseparable; they always go together, and are to be found in the same persons; and where they are, they cannot be hid, as they were not in these Ephesians; their faith was professed by them, and was made public, and their love showed itself in deeds, as well as in words, to the saints: hence the apostle came to hear of them both, upon the certain relation of others; for these things were come abroad, and were talked of; (See Gill on “^{5100B}Colossians 1:3”). (See Gill on “^{5100B}Colossians 1:4”). (See Gill on “^{5100B}Philemon 1:4-5”).

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

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

Ver. 17. *That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.]* In what sense God the Father is the God of Christ, (See Gill on “^{400B}Ephesians 1:3”)

The Father of glory; or the glorious Father; who is glorious in himself, in the perfections of his nature, and in the works of his hands; and as a father, he is a glorious father to Christ, and is a father to him, as he is to none else; and has been honoured and glorified by Christ, and from whom Christ as man has received much honour and glory: and he is a glorious father to the saints, to whom he has shown inexpressible love, by adopting them into his family; and pities them, as a father does his children; takes care of them,

and protects them, and makes a glorious provision for them; not only of good things now, but of an eternal inheritance hereafter: and he may be so called, because he is the author and giver of eternal glory and happiness; and because all glory is due unto him: the Arabic version reads, “God, our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory”, making all these epithets to belong to Christ:

may give unto you the spirit of wisdom and revelation, in the knowledge of him; this was one part of the apostle's prayers for the saints at Ephesus, that they might increase in divine knowledge; either in the knowledge of God, as the God of Christ, and the Father of glory, and as their God and Father in Christ; or of God, as considered in Christ the Mediator; or else of Christ himself: and designs not a notional and speculative knowledge of Christ, but what is practical and experimental; and which is joined with love of him, faith in him, and obedience to him; and which is not only approbative, but fiducial and appropriating; and though it is but imperfect, yet is progressive; and for the progression of it, the apostle prays; for it is certain, that these saints had a knowledge of Christ, but this was not perfect; and a larger measure of it was desirable: and in order to this, he prays for the Spirit, as a “spirit of wisdom”; who implants spiritual wisdom in the hearts of men, and instructs them in the Gospel, the hidden wisdom of God, leads them into all truths, and opens to them the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, which are hid in Christ, the wisdom of God; and as a spirit of “revelation”; who reveals Christ and the things of Christ, at first conversion; and afterwards reveals him and his righteousness, and other benefits of his more largely, even from faith to faith; and gives a clearer view of interest in them: hence it appears, that the Spirit is the gift of God; and that all spiritual light and knowledge, and the increase of it, are owing to him.

Ver. 18. *The eyes of your understanding being enlightened, &c.*] By the Spirit of God already, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin; the insufficiency of their own righteousness; the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ, as a Saviour; the excellency, truth, and usefulness of the doctrines of the Gospel; in which their understandings were before dark, but now had light into them: wherefore these words are not to be considered as part of the apostle's petitions, but rather as what was taken for granted by him; and are to be put into a parenthesis, and the following words to be joined in connection with the preceding verse; unless it should be thought, that the apostle prays for greater illuminations, and for more

spiritual light, and that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightened; the phrase, $\text{I } \kappa\epsilon\eta \text{ } \acute{\gamma}\text{[}$, ομμα της διανοιας , “the eye of the understanding”, is Rabbinical, and often to be met with in Jewish writings¹⁶; the Alexandrian copy, and several others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, “the eyes of your heart”; and to, twbbi h yny[, “the eyes of the hearts, or minds”, is a phrase used by the Jewish writers¹⁷:

that ye may know what is the hope of his calling; by which is meant, the effectual calling of the saints; which is not a call to an office, or a call merely by the external ministry of the word; but which is internal, special, powerful, high, and heavenly: and this is the calling of God, of which he is the author; who calls with an holy calling, unto eternal glory by Christ Jesus; and which is without repentance: and the hope of this calling, is either eternal happiness, which is the thing hoped for; or Christ, who is the ground and foundation of it; or the grace of hope, which is exercised on both; or all three: for hope of eternal glory, as it is founded on Christ, may be said to be the hope of the calling of God, because it is wrought in the soul at the time of the effectual calling, and what saints are then called to the exercise of; and calling grace, is an encouragement to hope for eternal life; since whom God calls, he justifies and glorifies: and now the apostle prays, that these saints who were called by the grace of God, might know more of Christ, the foundation of their hope; and what that is they are hoping for, and more and more what it is to hope for the same, upon the view of Christ's person, blood, and righteousness:

and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints; the saints themselves are the Lord's portion, and the lot of his inheritance, in whom he is, and will be abundantly glorified; but here it rather seems to design the heavenly inheritance before spoken of, of which the Spirit is the earnest; and this is the Lord's, it is of his preparing, and it is his gift, and a very rich and glorious inheritance it is: hence it is not only signified by mansions, and everlasting habitations, by an house, and by a city, but by a kingdom; the riches of grace are preparatory to it, and the riches of glory are comprised in it; and this is in, or among the saints, who only have a right unto it, and a meetness for it; and what this inheritance is, with the riches and glory of it, will not be fully known in this life; and indeed but little of it is known; so that such a petition as this is always proper and pertinent.

Ver. 19. *And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, &c.*] The objects of the divine power here intended, are believers in Christ; which distinguishes this power from that which was put forth in creation, and from that which will be displayed in the resurrection of the dead, and from the power of divine wrath, which will appear in the damnation of sinners; and shows, that this power is that which is exerted in the implantation of faith, and in the continuance of it, and in the finishing of that work; and that this is a great power, an exceeding great one, a super eminent one; which is attended with energy and efficacy, and is irresistible and insuperable: the greatness of this power as displayed in the work of conversion and faith appears, if it be considered what the work itself is called, a creation, a resurrection from the dead, a regeneration, and a transformation of the man into another man, which must needs require almighty power; as well as what is then done, some things are removed, Satan is dispossessed, the stony heart is taken away, the enmity is slain, the old man is put down from his throne, and put off with his deeds; and there are some things wrought, Christ is formed in the soul, his grace is implanted, his image is stamped on, a new heart is given, and principles of light and life, of grace and holiness are put; the understanding is enlightened, the will is subdued, the affections are set on other objects, and the mind and conscience are cleansed and purified; and the means of this are the ministers, and ministry of the word, which are weak, foolish, and contemptible, in the eyes of men; to which may be added, the opposition made both from within and from without, from a sinful heart, a tempting devil, and an ensnaring, reproaching, and persecuting world: so that this work of faith cannot be ascribed to anything short of the exceeding greatness of divine power; and which is seen in supporting faith when it is wrought, under great discouragements; in delivering believers out of divers temptations; in assisting them to discharge their duty, and in their final perseverance: and to increase the idea of this power it is added,

according to the working of his mighty power, or “according to the energy of the might of his power”: the strength of his power, in all the mighty energy of it, is exerted towards and upon believers; and which they should know, own, and acknowledge, to the glory of the grace of God: and this is in proportion, and agreeably to that power.

Ver. 20. *Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, &c.*] There are many articles of faith contained in this passage; as that Christ died, that he is raised from the dead, that he was raised from the

dead by God the Father, and that his resurrection was by the power of God: the resurrection of any person is an instance of great power, but Christ's resurrection from the dead was an instance of peculiar and special power; for he was raised from the dead as a public person, representing all his people, for whom he became a surety; and he was raised again for their justification, and to great glory in himself, after he had been brought into a very low estate indeed: moreover, this passage in connection with the preceding verse suggests, that there is some proportion between the power put forth on Christ in raising him from the dead, and that which is exerted in the work of conversion and faith: there is some likeness between the things themselves, as well as in the display of power in them; Christ's resurrection is called a begetting, and he is styled the first begotten from the dead, and the regeneration of men is signified by a resurrection from the dead; as Christ's body was really dead, lifeless, and without motion, antecedent to his resurrection, so men, previous to conversion, are dead in trespasses and sins, and are destitute of spiritual life and motion; and as Christ's human nature could not help itself, could not raise itself, so neither can dead sinners convert themselves, or bring themselves out of that state and condition, in which they are by nature; and as the resurrection of Christ was the pure work of God, and a display of his almighty power, so the work of faith, of grace and conversion, is the entire work of God, which is begun, carried on, and finished wholly by his power; and as Christ's resurrection was in order to his glorification, so is the regeneration and conversion of men, in order to their enjoyment of the heavenly inheritance, as it follows:

and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly [places]; which is expressive of the great honour conferred upon the human nature of Christ, such as never was given to any of the angels, and of the glory it is exalted to; and shows that he has done his work on earth with acceptance, which he came about; and therefore is set down at his Father's right hand, where he enjoys rest and ease from his labours, and is out of the reach of every enemy; will never die again, but live for ever, to intercede for his people, to assist and protect them, and bring them where he is; and in whom, as their head and representative, they are already set down in the same heavenly places.

Ver. 21. *Far above all principality and power,* &c.] Good angels and bad angels, and civil magistrates, who also may be intended by the following words:

and might and dominion; good angels may be so called, because of their employment under God in the affairs of Providence, and the government of this world; and Christ is not only above them, as he is God, being their Creator, who has made them, and on whom they depend, and is the Lord whom they serve, and is the object of their worship and adoration, and as he is Mediator, to whom they minister, and so is above them in nature, name, and office; but also as he is man, in union with the Son of God; and chiefly he here is said to be above them on account of place, being at the right hand of God, where they are not, (^{<3013>}Hebrews 1:13). And evil angels may be so called, because of the government which subsists among themselves, and the power and influence they have over mankind; Christ was above them when here on earth, as appears by his resisting the temptations of Satan, and defeating him in them; by his dispossessing devils from the bodies of men; by his spoiling and destroying them and their works at his death; and by his leading them captive, and triumphing over them at his ascension; and by delivering souls out of his hands at conversion, through his power attending the ministration of his Gospel; and his being above them will still be more manifest, in the binding of Satan a thousand years, and in the final condemnation of him, and of all his angels under him: civil magistrates are sometimes called by these names, and Christ is above them; they receive their governments from him, they rule by him, and are accountable to him, and are set up and put down at his pleasure; all these senses may be taken in; but the first seems chiefly designed: it is added,

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

Ver. 22. *And hath put all things under his feet*, &c.] These words are taken out of (^{<1986>}Psalm 8:6). (See Gill on "^{<4657>}1 Corinthians 15:27").

And gave him to be the head over all things to the church; the Vulgate Latin version reads, "and gave him to be the head over every church", or "all the church"; the Ethiopic version, "the whole church"; which intends not barely professors of religion, or a family of faithful persons, or a

particular congregation, in which sense the word is sometimes used; but the whole body of God's elect, the church, which is built on Christ the rock, for which he gave himself, and which is the general assembly and church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven: Christ is an head to this church; in what sense he is so, (See Gill on "~~1~~1 Corinthians 11:3"). And this headship of Christ is the gift of God; and it is an honourable gift to him, as Mediator; it is a glorifying of him, and a giving him in all things the pre-eminence; and it is a free grace gift to the church, and a very special, valuable, and excellent one, and of infinite benefit and advantage to it; and which is expressed in his being head "over all things" to it; to overrule all things for its good; to communicate all good things to it; and to perform all the good offices of an head for it: the Syriac version reads, "and him who is above all things, he gave to be the head to the church" even him who is God over all, blessed for evermore.

Ver. 23. *Which is his body*, &c.] That is, which church is the body of Christ; as an human body is but one, consisting of various members, united to each other, and set in an exact proportion and symmetry, and in a proper subservience to one another, and which must be neither more nor fewer than they are; so the church of Christ is but one general assembly, which consists of many persons, of different gifts and usefulness, and are all united together under one head, Christ, whose name they bear, and are made to drink of the same Spirit; and these are placed in such order, as throw a glory and comeliness on each other, and to be useful to one another, so that it cannot be said of the meanest member, that there is no need of it; and the number of them can neither be increased nor diminished; and this is Christ's body, his mystical body, which becomes his by the Father's gift to him, and by his own purchase; to which he is united, and of which he is the only head; and which he loves as his own body, and supplies, directs, and defends:

the fulness of him that filleth all in all; besides the personal fulness which Christ has as God, and his fulness of ability and fitness for his work as Mediator, and his dispensatory fulness, which dwells in him for the use of his people, the church is his relative fulness, which fills him, and makes up Christ mystical; and which is filled by him, and is complete in him: and then will the church appear to be Christ's fulness, when all the elect, both Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in; and when these are all filled with the grace designed for them; and when they are all grown up to their full proportion, or are arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of

Christ; which will be a glorious sight to see, and very desirable: and this shows the certainty of the saints' perseverance and salvation: for if anyone member, even the meanest, could be lost, the church would not be the fulness of Christ: and this may be further concluded, from its being his fulness, who

fillet *all in all*; which may be understood either more extensively; for he fills both worlds with inhabitants; he fills all places with his omnipresence, and all creatures with proper food and sustenance: or with a limitation to the church and people of God; he fills all his churches and ordinances with his gracious presence; and he fills the various societies of his saints with members and with officers; and these with the gifts and graces of his Spirit, suitable to their place and station; he fills all and every of the saints, all the vessels of mercy, whether greater or lesser, all sorts of them, of larger or meaner capacities; he fills all the powers and faculties of their souls, their hearts with joy, their minds with knowledge, their consciences with peace, their wills with spiritual desires, submission and resignation, and their affections with love to himself and people: in short, he fills them with all grace and goodness, and the fruits of righteousness; and so makes them meet for usefulness here, and for happiness hereafter; the fulness of the earth in (~~Psalm~~ Psalm 24:1) is by the Jews interpreted of the souls of the righteous, and of the congregation of Israel¹⁸.

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 2

The design of the apostle in this chapter, is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual calling and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus; in order to which, he describes the sad estate they are in by nature, and before conversion, even God's elect among the Jews, and especially among the Gentiles; and then observes how peace is made for and between them both, by Christ the peacemaker; and the various privileges and blessings which both enjoy, in consequence of it: he begins with the Ephesians, and expresses the former state they were in by a death, which is ascribed to trespasses and sins, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:1), and represents their walk and conversation to have been according to the world, and after Satan; who is described by his dominion over other devils that dwell in the air, and by his influence upon disobedient men, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:2), and that it might not be thought that the case of these Gentile Ephesians was worse than others, the apostle observes of himself, and other saints among the Jews, that their conversation before conversion was among the men of the world, and so according to the course of it, as the Gentiles; and that it was a very carnal conversation they had spent, in fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh; and that they were as deserving of, and as liable to the wrath of God in themselves, as other persons, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:3), to which former state he opposes their present one; they were not now dead in sin, but were quickened; which is ascribed to God as the efficient cause, and to his rich mercy and great love as the moving cause; and to Christ as the meritorious and procuring cause, by whose grace they were saved, and in whom they were not only quickened, but raised, and made to sit together in heavenly places; and the final cause and end of all this was, to show forth the abundant grace and kindness of God, through Christ, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:4-7). The doctrine of salvation by grace, the apostle takes up again from (~~400~~Ephesians 2:5), and to the moving cause of salvation, the grace of God, he adds the means, or instrument by which it is received and enjoyed, which is faith; and that is denied to be owing to the power of men, but is said to be a gift of God (~~400~~Ephesians 2:8), and the end in view, in putting salvation upon the foot of grace and not works, is to prevent boasting in

the creature, (^{<4119>}Ephesians 2:9), and that works cannot be the causes of salvation, either efficient, moving, or procuring, is evident; since though they are to be performed as being agreeable to the purposing, as well as commanding will of God, yet they are effects, both of the work of grace upon the soul in time, called a creation, and of the decrees of God from eternity, (^{<4120>}Ephesians 2:10), when the apostle goes on to put the Ephesians in mind of their former state in unregeneracy, with the same view as before, to magnify the grace of God, but in a different manner; not as common to them with the Jews, but as peculiar to them as Gentiles; as that they were had in contempt by the Jews, and were in a state of alienation, not only from them, but from God and Christ, and the enjoyment of various privileges, (^{<4121>}Ephesians 2:11,12), wherefore the grace of God was the more conspicuous in their present state of nearness both to God and his people, brought about by the blood of Christ, (^{<4123>}Ephesians 2:13), who, as the peacemaker, not only made peace by the blood of his cross between God and them, but between them and the true Israel of God among the Jews; which was done, partly by abolishing the ceremonial law, which occasioned enmity, and kept up a division among them, (^{<4124>}Ephesians 2:14-16), and partly by sending, and preaching the Gospel of peace to them both, (^{<4127>}Ephesians 2:17), and by opening a way of access for them both unto the Father through himself, under the direction and influence of the Spirit, (^{<4128>}Ephesians 2:18), from all which it appeared, that they were not in a state of distance and alienation as before, but all belonged to the same city and family, and were built on the same foundation, and were united together in the same corner stone, Jesus Christ, (^{<4129>}Ephesians 2:19,20), and as the apostle compares Christ to a foundation, and a corner stone, so the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, to a temple; which being fitly put together, becomes, an Holy One in the lord, and a suitable habitation for God through the Spirit, (^{<4122>}Ephesians 2:21,22).

Ver. 1. *And you hath he quickened*, &c.] The design of the apostle in this and some following verses, is to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to set forth the sad estate and condition of man by nature, and to magnify the riches of the grace of God, and represent the exceeding greatness of his power in conversion: the phrase

hath he quickened, is not in the original text, but is supplied from (^{<4125>}Ephesians 2:5), where it will be met with and explained: here those

who are quickened with Christ, and by the power and grace of God, are described in their natural and unregenerate estate,

who were dead in trespasses and sins; not only dead in Adam, in whom they sinned, being their federal head and representative; and in a legal sense, the sentence of condemnation and death having passed upon them; but in a moral sense, through original sin, and their own actual transgressions: which death lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, such are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Christ, who is the author and giver of life, and they are sensual, not having the Spirit, who is the spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, such are dead as to their understandings, wills, and affections, with respect to spiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is spiritually good; and in a loss of original righteousness; and in a privation of the sense of sin and misery; and in a servitude to sin, Satan, and the world: hence it appears, that man must be in himself unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow creatures, and incapable of helping himself: so it was usual with the Jews to call a wicked and ignorant man, a dead man; they say ^{f9},

“there is no death like that of those that transgress the words of the law, who are called, **μytm**, “dead men”, and therefore the Scripture says, “turn and live”.”

And again ^{f10},

“no man is called a living man, but he who is in the way of truth in this world. — — And a wicked man who does not go in the way of truth, is called, **tm**, “a dead man”.”

And once more ^{f11} “whoever is without wisdom, lo, he is **tmk**, “as a dead man”;

(See Gill on “~~SAB6~~ 1 Timothy 5:6”). The Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and one of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “dead in your trespasses and sins”; and the Syriac version, “dead in your sins and in your trespasses”; and the Ethiopic version only, “dead in your sins”.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked*, &c.] Sins and transgressions are a road or path, in which all unconverted sinners walk; and this path is a dark, crooked, and broad one, which leads to destruction and death, and yet is

their own way, which they choose, approve of, and delight to walk in; and walking in it denotes a continued series of sinning, an obstinate persisting in it, a progress in iniquity, and pleasure therein: and the time of walking in this path, being said to be in time past, shows that the elect of God before conversion, walk in the same road that others do; and that conversion is a turning out of this way; and that when persons are converted, the course of their walking is altered, which before was

according to the course of this world meaning this world, in distinction from the world to come, or the present age, in which the apostle lived, and designs the men of it; and the course of it is their custom, manner, and way of life; to which God's elect, during their state of unregeneracy, conform, both with respect to conversation and religious worship: great is the force that prevailing customs have over men; it is one branch of redemption by Christ, to deliver men from this present evil world, and to free them from a vain conversation in it; and it is only the grace of God that effectually teaches to deny the lusts of it; and it is only owing to the prevalent intercession and power of Christ, that even converted persons are kept from the evil of it:

according to the prince of the power of the air: which is not to be understood of any supposed power the devil has over the air, by divine permission, to raise winds, but of a posse, or body of devils, who have their residence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the Jews^{f12}, that there are noxious and accusing spirits, who fly about *rywab*, “in the air”, and that there is no space between the earth and the firmament free, and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; but also it was the opinion of the Chaldeans^{f13}, and of Pythagoras^{f14}, and Plato^{f15}, that the air is full of demons: now there is a prince who is at the head of these, called Beelzebub, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him are as so many flies in the air, (~~402b~~ Matthew 12:24) and by the Jews called^{f16}, *ayj wrd ^whbr*, “the prince of spirits”; and is here styled, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; by which spirit is meant, not the lesser devils that are under the prince, nor the spirit of the world which comes from him, and is not of God; but Satan himself, who is a spirit, and an evil, and an unclean one; and who operates powerfully in unbelievers, for they are meant by children of disobedience, or unbelief; just as *atwnmyhm ynb*, “children of faith”^{f17}, in the Jewish dialect, designs believers; and over these Satan has great influence, especially the reprobate

part of them; whose minds he blinds, and whose hearts he fills, and puts it into them to do the worst of crimes; and indeed, he has great power over the elect themselves, while in unbelief, and leads them captive at his will; and these may be said in their unregeneracy to walk after him, when they imitate him, and do his lusts, and comply with what he suggests, dictates to them, or tempts them to.

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

in the lusts of our flesh; by “flesh” is meant, the corruption of nature; so called, because it is propagated by natural generation; and is opposed to the Spirit, or principle of grace; and has for its object fleshly things; and discovers itself mostly in the body, the flesh; and it makes persons carnal or fleshly: and this is called “our”, because it belongs to human nature, and is inherent in it, and inseparable from it in this life: and the “lusts” of it, are the inward motions of it, in a contrariety to the law and will of God; and are various, and are sometimes called fleshly and worldly lusts, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: and persons may be said to have their conversations in these, when these are the ground of their conversation, when they are solicitous about them, and make provision for the fulfilling of them, and constantly employ themselves in obedience to them, as follows:

fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: or the wills of them; what they incline to, will, and crave after: various are the degrees of sin, and its several motions; and universal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the several members of it, are defiled with sin, and disposed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the soul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, understanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which lust has over them:

and were by nature children of wrath, even as others: by which is meant, not only that they were wrathful persons, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; but that they were deserving of the wrath of God, which comes upon the children of disobedience, among whom they had their conversation; and which is revealed from heaven against such sins as they were guilty of, though they were not appointed to it: and they were such “by nature”; really, and not in opinion, and by and from their first birth: so a Jewish commentator^{f18} on these words, “thy first father hath sinned”, (~~2387~~ Isaiah 43:27) has this note;

“how canst thou say thou hast not sinned? and behold thy first father hath sinned, and he is the first man, for man *aj j b [bj wm*, “is naturally in sin”;

or by nature a sinner, or sin is naturally impressed in him; and hence being by nature a sinner, he is by nature deserving of the wrath of God, as were the persons spoken of:

even as others; as the rest of the world, Jews as well as Gentiles; and Gentiles are especially designed, in distinction from the Jews, the apostle is speaking of; and who are particularly called in the Jewish dialect *pyrj a*, “others”; (See Gill on “~~2381~~ Luke 18:11”).

Ver. 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy*, &c.] Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and is essential to God; and may be considered with respect to the objects of it, either as general, extending to all men in a providential way; or as special, reaching only to some in a way of grace; for though mercy is his nature, yet the display and exertion of it towards any object, is the act of his will; and special mercy, with all the blessings and benefits of it, is only exhibited in Christ Jesus: and God is said to be “rich” in it, because he is free and liberal in dispensing it, and the effects of it; and that to a large number of persons, in great abundance and variety, by various ways, and in divers instances; as in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in redemption by him, in regeneration, in pardon of sin, and in eternal salvation; and yet it is inexhaustible and perpetual; and this sets forth the excellency and glory of it:

for his great love wherewith he loved us; the love of God to his chosen people is very great, if it be considered who it is that has loved them, God and not man; who is an infinite, unchangeable, and sovereign Being; and his love is like himself, for God is love; it has heights and depths, and

lengths and breadths immeasurable; it admits of no variation nor alteration; and is altogether free, arising from himself, and not from any motives and conditions in men: and if the persons themselves are considered, who are the objects of it, men, sinful men, unworthy of the divine notice and regard; and that these are loved personally, particularly, and distinctly, and not others; nakedly, and not theirs, or for any thing in them, or done by them, and that notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions: to which may be added, that this love is represented as a past act; and indeed it is from everlasting, and is antecedent to their being quickened, and was when they were dead in trespasses and sins; and is the source and spring of the blessing next mentioned: so the divine love is often called in the Cabalistic writings of the Jews ^{f19}, *hbr hbha*, “great love”.

Ver. 5. *Even when we were dead in sins*, &c.] (See Gill on “~~am~~ Ephesians 2:1”).

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

think themselves alive, and in a good state; but when the Spirit of God comes, he strikes dead all their hopes of life by a covenant of works; not merely by letting in the terrors of the law upon the conscience, but by showing the spirituality of it, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and how incapable they are of satisfying the law, for the transgressions of it; and then he works faith in them, whereby they revive and live; they see pardon and righteousness in Christ, and pray for the one, and plead the other; and also lay hold and live upon the righteousness of Christ, when the Spirit seals up the pardon of their sins to them, and passes the sentence of justification on them, and so they reckon themselves alive unto God; and this is the justification of life, the Scripture speaks of; and this is in consequence of their being quickened with Christ, at the time of his resurrection; for when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; when he was justified, they were justified in him; and in this sense when he was quickened, they were quickened with him:

by grace ye are saved: the Claromontane copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “by whose grace”; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, “by his grace”; either by the grace of him that quickens, or by the grace of Christ with whom they were quickened; the Syriac version renders it, “by his grace he hath redeemed us”; which seems to refer to the redeeming grace of Christ; and so the Ethiopic version, “and hath delivered us by his grace”; and there is a change of the person into “us”, which seems more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after; (see Gill on ~~“Ephesians 2:8”~~ Ephesians 2:8”).

Ver. 6. *And hath raised us up together*, &c.] Which refers either to a spiritual resurrection, to a resurrection from a death in sin, to a spiritual life; and which is the effect of almighty power, and of rich grace and mercy; and in which Christ is concerned: he is the efficient cause of it, he raises the dead in this sense, and quickens whom he will; and his resurrection is the virtual cause of it; and also the exemplar, between which there is a great likeness; both bear the same name; both are a declaration of sonship; and both the first step to glory in Christ and in his people; and both are instances of the exceeding greatness of God's power: or it may refer to a corporeal resurrection, said to be already, because it is in faith and hope, and because of the certainty of it; and to be together with Christ, because of the conformity of it to his resurrection, and to the influence of which it is owing; and chiefly because that when Christ rose from the dead, all his people rose in him, and with him, as their head and representative, he

being the firstfruits of them that slept; so called, in allusion to the firstfruits of the harvest under the law, which represented and sanctified the whole:

and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Christ is entered into heaven as the forerunner, to take possession of it for his people, in their name; and to prepare mansions of glory for them, and in these they sit; which imports honour, pleasure, rest from labour and weariness, and safety and security: and what adds to the happiness of this is, that it is together with all the saints, and with Christ himself; and in these they are made to sit already; which is so said, because of the certainty of it, for the same glory Christ has, they shall have; and because of their right to such a blessing; and chiefly because Christ their head is set down therein, who sustains their persons, bears their names on his heart, and represents them.

Ver. 7. *That in the ages to come,* &c.] This is the end of God's permitting sin, in which men are morally dead; and of his suffering them to go on in sin, in a state of unregeneracy; and of his quickening them with Christ, and raising them up, and causing them to sit together with him: namely, that

he might show the exceeding riches of his grace: riches being added to grace, denote the valuableness of it, as well as its plenty and abundance; and also the freeness and liberality of God in giving it; and likewise the enriching nature of it: and these riches are exceeding; they exceed the riches of this world, in the immenseness of them, being unsearchable; and in the inexhaustibleness of them, for though such large treasures have been expended upon such numbers of persons, yet there is still the same quantity; and in the duration of them, they last forever; and in the profit and satisfaction they yield, when other riches fade away, are not profitable nor satisfying; and they exceed the conception, knowledge, and comprehension of men; and intend the utmost stretch of the grace of God: and which are evidently and remarkably displayed,

in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus; in providing him as a Saviour for his people; in the mission of him into this world; in not sparing, but giving him up as a sacrifice to justice for their sins; and blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him: all which God designed to show forth, in the ages to come; meaning either the ages following to the end of time, in distinction from the ages that were past: hence it appears, that the world was not expected to be immediately at an end; and that the writings of the New Testament were to be continued, and the Gospel preached unto the

end of time, in which the riches of divine grace are held forth to view; and that these ages to come, are seasons and days of grace; for a day of grace will never be over, as long as the Gospel of grace is preached; and that the instances of grace through Christ, and in the times of the apostles, are encouraging to men in ages succeeding; and that the same grace that was displayed then, is shown forth in these: or else the world to come is meant, which will take place at the end of this; and may lead us to observe, that there will be ages in the other world; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for his people, but he has appointed ages enough for them to enjoy it in; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in some measure hid; and that these are the produce of the grace of God; and that the exceeding riches of that will be then manifested, when it will also appear that God's giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindness to them; and that eternal happiness will be heartily and freely bestowed upon them, and that through Jesus Christ their Lord: the Syriac version renders it, "that unto ages to come he might show", &c. that is, to men in ages to come; the sense is much the same.

Ver. 8. *For by grace are ye saved, &c.*] This is to be understood, not of temporal salvation, nor of preservation in Christ, nor of providential salvation in order to calling, and much less of being put in a way of salvation, or only in a salvable state; but of spiritual salvation, and that actual; for salvation was not only resolved upon, contrived and secured in the covenant of grace, for the persons here spoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Christ, and was actually applied unto them by the Spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and because of the certainty of it, they are said to be already saved; and besides, were representatively possessed of it in Christ their head: those interested in this salvation, are not all mankind, but particular persons; and such who were by nature children of wrath, and sinners of the Gentiles; and it is a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the blessings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Gospel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infused; but the free favour of God, to which salvation in all its branches is ascribed; as election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory: the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "by his grace", and so some copies; and it may refer to the grace of

all the three Persons; for men are saved by the grace of the Father, who drew the plan of salvation, appointed men to it, made a covenant with his Son, in which it is provided and secured, and sent him into the world to obtain it; and by the grace of the Son, who engaged as a surety to effect it, assumed human nature, obeyed and suffered in it for that purpose, and has procured it; and by the grace of the Spirit, who makes men sensible of their need of it, brings it near, sets it before them, and applies it to them, and gives them faith and hope in it: hence it follows,

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds anything to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God: though faith is elsewhere represented as the gift of God, (~~John~~ John 6:65 ~~Philippians~~ Philippians 1:29) and it is called the special gift of faith, in the Apocrypha:

“And blessed is the eunuch, which with his hands hath wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against God: for unto him shall be given the “special gift of faith”, and an inheritance in the temple of the Lord more acceptable to his mind.” (Wisdom 3:14)

— — - (I asked the following question from a Greek and Hebrew professor:

“In this verse, to what does the word “that” refer to? Adam Clarke, Wesley & company say that it is neuter plural and “Faith” is feminine hence it cannot refer to faith, (Such an admission would destroy their theological system.) However “Grace” is also feminine as is “Salvation”.”

His reply was:

“Here you ask a wonderful theological/exegetical question to which I can only give an opinion, and not a definitive answer. The problem is that there is NO precise referent. Grace is feminine.

Faith is feminine. And even Salvation (as a noun) is feminine. Yet it must be one of these three at least, and maybe more than one, or all three in conjunction. Since all three come from God and not from man, the latter might seem the more likely. However, it is a tautology to say salvation and grace are “nor of yourselves,” and in that case it certainly looks more like the passage is really pointing out that man cannot even take credit for his own act of faith, but that faith was itself created by God and implanted in us that we might believe (i.e. the normal Calvinistic position). In which regard the whole theological issue of “regeneration preceding faith” comes into play. So, that is basically my opinion, though others obviously disagree strenuously, but from an exegetical standpoint, the other positions have to explain away the matter of the tautology.”

Whether you accept the reply or not, it is sufficient to show that the Greek is not as definitive in this verse as some scholars would have you believe.
Editor)

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

lest any man should boast; of his works before God, and unto men; wherefore he has denied works any place in justification and salvation, in order to exclude all boasting in man; and has fixed it in a way of grace, and has chosen and called poor sinful worthless creatures to enjoy it, that whoever glories, may glory in the Lord.

Ver. 10. *For we are his workmanship*, &c.] Not as men only, but as Christians; not as creatures merely, but as new creatures; the work of grace upon the soul seems chiefly designed, which like a poem, as the word may be rendered, is a very curious work; the king's daughter is all glorious within, for this is an internal work, and is a good and excellent one; it is not indeed perfected at once, but is gradually carried on, till the finishing stroke is given to it by that hand which begun it; the author of it is God, it is not man's work; nor is it the work of ministers, no, nor of angels, but it is God's work: sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit, who regenerates and

sanctifies; and sometimes to the Son of God, who quickens whom he will; and sometimes to the Father, who reveals his Son, and draws men to him, and who seems to be meant here: the subjects of this divine operation, are the persons described in (~~the~~ Ephesians 2:1-3) and include both Jews and Gentiles; and express the distinguishing grace of God, that they and not others, and who were by nature children of wrath as others, should be his workmanship: and this is mentioned to show, that salvation can not be by any works of men, since all their works are either wrought for them, or in them, by God; salvation is a work wrought for them without them; and sanctification is a work wrought in them by God, of his good pleasure; and all their good works are fruits of his grace, as follows:

created in Christ Jesus unto good works; the work of grace is a creation, or a creature, a new creature; not a new vamp of old Adam's principles, but; an infusion of new ones, and is a work of almighty power; and such who have it wrought in them, are said to be created in Christ; because as soon as a man becomes a new creature, he is openly and visibly in Christ; and by these new principles of grace which are created in him, he is fit and ready, and in a capacity to perform good works; the new man formed in him, is formed for righteousness and true holiness; the internal principle of grace both excites unto, and qualifies for, the performance of righteous and holy actions:

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, or has “before prepared”; for the preparation of good works to be performed by saints, and the preparation of them for the performance of them; are both from the Lord; God has appointed good works to be done by his people and in his word he has declared what they are he would have done; and it is his will not only that they should do them, but continue to do them; not only that they should do a single act or more, but walk in them; their conversation and course of life should be one continued series of good works; but the intention is not that they should be saved by them, but that they should walk in them; and this being the pre-ordination of God, as it shows that predestination is not according to good works, since good works are the fruits and effects of it, so likewise that it is no licentious doctrine; seeing it provides for the performance of good works, as well as secures grace and glory.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye be in time past Gentiles in the flesh*, &c.] This, with what follows in the next verse, the apostle puts the

converted Ephesians in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their conversion; and to humble them in a view of their former state and condition; and to teach them that they could never be saved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were in “time past Gentiles”; which does not so much regard the nation and country they were of, for in that sense they were Gentiles still; but their state and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were Gentiles that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate sinners of the Gentiles; and they had been “Gentiles in the flesh”: not according to the flesh, or by birth, for so they were then; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the flesh, walked after it, and fulfilled the lusts, and did the works of it; particular respect seems to be had to their uncircumcision in the flesh, to which circumcision in the flesh is opposed in the next clause:

who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumcised persons; than whom none were more abominable to the Jews, and hated by them, who were called circumcised persons from that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called *l hwm*, “the circumciser”; which any one might be, except a Gentile^{f20}; an Israelite adult and skilful was preferred; yet these were not circumcised persons with that circumcision that is inward, and is of the heart, in the Spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the Spirit and power of God.

Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Christ*, &c.] Or separate from him: they were chosen in him and were preserved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or subjection to him, his Gospel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promises of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the Jews; hence the Messiah is called *l arçyd aj yçm*, “the Christ of Israel”^{f21}, and who as he was promised, so he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house, of Israel: hence it follows,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; both from their civil and church state; the Gentiles might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unless they conformed to certain laws; nor might the Jews go into any, nor eat or converse with any, that were

uncircumcised; so great an alienation and distance were there between these two people; and much less might they eat the passover and join with them in religious worship; the word for “commonwealth” here used, Harpocratian says ^{f22}, is commonly used by Greek writers for a “democracy” though the original constitution of the Israelites was properly a “theocracy”:

strangers to the covenants of promise; to the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; and to the covenant at Mount Sinai, made with Israel; and to the dispensation of the covenant of grace to that people, sometimes called the first covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, (~~εἰς~~ Romans 9:4) one copy reads, “strangers to the promises of the covenant”; which is natural enough; the Vulgate Latin version joins the word “promise” to the next clause, and reads,

having no hope of the promise of the promised Messiah: “having no hope”; of the Messiah and salvation by him, of the resurrection of the dead, of a future state, and of eternal life; none that is sure and steadfast, that is purifying, and makes not ashamed; or which is a good hope through grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miserable condition: Philo, the Jew ^{f23}, observes, that

“the Chaldeans call a man Enos, as if he only was truly a man that expects good things, and supports himself with good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifest that one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a beast in an human form; since he is destitute of hope, which is the property of the human soul;”

and without God in the world; without the knowledge of God in Christ; without the image of God, which was defaced by sin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worship of him; and while they were so they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word signifies “atheists”: so some of the Gentiles were in “theory”, as they all were in practice; and they were by the Jews reckoned no other than “atheists”; it is a common saying with them ^{f24} that

“he that dwells without the land (of Israel) is like one **hwl a wl** **yaç**, “who has no God”:

Ver. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus*, &c.] Being openly and visibly in Christ, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before secretly in him, as chosen and blessed in him before the foundation of the world:

ye who sometimes were far off; who in their state of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any spiritual knowledge of him and fellowship with him; and from Jesus Christ, and from the knowledge of his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and from the Spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the saints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any solid hopes of happiness, or real peace and comfort; which distance was owing both to Adam's sin and to their own transgressions: it is an observation of a Jewish writer ^{f25} on (~~GEN~~ Genesis 3:9) "where art thou?" he (God) knew where he was, but he said so to show him that he was **pj wrm**, "afar off from" God by his sin: (see ~~ISA~~ Isaiah 59:2), and yet

are made nigh by the blood of Christ: so as to have nearness of access to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ; which gives boldness and speaks peace; by which their persons are justified, the pardon of their sins is procured, reconciliation is made, and their garments are washed, and made white; and so they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

Ver. 14. *For he is our peace*, &c.] The author of peace between Jew and Gentile: there was a great enmity of the Jew against the Gentile, and of the Gentile against the Jew; and chiefly on account of circumcision, the one being without it, and the other insisting on it, and branding one another with nicknames on account of it; but Christ has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occasion of the difference, and by sending the Gospel of peace to them both, by converting some of each, and by granting the like privileges to them all, as may be observed in the following verses: and Christ is the author of peace between God and his people; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; sin has separated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it; and what will, he cannot do; Christ is the only fit and proper person for this work, being a middle person between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man; and so could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his

sufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and so is a lasting one, and attended with a train of blessings: moreover, Christ is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conscience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews ^{f26};

“says R. Jose the Galilean, even the name of the Messiah is called **פּוֹלָצ**, “peace”; as it is said, (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6) “the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace”;

(see ³⁰⁸⁵Micah 5:5) where it is said, “and this man shall be the peace”; which the Jewish ^{f27} writers understand of the Messiah:

who hath made both one; Jews and Gentiles, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and caused them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himself, who represented them all:

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles: so the Jews call the law a wall, “if she be a wall”, (²⁰⁸⁹Song of Solomon 8:9) **הַרְוֹתַּ וְזָ**, “this is the law”, say they ^{f28}; and hence we read of **הַרְוֹתַּ תְּמוֹתַי**, “the wall of the law” ^{f29}; and sometimes the phrase, a “partition wall”, is used for a division or disagreement; so R. Benjamin says ^{f30}, that between the Karaites and Rabbanites, who were the disciples of the wise men, there was **הַחֲוֹתַי מִן**, “a middle wall of partition”; a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

Ver. 15. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity*, &c.] The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows,

even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; which consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an indication of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it; and because it

was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh, by reason of its many and troublesome rites; and because it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile: the Jews say ^{f31}, that Sinai, the mount on which the law was given, signifies “hatred”; and that it is so called because from it descended *hanç*, “hatred” or “enmity” to the nations of the world: now this Christ abolished, “in his flesh”, or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himself, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he abolished it, so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not, and of no use and service; and that because it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and because there was a change in the priesthood; and because it was contrary to a spirit of liberty, the great blessing of the Gospel; and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows:

for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same Spirit; the foundation of which union is in himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus; he is the cornerstone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

Ver. 16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God, &c.*] This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: the Jews had run up a long score against the ceremonial law, as well as against the moral law; and Christ by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the person offended; and who yet first set on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made

in one body by the cross; by which “body” is meant, the human body of Christ, which the Father prepared for him, and he assumed, and that in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is said to be “one” body,

because it was in one and the same body, which he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, and in or by one sacrifice of that body; reconciliation being so effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the sense is, he reconciled them into “one body”; into one mystical body, the church, of which he is head; and this he did “by the cross”, that is, by his blood shed on the cross, or by his suffering the death of the cross; which shows that reconciliation is made in a way of satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by Christ's bearing the penalty of the law, and suffering the strokes of justice on the cross; and expresses the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, and the greatness of his condescension and love:

having slain the enmity thereby; the ceremonial law, as before; and the slaying it is the same with abolishing it; unless the enmity between God and man is meant, which was slain by removing the cause of it, sin; and which laid a foundation for the slaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when sin is made odious to them, and they are reconciled to God's way of salvation; hence being slain in both senses, peace with God can never be broken.

Ver. 17. *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, &c.]* Which is to be understood not of Christ's coming in the flesh; for when he came in the flesh, he came only to the Jews that were nigh, and preached the Gospel in his own personal ministry to them, and not to the Gentiles, who are the persons afar off; (~~4112~~ Ephesians 2:12,13) but of his coming by his Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, to whom he gave a commission after he had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the furthest parts of the earth; and on whom he bestowed gifts, qualifying them for such service, and succeeded them in it by his power and grace: and the subject of their ministry was peace, Christ who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Gospel of peace, which declares both these; and it is the means of making persons of peaceable dispositions; its doctrines and promises, when powerfully applied, give peace to distressed minds, and quiet to doubting saints; and it shows the way to eternal peace:

and to them that were nigh; to the Jews, to whom the Gospel of peace was preached in the first place, not only by Christ and his apostles, before his death; but by his apostles after his resurrection, and after the commission was given to preach it to the Gentiles; though they are mentioned last,

because the apostle was speaking to Gentiles; and this also verifies what Christ says, the first shall be last, and the last first: the Alexandrian copy, some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read “peace”, in this clause, as in the former; the apostle seems to have respect to (²⁵⁷⁹Isaiah 57:19) a like description and distinction of Jews and Gentiles may be observed in the writings of the Jews^{f32}; so they say,

“the Israelites are near unto the holy King, and the rest of the nations are far from him.”

Ver. 18. *For through him we both have an access*, That is, both Jews and Gentiles; the Arabic version reads, “we both factions”: being made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Gospel of peace preached to both, they have through Christ freedom of access and boldness in it:

by one Spirit unto the Father: they may come to God as the Father of spirits, and of mercies, who has made their souls or spirits, and bestowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the Father of Christ, and as their God and Father in Christ: and the rather they should consider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to secure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldness, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them submission to his will: and their access to him is “through” Christ, who has made peace for them, and atonement for their sins; who has satisfied law and justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for them; so that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and besides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the presence of his Father, and presents their petitions for them, on whose account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this access is also “by one Spirit”; the “Holy Spirit”, as the Ethiopic version reads; and who is necessary in access to God, as a spirit of adoption, to enable and encourage souls to go to God as a father; and as a spirit of supplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they should; and as a free spirit to give them liberty to speak their minds freely, and pour out their souls to God; and as a spirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldness, confidence, and importunity; and he is said to be “one”, both with respect to the persons to and by whom access is had, the Father and Christ, for he is the one and the same Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and with respect to the persons who have this access, Jews and Gentiles, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one

and the same Spirit: hence this access to God is of a spiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worshipping him in spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and should be, with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is a peculiar privilege that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour bestowed upon them, to have access to God at any time, as their Father, through Christ the Mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and assistance of the Holy Spirit: this is a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of their deity and distinct personality.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers.* &c.] Alluding to the name *yrkn*, “a stranger”, by which the Jews called the Gentiles; meaning that they were not now strangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Christ, to his person, his work and office, to his righteousness, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the Holy Spirit, as an enlightener, a comforter, the spirit of adoption, and as a seal and earnest of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulness of them; nor to the devices of Satan; nor to the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises:

and foreigners: in the commonwealth of Israel, in the church of God;

but fellow citizens with the saints: the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Christ is the foundation, which is strongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, is delightfully situated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various privileges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building also, and where he has his residence, and which is the habitation of angels and saints; of this city in either sense saints are citizens; such who are saints by separation, who are set apart by the Father's grace, and by imputation, or through Christ's being made sanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the blessed Spirit; and these, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have also their citizenship in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetness; and believing Gentiles are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing Jews:

and of the household of God: and which is sometimes called the household of faith, the church of God consisting of believers, the family in heaven and in earth named of Christ; in which family or household God is the Father, Christ is the firstborn, ministers are stewards; and here are saints of various growth and size, some fathers, some young men, some children: and to this family all believers belong, whether Gentiles or Jews; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fulness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never fading inheritance.

Ver. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,* &c.] The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, who agree in laying ministerially the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; for not the persons of the apostles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Christ who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the blessings and promises of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of salvation and eternal happiness; on this foundation the saints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient causes, and by the ministers of the Gospel as instruments: these lie in the same common quarry with the rest of mankind, and are singled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and ministers of it, as means; and are ministerially laid on Christ the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holiness; yea, private Christians are useful this way to build up one another:

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; which cements and knits together angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above, and saints below, saints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the strength of the building, which keeps all together; and Christ is the chief, the headstone of the corner, and who is superior to angels and men. This phrase is used by the Jews to denote excellency in a person; so a wise scholar is called *hnyq ba*, “a cornerstone”; ^{f33} (see ^{118:22} Psalm 118:22 ^{28:16} Isaiah 28:16) (^{10:4} Zechariah 10:4). It may be rendered, “the chief cornering-stone”; it being such an one that is a foundation stone, as well as

a cornerstone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and supported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner stone in this spiritual building, is one and the same stone, Christ: it is said of the temple of Latona, at Buto, in Egypt, that it was made, *εξ ενος λιψου*, “of one stone”, as Herodotus^{f34} an eyewitness of it, attests.

Ver. 21. *In whom all the building fitly framed together*, &c.] This building is to be understood of all the saints, and people of God; of the whole universal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a spiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it consists of various parts, as a building does; some saints are comparable to beams, some to rafters, others to pillars, &c. and these are joined and united to one another, and are set in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in a proper subserviency to each other; and so as to make for the good, the strength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centres in Christ; he has a great concern in this building; he is the master builder, and the foundation and cornerstone; and it being knit together in him,

groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: it grows by an accession of new stones, or of souls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and visibly completed, as it will be; in order to which the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in: and this growth may be understood also of an increase of those, who are openly laid in the building; of their spiritual growth into their head, Christ; and of an, increase of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine blessing: and this building grows unto an “holy temple”, the Gospel church state, called a “temple”, in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem; whose materials were stones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whose magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of public worship, and of the divine abode, and was a very significant emblem of the church of God; (see ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:16), which is an “holy” one, set apart for holy uses, and internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; and which is discovered by external holiness of life, and conversation in the members of it: and this is said to be “in the Lord”; which phrase may refer to the word “groweth”, and denotes that growth and increase, both of persons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; or to the word “holy”, and intimates, that the holiness of

the church, and every member of it, is also in and from the Lord; or to the word “temple”, which is built for him to dwell in.

Ver. 22. *In whom you also are builded together, &c.*] As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was: God is the builder of it; Christ is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is Christ, and faith in him; the ministers of the Gospel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various sorts, there are vessels of small, and of great quantity; and its provisions are large and entertaining. A church is a building compact together; it consists of many parts; and these are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are designed for social worship, and their great concern should be to edify one another. The phrase, “in whom”, may either refer to the holy temple before spoken of, the church universal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Christ, who is the master builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the cornerstone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; which may be understood of God the Father, since he is distinguished from Christ, in whom, and from the Holy Spirit, through whom, they are built for this purpose, though not to the exclusion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, shows his great grace and condescension, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a desirable, delightful, and pleasant habitation to the saints; and hence it is a safe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither should souls come for the enjoyment of the divine presence: and whereas it is said to be such through the Spirit; hence it appears, that the Spirit is concerned with the other two persons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a spiritual house; and is, through his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his Spirit.

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 3

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

faith, and confidence, as the Gospel declares, (^{<BRD>}Ephesians 3:12). Wherefore, though he endured much tribulation for the sake of preaching this Gospel, this should not at all sink their spirits, or move them away from the hope of it; but they should rather glory that they had such a faithful preacher and defender of it, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:13). And as he desired their perseverance, so he prays for it, and for several things in order to it; the posture in which he prayed was by bowing the knee; the person to whom he prayed is described by his relation to Christ, as his Father, of whom, or of Christ, the whole family of God in heaven and earth are named, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:14,15). The petitions made by him are for internal strength from the Spirit of God, that so they might be enabled to persevere, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:16), and also, that Christ might continue to dwell in their hearts by faith, which would keep them from falling; and likewise, that they might have a lively sense, and a full persuasion of their interest in the love of God; even so as to comprehend with others its breadth, length, depth, and height, which would engage them to press forward, and to hold on, and out, and not faint at tribulations, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:17,18), And particularly he prays; that they might know more of the love of Christ, which is not fully to be known, and which would constrain them to follow him, and cleave to him with full purpose of heart; and that they might have a full supply of all grace to support, influence, and assist them, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:19), and for his own, and their encouragement, with respect to having the petitions made, the apostle ascribes glory to God by Christ, as it should be done in the church throughout all ages of time, under this consideration, as being able to do for his people abundantly more than they are able to ask of him, or can think of asking of him, or receiving from him, (^{<BRB>}Ephesians 3:20,21).

Ver. 1. *For this cause I Paul, the prisoner of Jesus Christ, &c.*] Not actively, whom Christ had apprehended by his grace, and made a prisoner of hope; but passively, who was made a prisoner for Christ, on account of preaching Christ, and his Gospel: he was not a prisoner for any capital crime, as theft, murder, &c. and therefore he was not ashamed of his bonds, but rather glories in them; and a prison has often been the portion of the best of men in this world: from hence we learn, that this epistle was written when the apostle was a prisoner at Rome; and the consideration of this his condition serves much to confirm the truths he had before delivered, seeing they were such as he could, and did suffer for; and which

must engage the attention of the Ephesians to them, and especially since his sufferings were on their account:

for you Gentiles: because he preached the Gospel to the Gentiles, which the Jews forbid, that they might not be saved; and because he taught them, that circumcision and the rest of the ceremonies of the law were not binding upon them; which gave great offence to the Jews, who were the means of bringing of him into these circumstances, and particularly the Asiatic Jews, the Jews of Ephesus; who having seen and heard him there, knew him again when in the temple at Jerusalem, and raised a mob upon him, having bore a grudge against him for his ministry at Ephesus, by which means he became a prisoner; so that he might truly say, he was a prisoner for the sake of them; (see ^{<4217>}Acts 21:27-33). One of Stevens's copies adds, “am an ambassador”, as in (^{<4050>}Ephesians 6:20) and another of them, “glory”, or “rejoice”; (see ^{<5076>}Philippians 2:16,17).

Ver. 2. *If ye have heard of the dispensation of the grace of God*, &c.] Not the free love and favour of God in his heart towards his people; nor internal grace wrought in the heart of the apostle; but either the gift of grace, as in (^{<4887>}Ephesians 3:7) qualifying him for the work of the ministry; and so the Ethiopic version renders it, “if ye have heard the gift of the grace of God”; or rather the doctrine of grace, the Gospel, the subject matter of which is the grace of God; it is a declaration of the free grace of God in the salvation of men; and it is the means of conveying the grace of God into their hearts. Now the apostle had a dispensation to preach this Gospel committed to him; he acted by authority, and as a steward of the mysteries of God; and which he faithfully dispensed to the family of Christ, who appointed him to this service: this the Ephesians had heard of, from the relations of the apostle, and others, and knew it themselves, having often heard him preach, for he was with them for the space of three years; wherefore this is not said as if he questioned, whether they had heard or not, but as taking it for granted that they had: “if”, or “seeing ye have heard”, &c.

which is given me to you-ward; it was not for his own private use, that the Gospel was committed to him, or gifts were given him to qualify him for the dispensation of it, but for the sake of others, especially the Gentiles, and particularly the Ephesians.

Ver. 3. *How that by revelation he made known unto me the mystery*, &c.] Or “is made known unto me”: so the Alexandrian copy, and some others,

and the Vulgate Latin version. The Gospel, which is sometimes called a mystery, the mystery of the Gospel, the mystery of godliness, and the mystery of faith: the several doctrines of the Gospel are the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven; such as a trinity of persons in the Godhead, the union of the two natures in Christ, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, and the change of living saints, and the whole doctrine of salvation by Christ, of justification by his righteousness, pardon by his blood, and atonement by his sacrifice; and this was made known to the apostle, not in a mere notional and speculative way, but in a spiritual and saving manner; not by men, for he was not taught by men, nor did he receive it from them, but had it by the revelation of Jesus Christ, and by the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him:

as I wrote afore in few words: in the two first chapters of this epistle, which are a compendium of the mystery of the Gospel, in its several parts; as predestination, election, redemption, regeneration, and salvation by free grace.

Ver. 4. *Whereby when ye read, &c.*] The above chapters, and seriously consider what is contained in them:

ye may understand my knowledge in the mystery of Christ of his person, office, and grace; and which knowledge was very large indeed.

Ver. 5. *Which in other ages was not made known unto, the sons of men, &c.*] That is, which mystery of Christ, and of the Gospel, was not made known to men in general, nor so clearly as under the Gospel dispensation. Some hints were given of it to Adam, immediately after his fall; and the Gospel was before preached to Abraham, Moses, and David, and others knew something of it; and it was still more fully dispensed in the times of the prophet Isaiah, and other following prophets: but then the knowledge of it was not so extensive, nor so clear as now; it lay hid in types and shadows, in obscure prophecies and short hints. Moreover, this may have respect particularly to the calling of the Gentiles, as appears from the following words; this was, in some measure, made known, as that in Christ all the nations of the earth should be blessed; that when Shiloh came, to him should the gathering of the people be; that the Messiah should be an ensign of the people, and to him should the Gentiles seek; that he should be the covenant of the people, and a leader and a commander of them; and that there should be great flockings to him; but then this was not known to

many, and the time, mode, and circumstances of it were but little understood, and comparatively speaking, it was not known: however, it was not so known,

as it is now revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets by the spirit. The apostles and prophets were the superior officers in the Gospel dispensation; the former design the twelve apostles of Christ, and the latter such who had the gift of interpreting the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling things to come, having received gifts from Christ to fit them for such offices, some apostles, some prophets; and to these a revelation was made of the mystery of the Gospel in general, and of the calling of the Gentiles in particular, by the Spirit, who searches the deep things of God, and reveals them, and leads into all truth; and who, by falling upon the Gentiles, as upon Cornelius and his family, and by the success which he gave to the Gospel in the Gentile world, made their calling clear and manifest. The Complutensian edition reads, “by the Holy Spirit”; and so the Arabic and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 6. *That the Gentiles should be fellowheirs, &c.*] With the Jews, of all the blessings of grace, of lasting salvation, and of the eternal, incorruptible, and never fading inheritance in heaven; that they should be heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ Jesus, and inherit all things: and heirs they are by being Christ's, and on account of their special adoption through him, and their justification by his righteousness; and which appears by their regeneration to a lively hope of the inheritance reserved for them in heaven:

and of the same body: coalesce in one and the same church state, with the believing Jews, under one and the same head, Christ Jesus, and participate of the same grace from him, being all baptized into one body, and made to drink of the same Spirit, and enjoy the same privileges and immunities.

And partakers of his promise in Christ by the Gospel; as of God, being their covenant God, which is the great promise of the covenant; or of the Spirit, his gifts and graces, called the promise of the Spirit; or of eternal life and happiness, as the gift of grace through Christ. Now all these promises, and all others, are in Christ, yea and amen, safe and secure; and it is through being in Christ that any come to partake of them; and that by the means of the Gospel, as these Gentiles were to do, and did: the Gospel is a declaration of what God has promised in covenant to his people; this was

carried among the Gentiles, and was made effectual to their participation of the things contained in it.

Ver. 7. *Whereof I was made a minister, &c.*] That is, of the Gospel, not by men, but by God: and he is a true minister of the Gospel who is called of God to the work of the ministry, and is qualified by him with grace and gifts for it; and who faithfully discharges it according to the ability God has given; and such an one was the apostle:

according to the gift of the grace of God given unto me; not according to his natural capacity, his liberal education, or acquired learning; but according to a gift, a ministerial gift bestowed upon him, for such service: for this gift of grace does not design the grace of God wrought in his soul; nor the doctrines of grace, the subject of the Gospel ministry; nor the efficacious grace of God, which makes that successful and useful to the souls of men; but a gift of interpreting the Scriptures, and of explaining the truths of the Gospel to the edification of men; and which is a distinct thing from natural abilities, human learning, or internal grace; for there may be all these, and yet a man not fit to be a minister of the Gospel; what qualifies men for that is the above gift, which God, of his sovereign good will and pleasure, gives to some of the sons of men:

by the effectual working of his power; the power of God is seen in working grace in the hearts of men, thereby making them believers in Christ; and it is also displayed in the gifts of the Spirit bestowed on men, which is called a being endued with a power from on high; thereby making men, and not angels, and these oftentimes the meanest and weakest, ministers of Christ; and likewise in assisting them in their work, and in carrying them through it, and in making them successful in it, to the conversion of sinners, and the edification of saints.

Ver. 8. *Unto me who am less than the least of all saints, &c.*] This is an instance of the great humility of the apostle, and indeed the greatest saints are generally speaking, the most humble souls, as Abraham, Jacob, Moses, David, and others; these have the meanest thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; they rejoice in the grace of God manifested to others; they are willing to receive instruction, nay admonition, from the meanest believer; they have the least opinion of their own works, and are the greatest admirers of the grace of God; and do most contentedly submit to the sovereign will of God: the reasons of their great humility are, because they have the largest discoveries of the love and grace of God and Christ,

which are of a soul humbling nature; they are the most sensible of their own sinfulness, vileness, and unworthiness, which keeps them low in their own sight; they are commonly the most afflicted with Satan's temptations, which are suffered to attend them, lest they should be exalted above measure; they are the most fruitful souls, and boughs laden with fruit hang lowest; and they are the most conformable to Christ, who is meek and lowly. The phrase seems to be Jewish: there was one R. Jose “the little”, who was so called, it is said, because he was *μυδυσj ἡj q*, “the least of saints”^{f35}: but the apostle uses a still more diminutive word, and calls himself less than the least of them; and adds,

is this grace given; that is, the gift of grace, as before, the ministerial gift:

that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ; the riches of Christ, as God, lie in the perfections of his nature, in the works of his hands, in his empire and dominion over all, and in the revenues of glory, which result from thence; and these riches are underived and incommunicable, and are ineffable, yea inconceivable: his riches, as Mediator, lie in the persons of the elect, in the grace that is laid up in him for them, called the riches of grace, and in the inheritance he is possessed of for them, called the riches of glory; and these rich things are communicable, as well as solid, satisfying, and lasting; and they are unsearchable to the natural man, and cannot be fully investigated by believers themselves; they will be telling over to all eternity: and they will appear unsearchable, when it is considered what they have procured, and what blessings have been dispensed according to them; what a large family Christ has maintained by them, and how richly and fully he has provided for them, and to what honour and grandeur he raises them all. Now it was great grace to intrust the apostle with such a ministry, to put such treasure into an earthen vessel; it was great grace that qualified him for it; and it was great grace in particular to the Gentiles, that he should be appointed to publish these among them; and so the apostle esteemed it, and himself unworthy of such honour.

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

concern and interest which both Jews and Gentiles have in the privileges of it. Now men are naturally in the dark about these things, and the ministry of the word is the means of enlightening them, and is indeed the grand design of it; and the ministers of the Gospel do instrumentally enlighten persons, though it is God only that does it efficiently; and for this, gifts of grace were bestowed upon the apostle, even for the enlightening of all men, not every individual person in the world, but some of all sorts, particularly Gentiles, as well as Jews. The word *παντας*, rendered “all men”, is left out in the Alexandrian copy.

Which from the beginning of the world hath been hid in God; in the heart of God, in his counsel and covenant; which shows the original and source of the Gospel, and expresses the richness and valuableness of it, as well as its safety and secrecy: here it was hid in some measure from the elect angels, and from Old Testament saints, and altogether from natural men, and especially from the Gentiles, whose times of ignorance God winked at, or overlooked: and this was kept so from ages past, from the beginning of time, till now, and was laid up in the breast of God from all eternity; for it was ordained before the world for the glory, of his people. What the apostle says of the Gospel, the Jews say of the law, that it was hid and treasured up two thousand years before the world was created^{f36}; yea, they say^{f37}, that many ages before the creation of the world it was written and left, *hbqh I ç wqyj b*, “in the bosom of God”: and he is here described, as he

who created all things by Jesus Christ; not as an instrument, but as a co-efficient cause: and this is to be understood, not of the new creation, but of the old, and of all things in it; for without Christ, was not anything made that is made. The phrase, “by Jesus Christ”, is left out in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions.

Ver. 10. *To the intent that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, &c.*] By whom are meant, not civil magistrates, much less evil angels, but the good angels, the angels in heaven; (See Gill on “~~402~~ Ephesians 1:21”).

might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God; not the perfection of wisdom, nor Jesus Christ the wisdom of God, nor the holy Scriptures; but the Gospel, which is the pure produce of the wisdom of

God; which is gloriously displayed in the several doctrines of it; as in election, in choosing men in Christ for the security of their persons, in founding it not upon their works, but his own grace, for the security of his purpose, and in pitching on such persons as he has, for the magnifying of his grace: and in redemption, which is seen in the person of the Redeemer, who is both God and man; and in the manner in which it is effected, being both for the glory of God's grace and mercy, and for the honour of his justice and holiness; and wherein Satan is mortified, sin is condemned, and the sinner saved: and in justification, whereby sinful men become just with God: God is just, and yet the justifier of him that believes; the ungodly is justified, and yet not justified in his ungodliness, but from it: and in the pardon of sin, in which iniquity is forgiven, and yet vengeance is taken on men's inventions; it is an act of mercy, and yet of justice; it is by price, and yet of free grace; and the like may be observed of all other doctrines of the Gospel. And it may be called "manifold", because of its various doctrines and promises and because of the various instances of wisdom in them, and the various persons to whom it is made known, and the various times in which it is displayed: and now under the Gospel this is more clearly known, or made known to the angels by the church of God, through the ministry of the word in it, on which angels attend, being desirous to look more diligently into the mysteries of it; and by the displays of the wisdom and grace of God unto his church and people.

Ver. 11. *According to the eternal purpose, &c.*] The whole of salvation, in which is displayed the great wisdom of God, is according to a purpose of his; the scheme of it is fixed in the council of peace; the thing itself is effected in pursuance of it; Christ, the Redeemer, was set forth in it; his incarnation, the time of his coming into the world, his sufferings and death, with all their circumstances, were decreed by God; and the persons for whom Christ became incarnate, suffered, and died, were appointed unto salvation by him; and the application of it to them is according to his purpose; the time when, the place where, and the means whereby souls are converted, are all settled in the decrees of God; the Gospel itself, the preaching of it by such and such persons, its use to make men see the mysteries of grace, and the fellowship of them, and to make known these things to the angels of heaven, are all according to a divine purpose: and this purpose is eternal, or was in the mind of God from all eternity; for no new will can arise in him; no purpose, resolution, or decree can be made by him in time, which was not in his breast from everlasting; and his purpose

concerning the salvation of men must be eternal, since a council of peace was held, a covenant of peace was made, a promise of life was given, persons were fixed upon to be saved, a Saviour was appointed for them, and grace, and the blessings of it were put into his hands before the world began.

Which he purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord; the constitution of it was in him; God was in Christ contriving the scheme of salvation; eye was upon him, his thoughts centred in him, in him are all his promises, and blessings of grace designed and provided for his people; and the execution of this purpose is by him; though some refer this clause to the church in (~~AND~~ Ephesians 3:10) which he has made in Christ, or by Christ, has built upon him, and united to him; and others, to the manifold wisdom of God displayed in Christ, who is the wisdom of God, and in whom all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are hid.

Ver. 12. *In whom we have boldness and access,* &c.] Into the holy of holies, to the throne of grace there, and to God the Father, as seated on it: Christ is the way of access; union to him gives right of access; through his mediation his people have audience of God, and acceptance with him, both of person and service: and this access is with boldness; which denotes liberty of coming, granted by God, and a liberty in their own souls to speak out their minds plainly and freely; and an holy courage and intrepidity of soul, being free from servile fear, or a spirit of bondage; which is owing to the heart being sprinkled from an evil conscience, to an act of faith, on the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to a view of God, as a God of peace, grace and mercy: and this access may be had

with confidence by the faith of him; with confidence of interest in the everlasting love of God; of relation to him, as a covenant God and Father; of his power, faithfulness, and willingness to fulfil his promises; of his hearing and answering prayer; of the fulness of Christ, the prevalence of his mediation, and of the acceptance of persons and performances through him; and of the work of grace being carried on till the day of Christ; and of entrance at last into the heavenly glory: and this access is not local but spiritual; it is by faith, and so is peculiar to believers; and the confidence with which it may be had, arises from its being by the faith of Christ; not that faith which Christ himself had, and exercised as man, but that of which he is both the object and author; or that by which souls believe in him for

acceptance, for righteousness, for pardon, for every supply of grace, and for eternal life and happiness.

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

Ver. 14. *For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father,* &c.] That is, pray unto him for the perseverance of the saints; for nothing is more desirable to the ministers of Christ than that; which is the pure gift of God, and is what he has promised, and therefore should be prayed to for it; for what God has designed and promised to his people, he will be sought to; and the apostle's view might be also to stir up these saints to pray for themselves: the gesture he used in prayer was bowing the knees; a man is not tied to any particular gesture or posture in prayer, the main thing is the heart; mere postures and gestures are insignificant things with God; though where the mind is affected, the body will be moved; and this gesture may be expressive of reverence, humility, and submission in prayer: the object he prayed unto is the Father; that is, as follows,

of our Lord Jesus; though these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and Ethiopic version, yet are rightly retained in others; for God is the Father of Christ, not by creation, nor adoption, but by generation, being the only begotten of the Father; and as such he is rightly prayed to, since not only Christ prayed to him as such; but he is the Father of his people in and through Christ; and there is no other way of coming to him but by Christ; and all spiritual blessings come through Christ, and from God, as the Father of Christ.

Ver. 15. *Of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named.*] This may refer either to God, the Father of Christ; who is the Father of the whole family in heaven and in earth; not only the Father of Christ, but the Father of spirits, of angelic spirits, as well as of the souls of men; and the Father of all the saints by adopting grace, whether above or below; they are all the household of God: or else to Jesus Christ, who is the everlasting Father, the Son over his own house, and the firstborn among many brethren: and this family consists either of elect angels and elect men, who are both under one head, Christ, and are in one family, only with this difference, the one are servants, the other sons; or else only of elect men, of saints in heaven and in earth, who all make up but one family; and that part of it, which is on earth, consists of persons of various sizes and growth, as fathers, young men, and children, though they are all the children of God, and partake of the same privileges: and this family is named of Christ; they are called Christians from him, and he is the master and governor of them; they have their laws, directions, and instructions from him; and he is the great provider for them, and the support of them; they have their food and clothing from him, as well as are called by his name. Frequent mention is made in the Jewish writings^{f38} of the family of the holy angels, and of the family above, and the family below, to which here may be some reference.

Ver. 16. *That he would grant you according to the riches of his glory,* &c.] Or according to, and out of that rich, plenteous, and glorious fulness of grace and strength in Christ Jesus.

To be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; this is the petition which the apostle puts up on his bended knees to the Father of Christ, that he would strengthen these saints, that so they might not faint at the tribulations which either he or they endured. Believers in Christ need fresh supplies of strength to enable them to exercise grace, to perform

duties, to resist Satan and his temptations, to oppose their corruptions, and to bear the cross, and undergo afflictions cheerfully, and to hold on and out to the end: this is a blessing that comes from God, and is a gift of his free grace; a “grant” from him who is the strength of the lives of his people, of their salvation, of their hearts, and of the work of grace in their hearts: the means whereby the saints are strengthened by God, is “his Spirit”; who strengthens them by leading them to the fulness of grace and strength in Christ, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by applying the promises of the Gospel to them, and by making the Gospel itself, and the ordinances of it, useful to them, causing them to go from strength to strength in them: the subject of this blessing is the “inner man”, or the Spirit, or soul of man, which is the seat of grace; and this shows that this was spiritual strength which is here desired, which may be where there is much bodily weakness, and for which there should be the greatest concern; and that this strength is not naturally there, it must be given, or put into it. This last phrase,

in the inner man, is joined to the beginning of the next verse in the Arabic, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, “in the inner man Christ may dwell”, &c.

Ver. 17. *That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith*, &c.] This is another petition put up by the apostle for the Ephesians, which is for the inhabitation of Christ in them: the inhabitant Christ is he who dwells in the highest heavens, who dwells in the Father, and the Father in him, in whom all fulness dwells, the fulness of the Godhead, and the fulness of grace; so that those in whose hearts he dwells cannot want any good thing, must be in the greatest safety, and enjoy the greatest comfort and pleasure; and this inhabitation of Christ prayed for is not to be understood in such sense, as he dwells everywhere, being the omnipresent God; or as he dwells in the human nature; nor of his dwelling merely by his Spirit, but of a personal indwelling of his; and which is an instance of his special grace: he dwells in his people, as a king in his palace, to rule and protect them, and as a master in his family to provide for them, and as their life to quicken them; it is in consequence of their union to him, and is expressive of their communion with him, and is perpetual; where he once takes up his residence, he never totally and finally departs: the place where he dwells is not their heads, nor their tongues, but their hearts; and this is where no good thing dwells but himself and his grace; and where sin dwells, and where he is often slighted, opposed, and rebelled against: the means by which he dwells is faith; which is not the bond of union to Christ, nor the cause of his being and dwelling

in the hearts of his people; but is the instrument or means by which they receive him, and retain him, and by which they have communion with him:

that ye being rooted and grounded in love; either in love to God, and one another; for faith and love go together; and love is sometimes weak, and needs establishing; and what serves to root and ground persons in it, are the discoveries of God's love, views of Christ's loveliness, the consideration of blessings received, and the communion they have with God, and Christ, and one another, and a larger insight into the doctrines of the Gospel: or rather in the love of God to them; which is the root and foundation of salvation; this is in itself immovable and immutable; but saints have not always the manifestations of it, and sometimes call it in question, and have need to be rooted and grounded in it; which is to have a lively sense of it, and to be persuaded of interest in it, and that nothing shall be able to separate from it.

Ver. 18. *May be able to comprehend with all saints, &c.*] This is the end of their being rooted and grounded in love, that they, together with the rest of the saints interested in it, might have a larger and more comprehensive view of

what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; not of God himself, who is incomprehensible by finite minds, and is not to be found out to perfection; (see ^{<18107>}Job 11:7-9) but either of the great mystery of salvation, particularly the mystery of the calling of the Gentiles mentioned in the beginning of the chapter; or of the spiritual building, the church, the dimensions of which are given, (^{<6115>}Revelation 21:15,16) or rather of the love of God, which in its length reaches from one eternity to another; in its breadth to all the elect, in all ages, places, and nations; and in its depth to saints in the lowest state of life; and in its height to bring them to an exalted state in glory.

Ver. 19. *And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, &c.*] The love of Christ to his own, to his church and people, is special and peculiar; free and Sovereign; as early as his Father's love, and is durable and unchangeable; the greatest love that ever was heard of; it is matchless and unparalleled; it is exceeding strong and affectionate, and is wonderful and surprising: the instances of it are, his engaging as a surety for them; his espousing both their persons and their cause; his assumption of their nature; his dying in their room and stead; his payment of their debts, atoning for their sins, and bringing in for them an everlasting righteousness;

his going to prepare a place for them in heaven; his intercession for them there; his constant supply of all their wants, and the freedom and familiarity he uses them with. The saints have some knowledge of this love, some tastes of it; their knowledge is a feeling and experimental one, fiducial and appropriating, and what influences their faith, and love, and cheerful obedience, but it is but imperfect; though the knowledge they have of it is supereminent, it exceeds all other knowledge, yet this love passes knowledge; not only the knowledge of natural men, who know nothing of it, but the perfect knowledge of saints themselves, in the present life, and of angels also, who desire to look into it, and the mysteries of it; and especially it is so as to some instances of it, such as the incarnation of Christ, his becoming poor who was Lord of all, being made sin, and a curse, and suffering, the just for the unjust. Now the apostle prays, that these saints might know more of this love; that their knowledge, which was imperfect, might be progressive.

That ye might be filled with all the fulness of God; this is the last petition, and is to be understood, not of a full comprehension of the divine Being, nor of a communication of his divine perfections, nor of having in them the fulness of grace, which it has pleased God should dwell in Christ; but either of that fulness of good things, which they may receive from God in this life; as to be filled with a sense of the love and grace of God; with satisfying views of interest in the righteousness of Christ; with the Spirit, and the gifts and graces thereof; with full provisions of food for their souls; with spiritual peace, joy, and comfort; with knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, of Christ, of the Gospel, and of the will of God; and with all the fruits or righteousness, or good works springing from grace; or else of that fulness which they shall receive hereafter, even complete holiness, perfection of knowledge, fulness of joy and peace, entire conformity to God and Christ, and everlasting communion with them.

Ver. 20. *Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly*, &c.] This is the conclusion of the apostle's prayer, in which the power of God is celebrated, a perfection which is essential unto God, and is very large and extensive; it reaches to all things, to every thing that he wills, which is his actual or ordinative power; and to more things than he has willed, which is his absolute power; and to all things that have been, are, or shall be, and to things impossible with men; though there are some things which God cannot do, such as are contrary to his nature, inconsistent with his will, his

decrees and purposes, which imply a contradiction, and are foreign to truth, which to do would be to deny himself: but then he can do

above all that we ask or think; he can do more than men ask for, as he did for Solomon: God knows what we want before we ask, and he has made provisions for his people before they ask for them; some of which things we never could, and others we never should have asked for, if he had not provided them; and without the Spirit of God we know not what to ask for, nor how to ask aright; this affords great encouragement to go to God, and ask such things of him as we want, and he has provided; and who also can do more than we can think, imagine, or conceive in our minds.

According to the power that worketh in us: either in believers in common, meaning the Spirit of God, who is the finger and power of God, who begins, and carries on, and will finish the work of grace in them, and which is an evidence of the exceeding greatness of the power of God; or in the apostles in particular, in fitting and furnishing them for their work, and succeeding them in it; which is another proof and demonstration of the abundant power of God, and shows what he can do if he pleases.

Ver. 21. *Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, &c.*] This is a doxology, or an ascription of glory to God, with which the apostle concludes his prayer; glory is to be given to God on account of his perfections, which are to be celebrated; and on account of the works of creation and Providence, which are to be commended and acquiesced in; and on account of temporal mercies, for which thanks should be given; and especially for spiritual mercies, and above all for Jesus Christ: the glory of salvation, from first to last, is to be ascribed to his free grace; and his worship is to be regarded and constantly attended on; faith is to be exercised on him, as a promising and covenant keeping God; and our lives and conversations are to be ordered aright according to his word; and we are cheerfully and patiently to suffer for his cause and interest, in all which instances he is glorified: and the place where this glory is to be given, is the “church”; for the church, and true believers, only know the blessings and mysteries of divine grace; and they only know how to glorify God aright; and besides, glory must be given to God by believers, not only separately and apart, but conjunctly and together, in a church state; because there the Lord appears glorious, grants his presence, and displays his mighty grace: and this is to be done by “Christ Jesus”, or “in” him; and may refer either to the church, which is in Christ; or to him as the medium by whom praise

and glory are to be given to God; for all blessings are in Christ, and come to us through him, and he is the only way of access to God; nor can our praises and thanksgivings be acceptable unto God, but through him: and this glory is to be given

throughout all ages, world without end, Amen; for the church will abide for ever, in which it is to be given; the blessings of grace will be for ever dispensing, for which it is to be given; and Jesus Christ, the Mediator, will continue for evermore, by whom it is given: to all which is added the word “Amen”, signifying his wish, that so it might be, and his faith, that so it would be.

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 4

The apostle having in the three former chapters treated of the doctrines of grace, and explained and established them, proceeds in the three following to exhort to the duties of religion; and in this advises to a becoming conversation in general, and to brotherly concord and unity in particular; and dehorts from several vices, and encourages to the contrary virtues. And inasmuch as these Ephesians were called with an holy calling, he entreats them, if they had any regard for him as a prisoner of Christ, that they would walk worthy of it, ([Ephesians 4:1](#)), and directs to the manner in which they should act becoming it, with all humility, patience, forbearance, and love; seeking to preserve a spiritual harmony, unity, and peace, one among another, ([Ephesians 4:2,3](#)), for the encouragement of which, he makes use of various arguments, taken from the unity of the body, of which they were members; from their being quickened and influenced by one and the same Spirit; from having the same hope of eternal happiness, to which they were called; from their having one Lord over them, who is Christ; from their having the same like precious faith in him; from their being baptized with the same baptism in him; and from their having one, and the same God and Father, ([Ephesians 4:4-6](#)), and from all of them having gifts, though different, for mutual usefulness; which gifts are described by the author and donor of them, Christ, ([Ephesians 4:7](#)), which is proved ([Ephesians 4:8](#)), out of a passage in ([Psalm 68:18](#)), which is explained of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his descent from heaven, and ascension thither; the end of which latter was to fill all things, or persons, with gifts, ([Ephesians 4:9,10](#)), of which a particular enumeration is given, ([Ephesians 4:11](#)), the design of which is, to fit men for the work of the ministry, and by them to convert sinners, and edify saints, ([Ephesians 4:12](#)), which ministry is to be continued, until all the saints arrive to a perfection of spiritual knowledge, and make up one perfect man, or body of men in Christ, ([Ephesians 4:13](#)), for the use and end of the Gospel ministry is not, that such who are converted by it should continue children, be in suspense about truth, and under the deceptions of men, ([Ephesians 4:14](#)), but that through speaking the

truth in love, they should grow up into Christ their head; from whom supplies of grace are communicated, for the increase and edification of every member of the body, (^{<4045>}Ephesians 4:15,16), and seeing these Ephesians to whom the apostle writes were separated in the effectual calling from the rest of the Gentiles, they ought not to walk as the others did; whose minds were vain, their understandings darkened, and their hearts blinded, hardened, and ignorant; and had no sense of things, but were given up to all manner of wickedness, (^{<4047>}Ephesians 4:17-19), whereas they had learned Christ, and through hearing had been taught the truth of the Gospel, as it was in him, (^{<4041>}Ephesians 4:20,21), wherefore it became them in their conversation, not to follow the dictates of corrupt nature, called the old man, that being full of lusts, corrupt, and deceitful, but to act becoming the renewing work of the Spirit upon their souls, and agreeably to the new principles of the grace of God created in them, in order to righteousness and holiness, (^{<4042>}Ephesians 4:22-24), and in particular it became them to avoid lying, and on the contrary to speak truth to one another; and that for this reason, because they were members of the same body, and of one another, (^{<4025>}Ephesians 4:25), and likewise to abstain from sinful anger, and not continue a wrathful disposition, (^{<4043>}Ephesians 4:26), nor was it advisable to yield to the suggestions, solicitations, and temptations of Satan, (^{<4047>}Ephesians 4:27), nor to commit theft, but on the other hand give themselves to manual labour at some commendable calling, that they might have for their own use, and others too, (^{<4043>}Ephesians 4:28), and it was also right to be careful not to suffer corrupt and unchaste words to come out of their mouths, but such as would be grateful and useful to others, (^{<4049>}Ephesians 4:29), and the rather this, and all the rest of the things mentioned, and likewise what follows, should be attended to; since by such evil lusts, words, and actions, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, who should not, since he is the sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption, (^{<4041>}Ephesians 4:30). And the chapter is concluded with a dehoration from several vices of the mind and tongue, respecting wrath and revenge; and an exhortation to the contrary virtues, kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness; to which encouragement is given, by the example of God, who forgives for Christ's sake, (^{<4051>}Ephesians 4:31,32).

Ver. 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, &c.*] Or “in the Lord”; that is, for the Lord's sake; (See Gill on “^{<4041>}Ephesians 3:1”). Some connect this phrase, “in the Lord”, with the following word, “beseech”: as

if the sense was, that the apostle entreated the believing Ephesians, in the name of the Lord, and for his sake, to take heed to their walk and conversation, that it be as became the calling by grace, and to glory, with which they were called: and this exhortation he enforces from the consideration of the state and condition in which he was, a prisoner, not for any wickedness he had been guilty of, but for the Lord's sake, which seems to be the true sense of the word; and that, if they would not add afflictions to his bonds, as some professors by their walk did, he beseeches them, as an ambassador in bonds, that they would attend to what he was about to say; and the rather, since such doctrines of grace had been made known to them, which have a tendency to promote powerful godliness; and since they were made partakers of such privileges as laid them under the greatest obligation to duty, which were made mention of in the preceding chapters.

That ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called; by which is meant, not that private and peculiar state and condition of life, that the saints are called to, and in: but that calling, by the grace of God, which is common to them all; and is not a mere outward call by the ministry of the word, with which men may be called, and not be chosen, sanctified, and saved; but that which is internal, and is of special grace, and by the Spirit of God; by whom they are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, and from the company and conversation of the men of it, into the fellowship of Christ, and his people, to the participation of the grace of Christ here, and to his kingdom and glory hereafter; and which call is powerful, efficacious, yea, irresistible; and being once made is unchangeable, and without repentance, and is holy, high, and heavenly. Now to walk worthy of it, or suitable to it, is to walk as children of the light; to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ and his Spirit make them free; to walk by faith on Christ; and to walk in the ways of God, with Christ, the mark, in their view, and with the staff of promises in their hands; and to walk on constantly, to go forwards and hold out unto the end: for this walking, though it refers to a holy life and conversation, a series of good works, yet it does not suppose that these merit calling; rather the contrary, since these follow upon it; and that is used as an argument to excite unto them: but the phrase is expressive of a fitness, suitableness, and agreeableness of a walk and conversation to such rich grace, and so high an honour conferred on saints.

Ver. 2. *With all lowliness and meekness,* &c.]. In the exercise of humility, which shows itself in believers, in entertaining and expressing the meanest

thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; in not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increase of them; in a willingness to receive instruction from the meanest saints; in submission to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God: and so to behave, is to walk agreeably to their calling of God; and what the consideration of that may engage them to, when they serve the low estate and condition out of which they are called, in which they were before calling: and that in effectual calling they have nothing but what they have received; and that others are called with the same calling that they are: and to walk humbly before God and man, is to walk according to the will of God that calls; and it is walking as Christ walked, who is meek, and lowly; and is agreeable to the blessed Spirit, one of whose fruits is meekness; and is what is very ornamental to the saints, and is well pleasing in the sight of God.

With longsuffering; bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other; without being easily provoked to anger by any ill usage; and not immediately meditating and seeking revenge for every affront given, or injury done; and so to walk, is to walk worthy of the grace of calling, or agreeable to it, to God that calls by his grace, who is longsuffering both with wicked men, and with his own people.

Forbearing one another in love; overlooking the infirmities of one another, forgiving injuries done, sympathizing with, and assisting each other in distressed circumstances, the spring of all which should be love; by that saints should be moved, influenced, and engaged to such a conduct, and which should be so far attended to, as is consistent with love; for so to forbear one another, as to suffer sin to be on each other, without proper, gentle, and faithful rebukes for it, is not to act in love.

Ver. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, &c.*] That is, a spiritual union: there is an union between God and his people, and between Christ and his members, and between saints and saints, and the bond of each union is love; and that it is which knits and cements them together; and it is the last of these which is here intended: the saints are united under one head, and are members of one and the same body, and should be of the same mind and judgment, and of one accord, heart, and affection: and this may be called “the unity of the Spirit”; because it is an union of spirits, of the spirits or souls of men; and that in spiritual affairs, in the spiritual exercises of religion; and it is effected by the Spirit of God, by whom they

are baptized into one body. Now to endeavour or study to keep and preserve this, supposes that this union does already exist; that it is very valuable, as making much for the glory of God, the mutual comfort and delight of saints, and is worth taking some pains about; and that it is very difficult to secure, there being so many things which frequently arise, and break in upon it, through the devices of Satan, and the corruptions of men's hearts: but though it is difficult, and may sometimes seem to be impossible, yet it becomes the saints to be diligent in the use of means to keep it up, and continue it; and which they may be said to endeavour after, when they abide with one another, and do not forsake each other upon every occasion; when they perform all offices of love to one another, and stir up each other to the like: and the way and manner in which this is to be kept, is

in the bond of peace: the Arabic version reads, “by the bond of love and peace”: by maintaining peace among themselves, and seeking those things which tend to, and make for peace, and spiritual edification; and which is called a bond, in allusion to the Greek word used, which comes from one that signifies to knit, join, and bind together, and because it is of a knitting and uniting nature. Now so to act is to walk worthy of calling grace, or agreeably to it: peace is what the saints are called unto in the effectual calling: and what is suitable to God, who is the God of peace; and to Christ, who is the Prince of peace; and to the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and to the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace; and to the character which the saints bear, which is that of sons of peace.

Ver. 4. *There is one body*, &c.] The church; in what sense that is a body, and compared to one, (See Gill on “⁴⁰²³Ephesians 1:23”). It is called “one” with relation to Jews and Gentiles, who are of the same body, and are reconciled in one body by Christ, and are baptized into it by the Spirit; and with respect to saints above and saints below, who make up one general assembly; and with regard to separate societies; for though there are several particular congregations, yet there is but one church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and saints of different ages, places, states, and conditions, are all one in Christ Jesus, who is the one, and only head of this body: and this is an argument to excite the saints to unity of Spirit; since they are, as one natural body is, members one of another, and therefore should not bite and devour one another; they are one political body, one kingdom, over which Christ is sole King and lawgiver, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; they are one

economical body, one family, they are all brethren, and should not fall out by the way.

And one Spirit; the Holy Spirit of God, who animates, quickens, and actuates the body: there is but one Spirit, who convinces of sin, enlightens, regenerates, and makes alive; who incorporates into the body, the church; who comforts the saints; helps them in their access to God through Christ; makes known the things of Christ to them, is a spirit of adoption, and the seal and earnest of the heavenly glory; and the consideration of this should engage to unity, because a contrary conduct must be grieving to the Spirit of God, unsuitable to his genuine fruits, and very unlike the true spirit of a Christian: and by one spirit may be meant the spirit of themselves, who, as the first Christians were, should be of one heart, and of one soul, of the same mind, and having the same affections for one another; which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Arabic versions; the former rendering the words, “that ye may be one body and one spirit”, making this to be the issue and effect of their endeavours after union and peace; and the latter reads them as an exhortation, “be ye one body and one spirit”; that is, be ye cordially and heartily united in your affections to one another:

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; that is, the glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the saints are called in the effectual calling, is one and the same: there are no degrees in it; it will be equally possessed by them all; for they are all loved with the same love, chosen in the same head, and secured in the same covenant; they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness; they are all equally the sons of God, and so heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; and are all made kings and priests unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all; and the holiness and beatific vision of the saints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they should be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity. So the Jews say ^{f39}, that in the world of souls, all, small and great, stand before the Lord; and they have a standing alike; for in the affairs of the soul, it is fit that they should be all μῦνς, “equal”, as it is said (⁴⁰¹⁵Exodus 30:15), “the rich shall not give more”.

Ver. 5. *One Lord*, &c.] The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by right of creation, is Lord of all; and by right of marriage, and redemption, is the one and only Lord of his church and people; he has betrothed them to himself, and is

their husband, and so their Lord, whom they are to worship and obey; he has redeemed them, he has bought them with the price of his blood, and therefore they are not their own, but his, and should glorify him both with their bodies and souls, which are his; he is the head of his body the church, the King of saints, and Father and master of the family named of him, and therefore they ought to agree among themselves, and not be many masters, and usurp a domination over one another. The Ethiopic version reads, “one God”, but that is expressed in the following verse.

One faith; there is but one grace of faith; there are indeed different sorts of faith; there is the faith of miracles, and an historical, temporary faith, but there is but one true grace of faith; and which, though it is in different subjects, and its degrees and acts are various, yet as to its nature, it is like precious faith in all; and has the same author and object, Jesus Christ, and springs from the same cause, the free grace of God, and has equally in all everlasting salvation connected with it, and consequent upon it: and there is but one doctrine of faith; the Gospel is so called, because it consists of things to be believed, is the means of implanting faith, it proposes the object to be believed in, and requires the exercise of it upon it, and should be mixed with faith whenever heard. Now this is but one, and is all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and so should the professors of it be, and love one another in the faith.

One baptism, there were divers baptisms under the law, but there is but one baptism under the Gospel; for John's and Christ's are the same: there are, besides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are so in an improper sense, as the baptism of the Spirit, and the baptism of blood, or of sufferings; but there is but one baptism, literally and properly so called, which is water baptism; and which is to be administered in one and the same way, by immersion in water; and on one and the same subjects, believers in Christ; and in one and the same name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and to be performed but once, when rightly administered.

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

all nominal and figurative deities, and which are not gods by nature, and to the fictitious deities and idols of the nations; and there is but one God of Jews and Gentiles; nor is the unity of the Godhead inconsistent with a trinity of persons in it: and this one God is the Father of all; the Father of all mercies, and of all spirits, both angels and souls of men; and he is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of all the elect in him: and seeing that they have all one covenant God and Father, who has predestinated them to the adoption of children, and who has put them among the children, and adopted them into his family, and stand in the same relation to him, and enjoy the same privileges, they ought to love as brethren:

who is above all; which may denote the superior excellency of his nature, not above his Son and Spirit, who are of the same nature with him, but above angels and men; and the extensiveness of his government, over all creatures in general, and over his church and people in particular:

and through all; the Arabic version renders it, “taking care of all”; which may have respect to his providence, which is either universal, and reaches to all creatures his hands have made; or special, and concerns his own chosen people, who belong to his family, and to whom he stands in the relation of a covenant God and Father: or this clause may refer to the perfections of his nature, which appear through the whole of the salvation of all the chosen ones; as his wisdom, love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness:

and in you all; which is to be understood, not of his being in his creatures, by his powerful presence, which is everywhere supporting them; but of the gracious union there is between him and his people, and of his gracious inhabitation in them by his Spirit. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read, “in us all”; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version, read only, “in all”.

Ver. 7. *But unto everyone of us is given grace*, &c.] Which may refer to the saints in common, and may be interpreted of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace, bestowed upon them all, freely and liberally, not grudgingly, nor niggardly, and without motive and condition in them; or to the ministers of the Gospel, and so design gifts fitting for the ministry, which every one has, though differing one from another, and all of free grace:

according to the measure of the gift of Christ: either according to the gift of grace to Christ before the world began, and the measure of it, which he communicates to them in time, even grace for grace; or according to that measure of gifts which Christ received from men at his ascension: it may be observed that every member of Christ, and minister of his, receive more or less grace and gifts from him; and that what they receive is all of free grace, and in measure; and though they may have gifts differing one from another, yet all are useful; so that there is no room for pride, envy, and contempt, which would break in upon the unity of the Spirit; for what is said from (^{<401B>}Ephesians 4:3) contains so many arguments to stir up the saints to endeavour to preserve that.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore he saith,* &c.] God in the Scripture, (^{<10618>}Psalm 68:18)

when he ascended up on high; which is not to be understood of Moses's ascending up to the firmament at the giving of the law, as some Jewish writers ^{f40} interpret it; for though Moses ascended to the top of Mount Sinai, yet it is never said that he went up to the firmament of heaven; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses of his enemies, as another of those writers ^{f41} would have it; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, of which there is no mention in Scripture; but of the Messiah's ascension to heaven, which may very well be signified by this phrase, "on high"; (see ^{<39A29>}Psalm 102:19) (^{<2573>}Jeremiah 25:30), and which ascension is to be taken not in a figurative, but literal sense, and as real, local, and visible, as Christ's ascension to heaven was; being from Mount Olivet, attended by angels, in the sight of his apostles, after he had conversed with them from the time of his resurrection forty days; and which ascension of his was in order to fulfil the type of the high priest entering into the most holy place; and to make intercession for his people, and to send down the Spirit with his gifts and graces to them, and to make way and prepare mansions of glory for them, and receive the glory promised and due to him: in the Hebrew text it is, "thou hast ascended"; there the psalmist speaks to the Messiah, here the apostle speaks of him; though the Arabic and Ethiopic read there, "he ascended", as here:

he led captivity captive; which is expressive of Christ's conquests and triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave; and indeed, every spiritual enemy of his and his people, especially the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers, whom Christ has spoiled and triumphed over; the allusion is to

the public triumphs of the Romans, in which captives were led in chains, and exposed to open view^{f42}:

and gave gifts unto men; meaning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and particularly such as qualify men for the work of the ministry; these he received **μδab**, “in man”; in human nature, in that nature in which he ascended to heaven; **hl [ml [wdyh μδab**, “in the man that is known above”^{f43}, as say the Jews; and these he bestows on men, even rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and make them useful to others: wherefore the Jews have no reason to quarrel with the version of the apostle as they do^{f44}; who, instead of “received gifts for” men, renders it, “gave gifts to men”; since the Messiah received in order to give, and gives in consequence of his having received them; and so Jarchi interprets the words, **μtll**, “to give them” to the children of men; and besides, as a learned man has observed^{f45}, one and the same Hebrew word signifies to give and to receive; to which may be added that their own Targum renders it **atbhy**, “and hast given gifts to the children of men”; and in like manner the Syriac and Arabic versions of (^{<99818>}Psalm 68:18) render the words; very likely the apostle might use the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one: it was customary at triumphs to give gifts to the soldiers^{f46}, to which there is an allusion here.

Ver. 9. *Now that he ascended*, &c.] These words are a conclusion of Christ's descent from heaven, from his ascension thither; for had he not first descended from thence, it could not have been said of him that he ascended; for no man hath ascended to heaven but he that came down from heaven, (^{<9913>}John 3:13) and they are also an explanation of the sense of the psalmist in the above citation, which takes in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; which humiliation is signified by his descent into the earth:

what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? this the Papists understand of his decent into a place they call Limbus Patrum, which they make to be contiguous to hell; and where they say the patriarchs were detained till Christ's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that these are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where Abraham was with Lazarus in his bosom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, (^{<9163>}Luke 16:23,26) and the spirits or souls of the patriarchs returned to God that gave them, when

separated from their bodies, as the souls of men do now, (²¹¹⁷Ecclesiastes 12:7) nor did Christ enter any such feigned place at his death, but went to paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Christ spoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: some interpret this of Christ's descent into hell, which must be understood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for sin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the state of the dead; but it may rather design the whole of his humiliation, as his descent from heaven and incarnation in the virgin's womb, where his human nature was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; and his humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when he was made sin and a curse for his people, and bore all the punishment due to their transgressions; and his being in Hades, in the state of the dead, in the grave, in the heart of the earth, as Jonah in the whale's belly: reference seems to be had to (¹⁸¹⁵Psalm 139:15) where “the lower parts of the earth”, is interpreted by the Targum on the place of *amad asyrk*, “his mother's womb”; and so it is by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melec. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version leave out the word “first” in this clause.

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

up far above all heavens: the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens; Christ ascended far above these, and went into the third heaven, the holiest of all; and this is expressive of the exaltation of Christ, who is made higher than the heavens; and the end of his ascension was,

that he might fill all things, or “fulfil all things”; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and answer to the type of the high priest's entering once a year into the holiest of all: or that he might complete,

perfect, and fill up all his offices; as the remainder of his priestly office, his intercession for his people; and more finally his prophetic office by the effusion of his Spirit; and more visibly his kingly office, by sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, and subduing the people under him: or that he might fill all places; as God he fills all places at once being infinite, immense, and omnipresent; as man, one after another; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth; at his death he descended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, “Hades”, or the grave; and at his resurrection stood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him; and at his ascension he went through the airy and starry heavens, into the highest heaven; and so successively was in all places: or rather that he might fill all persons, all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles; and so the Arabic version renders it, “that he might fill all creatures”; as the Gentiles were called; particularly that he might fill each and everyone of his people with his grace and righteousness, with his Spirit, and the fruits of it, with spiritual knowledge and understanding, with food and gladness, with peace, joy and comfort; and all his churches with his gracious presence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces suitable to their several stations and work.

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

and some prophets; by whom are meant, not private members of churches, who may all prophesy or teach in a private way; nor ordinary ministers of the word; but extraordinary ones, who had a peculiar gift of interpreting the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling

things to come; such were Agabus and others in the church of Antioch, (~~4117~~ Acts 11:27 13:1)

and some evangelists; by whom are designed, not so much the writers of the Gospels, as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, some of which were also apostles; as preachers of the Gospel, and who yet were distinct from the ordinary ministers of it; they were below the apostles, and yet above pastors and teachers; they were the companions of the apostles, and assistants to them, and subserved them in their work; such were Philip, Luke, Titus, Timothy, and others; these were not fixed and stated ministers in anyone place, as the following officers be, but were sent here and there as the apostles thought fit:

and some pastors and teachers, or doctors; these may be thought to differ, but not so much on account of the place where they perform their work, the one in the church, the other in the school; nor on account of the different subject of their ministry, the one attending to practical, the other to doctrinal points; but whereas the pastors are the shepherds of the flock, the overseers of it, and the same with the bishops and elders, and the teachers may be the gifted brethren in the church, assistants to the pastors, bare ministers of the word; so the difference lies here, that the one has the oversight, and care, and charge of the church, and the other not; the one can administer all ordinances, the other not; the one is fixed and tied to some certain church, the other not: though I rather think they intend one and the same office, and that the word “teachers” is only explanative of the figurative word “pastors” or shepherds; and the rather because if the apostle had designed distinct officers, he would have used the same form of speaking as before; and have expressed himself thus, “and some pastors, and some teachers”; whereas he does not make such a distribution here as there; though the Syriac version reads this clause distributively as the others; and among the Jews there were the singular men or wise men, and the disciples of the wise men, who were their companions and assistants; and it is asked ^{f47},

“who is a singular man? and who is a disciple? a singular man is everyone that is fit to be appointed a pastor or governor of a congregation; and a disciple is one, that when he is questioned about any point in his doctrine, gives an answer:”

wherefore if these two, pastors and teachers, are different, it might be thought there is some reference to this distinction, and that pastors answer

to the wise men, and teachers to their disciples or assistants; and so Kimchi in (^{248B}Jeremiah 3:15) interprets the pastors there of *l [rçyd p̄ysnrp*, “the pastors of Israel”, which shall be with the King Messiah, as is said in (^{318B}Micah 5:5) and undoubtedly Gospel ministers are meant: from the whole it may be observed, that as there have been various officers and offices in the Gospel dispensation, various gifts have been bestowed; and these are the gifts of Christ, which he has received for men, and gives unto them; and hence it appears that the work of the ministry is not an human invention, but the appointment of Christ, for which he fits and qualifies, and therefore to be regarded; and that they only are the ministers of Christ, whom he makes ministers of the New Testament, and not whom men or themselves make and appoint.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the saints*, &c.] The chosen ones, whom God has sanctified or set apart for himself in eternal election: the ministry of the word is designed for the completing the number of these in the effectual calling; and for the perfecting of the whole body of the church, by gathering in all that belong to it, and of every particular saint, who is regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God: for the best of saints are imperfect; for though there is a perfection in them, as that designs sincerity, in opposition to hypocrisy, and as it may be taken comparatively with respect to what others are, or they themselves were; and though there is a perfection of parts of the new man in them, yet not of degrees; and though there is a complete perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves, their sanctification is imperfect, as their faith, knowledge, love, &c. sin is in them, and committed by them, and they continually want supplies of grace; and the best of them are sensible of their imperfection, and own it: now the ministration of the word is a means of carrying on the work of grace in them unto perfection, or “for the restoring or joining in of the saints”; the elect of God were disjointed in Adam's fall, and scattered abroad, who were representatively gathered together in one head, even in Christ, in redemption; and the word is the means of the visible and open jointing of them into Christ, and into his churches, and also of restoring them after backslidings:

for the work of the ministry; gifts are given unto men by Christ to qualify them for it: the preaching of the Gospel is a work, and a laborious one, and what no man is sufficient for of himself; it requires faithfulness, and is a good work, and when well performed, those concerned in it are worthy of

respect, esteem, and honour; and it is a ministering work, a service and not dominion:

for the edifying the body of Christ; not his natural body the Father prepared for him; nor his sacramental body in the supper; but his mystical body the church; and gifts are bestowed to fit them for the preaching of the Gospel, that hereby the church, which is compared to an edifice, might be built up; and that the several societies of Christians and particular believers might have spiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and their numbers be increased, and their graces be in lively exercise.

Ver. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith*, &c.] These words regard the continuance of the Gospel ministry in the church, until all the elect of God come in: or “to the unity of the faith”; by which is meant, not the union between the saints, the cement of which is love; nor that which is between Christ and his people, of which his love, and not their faith, is the bond; but the same with the “one faith”, (~~ROM~~ Ephesians 4:5) and designs either the doctrine of faith, which is uniform, and all of a piece; and the sense is, that the ministration of the Gospel will continue until the saints entirely unite in their sentiments about it, and both watchmen and churches see eye to eye: or else the grace of faith, which as to its nature, object, author, spring, and cause, is the same; and it usually comes by hearing; and all God's elect shall have it; and the work and office of the ministry will remain until they are all brought to believe in Christ;

and of the knowledge of the Son of God; which is but another phrase for faith in Christ, for faith is a spiritual knowledge of Christ; it is that grace by which a soul beholds his glory and fulness, approves of him, trusts in him, and appropriates him to itself; and such an approbatory, fiducial, appropriating, practical, and experimental knowledge of Christ, is here intended; and which is imperfect in those that have it, and is not yet in many who will have it; and inasmuch as the Gospel ministry is the means of it, this will be continued until every elect soul partakes of it, and arrives to a greater perfection in it: for it follows,

unto a perfect man; meaning either Christ, who is in every sense a perfect man; his human nature is the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and he is perfectly free from sin, and has been made perfect through sufferings in it; and coming to him may be understood either of coming to him now by faith, which the Gospel ministry is the means of, and encourages to; or of

coming to him hereafter, for the saints will meet him, and be ever with him, and till that time the Gospel will be preached: or else the church, being a complete body with all its members, is designed; for when all the elect of God are gathered in and joined together, they will be as one man; or it may respect every individual believer, who though he is comparatively perfect, and with regard to parts, but not degrees, and as in Christ Jesus, yet is in himself imperfect in holiness and knowledge, though hereafter he will be perfect in both; when he comes

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: not of Christ's natural body, but of his mystical body the church, which will be his fulness when all the elect are gathered in; and when they are filled with his gifts and graces, and are grown up to their proportion in it, they will be come to the measure and stature of it: or it may be understood of every particular believer, who has Christ formed in him; who when the work of grace is finished in him, will be a perfect man in Christ, and all this will be true of him; till which time, and during this imperfect state, the Gospel ministry will be maintained: the phrase is taken from the Jews, who among the forms and degrees of prophecy which the prophets arrived to, and had in them the vision of God and angels, make *hmqw rw[ç*, “the measure of the stature”^{f48}, a principal one; and is here used for the perfection of the heavenly state in the vision, and enjoyment of God and Christ.

Ver. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children*, &c.] Meaning not children of men, for grace does not destroy natural relations; nor children of God, which is a privilege, and always continues; nor indeed children of disobedience, though the saints cease to be such upon conversion; but in such sense children, as they were when first converted, newborn babes, little children: there are some things in which they should be children still, namely, with respect to an ardent and flaming love to God and Christ, and to the saints; and with regard to their eager desire after the sincere milk of the word; and as to pride, malice, envy, evil speakings, guile and hypocrisy; in these things it becomes them to be children: but not in understanding; they should not always remain ignorant, imprudent, or be always fed with milk, and not able to digest meat; nor be unable to go unless led, and be tender and incapable of bearing hardships for Christ and his Gospel, and of defending it, and his cause and interest; but should play the man, and quit themselves as such and be strong, which the Gospel ministry is a means of, and encourages to:

tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; false doctrine, which may be compared to wind for its lightness and emptiness, and for its swelling and puffing nature, and for the noise and bluster it makes, and for its rapidity and force, with which it sometimes comes and bears all before it, and for its infectiousness, which is the nature of some winds; and to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with it, is expressive of much ignorance and want of a discerning spirit, and implies hesitation, and doubts and scruples, and shows credulity, fickleness, and inconstancy: and which is brought on

by the sleight of men; either through the uncertain and changeable state of things in life; the mind of man is fickle, the life of man is uncertain, and all the affairs of human nature are subject to change, by reason of which men are easily imposed upon; or rather through the tricking arts of false teachers; the word here used is adopted by the Jews into their language, and with them *aybwq* signifies the game at dice^{f49}; and *swj swybwq*, is a gamester at that play, and is interpreted by them, one that steals souls^{f50}, and deceives and corrupts them; and may be filly applied to false teachers, who make use of such like artifices and juggling tricks, to deceive the hearts of the simple, as the others do to cheat men of their money: hence it follows,

and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; or “unto the deceitful methods or wiles of the devil”, as the Alexandrian copy reads; which not only suggests that their principal end in view is to deceive, but their insidious, private, and secret way of deceiving, and their expertness in it, which they have from the devil; and now the ministration of the Gospel is the best and surest guard and antidote against such fluctuations and deceptions.

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

teachers; and with respect to private Christians, as they are to receive it in love, so to speak of it to one another from a principle of love, and an affectionate concern for each other's welfare, to the end that they

may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even “Christ”: the work of grace upon the soul is a gradual work, and an increase of this in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and spiritual knowledge, is a growth; and this is a growth in all things, in all grace, as in those mentioned, so in others, as humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of the will to the will of God, and especially the knowledge of Christ; for it is a growing into him, from whom souls receive all their grace and increase of it; for he is the head of influence to supply them, as well as the head of eminence to protect them; (see ⁴⁰¹²Ephesians 1:22) and now the preaching of the Gospel, or the sincere speaking of the truth, is the instrumental means of such growth.

Ver. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joined gether*, &c.] By which is meant, the church; (see ⁴⁰¹³Ephesians 1:23) sometimes it designs all the elect of God in heaven and in earth, but here the church militant, which only can admit of an increase; this body is from Christ, as an head, and the phrase denotes the rise and origin of the church from Christ, her dependence upon him, and union to him, and of its members one to another; she has her being and form, from him, and all her blessings, as her life and light, righteousness and holiness, her grace and strength, her joy, peace, and comfort, her fruitfulness and final perseverance; and her dependence is upon him for subsistence, sustenance, protection and safety, and for grace and glory; and her union to him is very near, strict and close, and indissoluble; and the union between the several members is also very close, and both are very beautiful:

and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. The Alexandrian copy reads, “of every member”; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the author of the union of the members of Christ's body to one another is the Spirit of God, by him they are baptized into one body; the cement or bond of this union is the grace of love wrought in their souls by him; and the means are the word and ordinances, and these convey a supply from Christ the head to every member, suitable to the part it bears in the body, according to the energy of the Spirit, who makes all effectual: and so

maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love; the increase of the body the church, is either in numbers, when persons are converted and added to it; or in the exercise of grace, under the influence of the Spirit, through the ministration of the word and ordinances; and both these tend to the edifying or building of it up; and nothing is of a more edifying nature to the church than love, which bears the infirmities of the weak, and seeks for, and follows after those things which make for peace and godly edification, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 8:1).

Ver. 17. *This I say therefore and testify in the Lord*, &c.] These words may be considered either as an assertion, and so a testimonial of the different walk and conversation of the saints at Ephesus, from the rest of the Gentiles; or as an exhortation in the name of the Lord to such a walk, the apostle here returning to what he stirs them up to in (~~400~~Ephesians 4:1)

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

Ver. 18. *Having the understanding darkened*, &c.] Not that the natural faculty of the understanding is lost in men, nor the understanding in things

natural and civil, and which is quick enough, especially in things that are evil; but in things spiritual it is very dark and ignorant, as about the nature and perfections of God, his holiness and righteousness; about sin and the consequences of it; about Christ, his person, office, and work, and salvation by him; about the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the soul; and about the Scripture, and the doctrines contained in it; and so it came to be by sin: the understanding of man was at first filled both with natural and divine knowledge; but man was not content with this, and being ambitious of more, even of being as God, lost what he had; for on account of his sin he was banished from the divine presence, which brought not only a darkness upon him, but upon all his posterity; and which is increased by personal iniquity, and oftentimes by Satan the god of this world, who blinds the minds of men; and sometimes men are given up in just judgment by God, to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and which issues in utter darkness, in blackness of darkness for evermore:

being alienated from the life of God; not that which God lives in himself, but that which he lives in his people; nor that natural life which men receive from him, but a spiritual life, a life of grace, faith and holiness; and which may be called the life of God, because it is infused by the Spirit of God, and the word of God is the means of it, and it is supported and secured by the power of God, and is according to the will of God, and is directed to his glory: now wicked and unconverted men are alienated from this life; they are estranged from God the fountain of it; and go astray from the law, the rule of an holy life; and are entirely destitute of a principle of life, from whence men can only act and are utterly unacquainted with the pleasures and sweetness of the life of faith and holiness; nor do they approve of such a life, but have the utmost aversion to it:

through the ignorance that is in them; every unregenerate man is an ignorant man, and especially the Gentiles were very ignorant of God, and of divine things; ignorance is natural to men, it comes by sin, and is itself sinful, and is sometimes the punishment of sin, and also the cause of it, as here of alienation from the life of God; for where is ignorance of God, there can be no desire after him, no communion with him, no faith in him, had dependence on him; no true worship of him, or living according to his will, and to his glory: and this ignorance is,

because of the blindness of their hearts, or “the hardness of it”; there is a natural hardness of the heart, the heart is naturally stony, and so it remains

till grace takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh; it is insensible and inflexible, and not susceptible of any impression; and there is a voluntary hardness of it, men willingly harden themselves against the Lord, and make their hearts like an adamant stone, all sin is of an hardening nature; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives up men unto; and when and where this is the case, in either sense, it is no wonder men should be so ignorant of God, and so alienated from the life of him: *bl h twyms*, “blindness of heart”¹⁵¹, is a Rabbinical phrase.

Ver. 19. *Who being past feeling*, &c.] Their consciences being cauterized or seared as with a red hot iron, which is the consequence of judicial hardness; so that they have lost all sense of sin, and do not feel the load of its guilt upon them, and are without any concern about it; but on the contrary commit it with pleasure, boast of it and glory in it, plead for it and defend it publicly, and openly declare it, and stand in no fear of a future judgment, which they ridicule and despise: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Claromontane exemplar read, who “despairing”: of mercy and salvation, saying there is no hope, and therefore grow hardened and desperate in sin;

have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; by “lasciviousness” is meant all manner of lusts, and a wanton and unbridled course of sinning; and their giving themselves over unto it denotes their voluntariness in sinning, the power of sin over them, they being willing slaves unto it, and their continuance in it; and this they do in order

to work all uncleanness; to commit every unclean lust, to live in a continued commission of uncleanness of every sort; and that

with greediness; being like a covetous man, never satisfied with sinning, but always craving more sinful lusts and pleasures.

Ver. 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ*, &c.] Some distinguish these words, and make two propositions of them, “but ye not so”, or “ye are not so, ye have learned Christ”; the first of these propositions has respect to what goes before, and suggests that regenerate persons are not as other men: they do not walk in the vanity of their minds as others, their minds are not empty and vain; but are filled with God, with a saving knowledge of God in Christ, with the fear and love of God, and with Christ, with a spiritual knowledge of him, with faith in him and love to him, and with the

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

Ver. 21. *If so be that ye have heard him,* &c.] Not heard him preach, but heard him preached; and that not merely externally, with the outward hearing of the ear; though oftentimes spiritual conviction and illumination, true faith in Christ, real comfort from him, and establishment and assurance of interest in him, come this way, as to these Ephesians, (~~4013~~ Ephesians

1:13) but internally, so as to know him, understand his word, and distinguish his voice; so as to approve of him and love him, and believe in him; feel the power of his Gospel, relish his truths, and obey his ordinances, and so bring forth fruit to his glory; as such do, who are quickened by him, whose ears are unstopped, and their hearts opened, and their understandings enlightened; and who have hearing ears, and understanding hearts given them:

and have been taught by him: not personally, but by his Spirit and ministers; for Christ is not only the subject of the ministry of the word, and whom the Spirit of God teaches and directs souls to for righteousness, pardon, cleansing, and for every supply of grace; but he is the efficient cause of teaching; and there is none who teaches like him: and those who are taught by him, are taught

as the truth is in Jesus; as the Gospel is in him, as in its original and subject; for he is truth itself, and grace and truth came by him; and as it was preached by him, and so is pure and unmixed.

Ver. 22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, &c.]* Which is the corruption of nature; why this is called a man, and an old man, (see Gill on “^{<816>}Romans 6:6”), the putting him off, is not a removing him from the saints, nor a destroying him in them, nor a changing his nature; for he remains, and remains alive, and is the same old man he ever was, in regenerate persons; but it is a putting him off from his seat, and a putting him down from his government; a showing no regard to his rule and dominion, to his laws and lusts, making no provision for his support; and particularly, not squaring the life and conversation according to his dictates and directions; and therefore it is called a putting him off, concerning the former conversation: the change lies not, in the old man, who can never be altered, but in the conversation; he is not in the same power, but he retains the same sinful nature; he is put off, but he is not put out; and though he does not reign, he rages, and often threatens to get the ascendant: these words stand either in connection with (^{<817>}Ephesians 4:17) and so are a continuation and an explanation of that exhortation; or else they point out what regenerate souls are taught by Christ to do, to quit the former conversation, to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, and to put it off; for the allusion is to the putting off of filthy garments, as the works of the flesh may be truly called, which flow from the vitiosity of nature, the old man:

which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; the old man, or the vitiosity of nature, has its lusts; and these are deceitful; they promise pleasure and profit, but yield neither in the issue; they promise liberty, and bring into bondage; they promise secrecy and impunity, but expose to shame, and render liable to punishment; they sometimes put on a religious face, and so deceive, and fill men with pride and conceit, who think themselves to be something, when they are nothing: and through these the old man is corrupt; by these the corruption of nature is discovered; and the corruption that is in the world is produced hereby; and these make a man deserving of, and liable to the pit of corruption; and this is a good reason, why this corrupt old man, with respect to the life and conversation, should be put off.

Ver. 23. *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*] Or by the Spirit that is in your mind; that is, by the Holy Spirit; who is in the saints, and is the author of renovation in them; and who is the reviver and carrier on, and finisher of that work, and therefore that is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit, (^{<3015>}Titus 3:5) or rather the mind of man, which is a spirit, of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal, and is the seat of that renewing work of the Spirit of God; which shows, that the more noble part of man stands in need of renovation, being corrupted by sin: and this renewing in it, designs not the first work of renovation; for these Ephesians had been renewed, and were made new creatures in Christ; but the gradual progress of it; and takes in, if not principally intends, a renewal, or an increase of spiritual light and knowledge, of life and strength, of joy and comfort, and fresh supplies of grace, and a revival of the exercise of grace; and in short, a renewal of spiritual youth, and a restoration of the saints to that state and condition they were in, in times past: and the exhortation to this can only mean, that it becomes saints to be concerned for such revivings and renewings, and to pray for them, as David did, (^{<3510>}Psalm 51:10) for otherwise, this is as much the work of the Spirit of God, as renovation is at first; and he only who is sent forth, and renews the face of the earth, year by year, can renew us daily in the Spirit of our minds.

Ver. 24. *And that ye put on the new man,* &c.] Which some understand of Jesus Christ, who is truly and really man, and a new or extraordinary one, (^{<3812>}Jeremiah 31:22) and as such is God's creature, and is made after his image, and which appears in his perfect holiness and righteousness; and the phrase of putting on well agrees with him, (^{<3134>}Romans 13:14 ^{<3827>}Galatians 3:27) whose righteousness is a garment, pure and spotless, and which is

put on by the hand of faith: though rather by the “new man” is meant, the new nature, the new principle, or work of grace in the soul, elsewhere called a new creature; and it bears this name in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, or corruption of nature, before spoken of; and because it is “de novo”, or anew, put into the hearts of men; it is not what was in them naturally; nor is it any old principle renewed, or wrought up in another and better form; but it is something that is infused, that was never there before: and because it is new in all its parts; such who have it, have new hearts and new spirits given unto them; they have new eyes to see with, and new ears to hear with, and new hands to handle and work with, and new feet to walk with; and they live a new life and conversation: so the Jews says of a man that truly repents of sin, and does not return to it, that he is **ꝥdj j ya**, “a new man”^{f52}: now to put on this new man, is not to make ourselves new creatures; for this is not by the power of man, but by the Spirit of God; this is God's work, and not man's; it is he who made us at first, remakes us, and not we ourselves; besides, these Ephesians the apostle writes to, were already made new men, or new creatures; but to put on the new man, is to walk in our lives and conversations agreeably to the new man, or work of grace upon the soul; as to put off the old man, respects the former conversation, or a not walking as formerly, and agreeably to the dictates of corrupt nature, so to put on the new man, is to walk according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in the soul: and of this new man it is further said,

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

of them: some copies read, “in righteousness, and holiness, and truth”; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read.

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

speaking every man truth with his neighbour; both with respect to civil and religious affairs, in common conversation, in trade and business, and in all things relating to God and men:

for we are members one of another; as men, are all of one blood, descended from one man, and so are related one to another; and as in civil society, belong to one body politic; and in a religious sense, members of the same mystical body, the church; of which Christ, who is the truth itself, is the head; and therefore should not attempt to deceive one another by lying, since there is such a near relation and close union of one to another.

Ver. 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not*, &c.] There is anger which is not sinful; for anger is fouled in God himself, in Jesus Christ, in the holy angels, and in God's people; and a man may be said to be angry and not sin, when his anger arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not against persons, but sins; when a man is displeased with his own sins, and with the sins of others: with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worship, and with all false doctrine; and also when it is carried on to answer good ends, as the good of those with whom we are angry, the glory of God, and the promoting of the interest of Christ: and there is an anger which is sinful; as when it is without a cause; when it exceeds due bounds; when it is not directed to a good end; when it is productive of bad effects, either in words or actions; and when it is soon raised, or long continues: the Jews have a like distinction of anger; they say ^{f53},

“there is an anger and an anger; there is an anger which is blessed above and below, and it is called blessed, as it is said (^{<OH49>}Genesis 14:19) and there is an anger which is cursed above and below, as it is said (^{<OKB14>}Genesis 3:14 49:7)”

And these two sorts are compared to “Ebal” and “Gerizzim”, from the one of which proceeded blessing, and from the other cursing: anger for the most part is not only sinful, but it tends to sin, and issues in it; hence that saying of the Jews, *yj j t al w j trt al*, “be not angry, and thou wilt not sin” ^{f54}: the spring of it is a corrupt heart, it is stirred up by Satan, encouraged by pride, and increased by grievous words and reproachful language:

let not the sun go down upon your wrath; there is an allusion to (^{<R240>}Deuteronomy 24:10,13-15) it seems to be a proverbial expression; and

the design of it is to show, that anger should not be continued; that it should not last at furthest more than a day; that when the heat of the day is over, the heat of anger should be over likewise; and that we should not sleep with it, lest it should be cherished and increased upon our pillows; and besides, the time of the going down of the sun, is the time of evening prayer, which may be greatly interrupted and hindered by anger. R. Jonah^{f55} has an expression or two like to this;

“let not the indignation of anyone abide upon thee; and let not a night sleep with thee, and anger be against any one:”

it should be considered, that as God is slow to anger, so he does not retain it for ever; and that to retain anger, is to gratify the devil; wherefore it follows,

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

Ver. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more,* &c.] Stealing, or theft, is a fraudulent taking away of another man's goods, without the knowledge and will of the owner, for the sake of gain; to which evil may be reduced, not making good, or not performing payments, all unjust contracts, detention of wages, unlawful usury, unfaithfulness in anything committed to trust, advising, encouraging, and receiving from thieves: theft is a very great evil; it is a breach of the common law of nature, to do to others, as we would be done by; it is contrary to particular laws of God, and is against common justice, and ought not to be continued in, and is punishable by God and man; it springs from a corrupt heart, and often arises from poverty, idleness, sloth, covetousness, and prodigality: the remedy against it follows,

but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good; labouring with diligence and industry, at any manufacture, trade, or

business, which is honest, lawful, and of good report, is a proper antidote against theft; and ought to be preferred to such a scandalous way of living, and to be constantly attended to: and that for this end among others,

that he may have to give to him that needeth; and not take away another man's property; needy persons are the objects of charity; and what is given to them, should be a man's own; and what a man gets by his hand labour, he should not prodigally spend, or covetously lay up, but should cheerfully distribute it to indigent persons.

Ver. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, &c.*]

As unsavoury speech, foolish talking, light and frothy language, that which is filthy, unprofitable, noxious, and nauseous, and all that is sinful; such as profane oaths, curses, and imprecations, unchaste words, angry ones, proud, haughty, and arrogant expressions, lies, perjury, &c. which may be called corrupt, because such communication springs from a corrupt heart; is an evidence of the corruption of it; the subject matter of it is corrupt; and it conveys corruption to others, it corrupts good manners; and is the cause of men's going down to the pit of corruption: wherefore a restraint should be laid upon the lips of men; men have not a right to say what they please; good men will be cautious what they say, otherwise their religion is in vain; and conscious of their own weakness, they will pray to God to set a watch before their mouth, and to keep the door of their lips, and not suffer anything to come out,

but that which is good for the use of edifying: or “for edification”, as the Syriac version renders it; the Arabic version reads, “for the edification of all”; that is, that hear; and the Vulgate Latin version and Claromontane exemplar, “for the edification of faith”: for the building up of saints on their most holy faith, and for the encouragement and increase of the grace of faith: in the Greek text it is literally, “for the edification of use”; for useful edification, or what is useful for edification; and is suited to the present want or opportunity, as the word is by some rendered: and that must be “good”, which answers such an end; meaning not that the language should be formally and grammatically good, though to speak with propriety is useful and serviceable, and tends the more to instruction and edification; but that which is materially good, or the subject of it is good; that which is true, pure, pleasant, and profitable:

that it may minister grace unto the hearers; may be grateful and acceptable to them, or may minister the grace of God to them; that is, the doctrine of

grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; and be a means of conveying the principle of grace into the hearts of the hearers, and of drawing it forth into exercise where it is; and such speech or communication which springs from a gracious heart, and from a principle of grace in the heart, and is upon the subject of the grace of God, is most likely to be thus useful and edifying: agreeably to all this are some sayings of the Jews^{f56},

“says R. Joshua ben Levi, for ever let not a man suffer any thing **hnwgm**, “that is filthy”, or unseemly, to proceed out of his mouth; says R. Ishmael, for ever let a man discourse **hyyqn ʿwçl b**, “in a pure language”;

not corrupt.

Ver. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*, &c.] Not a believer's own spirit, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is grieved by sin; nor the spirit of a good man, that hears our words and sees our actions, and is displeased and troubled at them; but the third person in the Trinity: and this is said of him by an anthropopathy, and supposes something done that is offensive to him; and he may be grieved, not only by unconverted persons, by their stubborn resistance and opposition to the Gospel and means of grace, and by their contempt of his person, office, and grace, but by believers themselves, and who are here spoken to; and which may be done both by their words, lying, angry, and corrupt ones, before cautioned against, (^{40ES}Ephesians 4:25,26,29) and by their actions, their behaviour towards God, their conversation in the world, and by their carriage to one another, which is suggested in the following verse: also he may be grieved by their thoughts, their vain and sinful thoughts, and that they are no better employed; and especially when they entertain any undervaluing ones of Jesus Christ, whose glorifier he is; and by the unbelief of their hearts, and by their unmindfulness of the things of the Spirit; and when they disregard the rules, dictates, and advice of the Spirit, and make no use of him: and his being grieved appears by his departure from them; which is to be perceived by the darkness of their souls, the prevailings of corruption, the weakness of grace, and their backwardness to duty: and now there are many reasons why he should not be grieved; as because he is God, and the author of the new birth, the implanter and applier of all grace, and the finisher of it; because he is the saints' comforter, their advocate, helper, and strengthener; and their constant companion, who dwells in them, and will remain in them, until death: and it follows,

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; of the sealing work of the Spirit, (see Gill on “^{<4013>}Ephesians 1:13”). By “the day of redemption” may be meant, either the day of death, when the saints have a deliverance from the incumbrance of the body; from their present state of exile and banishment; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from the temptations of Satan; from doubts, fears, and unbelief; and from all fear of death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: or the day of the resurrection, when the body will be redeemed from mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour; when it will be refined and spiritualized, so that it will not stand in need of natural sustenance; will be endowed with great agility, like that of spirits; and will be subject to the soul, or spirit, and will be suited to spiritual objects; to which may be added, the day of judgment, (^{<4213>}Luke 21:28) when Christ shall appear in glory, and his saints with him, and he will put them, soul and body, into the possession of everlasting happiness; which will consist in the vision of Christ, in conformity to him, and in that happy company and conversation that will then be enjoyed, and that delightful employment they will be taken up in: and now the saints being sealed up by the Spirit unto this time, shows the perpetual indwelling of the Spirit in them; and that it will continue even after death, who will give them confidence at the day of judgment; and that it is the Spirit which works up the saints, and makes them meet for glory; and gives them the assurance of it, and therefore they should not be grieved.

Ver. 31. *Let all bitterness*, &c.] These words are a dehortation from several vices good men are liable to, by which the Spirit of God is grieved: “bitterness” sometimes designs the corruption of nature, which is the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and sometimes actual sins and transgressions, even those of God’s own people, which are evil and bitter things; and sometimes heretical doctrines, which are roots of bitterness; and sometimes sinful words spoken by the saints, one against another; and here perhaps it signifies, the first offence taken in the mind, against any person, upon any account, which should at once be put away, and not encouraged:

and wrath: heat of spirit, which follows upon bitterness, or upon the spirit being embittered and offended; (see ^{<4134>}Ezekiel 3:14).

And anger; a sinful one, cautioned against before, (^{<4013>}Ephesians 4:26).

And clamour and evil speaking; such as brawlings, contentions, contumelies, reproaches, slanders, &c. arising from an embittered, wrathful, and angry disposition: these should all

be put away from you, with all malice; being the deeds of the old man, unbecoming such as are born again, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

Ver. 32. *And be ye kind one to another*, &c.] Good, affable, courteous; which appears in looks, words, and actions; by looking pleasantly on each other, speaking kindly to one another, and mutually doing every good office that lies in their way, and in their power:

tender hearted: which is opposed to a being hard hearted to them that are in distress, and close at hand to the needy; to cruelty and severity to such who are subject to them, or have injured them; and to a rigid and censorious spirit to them that are fallen:

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

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 5

The apostle, in this chapter, goes on with his exhortations to the duties of religion; and such in general as relate to purity of life, and against uncleanness; and particularly treats of the duties of married persons. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had exhorted to kindness and tenderness, and which he enforced by the example of God himself, he here repeats and urges it; and to it adds the example of Christ in loving his people, and giving himself for them a propitiatory sacrifice, acceptable to God, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:1,2), then follows a dehortation from several vices of the impure kind, some as being filthy actions, and unbecoming saints, and not to be named by them, and much less done, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:3), others, and such as are vices of the tongue, as being inconvenient, and to which thanksgiving is preferred, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:4), and the former especially, as excluding from having any part or portion in the kingdom of God and Christ (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:5), and all of them, as bringing the wrath of God upon men, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:6), wherefore professors of religion should avoid such sins, and not join with the children of disobedience in the commission of them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:7), to which exhortation they should the rather give heed, from the consideration of their present state, illustrated by their former one; who were once darkness, but now light, and therefore should walk as enlightened persons, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:8), and as having the Spirit of God, which is known by its fruits, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:9), studying to know, approve of, and do that which is acceptable to God, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:10), and on the contrary, should have no society and communion with men in the commission of sins, the works of darkness, but should reprove them for them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:11), since the things done by them were such, that it was a shame to relate them, and much more to commit them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:12), and the rather this was incumbent upon them, since it was agreeably to their character, as being made light in the Lord; seeing it is the property of light to make manifest and detect what is done in the dark, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:13), which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture pertinently produced, to stir up drowsy and lifeless professors to the

discharge of their duty, (^{<4054>}Ephesians 5:14), and from hence the apostle enforces a wise and circumspect walk and conversation, one part of which lies in redeeming time; and which should be done for this reason, because the present days were evil ones, (^{<4055>}Ephesians 5:15,16), and that they might avoid a foolish walk, and order their conversation wisely and aright, he suggests it would be proper to learn what was the will of the Lord, which is the rule of a Christian's walk and conversation, (^{<4057>}Ephesians 5:17), and whereas drunkenness is oftentimes the cause of all the above mentioned vices, the apostle cautions against that, and on the contrary advises them to be concerned for a larger measure of the Spirit of God; that under his influence they might sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in a melodious manner, and heartily to the Lord; and so express their thankfulness to him, for all mercies from him; and not abuse their mercies and themselves, spend their time in singing lewd and profane songs, as drunkards often do, (^{<4058>}Ephesians 5:18-20), and hence he passes to the special duties of wives and husbands, to which he premises a general exhortation to submission to one another, (^{<4021>}Ephesians 5:21), and begins with the subjection of wives to their husbands, this being the will of the Lord, (^{<4052>}Ephesians 5:22), and besides, the relation which the wife stands in to her husband, being her head, requires it; and which is illustrated by Christ being the head and Saviour of his body, the church, (^{<4053>}Ephesians 5:23), and which is further urged and enforced by the instance and example of the church's subjection to Christ, (^{<4054>}Ephesians 5:24), and next the apostle exhorts husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ, who has loved his church; and as an instance of it, has given himself to death for her; than which, there cannot be a greater instance of love, (^{<4055>}Ephesians 5:25), the ends of which were, the sanctification and cleansing of the church with his blood, by means of water and the word; and the presentation of her to himself, all glorious and beautiful, (^{<4056>}Ephesians 5:26,27), and then another argument is used, to engage the affections of husbands to their wives, they being their own bodies; so that loving them, is loving themselves, (^{<4058>}Ephesians 5:28), nor was it ever known, and it would be unnatural, for a man to hate his own flesh, but on the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it; and therefore seeing the wife is a man's own flesh, he ought not to hate her, but to nourish and cherish her; and this is also enforced by the example of Christ, who does not hate his church, but nourishes and cherishes her, (^{<4059>}Ephesians 5:29), the reason of which is, because the saints which make up the church are members of him, one flesh and blood with him, (^{<4060>}Ephesians 5:30), which is the case of a man and

his wife; and hence it is, that according to the original law of marriage, a man was to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:31), the whole of which is a mystery, and typical of the marriage relation and union between Christ and his church, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:32), and the chapter is closed with a recapitulation of the mutual duties of husband and wife, love in the one, and reverence in the other, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:33).

Ver. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God,* &c.] Not in his works of infinite wisdom and almighty power, which is impossible; but in acts of righteousness and holiness, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodness, and beneficence; as in forgiving injuries and offences, and in freely distributing to the necessities of the saints; as the connection of the words with the preceding chapter, and the instance and example in the following verse show: and this should be done by the saints,

as dear children; and because they are such by adopting grace; being predestinated unto the adoption of children, in the eternal purpose of God, and taken into that relation in the covenant of grace; and which is declared and made manifest in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus: and they are dear, or beloved children, being loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and which is the spring and source of their adoption; and their being dear to him is seen by what he is unto them, their covenant God and Father; and by what he has done for them, in giving his Son to them, and for them; as well as in choosing, calling, and quickening them by his grace, and by the account he makes of them, as his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye; and by the pity and compassion he has for them, and the care he takes of them; and therefore it becomes them to imitate him; for who should they imitate and follow after, but their Father, and especially when they are so dear unto him?

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

concern at his absence: and also they should walk in love to one another, which is chiefly designed; which is Christ's new commandment, and is an evidence of regeneration; and without which a profession of religion is in vain: and to “walk” in love, is not merely to talk of it, but to exercise it; and to do all that is done for God, and Christ, and the saints, from a principle of love; and to advance, increase, and abound in it, and to go on and continue therein: the example to be copied after, and which carries in it an argument engaging to it is,

as Christ also hath loved us; with a love exceeding great and strong, which is wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled; and even as the Father has loved him; with a love that is free and sovereign, unchangeable and everlasting, of which he has given many instances; and a principal one is hereafter mentioned: the “as” here is a note of similitude, not of equality; for it cannot be thought that the saints should love God, or Christ, or one another, with a love equal to Christ's love to them, but only that theirs should bear some likeness to his: the Alexandrian copy and Ethiopic version, instead of “us”, read “you”:

and hath given himself for us; not the world, and the things of it, which are his; not men, nor angels, nor animals, but himself; he gave away his time, service, and strength; his name, fame, and reputation; all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole human nature, soul and body, and that as in union with his divine person; and that not only for the good of his people, but in their room and stead; not for angels, nor for all men, but for his chosen ones, the church, his sheep, his people, and when they, were sinners; in the following manner, and for the said purpose:

an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour; Christ was both priest and sacrifice; he offered up himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people, to expiate them, and make reconciliation and satisfaction for them; and this he offered up to God, against whom they had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, who called him to this work, and engaged him in it; and which was well pleasing to him, he smelled a sweet savour of rest in it, it being an unblemished sacrifice, and voluntarily offered up; and was complete, full, and adequate to the demands of his justice; by it sin was put away, finished, and made an end of, and his people perfected for ever; (see ^{CHESD}Genesis 8:20,21).

Ver. 3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, &c.]* The apostle proceeds to dehort from several vices, which are unbecoming the

dear children and followers of God; and which the love of Christ should constrain them to avoid: the first of these, which is simple “fornication”, is the sin which is committed between single or unmarried persons; and is contrary to the law of God, is a work of the flesh, and is against a man's own body; it renders persons unfit for church communion, brings many temporal calamities upon them, and exposes them to divine wrath, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, without repentance; and the reason why it is so often taken notice of is, because it was very frequent among the Gentiles, and not thought criminal: “all uncleanness” takes in adultery, incest, sodomy, and every unnatural lust; and “covetousness” seems not so much to design that sin which is commonly so called, namely, an immoderate desire after worldly things, as a greedy and insatiable appetite after the above lusts:

let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; that is, neither one or other of them; the sense is, that they should not be committed; so that there might be no occasion to speak of them, even though with abhorrence, as if there were no such vices in being; and much less should they be named with pleasure, and pleaded for: for thus it becomes such who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and whose hearts are sanctified by the Spirit of God; who profess the Gospel of Christ, and have a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ver. 4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, &c.*] The former of these may include all filthy gestures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite lust; and also all impure words, these discover an impure heart, and are the means of corrupting men's minds and manners; filthy speaking, is a verbal commission of the things that are spoken of; and it may include all impure songs and books, and the reading or hearing of them; this is what the Jews call *hp l wbn*, “filthiness of the mouth”, obscene words; which they say they do not use on feast days, as the Gentiles do^{f57}: “foolish talking” does not so much design every imprudent thing that is said, as that which is wicked, corrupt, unsavoury, light, vain, idle, and unprofitable; and takes in all fabulous stories, and mimicking of fools in words and gestures: and “jesting”, when it is with wantonness, and excites unto it, and is inconsistent with truth, and when the Scriptures are abused by it, and not our neighbour's edification, but hurt, is promoted by it, ought not to be used:

which are not convenient; are disagreeable to the will of God, and unsuitable to the characters of the saints, and are very unbecoming them to practise:

but rather giving of thanks; instead of these, as the Syriac version renders it; it is much more suitable and becoming to give thanks to God for temporal and spiritual mercies, and to speak those things which are grateful to good men; this is to use the tongue to much better purpose, than in an obscene, foolish, or jocose way: one of Stephens's copies read, "but only of giving of thanks".

Ver. 5. *For this ye know*, &c.] Or, "know ye this", as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read:

that no whoremonger, nor unclean person; anyone that is guilty of fornication, adultery, incest, &c.

Nor covetous man, who is an idolater: as every man is, that indulges his lusts, the idols of his own heart; and who serves divers lusts and pleasures, and gives up himself to work all uncleanness with greediness; never having his fill of sin, but is ever craving and coveting it; as well as he who is immoderately desirous of worldly things: the covetous man may be called an idolater, because the idolater and he worship the same in substance, gold and silver, and brass, or what is made of them; the covetous man admires his gold, lays it up, and will not make use of it, as if it was something sacred; and through his over love to mammon, whom he serves, he neglects the worship of God, and the good of his own soul, and puts his trust and confidence in his riches: now no such person

hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God; meaning either a Gospel church state, in which persons of such characters, and living in such sins, ought not to be; or else the kingdom of heaven and of glory, which may be called the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his hands, for his people; and it is his righteousness that gives a title to it, and his Spirit and grace which make meet for it; and it is by his power saints are preserved unto it; and he will put them into the possession of it; and which will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him: and this is also the kingdom of God, either of Christ who is God, or of God the Father; it being of his preparing and giving, and which he calls unto, and makes meet for; and this may be said to be an inheritance, because it is peculiar to children, the

bequest of their heavenly Father, and is not purchased or acquired by them, but comes to them from the free donation of God, through the death of Christ; and to have an inheritance in it, is to have a right unto it, a meetness for it, and to be possessed of it: now the meaning of these words is, not that all who have been guilty of these sins shall be excluded the kingdom of God, but all such who live and die in them, without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words,* &c.] With vain philosophy, vain babblings, with foolish and filthy talking; suggesting that these were not sinful the apostle had condemned; or that they were small sins, the frailties of human life; and that God would take no notice of them, and they might continue in them with impunity: such deceivers there were, doctrinal and practical ones, who lay in wait to deceive men with such vain pretences; and there was danger of being carried away with their error; for the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and is easily taken in such snares: wherefore the apostle cautions against such deceptions, adding,

for because of these things; fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting:

the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; in temporal judgments, and in eternal ruin; there have been instances of it; it is usually the case, and always if grace prevents not; this wrath comes down from above, and sometimes suddenly, with great force and power, like a mighty flood; and there is no standing up under it, and against it; and though it falls upon the children of disobedience, such as are disobedient both to law and Gospel, are unbelievers in Christ, and not persuadable by his ministers, are stubborn, obstinate, and rebellious; yet it shows how much these things are displeasing to God, and resented by him, and therefore should be avoided by his people; and the consideration of their not being appointed to this wrath, though deserving of it as others, and of their deliverance from it by Christ, should engage them the more to abstain from these sins.

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

Ver. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness,* &c.] Not only dark, but darkness itself; exceeding blind, dark, and ignorant, respecting spiritual things; so the

Gentiles were wont to be called by the Jews, *ÆϞwh*, “darkness”^{f58} itself; of this darkness, (see Gill on “~~4048~~ Ephesians 4:18”).

But now [are ye] light in the Lord; either in, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of men, from whom all spiritual light comes; or by the Lord the Spirit, by whom the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart and life; the insufficiency of their own righteousness and moral virtues, to justify them before God; and the true and right way of righteousness, life and salvation by Christ; and to have some light into the several doctrines of the Gospel, and even a glimpse of the invisible glories and realities of another world: and this light is so great, that they are not only said to be enlightened, but to be light itself; and this they have not of, and from themselves, but the Lord; and therefore should

walk as children of light; not in sins, which are works of darkness, but in faith, truth, and holiness.

Ver. 9. *For the fruit of the Spirit*, &c.] Either of the spirit of man, as renewed, or rather of the Spirit of God; the allusion is to fruits of trees: the believer is a tree of righteousness; Christ is his root; the Spirit is the sap, which supports and nourishes; and good works, under the influence of his grace, are the fruit: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read “the fruit of light”; which agrees with the preceding words: and the genuine fruit of internal grace, or light,

[is] in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth; the fruit of “goodness”, lies in sympathizing with persons in distress; in assisting such according to the abilities men have in a readiness to forgive offences and injuries; and in using meekness and candour in admonishing others: “righteousness” lies in living in obedience to the law of God; in attending the worship and service of him; and in discharging our duty to our fellow creatures; and this as goodness, is very imperfect, and not to be boasted of, or trusted to, nor is salvation to be expected from it: “truth” is opposed to lying, to hypocrisy, to error and falsehood; and where the Spirit of God, and the work of grace are, there will be more or less an appearance of these fruits.

Ver. 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord*.] There are many things that are acceptable to God, as the person of Christ, his righteousness, sacrifice, sufferings, death, and mediation; the persons of his people, their

services, sufferings, sacrifices of prayer, and praise to him, and of bounty and liberality to the poor; their graces, and the exercise of them; and the actions of their lives and conversations, when they are becoming the Gospel, are according to the will of God, and are done in faith, and are directed to his glory: and these things which are acceptable to God, as all the truths of the Gospel, and duties of religion are, should be proved, or tried by men; and in order to the trial of spiritual things, it is necessary that the mind be renewed, the understanding be enlightened, the spiritual senses be in exercise, and all be under the influence and directions of the Spirit of God: and the trial is to be made, not according to human reason, which is corrupt and fallible; and besides, there are some things in revelation above it; but according to the Scriptures, which are the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice; and whither the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, always sent men for the trial of divine things; and things being here tried, and found to be right, should be approved of, valued, and esteemed, cleaved to and held fast.

Ver. 11. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,* &c.] It is not said with the workers of darkness, or with the men of the world, who are in darkness, and are darkness itself; to have fellowship with them in a civil way, or to dwell among them, is not prohibited; it is allowed of, and countenanced by the greatest examples; and especially it is lawful and right, when there is any prospect of doing good to the souls of men; and even when natural right, relation, and necessity require it; and indeed, the contrary is impracticable: conversation with them in things sinful and superstitious should be abstained from; and when it tends to draw off the soul from Christ and his interest, and is infectious; and when weak ones are offended, and sinners are hereby hardened and confirmed in sin; and the name of God is blasphemed, and the Gospel is evil spoken of: but fellowship is not to be maintained “with the works of darkness”; which are sins, so called, because they are opposite to light; to the light of nature, to the light of the divine word, both law and Gospel, to the light of grace, to God the fountain of light, and to Christ the light of the world; and because the source and spring of them are the original darkness of the mind, and Satan the prince of darkness; and because they are generally committed in the dark; and because the effect and consequence of them is utter darkness, and blackness of darkness: and these are “unfruitful”; they are of no profit and advantage, they bring forth no fruit, unless it be guilt, fear, shame, corruption, and death; wherefore no fellowship should be had with them,

by committing the same, by assisting in them, by consenting to them, by approving of them, by receiving any worldly advantage from them, and by winking and conniving at them: it is contrary to the character of saints to have fellowship with such, as the apostle says, (~~47614~~ 2 Corinthians 6:14), where he gives the mystical explanation of the law, in (~~476210~~ Deuteronomy 22:10); agreeably to which, and to the passage here, is the sense of a Jewish commentators ^{f59} who upon it observes, that that law

“intimates that a righteous man, **Ἐπισημασμένος**, “should have no fellowship” with a wicked man;”

this is to be unequally yoked, signified by the ox and the ass ploughing together:

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

Ver. 12. *For it is a shame even to speak of those things*, &c.] This is a reason, why persons should walk as children of light; why they should prove what is acceptable to God; why they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; why the apostle exhorts to reprove them, and yet does not express what they are; and why they should be reprov'd rather by deeds than by words: and he tacitly intimates, that if it is a shame to speak of those sins

which are done of them in secret, it is much more shameful to commit them; the persons the apostle refers to, are the unconverted Gentiles in general; such who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, who deceive men with vain words, who are children of disobedience, who are in darkness, and destitute of the Spirit; and it may be that respect may be had to the followers of Simon Magus, the Gnostics, and such like impure professors, by whom the vilest things were done in secret; for sins, works of darkness, will not bear the light; there is a consciousness in men of the evil of sin, unless past feeling, and therefore they do not care that others should know their crimes; and besides, there is an imaginary pleasure in

committing sin secretly; but then though these things are secret to men, they are not to God; nor will they always remain secrets, they will be brought to light, and therefore no fellowship should be had with them; and especially when they are of such a scandalous nature, that it is a shame to mention the very names of them.

Ver. 13. *But all things that are reprov'd, &c.*] As all sins should be, by the ministers of the Gospel, and by other saints, and will be by God; either by his Spirit convincing of them, or by his judgments, and the letting out of his wrath and fury, either here or hereafter, for the punishment of them:

are made manifest by the light: either by the saints, who are made light in the Lord, and detect and reprove the sins of others; or by the word of the Lord, which discovers the heinousness of sins; or by Christ the light of the world, who as Judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; or by the omniscience of God, to whom darkness and light are both alike

for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light; this is true in things natural and spiritual, whether of the sun in the firmament, or of Christ the sun of righteousness; or of the divine word, or of good men.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore he saith, &c.*] Either the man that is light in the Lord, who reproves the unfruitful works of darkness; or else the Holy Ghost by Paul, who here speaks after the manner of the prophets; or God, or the Spirit, or the Scripture; (see ⁵⁰⁴⁶James 4:6); but where is it said? some think the apostle refers to (^{239D}Isaiah 9:2); others to (^{239B}Isaiah 26:19); others to (^{230D}Isaiah 60:1); some are of opinion the words are cited out of an apocryphal book of Jeremy, or from some writing now lost; and some have thought them to be a saying of Christ, that was fresh in memory: it may not be improper to observe what Maimonides says ^{f60}, that

“the blowing of the trumpet in the beginning of the year had an intimation in it, as if was said, **μυνησθητε** [“awake ye that sleep”, from your sleep, and ye that slumber rouse up from your slumber, and search into your actions, and return by repentance, and remember your Creator;”

whether any reference may be had to this, may be considered: the words are spoken not to unregenerate men, for though they are asleep, and dead in sin, and need awaking out of sleep, and raising from the dead, yet they are never called upon to awake and arise of themselves; such a sense would

countenance the doctrine of man's free will and power, against the quickening and efficacious grace of God; but to regenerate persons, professors of religion, to whom the epistle in general was written; and who are spoken to, and exhorted in the context:

awake thou that sleepest: the children of God are sometimes asleep, and need awaking; of the nature, causes, and ill consequences of such sleeping, and of the methods by which they are sometimes awaked out of it, (see Gill on “[Romans 13:11](#)”).

And arise from the dead; living saints are sometimes among dead sinners, and it becomes them to arise from among them, and quit their company, which is oftentimes the occasion of their sleepiness: besides, the company of dead sinners is infectious and dangerous; it is a means of hardening in sin, and of grieving of the people of God, who observe it; and by abstaining from their company, a testimony is bore against sin, and conviction is struck into the minds of sinners themselves; to which add, that so to do is well pleasing to God, who promises to receive such who come out from among them, and separate themselves from them: and it follows here as an encouragement, and Christ shall give thee light; for such who are made light in the Lord, stand in need of more light; and by keeping close to the word, ways, ordinances, and people of Christ, they may expect more light from Christ: they need fresh light into pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; they want more to direct them in the way they should go; and they are often without the light of God's countenance; and they may hope for light from Christ, since it is sown in him, and promised through him; and he is given to be a light unto them, and he is the giver of it himself.

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

strength and power; and with wisdom and prudence, looking well to his going:

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

Ver. 16. *Redeeming the time*, &c.] Or “buying time”; a like expression is used in (²¹⁸⁸Daniel 2:8), which we render, gain time: but in the Chaldee text it is, “buy time”: and so Jacchiades, a Jewish commentator on the place, renders it, μῦρκμν ὑτα τάζη τ[η], “ye buy this opportunity”; and the Septuagint version uses the same phrase the apostle does here; but there it seems to signify a study to prolong time, to put off the business to another season; but here taking time for a space of time, it denotes a careful and diligent use of it, an improvement of it to the best advantage; and shows that it is valuable and precious, and is not to be trifled with, and squandered away, and be lost, as it may be; for it can neither be recalled nor prolonged: and taking it for an opportunity of doing good to ourselves or others, it signifies that no opportunity of discharging our duty to God and man, of attending on the word and ordinances of the Gospel, and to the private and public exercises of religion, of gaining advantage to our own souls, or of gaining the souls of others, and of doing good either to the bodies or souls of men, should be neglected; but even all risks should be run, and means used to enjoy it: in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, anmz, “time”, comes from ʿbz, “to redeem”: the reason the apostle gives for the redemption of time is,

because the days are evil; as such are, in which iniquity abounds, and many wicked men live, and errors and heresies prevail, and are days of affliction or persecution; (see ⁴⁷⁹Genesis 47:9).

Ver. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise*, &c.] No one would be thought to be unwise, but such are, who do not redeem time, and are ignorant of the will

of the Lord; believers should not act the unwise part, neither in their talk, nor in their walk and conversation, nor in their use of time:

but understanding what the will of the Lord [is]; or “of God”, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: there is the secret will of God, which is the rule of all his proceedings; and is unknown to men, till facts make it appear; this is always fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to his revealed will; to this the wills of the people of God should be always resigned: and there is his revealed will, which lies partly in the Gospel; which declares it to be his will, that Christ should work out the salvation of his people, which is what he came to do; that whoever believes in him shall be saved; that all that are redeemed shall be sanctified; and that they shall persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the law, in the precepts and commands of it, which contain the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God: and the understanding of it is not a mere speculative knowledge of it, but a practical one; when a man not only knows, but does the will of God, and his heart and actions agree with it; and this is to be done in faith, in virtue of grace and strength received, with a view to the glory of God, having no dependence on what is done; and to the right understanding of it, so as to act according to it, as should be, the word of God, and the illuminations, instructions, and grace of the Spirit, are necessary: the Alexandrian copy, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read the words as an exhortation, “understand ye the will of God”.

Ver. 18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,* &c.] The sin of drunkenness here dehorted from, is a custom, or habit, of voluntary excessive drinking of any strong liquor, whereby the mind is disturbed, and deprived of the use of reason: though wine is only here mentioned, that being the usual liquor drank in the eastern countries, yet the same holds good of any other strong liquor, as of that; nor is drinking wine for necessary use prohibited, nor for honest delight and lawful pleasure; but excessive drinking of it, and this voluntary, and with design, and on purpose; otherwise persons may be overtaken and intoxicated, through ignorance of the strength of the liquor, and their own weakness; and it is a custom, or habit of excessive drinking, for not a single act, but a series of actions, a course of living in this sin, denominates a man a drunkard; and generally speaking, excessive drinking deprives persons of the use of reason, though not always; and such are criminal, who are mighty to drink wine, and strong to mingle strong drink; as are also such, who though not

guilty of this sin themselves, are the means of it in others: the sin is very sinful; it is one of the works of the flesh; it is an abuse of the creature; it is opposed to walking honestly; for it persons are to be excluded from the communion of the church; and, without the grace of true repentance, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: many things might be said to dissuade from it; it hurts the mind, memory, and judgment; deprives of reason, and sets a man below a beast; it brings diseases on the body, and wastes the estate; it unfits for business and duty; it opens a door for every sin, and exposes to shame and danger; and therefore should be carefully avoided, and especially by professors of religion:

but be filled with the Spirit; that is, “with the Holy Spirit”, as read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit: some have been filled with them in an extraordinary way, as the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and others in an ordinary manner, as common believers; and who may be said to be filled with the Spirit, as with wine, or instead of it, or in opposition to it, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which is compared to wine, for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature; and they are filled with it, who have a comfortable sense of it, and a firm persuasion of interest in it, and are delighted with the views of it, and are as it were inebriated with it; and they are filled with the Spirit, in whom his grace is a well of living water, and out of whose belly flow rivers of it; and who have a large measure of spiritual peace and joy, expressed in the following manner.

Ver. 19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, &c.*] By psalms are meant the Psalms of David, and others which compose the book that goes by that name, for other psalms there are none; and by “hymns” we are to understand, not such as are made by good men, without the inspiration of the Spirit of God; since they are placed between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and are put upon a level with them, and to be sung along with them, to the edification of churches; but these are only another name for the Book of Psalms, the running title of which may as well be the Book of Hymns, as it is rendered by Ainsworth; and the psalm which our Lord sung with his disciples after the supper, is called an hymn; and so are the psalms in general called hymns, by Philo the Jew^{f61}; and songs and hymns by Josephus^{f62}; and *twj bçwtw twryç*, “songs and praises”, or “hymns”, in the Talmud^{f63}; and by “spiritual songs” are meant the same Psalms of David, Asaph, &c. and the titles of many of them are songs, and sometimes

a psalm and song, and song and psalm, a song of degrees; together with all other Scriptural songs, written by inspired men; and which are called “spiritual”, because they are indited by the Spirit of God, consist of spiritual matter, and are designed for spiritual edification; and are opposed to all profane, loose, and wanton songs: these three words answer to $\mu\upsilon\rho\gamma\zeta \mu\upsilon\lambda \text{ ht } \mu\upsilon\rho\omega\mu\zeta\mu$ the several titles of David's Psalms; from whence it seems to be the intention of the apostle, that these should be sung in Gospel churches; for so he explains speaking to themselves in them, in the next clause:

singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; singing, as it is a distinct thing from prayer, so from giving of thanks, which is mentioned in (Ephesians 5:20) as another duty; it is not a mental praising of God, for it is called speaking, and teaching, and admonishing, but it is a praising of God with the modulation of the voice; and is rightly performed, when the heart and voice agree; when there is a melody in the heart, as well as in the tongue; for singing and making melody in the heart, is singing with, or from the heart, or heartily; of as elsewhere, “with grace”, and which the Alexandrian copy reads here; that is, either with gratitude and thankfulness, or with grace in exercise; and the end in view should be the glory of God.

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

unto God, and the Father; to God who is, and as he is the Father of mercies, and of all creatures; and as he is the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him:

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for all the mercies of God's people, both temporal and spiritual, come through him, and for his sake; and thanksgivings for them are only acceptable to God as they are offered up by him; nor is there any other way of bringing them to God, but through him: this duty, as it stands connected with the former, shows that praise and thanksgiving are the principal subject matter of psalms, hymns, and

spiritual songs, to be sung; and that the manner of singing is with thanksgiving; and that the end of it is to give thanks to God.

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another, &c.*] Which may be understood either in a political sense, of giving honour, obedience, and tribute, to civil magistrates, since they are set up by God for the good of men, and it is for the credit of religion for the saints to submit to them; or in an economical sense; thus the wife should be subject to the husband, children to their parents, and servants to their masters, which several things are afterwards insisted on, as explanative of this rule; or in an ecclesiastic sense, so the Ethiopic version renders it, “subject yourselves to your brethren”: thus members of churches should be subject to their pastors, not in the same sense as they are to Christ, the head, nor are they obliged to believe or do everything they say, right or wrong; yet honour and esteem are due to them, and submission and obedience should be yielded to their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, when they are agreeably to the word of God; since God has set them in the highest place in the church, called them to the highest service, and most honourable work, and bestowed on them the greatest gifts; the younger members should also submit to the elder, and the minority to the majority; one member should submit to another, to the superior judgment of another, and to the weakness of another, and to the admonitions of others, and so as to perform all offices of love: and the manner in which this duty is to be performed, is

in the fear of God; which may be considered as the moving cause of submission, or, as the rule of it; submission should be on account of the fear of God, and so far as is consistent with it; and indeed, the fear of God is that which should influence and engage to every duty; and which should be before our eyes, and in exercise in our hearts, in all concerns, civil and religious: the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “in the fear of Christ”; who is the head of the church, and King of saints, and as such to be feared and revered; and for his sake there should be a submission to one another; the Syriac version reads, in the love of Christ, which should constrain the saints to this duty.

Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, &c.*] This is an instance, explaining the above general rule; which subjection lies in honour and reverence, (⁴¹⁸³Ephesians 5:33), and in obedience; they should think well of their husbands, speak becomingly to them, and respectfully of

them; the wife should take care of the family, and family affairs, according to the husband's will; should imitate him in what is good, and bear with that which is not so agreeable; she should not curiously inquire into his business, but leave the management of it to him; she should help and assist in caring and providing for the family; and should abide with him in prosperity and adversity, and do nothing without his will and consent: and this subjection is only to her husband; not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her servants, or any brought into her house; and this consideration should render the subjection more easy, voluntary, and cheerful: and which is but reasonable that it should be; as may be gathered from the time, matter, and end of the woman's creation, she was made after him, out of him, and for him; and from her fall, and being first in the transgression; and from her being the weaker and inferior sex; and from the profitableness and comeliness of it; and the credit of religion requires it, that so the word of God be not blasphemed: wherefore it follows,

as unto the Lord; that is, either as the Lord has commanded, that so it should be, showing a regard to his precepts; or as in the sight of the Lord, and so yielding it sincerely and heartily; or in things pertaining to the Lord, which are consistent with the law of the Lord, and the Gospel of Christ; and in like manner as the church is subject to Christ, her Lord and husband, as follows.

Ver. 23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, &c.*] (See Gill on “^{410B}1 Corinthians 11:3”).

Even as Christ is the head of the church; all the elect; (see Gill on “^{402E}Ephesians 1:22”). And he is the Saviour of the body; not “of our body”, as the Ethiopic version reads, of that part of man, which is called the body; though that indeed is redeemed and saved by Christ, as well as the soul; but “of his body”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, of the church, which is his body; (see ^{402E}Ephesians 1:23); of which he is the Saviour; he provides everything for it, preserves and protects it, and has wrought out salvation for it, which every member of it partakes of.

Ver. 24. *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, &c.*] Her head, being wholly dependent upon him, and entirely resigned to him, and receiving all from him; from whom alone is all her expectation of provision, protection, comfort, and happiness; wherefore she has respect to all his commands, and esteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right; and yields a cheerful, voluntary, sincere, and hearty obedience to them;

arising from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him:

so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything: political, domestic, and ecclesiastic; that is consistent with the laws of God, and the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 25. *Husbands, love your wives,* &c.] Which consists in a strong and cordial affection for them; in a real delight and pleasure in them; in showing respect, and doing honour to them; in seeking their contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure; in a quiet, constant, and comfortable dwelling with them; in providing all things necessary for them; in protecting them from all injuries and abuses; in concealing their faults, and covering their infirmities; in entertaining the best opinion of their persons and actions; and in endeavouring to promote their spiritual good and welfare: this love ought to be hearty and sincere, and not feigned and selfish; it should be shown in private, as well as in public: it should be chaste and single, constant and perpetual; it should exceed that which is bore to neighbours, or even to parents, and should be equal to that a man bears to himself; though not so as to hinder, and break in upon love to God and Christ: many are the reasons why husbands should love their wives; they are given to be helps unto them; they are companions of them; they are wives of covenant; they are their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own flesh, nay, as themselves; they are their image and their glory; and especially the example of Christ, in his love to his church and people, should engage to it:

even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: (see Gill on “^{MRD}Ephesians 5:2”); the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “his own church”; his bride and spouse, whom he betrothed to himself from all eternity, the Father having given her to him; and is no other than the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, even all the elect of God.

Ver. 26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it,* &c.] Being defiled, both with original sin and actual transgressions; for God's elect, whom Christ loved and espoused from everlasting, fell in Adam with the rest of mankind; and, in their natural state, live in sin as others do; and so are under the guilt, and in the pollution of it, as others be: Christ gave himself for them, that he might deliver them out of this state; he gave himself a sacrifice for them, that he might expiate their sins and make atonement and satisfaction for them; he shed his blood that he might cleanse them from

them; and he wrought out a righteousness that he might justify them from all their iniquities; and which being put upon them, makes them to appear pure and spotless in the sight of divine justice; for this sanctifying and cleansing does not so much refer to the inward work of sanctification of the Spirit, though that is a fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and is brought about by the following means, as to the justification of them by the blood and righteousness of Christ: which is said to be,

with the washing of water; not baptism, which is never expressed by washing; nor does it purify or cleanse from sin; nor is it the means of sanctification and regeneration, which ought to be before it; nor the grace of the Spirit, though that is often compared to water, and regeneration and sanctification are owing to it; yet the saints are not so cleansed from sin by it, as to be without spot or wrinkle; but the blood of Christ, which is the fountain to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin:

by the word; not the form of words in baptism; but either the Gospel, which brings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, atonement, and justification by Christ; or the sentence of justification pronounced upon the conscience by him; (see ~~ACT~~ John 15:2).

Ver. 27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, &c.*] There is a presentation of the church by Christ to his Father at his death, when he gathered the elect together in one, brought them nigh, and reconciled them to God, and presented them to holy, unblamable, and unreprieveable in his sight; and now in heaven, where he represents their persons, appears and makes intercession for them; and at the last day, when he will deliver the whole number of them complete and perfect, in consequence of his suretyship engagements: but this is a presentation of them to himself; and is either in this life, when they are brought to him in raiment of needlework, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood, and he beholds them all fair, and without spot; or at the first resurrection, and during the thousand years' reign; as well as in the ultimate glory, when the open marriage of the Lamb will be come, when his bride will be arrayed with line linen, clean and white; and have the glory of God upon her, and appear in glory with Christ, and will be a glorious church indeed:

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; the bodies of the saints will be like to Christ's glorious body, and will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and in their souls they will be completely conformed to the image of Christ, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and have

perfect knowledge of him; they will be always in his presence, and he will take unspeakable delight and complacency in them, which his presentation of them to himself is expressive of; the church will then be free from all spots and blemishes; from all hypocrites and formal professors; and all heresies and heretics; from all declensions and infirmities, and from all sin and iniquity: the allusion seems to be to the customs and practices of the Jews, in their espousals: if a man espoused a woman on condition that she had no spots in her, and afterwards spots were found in her, she was not espoused; for spots or blemishes, as in priests, so in women, render them unfit; as the one for service, so the other for marriage; and they reckon up eight several spots or blemishes, for which they may be rejected ^{f64}: but Christ's church has no spots or blemishes, nor anything like them; and will never be rejected by him, but will be always pleasing in his sight:

but that it should be holy and without blemish; as it is, being justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit.

Ver. 28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*, &c.] It is a common saying with the Jews, that a man's wife is **wpwgk**, “as his own body” ^{f65}; and it is one of the precepts of their wise men, that a man should honour his wife more than his body, **wpwgk hbhaw**, and “love her as his body” ^{f66}; for as they also say, they are but one body ^{f67}; the apostle seems to speak in the language of his countrymen; however, his doctrine and theirs agree in this point: wherefore

he that loveth his wife loveth himself; because she is one body and flesh with him.

Ver. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh*, &c.] This is unnatural, contrary to the first principles of nature; (see ~~2880~~ Isaiah 58:7); which the ^{f68} Jews understand of one that is near akin, and there is none nearer than a wife:

but nourisheth and cherisheth it; feeds and clothes it:

even as the Lord the church; who never hated her, but nourishes and cherishes her: Christ never hated his church and people; for his love is not only a love of benevolence, but of complacency and delight: there is a difference between anger and hatred, Christ may be angry with them, but not hate them; and there is a difference between persons and actions, Christ may hate their actions, but not their persons; and there is a difference

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

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

Of his flesh and of his bones: for so the church may be called, his own flesh, his flesh and bones, on account of the marriage relation she stands in

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

Ver. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, &c.]*

These words contain the law of marriage, and are cited from (⁴⁰⁰²⁴Genesis 2:24); and declare what ought to be, and are a prophecy of what should be; and are observed against polygamy, and to stir up mutual affection; (see Gill on ⁴⁰⁰¹⁵Matthew 19:5”).

Ver. 32. *This is a great mystery, &c.]* It has something mysterious in it; it is a figure and emblem of the mysterious union between Christ and his people: for so it follows,

but I speak concerning Christ and the church; or mention this law and institution of marriage, with respect to them; for the leaving of father and mother prefigured Christ's coming forth from the Father, and coming into this world in human nature, and his disregard to his earthly parents, in comparison with his people, and his service for them; the man cleaving to the wife very aptly expresses the strong affection of Christ to his church, and the near communion there is between them; and their being one flesh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of Christ and his church; for in this the first Adam was a figure of him that was to come, as well as in being a federal head to his posterity: Adam was before Eve, so Christ was before his church; God thought it not proper that man should be alone, so neither Christ, but that he should have some fellows and companions with him: the formation of Eve from Adam was typical of the church's production from Christ; she was made of him while he was asleep, which sleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one; which may resemble the sufferings and death of Christ, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which secure their comfort and happiness, and wellbeing: she was taken out of his side, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; both the justification and sanctification of the church are from Christ, from the water and the blood which issued out of his side, when on the cross: the bringing and presentation of Eve to Adam has its mystery; it was God that brought her to him; and she was the same that was made out of him; and to the same Adam was she brought of whose rib she was made, and that not against her will: so it is God that draws souls to Christ, and

espouses them to him, even the same that he has chosen in him, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and to the same are they brought, who was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their sins; and they are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to come and give themselves to him. Adam's consent and acknowledgment of Eve to be his wife, shadow forth Christ's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the saints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of his grace and Spirit.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular, &c.*] The apostle returns to his former subject, and recapitulates the mutual duties of husband and wife, after he had enforced them from the instance and example of Christ, and his church; and would have every married person in particular take the directions and instructions given, to themselves: as that the husband

so love his wife even as himself; since they two are one flesh:

and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband; since he leaves father and mother for her, and is the head of her; (see Gill on “~~40E2~~Ephesians 5:22”).

CHAPTER 6

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 6

In this chapter the apostle goes on with his exhortations to relative and domestic duties, and considers those of children and parents, and of servants and masters; and next he exhorts the saints in general to constancy and perseverance in the exercise of grace, and the performance of duty in the strength of Christ, and with the use of the armour of God described by him; entreats them to pray for him; gives the reasons of sending Tychicus, who brought them this epistle, and closes it with his apostolical salutation. He begins with the duties of children to their parents, which are submission and obedience to them, honour, fear, and reverence of them; the arguments engaging thereunto are taken from the light of nature and reason, from the command of God, and the promise annexed to it, (~~401~~Ephesians 6:1-3). Then follow the duties of fathers to their children, who are exhorted not to use them with too much rigour, and so provoke them to wrath, but to bring them up in a religious manner, that they may serve the Lord, (~~401~~Ephesians 6:4). Next he observes the duties of servants to their masters, which are subjection and obedience, which should be done with reverence of them, with simplicity of heart, as unto Christ, not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, but with the heart, and with good will, as doing the will of God, and as if it was to the Lord, and not men; to which they are encouraged by a promise of reward which is given without respect to bond or free, (~~401~~Ephesians 6:5-8). And masters, they are exhorted to do what is right and just to their servants, and not terrify them with menaces; to which they are moved by the consideration of their having a master in heaven, who is no respecter of persons, (~~401~~Ephesians 6:9). From hence the apostle passes to a general exhortation to the saints to behave with firmness and constancy of mind, though they had many enemies, and these mighty and powerful, and more than a match for them; relying on the power and strength of Christ, and making use of the whole armour of God, which he advises them to take, that they might stand and withstand in the worst of times, (~~401~~Ephesians 6:10-13), the several parts of which he enumerates, as the girdle of truth, the breastplate of righteousness, the shoes of the Gospel of peace, the shield of faith, whereby the fiery darts of Satan are quenched,

the helmet of salvation, the sword of the Spirit the word of God, and spiritual prayer of every sort for all saints, attended with watching and perseverance, (⁴⁰⁶⁴Ephesians 6:14-18), which last part of the spiritual armour being mentioned, leads on the apostle to entreat the Ephesians to pray for him, that he might freely and boldly preach the Gospel; which he commends from the mysterious nature and subject of it, from his character as an ambassador for it, or for Christ, the sum and substance of it, and from his being in bonds for it; which showed how great an esteem he had of it, and how heartily concerned he was to preach it without fear, (⁴⁰⁶⁹Ephesians 6:19,20). And then adds, that the reasons of his sending Tychicus, whom he describes by his relation to him as a brother, and his affection for him, and by his office as a minister, and his faithfulness in it, were, that they might be acquainted with his circumstances, in what state and condition he was, both with respect to things temporal and spiritual, and that their hearts might be comforted by him, (⁴⁰⁷²Ephesians 6:21,22). And the epistle is concluded with the apostle's salutation; and the persons saluted are the brethren of this church, and all that love Christ Jesus sincerely; and the blessings wished for are peace, love, with faith and grace; the persons from whom they are desired are God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ, (⁴⁰⁷³Ephesians 6:23,24).

Ver. 1. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, &c.*] The persons whose duty this is, “children”, are such of every sex, male and female, and of every age, and of every state and condition; and though the true, legitimate, and immediate offspring of men may be chiefly respected, yet not exclusive of spurious children, and adopted ones, and of children-in-law; and the persons to whom obedience from them is due, are not only real and immediate parents, both father and mother, but such who are in the room of parents, as step-fathers, step-mothers, guardians, nurses, &c. and all who are in the ascending line, as grandfathers, grandmothers, &c. to these, children should be subject and obedient in all things lawful, just, and good; in everything that is not sinful and unlawful, by the word of God; and in things indifferent, as much as in them lies, and even in things which are difficult to perform: and this obedience should be hearty and sincere, and not merely verbal, and in show and appearance, nor mercenary; and should be joined with gratitude and thankfulness for past favours: and it should be “in the Lord”; which may be considered either as a limitation of the obedience, that it should be in things that are agreeable to the mind and will of the Lord; or as an argument to it, because it is the command of the

Lord, and is wellpleasing in his sight, and makes for his glory, and therefore should be done for his sake:

for this is right; it appears to be right by the light of nature, by which the very Heathens have taught it; and it is equitable from reason that so it should be; and it is just by the law of God, which commands nothing but what is holy, just, and good.

Ver. 2. *Honour thy father and mother*, &c.] This explains who parents are, and points at some branches of obedience due unto them; for they are not only to be loved, and to be feared, and revered, their corrections to be submitted to, offences against them to be acknowledged, their tempers to be bore with, and their infirmities covered; but they are to be honoured in thought, word, and gesture; they are to be highly thought of and esteemed; they are to be spoken to, and of, very honourably, and with great veneration and to be behaved to in a very respectful manner; and they are to be relieved, assisted, and maintained in comfortable way when aged, and in necessitous circumstances; and which may be chiefly designed. So the Jews explain *dwk*, “the honour” due to parents, by, &c. *lykam*, “giving them food, drink”, and “clothing”, unloosing their shoes, and leading them out and in ^{f69}. Compare with this (~~480b~~ 1 Timothy 5:4,17); (see Gill on “~~480a~~ Matthew 15:4”);

which is the first commandment with promise: it is the fifth commandment in the decalogue, but the first that has a promise annexed to it: it is reckoned by the Jews ^{f70} the weightiest of the weightiest commands of the law; and the reward bestowed on it, is length of days, as follows.

Ver. 3. *That it may be well with thee*, &c.] In this world, and that which is to come; (see ~~480b~~ Deuteronomy 5:16). The Jews ^{f71} say,

“there are four things, which if a man does, he eats the fruit of them in this world, and the capital part remains for him in the world to come; and they are these, *μaw ba dwbyk*; “honouring father and mother”, doing acts of beneficence, making peace between a man and his neighbour, and learning of the law, which answers to them all.”

And thou mayest live long on the earth: length of days is in itself a blessing; and though men's days cannot be lengthened beyond God's purpose and decree; and though obedient children do not always live long;

yet disobedience to parents often brings the judgments of God on children, so that they die not a common death, (^{<1084>}2 Samuel 18:14 ^{<1017>}Proverbs 30:17). On those words in (^{<6347>}Deuteronomy 32:47), the Jews ^{f72} have this paraphrase;

“because it is your life, *μaw ba dwbyk hz*, “this is honouring father and mother; and through this thing ye shall prolong your days”, this is beneficence.”

It may be observed, that the words in this promissory part are not the same as in the decalogue, where they stand thus, “that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee”, (^{<0212>}Exodus 20:12), referring to the land of Canaan; for the law in the form of it, in which it was delivered by Moses, only concerned the people of the Jews; wherefore to suit this law, and the promise of it, to others, the apostle alters the language of it.

Ver. 4. *And ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath,* &c.] Neither by words; by unjust and, unreasonable commands; by contumelious and reproachful language; by frequent and public chidings, and by indiscreet and passionate expressions: nor by deeds; preferring one to another; by denying them the necessaries of life; by not allowing them proper recreation; by severe and cruel blows, and inhuman usage; by not giving them suitable education; by an improper disposal of them in marriage; and by profusely spending their estates, and leaving nothing to them: not but that parents may, and ought to correct and rebuke their children; nor are they accountable to them for their conduct; yet they should take care not to provoke them to wrath, because this alienates their minds from them, and renders their instructions and corrections useless, and puts them upon sinful practices; wrath lets in Satan, and leads to sin against God; and indeed it is difficult in the best of men to be angry and not sin; (see ^{<1021>}Colossians 3:21). Fathers are particularly mentioned, they being the heads of families, and are apt to be too severe, as mothers too indulgent.

But bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord; instructing them in the knowledge of divine things, setting them good examples, taking care to prevent their falling into bad company, praying with them, and for them, bringing them into the house of God, under the means of grace, to attend public worship; all which, under a divine blessing, may be very useful to them; the example of Abraham is worthy of imitation,

(^{<0189>}Genesis 18:19), and the advice of the wise man deserves attention, (^{<0226>}Proverbs 22:6).

Ver. 5. *Servants, be obedient to them that are [your] masters, &c.*] The apostle enlarges on the duty of servants, as well as frequently inculcates it in his epistles; because, generally speaking, they were more rude and ignorant, and less pains were taken with them to instruct them; they were apt to be impatient and weary of the yoke; and scandal was like to arise from servants in the first ages of Christianity through some libertines, and the licentiousness of the false teachers, who insinuated, that servitude was inconsistent with Christian freedom: the persons exhorted are “servants”, bond servants, and hired servants; who are to be subject to, and obey their “masters”, of each sex, whether male or female, of every condition, whether poor or rich, believers or unbelievers, good or bad humoured, gentle or froward: such as are their masters

according to the flesh; or “carnal masters”, as the Vulgate Latin version renders it; even though they are unregenerate men, and are in a state of nature, and only mind the things of the flesh, yet they are to be obeyed in their lawful commands; or “in things pertaining to the flesh”, as the Arabic version renders it; in things temporal, which concern the body, and this temporal life; not in things spiritual and religious, or that belong to conscience, and which are contrary to them: or “according to your flesh”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; signifying that they are only masters over their bodies, not their consciences; and that their power only extends to corporeal things, and can last no longer than while they are in the flesh; (see ^{<0389>}Job 3:19); and obedience is to be yielded to them

with fear and trembling; with great humility and respect, with reverence of them, and giving honour to them, with carefulness not to offend them, with submission to their reproofs and corrections, and with fear of punishment; but more especially with the fear of God, being by that influenced and constrained to obedience;

in singleness of heart; with readiness and cheerfulness, without hypocrisy and dissimulation, and with all integrity and faithfulness:

as unto Christ; it being agreeable to his will, and what makes for his glory, and serves to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour in all things.

Ver. 6. *Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers, &c.*] Doing nothing but when under the master's eye, and then pretending a great deal of diligence and

industry, in order to ingratiate themselves into his affections, and neglecting his business when he is absent; whereas they ought to attend his service in his absence, as well as in his presence, and so seek to please him, which is commendable.

But as the servants of Christ; acting in like manner as the servants of Christ, who are not menpleasers; or as if they themselves were serving Christ, as indeed they are, when they are doing that which is the will of Christ:

doing the will of God from the heart; meaning not the will of God in a religious, but in a civil sense, yielding a cheerful and hearty obedience to their own masters.

Ver. 7. *With good will doing service*, &c.] To their masters; not grudgingly, with an ill will; no otherwise, nor longer than when they are forced to it; but of a ready mind, and with a cheerful spirit, taking delight in their work, and reckoning it a pleasure to serve their masters; as an Israelite that is not sold, who does his work *wnwxrb*, “with his good will”, and according to his own mind^{f73}; doing what they do

as to the Lord, and not to men; not merely because it is the will of men, and they are commanded by them, and in order to please them, but because it is the will of the Lord, and is wellpleasing in his sight.

Ver. 8. *Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doth*, &c.] According to the will of God, from right principles in his heart, and with a view to God's glory:

the same shall he receive of the Lord; that is, he shall receive the fruit and advantage of it, in a way of grace,

whether [he be] bond or free; a bondman or a free man, a master or a servant.

Ver. 9. *And ye masters do the same things unto them*, &c.] This does not refer to service and obedience, but to singleness of heart, benevolence, humanity, and a regard to Christ, and the will of God, and to the doing of good things, and to the performance of their duty, as they would have their servants do theirs; whose duty, if religious masters, is, with respect to their souls, to instruct them in, and use them to religious exercises, to pray with them, and for them, to set them good examples, to prevent them falling

into, bad company, and to allow them proper time for religious duties; and with respect to their bodies, and outward concerns, to provide sufficient food and proper raiment for them, or to give them their due wages, to take care of them when sick or lame, and show compassion and humanity to them, to encourage those that are prudent, faithful, and laborious, and to correct the disobedient, and expel the incorrigible:

forbearing threatening; not that they may not in any sense threaten, but not always, nor too often, nor too much, and with great things on light occasions; nor should they be too forward to execute their threatenings, especially when their servants repent and amend; they should then forbear them and forgive; and so the Syriac version renders it, “forgive their offences”: this is opposed to all hard rigour, and ill usage, either by words or blows. And this is a rule given by the Jews ^{f74}, that a master should not multiply clamour and anger, but should speak him (his servant) quietly, and in a still manner, and he will hear his objections, or arguments and reasons:

knowing that your master also is in heaven; meaning Christ, who employs, provides for, and uses well all his servants, and to whom masters must be accountable for their usage of servants; for he is the common master of masters and servants; and so the Alexandrian copy, and Vulgate Latin version, read, “their and your master”: and the place of his habitation is mentioned, to distinguish him from earthly masters; and the more to move and excite masters to their duty, since he being in heaven overlooks and takes notice of all their actions, as the omniscient God; and being omnipotent, has it in his power to plead and avenge the cause of the injured:

neither is there respect of persons with him; as whether they are of this, or the other nation, Jew or Gentile; whether in this, or that state and condition, or in such and such circumstances of life; whether masters or servants, bond or free, or whether Canaanitish or Hebrew servants; between which the Jews ^{f75} made a difference, and allowed of rigour to be used to the one, but required mercy and kindness to be showed to the other; and so were respecters of persons.

Ver. 10. *Finally, my brethren*, &c.] This is the conclusion of the apostle's exhortations, in which he addresses the saints as his brethren; which appellation he uses, not merely as a familiar way of speaking among the Jews, but in regard to them as regenerate persons, and of the same family and household of God with himself; and he calls them so, to show his

humility, and as a proof of his affection to them, and with a design to encourage them to their duty, as follows:

be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might; which is directed to, partly on account of the things before exhorted to, which could not be performed in their own strength; and partly with respect to their many and potent enemies hereafter mentioned, against whom they had no might nor power of their own; and therefore the apostle points out the Lord Jesus Christ unto them, in whom are strength, power, and might, even everlasting strength, to enable them to perform their duty, and to fight against every enemy, sin, Satan, and the world; for though they are weak, and strength in themselves, and can do nothing of themselves, and without Christ; yet since there is strength in him, which is communicable to them, they may expect it from him, and depend upon it; and they may come at, or strengthen themselves in it, and by it, by meditation on it, by prayer for it, by waiting on Christ in his own ways, by exercising faith upon him, and through the Spirit, who strengthens them from him with might in the inward man.

Ver. 11. *Put on the whole armour of God, &c.*] Not that which God himself is sometimes clothed with, and uses against his enemies; but what he has provided for his people, and furnishes them with; the particulars of which are after mentioned: and it is called “the armour of God”, because it is prepared by him for his people, and is bestowed on them by him; and because it is in its own nature divine and spiritual, and not carnal; and because it is provided for fighting the Lord's battles, and is used in them; and because the efficacy of it is from him, and the execution it does is owing to him: and it is whole, complete, and perfect; and all of it is useful, and no part to be neglected, but all to be taken and “put on”; which is not to make and provide this armour, but to take it, as in (~~4063~~ Ephesians 6:13); as being ready made and provided, and to expect and prepare for battle, and make use of it; and this supposes saints to be in a warfare state, and that they are in the character of soldiers, and have enemies to fight with, and therefore should be accoutred with proper and suitable armour, to meet them:

that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil; who is the grand enemy of Christ and his people, and a very powerful and cunning one he is; so that the whole armour of God should be put on, which is proof against all his might and craft, in order to stand against him, oppose

him, and fight, and get the victory over him, which in the issue is always obtained by believers; for they not only stand their ground in the strength of Christ, and by the use of their armour confound his schemes, and baffle all his arts and stratagems, but are more than conquerors through him that has loved them.

Ver. 12. *For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, &c.*] The Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and some copies, read “you”, instead of “we”. This is a reason why saints should be strong in the Lord, and why they should put on the whole armour of God, and prepare for battle, since their enemies are such as here described: not “flesh and blood”; frail mortal men, such as were wrestled against in the Olympic games, to which the apostle alludes. For this wrestling, as Philo the Jew says ^{f76}, concerning Jacob's wrestling, is not of the body, but of the soul; (see ^{<4067>}Matthew 16:17 ^{<8016>}Galatians 1:16); and the meaning is, not with men only, for otherwise the saints have a conflict with men; with profane men, and wrestle against them, by bearing a testimony against their enormities, and by patiently enduring their reproaches, and conquer them by a constant adherence to Christ, and an exercise of faith upon him, which gets the victory over the world; and with heretical men, and maintain a conflict with them, by watching and observing the first appearance of their errors and heresies, and declaring against them, and by using Scripture arguments to confute them, and by rejecting the stubborn and incorrigible from church communion: yet they wrestle not against these only,

but against principalities, against powers; by whom are meant not civil magistrates, or the Roman governors, though these are sometimes so called, (^{<501>}Titus 3:1), and may be said to be the rulers of the darkness of this world, or of the dark Heathen world, and were in high places, and were of wicked and malicious spirits, against the people of Christ; yet these cannot be opposed to flesh and blood, or to men, since they were such themselves; and though they were in high, yet not in heavenly places; and the connection with the preceding verse shows the contrary, the enemy being the devil, and the armour spiritual; wherefore the devils are here designed, who are described from their power, rule, and government, (see Gill on ^{<4012>}Ephesians 1:21”), both in this clause, and in the next:

and against the rulers of the darkness of this world; that is, over wicked men in it, who are in a state of darkness itself; and so Satan is called the prince, and god of the world, (^{<4121>}John 12:31 ^{<5002>}2 Corinthians 4:4). The

and having done all to stand; or having overcome, having routed the enemy, stand as conquerors; or rather, having took and put on the whole armour of God, in order to stand, and withstand the enemy.

Ver. 14. *Stand therefore*, &c.] Keep your ground, do not desert the army, the church of Christ, nor his cause; continue in the station in which you are placed, keep your post, be upon your watch, stand upon your guard:

having your loins girt about with truth; by which is meant the Gospel, and the several doctrines of it; (see ^{<401B>}Ephesians 1:13 4:15); and to have the loins girt with it, shows, that it should be near and close to the saints, and never departed from; and that it is a means of keeping them close to God and Christ, and of strengthening them against the assaults and attacks of Satan; and is of great use in the Christians' spiritual conflict with their enemies; the girdle is a part of armour, and so considerable as sometimes to be put for the whole, (^{<21E7>}Isaiah 5:27); and here it is mentioned in the first place:

and having on the breastplate of righteousness; in allusion to (^{<25A7>}Isaiah 59:17), meaning not works of righteousness done by men, though these are a fence when rightly used against the reproaches and charges of the enemy, as they were by Samuel, (^{<402B>}1 Samuel 12:3), but rather the graces of faith and love, (^{<31B8>}1 Thessalonians 5:8), though faith has another place in the Christian armour, afterwards mentioned; wherefore it seems best to understand this of the righteousness of Christ, which being imputed by God, and received by faith, is a guard against, and repels the accusations and charges of Satan, and is a security from all wrath and condemnation.

Ver. 15. *And your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of peace.*]

The Gospel is so called, because it makes men to be of peaceable tempers and behaviour, and gives peace to distressed minds: it directs the way to eternal peace, and publishes peace made by the blood of Christ; and has a much better claim to this name, and epithet, than the law has, which is often called “peace” by the Jews ^{f82}: the “preparation” of it does not design a promptitude or readiness to preach the Gospel, or to receive it, or profess it, or to give a reason of faith in it, or to endure reproach and persecution for it; nor that readiness which the Gospel is a means of, as for every good work, for the spiritual warfare, for the Christian's journey heavenward, or for heaven itself: but the word **ετοιμασία** signifies a “base”, or foundation; and so it is used by the Septuagint interpreters on (^{<3051>}Zechariah 5:11); and here it designs a firm and solid knowledge of the

Gospel, as it publishes peace by Jesus Christ, which yields a sure foundation for the Christian soldier to set his foot upon, and stand fast on; it being that to him, as the shoe is to the foot, its base or foundation: and for the feet to be “shod with” it, does not mean the outward conversation being agreeably to the Gospel, though such a walk and conversation is very beautiful and safe, and such may walk and war with intrepidity: but it designs the constant and firm standing of believers in the faith of the Gospel, and so striving and contending for it, without being moved from it, that it may continue with them. Shoes or boots, which were sometimes of iron, and sometimes of brass, are reckoned among the armour of soldiers

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Ver. 16. *Above all, taking the shield of faith, &c.*] Which may be understood either of the grace of faith, which is like a golden shield, precious, solid, and substantial; and like a shield of mighty men, by which mighty things are done, and by which the believer not only repels, but conquers the enemy. The Jews say^{f84}, that repentance and good works are as a shield against divine vengeance: or rather of the object of faith, that which faith makes use of as a shield; so God himself is a shield, (^{<ORIS>}Genesis 15:1); his divine perfections, as his power, faithfulness, truth, and immutability, which encompass the saints as a shield, and are opposed by faith to the temptations of Satan; also the love and favour of God, (^{<ORIS>}Psalms 5:12); and particularly God in his word, (^{<ORIS>}Proverbs 30:5), which is a shield against false doctrines, and the wiles of Satan. Moreover, Christ is a shield, (^{<ORIS>}Psalms 84:11); and faith makes rise of him as a shield, his person, blood, righteousness, and sacrifice; which it holds up and opposes to all the charges and objections of Satan; and who is the saints' protection, and security from the wrath of God, divine justice, and eternal death. The disciples of the wise men are said to be^{f85} *wsyrt*, “shielded men”, who, as the gloss says fight in the war of the law; but they are not like Christ's disciples, who have on the shield, and fight the fight of faith: and this is “above all” to be taken, as being the most useful part of the Christian armour; or “with all”, with the rest, this is to be taken, and by no means to be neglected; and it is to be used “in all”; in every temptation of Satan, in every conflict with that enemy, or any other.

Wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked; of the wicked one, Satan; who was the first wicked one, and the tempter of others to wickedness; and is emphatically the wicked one, being wickedness itself; and his temptations are “fiery darts”: they may be

compared to “darts”, because they sometimes come suddenly and swiftly and thick and fast, are very numerous, and where they stick are very troublesome and grieving; (see ^{<0423>}Genesis 49:23,24). And they may be said to be “fiery”, because they serve to inflame the mind, and excite to sin, as lust, anger, revenge, and the like; and were they not repelled, would be the occasion of bringing into everlasting burnings. The allusion is to **βελεσι πεπυρωμενοις**, “the fiery darts”, cast by enemies into towns, and upon houses, in order to burn them ^{f86}. Mention is also made of **açad yryg**, “fiery darts”, with the Jews ^{f87}, and of Satan's casting a dart at David ^{f88}: from these customs, and ways of speaking, the apostle borrows his phrases; and suggests, that the shield of faith is of use to quench the fiery darts of Satan's temptations; so that they may not have the malignant influence they are designed for; which is chiefly done by faith's dealing with the blood of Christ. And there were ways of quenching the fiery darts alluded to; which was done by skins and hides of beasts made wet, or anointed with alum ^{f89}.

Ver. 17. *And take the helmet of salvation, &c.*] Meaning either Christ himself, the Saviour; and so the Arabic version renders it, “the helmet of the Saviour”: or the salvation itself, which he is the author of, and a well grounded hope of it; (see ^{<3188>}1 Thessalonians 5:8); the allusion is to (^{<2597>}Isaiah 59:17); and such an hope of salvation by Christ is a defence of the head against false doctrines; for the helmet is a piece of armour for the head; and it is an erector of the head in times of difficulty, affliction, and distress; and it covers the head in the day of battle, when engaged with Satan, the enemy of souls:

and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; the word of God is compared to a “sword”, for its two edges, the law and Gospel; the one convicts of sin, and cuts to the heart for it, and the other cuts down all the goodness of man; and the Scriptures in general are a sharp sword, in convincing of sin, reproof for it, and threatening with wrath and ruin, in refuting error and heresy, and repelling Satan's temptations, and will be used in the destruction of antichrist: and this word may be called “the sword of the Spirit”, because it is not carnal, but of a spiritual nature; and is used by the spiritual man; and because the Holy Spirit, as the Ethiopic version here expresses it, is the author of it; and which he furnishes the saints with, and teaches them how to make use of, and makes it powerful

and effectual. So the Jews say^{f90}, the words of the law are like to a sword, and speak of *hrwt brj* “the sword of the law”^{f91}

Ver. 18. *Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the spirit,* &c.] The last weapon is prayer, and takes in all sorts of prayer, mental and vocal, public and private; and every branch of it, as deprecation of evils, petitions for good things, and thanksgiving for mercies: and which should be used always: this stands opposed to such who pray not at all, or who have prayed, but have left it off; or who pray only in distress, and it suggests, that a man should pray as often as he has an opportunity; and particularly, that he should make use of it in times of darkness, desertion, and temptation: and this, when performed aright, is performed “in the Spirit”; with the heart, soul, and spirit engaged in it; it is put up with a true heart, and a right spirit, and without hypocrisy; in a spiritual way, and with fervency, and under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God.

And watching thereunto; either to the word, as a direction for prayer, or to prayer itself; for opportunities to pray for the assistance of the Spirit in prayer, for an answer of it, and to return thanks for blessings when bestowed; and against all dependence on it, and against Satan's temptations, and our own corruptions with respect to it:

with all perseverance; in it, notwithstanding what Satan and an unbelieving heart may suggest to the contrary:

and supplication for all saints; of every nation, age, sex, and condition, in all places, and of every denomination. So Christ taught his disciples to pray, saying, our Father, suggesting, that they were not only to pray for themselves, but for all the children of God.

Ver. 19. *And for me,* &c.] This shows the great humility of the apostle, and the sense he had of the greatness of the work of the ministry; and that it is the duty of people to pray for their ministers; and that no man is perfect in this life; and that the more superior members need the assistance of the inferior ones; for this request is made by the apostle not in dissimulation, or as feigning humility and modesty; but in the sincerity of his heart, and from a real sense of his need of fresh supplies of gifts and grace, to fit him for the work and service of Christ:

that utterance may be given unto me, or “that the word”; meaning not the subject matter of the ministry, the word of the Gospel, the word of faith, truth, and reconciliation, for that was committed to him; unless he should mean an increase of light and knowledge in it; but rather a faculty of speaking it freely and aptly, and what is commonly called elocution; not speaking with the enticing words of man's wisdom, but with the words of the Holy Ghost: or else an opportunity of preaching the word, and liberty to do it, as follows;

that I may open my mouth boldly; or “in the opening of my mouth”; the phrase is Rabbinical. The Jews¹⁹² say, that when Moses came to write that passage, “let us make man in our image”, &c. (Gen 1:26), he said before the Lord of the world, why dost thou give *hp ʾwj tp*, “opening of the mouth”, to heretics? i.e. an occasion to them of speaking, objecting to us, and of reproving and convincing us with respect to a plurality of persons in the Deity: and a little after they say,

“wherever you *hp ʾwj tp*, “an opening of the mouth to heretics”, you will find an answer by its side, or along with it.”

Now the apostle desired he might have something to say, to object to, and to reprove and convince the unbelieving Jews; that he might do this with boldness, with all faithfulness with Courage, and intrepidity, and with freedom of speech; or “openly” and “publicly”, as the Syriac version renders it:

to make known, the mystery of the Gospel; or the mysterious doctrines of it, such as the doctrines of a trinity of persons, of the union of the two natures in Christ, justification by his righteousness, regeneration by his Spirit and grace, the saints' union to Christ, and communion with him, the resurrection of the dead, &c. which are called mysteries, because they were hid until revealed; and though revealed, the “modus” and “ratio” of them are not to be accounted for. Now the apostle's work was to make known these mysteries, to prove the truth of them from the word of God, and to defend them against the opposers of them; and that he might be able to do this he entreats the prayers of the saints.

Ver. 20. *For which I am an ambassador in bonds*, &c.] The character the apostle bore was that of an ambassador; and he was an ambassador from and for Christ, in his room and stead; he represented him, he was sent by him, and entrusted by him with the Gospel; he gave him it, and a

commission to preach it, and furnished him with qualifications for it; such as knowledge and faithfulness wisdom and prudence, courage and greatness of mind; and made his embassy successful: and he was chiefly an ambassador to the Gentiles, which showed great condescension in Christ to send him to them, and base ingratitude in the despisers and rejecters of the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; for the embassy Christ's ministers are sent on, is the embassy of the Gospel of peace: their business is to declare that men by nature are enemies to God; that peace is made by the blood of Christ for such; by which means they are made useful to conciliate the minds of men to God's way of salvation and to bring them to submit to his government and laws: and when he adds, "in bonds", or "in a chain", he means, that he was in such circumstances, not for any crime, but for the Gospel, for which he was an ambassador; and therefore was not ashamed of his bonds, or chain, but rather gloried in them; and he makes mention of them to engage persons to a regard to him as an ambassador, and to his embassy; for an ambassador, especially an ambassador of Christ, that comes with his Gospel, and more especially that is suffering for it, ought to be received, heard, and honoured.

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

Ver. 21. *But that ye also may know my affairs, [and] how I do, &c.]* Both his temporal and spiritual affairs; as that he was in bonds, and how he was supported under them, and of what use they were to others; how that he preached in his own hired house, and with what success; and what ministering brethren he had with him to assist him; and in what condition was the church at Rome where he now was: the apostle's life and actions would bear the light, and what he did was worthy of imitation, and must be both delightful and useful to know; and the account he sends, by a messenger hereafter named, of whom he gives the following character, that credit might be the more readily given to his relation:

Tychicus, a beloved brother, and faithful minister in the Lord, shall make known to you all things. This Tychicus was of Asia, who accompanied the apostle in his travels, and went with him to Rome, from whence he sent

him to several places to relate his case, and to know the state of the churches, (^{<S407>}Colossians 4:7,8 ^{<S412>}2 Timothy 4:12 ^{<S412>}Titus 3:12). He calls him “a beloved brother”: he was a “brother”, because he was a partaker of the same grace, was of the same family and household of God, and was of the same function, being a minister of the Gospel, and was a “beloved” one: he was beloved of God and Christ, and of all the saints that knew him, and especially a brother beloved of the Apostle Paul; and where there is brotherhood, there should be love: he also styles him a “faithful minister in the Lord”; he was a “minister” in the work and service of the Lord, in things pertaining to him; he was one of his appointing, qualifying, and sending; and he preached Christ, and him crucified; and was a “faithful” one, to his Lord or master, in whose name he ministered, to the Gospel which he ministered, and to the souls of men to whom he ministered; and a greater character he could not well have; and therefore it need not be doubted but that he would faithfully relate all things concerning the apostle, and what he said might be depended on as truth.

Ver. 22. *Whom I have sent unto you for the same purpose, &c.*] Which shows the great concern the apostle had for the churches, being willing to inform them of everything that might be for their use and service:

that ye might know our affairs; temporal and spiritual, and not only the apostle's affairs, but the affairs of those that were with him, who were concerned in the same common cause:

and [that] he might comfort your hearts; both by such a relation, and by the ministry of the Gospel to them: believers in Christ are sometimes disconsolate, by reason of indwelling sin, Satan's temptations, the hidings of God's face, afflictions and persecutions, their own sufferings, and those of others; and it is the business of the ministers of Christ to comfort them; their commission is to speak comfortably to them; and they are qualified for it, by inward comforts in their own souls; the Gospel they preach, and the message they bring, is of a comfortable nature; the Spirit of God acts by them, and with them as a comforter; and sad indeed is the state of Zion, or the church of Christ, when it has no comforters.

Ver. 23. *Peace [be] to the brethren, &c.*] The members of the church at Ephesus, who stood in a spiritual relation to each other; meaning all prosperity outward and inward, temporal, spiritual, and eternal; especially peace of conscience under the sprinklings of the blood of Christ, and a view of peace made with God by that blood:

and love with faith from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ; that is, an increase of these graces, and of the exercise of them, is wished for; for otherwise these brethren had both these graces, faith and love; (see ~~4015~~ Ephesians 1:15); which go together; faith works by love, and love discovers faith, and both are imperfect; faith has something lacking in it, and love is apt to grow cold, and need reviving and increasing; and these, and the increase of them, are from God the Father, who is the God of all grace, and from Jesus Christ, in whom all fulness of grace is; and these things are equally desired from the one as from the other, and shows a plurality of persons in the Godhead, and the equality of Christ with the Father; and such a wish expresses the apostle's great love and affection for the brethren, and points out the things they stand in need of; and which, being asked for such, might be expected to be enjoyed.

Ver. 24. *Grace [be] with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ, &c.]* Christ is the object of love, and a lovely object he is: he is to be loved because of the loveliness of his person, and the transcendent excellencies that are in him; because of his suitableness and fulness as a Saviour; and because of his great love shown to his church and people; and because of the relations he stands in to them, and the communion they have with him: love to Christ is a grace of the Spirit, and is in all believers; and though it is imperfect, and sometimes cold, it will abide for ever; it ought to be universal and superlative; all of Christ is to be loved, and he is to be loved above all: and it shows itself in a value for his Gospel, and the truths of it; in an esteem of his ordinances, and a regard to his commands; in parting with all for Christ, when called for; and in bearing all for his sake; in a well pleasedness in his company and presence, and in a concern for his absence, and in an uneasiness until he is enjoyed again: it should be fervent, and constant, and cordial, and, as here said,

in sincerity; from the heart, and with all the heart, and without hypocrisy; not in word only, but in deed and in truth; which appears when he is loved, as before observed: and the apostle wishes “grace” to all such sincere and hearty lovers of him; by which may be meant a fresh discovery of the free grace, love, and favour of God in Christ to them; and a fresh supply of grace from the fulness of it in Christ; and a larger measure of the grace of the Spirit to carry on the good work begun in them; as well as a continuation of the Gospel of the grace of God with them, and an increase of spiritual gifts. Grace may be connected with the word translated “sincerity”, and be rendered “grace with incorruption”: or incorruptible

grace, as true grace is an incorruptible seed; or “grace with immortality”: and so the apostle wishes not only for grace here, but for eternal happiness and glory hereafter; and then closes the epistle with an Amen, as a confirmation and asseveration of the truth of the doctrines contained in it, and as expressive of his earnest desire that the several petitions in it might be granted, and of his faith and confidence that they would be fulfilled.

The subscription,

written from Rome to [the] Ephesians by Tychicus, seems to be right; for that this epistle is written to the Ephesians, the inscription shows; and that it was written when the apostle was at Rome, appears from (~~the~~ Ephesians 3:1 4:1 6:20); and that it was sent by Tychicus, seems very likely from (~~the~~ Ephesians 6:21,22).

FOOTNOTES

Ft1 -- L. 5. c. 29.

Ft2 -- Plin. ib. Justin ex Trogo, 50:2. c. 4.

Ft3 -- Philostrat. Vita Apollon. 50:8. c. 3.

Ft4 -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 79. 2.

Ft5 -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 76. 3.

Ft6 -- Zohar in Deuteronomy fol. 119. 3. Jetzirah, p. 22. 78. Ed. Rittangel.
R. Levi ben Gersom in Genesis fol. 14. 3. & Philo de opificio Dei, p.
15.

Ft7 -- Bechinat Olam, p. 260.

Ft8 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 50. 2. & in Exodus fol. 21. 2.

Ft9 -- Zohar in Gen, fol. 41. 3.

Ft10 -- Ib. in Numbers fol. 76. 1. Vid. ib.; in Exodus fol. 44. 2.

Ft11 -- Caphtor, fol. 30. 2.

Ft12 -- Shaare Ora, fol. 4. 1.

Ft13 -- Laert. Procem. in Vit. Philos, p. 5.

Ft14 -- lb. in Vit. Pythagor. p. 587.

Ft15 -- Apuleius de Deo Socratis, p. 331.

Ft16 -- T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 21. 2.

Ft17 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 21. 2. & 22. 4. & 27. 4. & 28. 2. & 35. 2. &
44. 1.

Ft18 -- Kimchi in loc.

Ft19 -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 8. 4. & in Exodus fol. 102. 3. Lex. Cabal. p.
44. 45.

Ft20 -- Maimon. Hilchot Milah, c. 2. sect. 1.

- Ft21** -- Targum in ^{<2161>}Isaiah 16:1. 5.
- Ft22** -- Lex. Decem Orator. p. 246.
- Ft23** -- De Abrahamo, p. 350, 351.
- Ft24** -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 110. 2. Zohar in Exodus fol. 33. 1. Cosri, par. 2. sect. 22. fol. 85. 2. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 129. 4. & 135. 2. & 153. 3. & 168. 3.
- Ft25** -- R. Abraham Seba, Tzeror Hammor, fol. 7. 2.
- Ft26** -- Perek Shalom, fol. 20. 1. Baal Hatturim in ^{<0512>}Numbers 25:12.
- Ft27** -- Vid. Kimchi in loc.
- Ft28** -- T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 87. 1.
- Ft29** -- Caphtor, fol. 95. 1. & 101. 1.
- Ft30** -- Itinerar. p. 28.
- Ft31** -- T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 89. 1. Shemot Rabba, sect. 2. fol. 92. 4.
- Ft32** -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 89. 3.
- Ft33** -- Abot R. Nathan, c. 28.
- Ft34** -- Euterpe, c. 155.
- Ft35** -- T. Hieros. Bava Kama, fol. 3, 4. Misna Sota, c. 9. sect. 15. Juchasin, fol. 79. 2.
- Ft36** -- Zohar in Exodus fol. 20. 4. & in Numbers fol. 66. 3. Targ. Jon. & Jeras. in ^{<0034>}Genesis 3:24.
- Ft37** -- Abot R. Nathan, c. 31. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 88. 2.
- Ft38** -- Targ. in Cant. 1:15. T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 17. 1. Zohar in Exodus fol. 105. 4. Raziel, fol. 42. 1. & 45. 2. Caphtor, fol. 58. 2. Shaare Orn, fol. 14. 3.
- Ft39** -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 154. 2.
- Ft40** -- Targum & Jarchi in Psal. lxxviii 18.
- Ft41** -- Aben Ezra in loc.

- Ft42** -- Alex. ab Alex. Genial. Dier. 50:6. c. 6.
- Ft43** -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 61. 4.
- Ft44** -- R. Isaac. Chizzuk Emuna, par. 2. c. 91.
- Ft45** -- Pocock. not. Misc. p. 24.
- Ft46** -- Alex. ab. Alex. ib. ut supra. (Genial. Dier. 50:6. c. 6.)
- Ft47** -- T. Bab. Taanith, fol. 10. 2.
- Ft48** -- Maimon. in Misn. Sanhedrin, c. 11. sect. 1. Cosri, par. 4. sect. 3. p. 213. 2.
- Ft49** -- T. Bab. Erubin, fol. 82. 1. Misna Roshhashana, c. 1. sect. 8. & Sanhedrin, c. 3. sect 3.
- Ft50** -- T. Bab. Cholin, fol. 91. 2. & Jarchi & Tosephot in ib. & Juchasin, fol. 88. 1.
- Ft51** -- T. Bab. Cetubot, fol. 105. 1.
- Ft52** -- Tzeror Hammor. fol. 156. 4.
- Ft53** -- Zohar in Genesis fol. 104. 1.
- Ft54** -- T. Bab. Beracot fol. 80. 3.
- Ft55** -- Apud Capell. in ^{<1123>}Matthew 5:23.
- Ft56** -- T. Bab. Pesachim, fol. 3. 1.
- Ft57** -- Jarchi in Psal. lxxv. 3. Vid. Vajikra Rabba, sect. 24. fol. 165. 3.
- Ft58** -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 1. 2.
- Ft59** -- Baal Hatturira in ^{<1521>}Deuteronomy 22:10.
- Ft60** -- Hilchot Heshuba, c. 3. sect 4.
- Ft61** -- De Mutat. Nomin. p. 1062. & alibi.
- Ft62** -- Antiqu. 50:7. c. 12. sect. 3.
- Ft63** -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 94. 1.
- Ft64** -- Misn. Cetubot, c. 7. sect. 7, 8. Maimon. & Bartenora in ib.

- Ft65** -- T. Bab. Beracot, fol. 24. 1. & Becorot, fol. 35. 2. Maimon. Hilchot Becorot, c. 2. sect. 17. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 18. 2.
- Ft66** -- T. Bab. Yebamot, fol. 62. 2. & Sanhedrin, fol. 76. 2. Derech Eretz, fol. 17. 4. Maimon Hilchot Ishot, c. 15. sect. 19.
- Ft67** -- Tzeror Hammor, fol. 6. 3.
- Ft68** -- Jarchi in loc. & R. Sol. Urbin. in Ohel Moed, fol. 85. 1.
- Ft69** -- T. Hieros. Kiddushin, fol. 61. 2. T. Bab. Kiddushin, fol. 31. 1, 2. Maimon. & Bartenora in Misn. Kiddushin, c. 1. sect. 7.
- Ft70** -- Debarim Rabba, sect. 6. fol. 241. 3.
- Ft71** -- Misna Peah, c. 1. sect. 1. T. Bab. Sabbat, fol. 127. 1, & Kiddushin, fol. 40. 1.
- Ft72** -- T. Hieros. Peah, fol. 15. 4.
- Ft73** -- Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 1. sect. 7.
- Ft74** -- Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 9. sect. 8.
- Ft75** -- Maimon. Hilchot Abadim, c. 9. sect. 8.
- Ft76** -- Leg. Allegor. 50:2. p. 96,
- Ft77** -- Vajikra Rabba, sect. 18. fol. 160. 1. & Shirhashirim Rabba, fol. 25. 4.
- Ft78** -- Pesikta in Kettoreth Hassammim in Targum in Genesis fol. 9. 4. Razel, fol. 13. 1.
- Ft79** -- Zohar in Leviticus fol. 19. 3.
- Ft80** -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 58. fol. 51. 2.
- Ft81** -- Tanchuma & Aruch in Guidon. Diet. Syr. Chal. p. 169.
- Ft82** -- Zohar in Numbers fol. 73. 3. Tzeror Hammor, fol. 9. 3.
- Ft83** -- Pausan. 50:6. p. 362, 378. Julian. Orat. 2. p. 105. Alex. ab Alexandro, 50:6. c. 22.
- Ft84** -- Pirke Abot, c. 4. sect. 11.
- Ft85** -- T. Bab. Becorot, fol. 36. 1. & Gloss. in ib.

Ft86 -- Apollodorus de Orig. Deorum, 50:2. p. 89.

Ft87 -- Targum Jon. & Jerus. in ~~1093~~ Exodus 19:13.

Ft88 -- T. Bab. Sanhedrin, fol. 95. 1. & 107. 1.

Ft89 -- Ammian. Marcellin. 50:20. c. 11.

Ft90 -- Targum in Cant. 3. 8.

Ft91 -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 19. 1.

Ft92 -- Bereshit Rabba, sect. 8. fol. 7. 1. & Vajikra Rabba, sect. 21. fol. 163. 1. Megillat Esther, fol. 94. 1, 3.