

1 CORINTHIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF 1 CORINTHIANS

This was not the first epistle that was written by the apostle to the Corinthians, for we read in this of his having written an epistle to them before, (~~418~~1 Corinthians 5:9), but this is the first epistle of his unto them, that is now extant; and has been received by the churches, as of divine authority, being written by the inspiration of God, of which there has been no doubt in any age. The apostle himself was nearly two years at Corinth; where he preached with great success; and was the instrument of converting many persons, who by him were formed into a church state, consisting both of Jews and Gentiles, as is clear from many passages in this epistle, and whom he left in good order, and in great peace and harmony; but quickly after his departure, false teachers got in among them, and bad principles were imbibed by many of them, and evil practices prevailed among them, and they fell into factions and parties, which occasioned the apostle to write this epistle to them, as well as their writing to him concerning certain things, they desired to have his judgment and opinion of, (~~410~~1 Corinthians 7:1), It is thought to be written about the year of Christ 55, and in the first year of Nero, though some place it in the year 59. It was written not from Philippi, as the subscription added to it affirms, but from Ephesus, as appears from (~~416~~1 Corinthians 16:8), and, it may be, after the uproar raised there by Demetrius, as should seem from a passage in (~~415~~1 Corinthians 15:32). The matter of it is various. The apostle first rebukes them for their schisms and divisions; suggests that their regard to the wisdom of men, and the philosophy of the Gentiles, had brought the simplicity of the Gospel into contempt with them; blames them for their conduct in the case of the incestuous person, and urges them to put him away from them; reproves them for going to law with one another before Heathen magistrates, and warmly inveighs against fornication; and then answers several questions, and resolves several cases concerning marriage; treats of things offered to idols, and of the maintenance of ministers; and

dissuades from idolatry, and all appearance of it; takes notice of the unbecoming conduct of the members of the church at the Lord's supper;

commends charity above them; observes and corrects some irregularities in the use of their gifts; proves by various arguments the doctrine of the

collection for the poor saints, and to several other things, and concludes the epistle with the salutations of others, and of himself.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO 1 CORINTHIANS 1

This chapter contains the general inscription of the epistle, the usual salutation, and a special thanksgiving for blessings received; after which the apostle intimates the occasion of his writing, the divisions about their ministers, which gives him an opportunity of discoursing concerning the nature, end, use, and efficacy of the preaching of the Gospel. The inscription is in (<400>1 Corinthians 1:1,2), in which an account is given of the persons concerned in this epistle; and first of Paul, the only inspired writer of it, who is described by his name, by which he went among the Gentiles; by his office, an apostle of Jesus Christ; and by the manner in which he came into it, being called to it not through any merit of his own, but through the sovereign will and pleasure of God: and next mention is made of Sosthenes, a brother minister of the Gospel, who was with the apostle, and joined in the salutation of the church, to whom the epistle is written; who are described, by their general character, a church of God; by the place of their abode, and seat of their church state, Corinth; and by their special characters, sanctified in Christ by election, and saints through the effectual calling; and with them are joined all other saints in Achaia, that belonged to them and the apostle, that called upon the name of the Lord; and then follows the salutation in (<400>1 Corinthians 1:3), usual in all the epistles; after that a thanksgiving to God for the grace they had by Christ in general, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:4), and particularly for their gifts of utterance and knowledge, which were plentifully bestowed upon them, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:5), and were a confirmation to them of the Gospel of Christ, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:6), and by which it appeared, that they were not behind other churches in these things; and are commended for their waiting for the coming of Christ, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:7), by whom the apostle assures them, they would be so confirmed in the mean while, as to be presented blameless by him in that day, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:8), of which they might be assured from the faithfulness of God, who had called them to communion with Christ, (<400>1 Corinthians 1:9), upon which he exhorts them to unity of affection and judgment, for this end, that there might be no schisms among them; and this he does in a way of entreaty, and that by

the name of Christ, and from the consideration of their being brethren, (~~4010~~1 Corinthians 1:10), suggesting hereby, that there were divisions among them: and signifies, that he had good reason to believe it, having had an account of them from a family of repute among them, (~~4011~~1 Corinthians 1:11), and then expressly mentions what their differences were about, namely, their ministers, (~~4012~~1 Corinthians 1:12), and uses arguments to dissuade them from their dividing principles and practices; showing, that one was their Lord and master, Christ, who was crucified for them, and in whose name they were baptized, and not his ministers, (~~4013~~1 Corinthians 1:13), and since some among them made an ill use of their having been baptized by the apostle, he is thankful that he had baptized no more of them, and mentions by name those that he had baptized, (~~4014~~1 Corinthians 1:14-16), and gives a reason for it, taken from the principal end of his mission by Christ, which was to preach the Gospel, and not only or chiefly to baptize, (~~4017~~1 Corinthians 1:17). The manner in which he was sent to preach, and did preach it, is observed by him, not in the words of human wisdom; and that for this reason, lest either the Gospel should be of no use, or the effect of it should be ascribed to a wrong cause; and then he obviates an objection that might be made to this way of preaching, that hereby the Gospel would be brought into contempt; to which he answers, by granting that it would be, and was reckoned foolishness by them that were blinded and were lost; and by observing on the other hand, that it was effectual to saving purposes to others, (~~4018~~1 Corinthians 1:18), and though the former sort might be the wise and prudent of this world, this need seem no strange thing, since the infatuation of such persons is no other than what was foretold would be, as appears from a testimony out of (~~2994~~Isaiah 29:14), cited in (~~4019~~1 Corinthians 1:19), upon which some questions are put, and inquiries made, after men of wisdom and learning, whose wisdom God made foolish, (~~4020~~1 Corinthians 1:20), the reason of which was, because they did not make a right use of their natural wisdom in the knowledge of God, wherefore it was his pleasure to save men by means esteemed foolishness by them, (~~4021~~1 Corinthians 1:21), and these wise men, who accounted the preaching of the Gospel foolishness, are distinguished into two sorts, Jews and Gentiles; the one requiring miracles to confirm it, the other seeking wisdom in it, (~~4022~~1 Corinthians 1:22), but finding neither, though there were really both, the preaching of a crucified Christ was a stumbling to the one, and folly to the other, (~~4023~~1 Corinthians 1:23), though those that were called by grace from among them, whether Jews or Gentiles, had different sentiments of it, and of Christ preached in

wisdom and power in Christ and his Gospel, which the apostle, an ironical concession, calls the foolishness and weakness of God, to the wisdom and ~~412~~1 Corinthians 1:25), and instances in the effectual

the wise, the mighty, and noble, (~~412~~) weak, and base; and the end of God, in the call of such, was to draw a veil over and bring to confusion the wisdom and power of men, (1 Corinthians 1:27,28), and also that no creature whatever should dare to ~~412~~1 Corinthians 1:29), but the true object of glorying in

grace being in him, and from him, is suggested, (~~413~~) that whoever glories, should glory in him, (~~413~~)

Ver. 1. *Paul called to be an apostle of Jesus Christ*, etc.] The author, or rather the writer of the following epistle; for the Holy Ghost was the author and dictator of it, and which was never doubted: he is described by his, name Paul, though his Jewish name was Saul; and very probably he being a Jew by birth, and yet born in a Roman city, might have two names, the one Jewish, the other Gentile; and by the one he went when among the Jews, and by the other when concerned with the Gentiles: and also by his office, “an apostle of Jesus Christ”; immediately called, and sent forth by him; had the Gospel from him by immediate revelation, and a commission to preach it; and which high office was confirmed by signs and wonders, and mighty deeds; by the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred on him, and on others under his ministry; and by the eminent success which attended the preaching of the Gospel by him. This his character he the rather mentions, because some in this church, through the insinuations of the false apostles, demurred upon it; whereas this was not a mere name given him by men, and by which he was only commonly called by them, but was an office he was “called” to by Christ; he did not rush into it, or assume it of himself, but had a divine warrant for it; for he was invested with it,

through the will of God: both by the secret will and purpose of God, by which he was a chosen vessel, to bear the name of Christ among the Gentiles, (~~415~~ Acts 9:15); and by the revealed will of God, signified by the Spirit of God, who said, “separate me Saul and Barnabas, for the work whereunto I have called them”, (~~416~~ Acts 13:2), and shows, that it was not

owing to any worth or merit in him, but purely to the free grace and sovereign will and pleasure of God, that he was made an apostle of Christ:

and Sosthenes our brother. This seems to be the same man, who was the chief ruler of the synagogue of the Jews at Corinth; and was converted to the Christian faith by the Apostle Paul whilst there, as appears from his favouring the cause of the apostle, for which the Jews beat him before the judgment seat, and yet Gallio the Roman deputy took no notice of it, (~~41817~~ Acts 18:17): in the Syriac dictionary ^{f1} mention is made of one Sosthenes, governor of a city, one of the seventy disciples, who was educated at Pontus, and cast into the sea by the order of Nouna; and is also said to be bishop of Colophon in Ionia, (see Gill on “~~41001~~ Luke 10:1”); but without any reason. This person the apostle joins with him, not as in equal office with him, but as a brother in Christ, and very probably a ministering brother, and a companion of his; and the rather, because he might be well known to the Corinthians, and respected by them; wherefore he chose to join him with him, to show their agreement in doctrine and discipline, and in advice to them, which might have the greater weight with them; (see ~~41817~~ Acts 18:17).

Ver. 2. *Unto the church of God which is at Corinth,* etc.] This epistle is inscribed to the saints at Corinth; who are described by their being “the church of God”, a particular congregated church; a number of persons gathered out of the world, and joined together in holy fellowship, carrying on the worship of God together, and walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord; a very high character this, to be called the church of God, which is the pillar and ground of truth: and it may be observed, that this is here given to a people, among whom were many irregularities, errors, disorders, and divisions; which shows, that a church of God is not to be unchurched for everything that is amiss in them: they are further described by the place of their abode, Corinth, the “metropolis” of Achaia; a very large and opulent city, a place of great trade and commerce, and famous both for its wealth and wisdom; but not so famous for anything as this, that there was a church of Christ in it; of the city of Corinth, (see Gill on “~~41801~~ Acts 18:1”); and of the church, (see Gill on “~~41808~~ Acts 18:8”). The members of it in general, for it cannot be thought to hold good of every individual, are said to be

sanctified in Christ Jesus; not by baptism, for they were sanctified before that; but were set apart, or chosen in Christ from all eternity, to grace here,

which sense the word “sanctified” is sometimes used; and to whom Christ they were sanctified by his Spirit in his name, out of that and holiness which is in him: wherefore it follows,

; for though they were chosen to holiness in Christ, and unholy; though Christ had given himself for them to sanctify and purify uncalled were impure; they fell in Adam, and became both unholy and unclean, and were so in their lives and conversations; nor are their own free will, but were become such through the powerful grace of principles of holiness were wrought in them; and by which they were called

And this epistle is not only inscribed to these saints at

with all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord
as in Achaia, of which

Invocation of the name of Christ not only respects prayer to him, but

being given to Christ, and perforated in his name, is a very considerable
Ethiopic version here styles him,

any but a divine person, one that is truly and properly God, without

phrase

, either, as some think, refers to “every place” and so Syriac, and Arabic versions; and the sense is, that

whether in was, or the Corinthians were, or any of the other saints in signifying, that invocation of God is not confined to any particular place,

rather it refers to “our Lord”, and shows that Christ is the common Lord of therefore ought to love one another.

Ver. 3. *Grace be unto you, and peace from God,* etc.] This is an usual salutation in all Paul's epistles; (see Gill on "~~ROM~~Romans 1:7").

Ver. 4. *I thank my God always on your behalf,* etc.] Now follows a thanksgiving for various blessings bestowed upon this church, which is a proof of the apostle's great affection for it, and how much its welfare lay at his heart. The object of thanksgiving is God, for as he is the author of all mercies, the glory and praise of them ought to be given to him. The apostle styles him "my God", to distinguish him from others; and to express his faith of interest in him; and to observe to this church, that all the good things they enjoyed came from him, who was his God and their God, his Father and their Father; and for which reason he returned thanks to him for them, and by so doing set them an example: the persons on whose behalf he gave thanks were not at this time himself and Sosthenes, but the members of the church at Corinth; and the continuance of his thankfulness for them, is "always", as often as he went to the throne of grace, or at any other time thought of them: what he particularly gives thanks to God for in this verse is,

for the grace which is given you by Jesus Christ: and includes all sorts of grace, adopting, justifying, pardoning, regenerating, and sanctifying grace; every particular grace of the Spirit, as faith, repentance, hope, love, fear, humility, self-denial, etc. all are gifts of God, and entirely owing to his free grace, and not to man's free will and power, or to any merits of his; and all come through the hands of Christ, and are given forth by him, as the Mediator of the covenant, and in consequence of his blood, righteousness, sacrifice, and merit.

Ver. 5. *That in everything ye are enriched by him,* etc.] This is still a continuation of the thanksgiving for this church, that they were "enriched", or plentifully and abundantly provided for by Christ, with all grace, with all the riches of grace; with his own unsearchable riches, of which they were made partakers, and the riches of glory, to which they were entitled by him; and all which come to them through his poverty, which makes his grace in the donation of these riches the more illustrious: and particularly the apostle is thankful, that they were enriched by Christ

in all utterance, and in all knowledge; that not only they had the knowledge of the truths and doctrines of the Gospel, concerning the person, offices, grace, and righteousness of Christ in the theory of them, or a speculative notion of them; but for the most part had a spiritual

experimental knowledge of these things; and many of them had such large to preach the Gospel to others; nay, even had the extraordinary gifts of the utterance.

.] By “the to his deity, his incarnation, his obedience, sufferings, and death, his hand, and intercession for the saints; to redemption by his blood, sacrifice, and complete salvation by his obedience and death. This, as it had them, by the signs and miracles with which it was attended; by the many of them; and by the internal power and energy of the Spirit,

Ver. 7. *So that ye come behind in no gift*

a detail of the gifts which were bestowed on them is made in (1

gifts to any of the churches:

; or “the revelation”

; who will appear a second time, come in great

cease and be of no more use, and when they must all be accounted for; and

improved to the interest and service of Christ; who will surely come again,

intrusted them with; and whose coming is to be believed, loved, looked,

Ver. 8. *Who shall also confirm you unto the end*

blessing of confirmation is not the Lord Jesus Christ, though he is

<FOOT>

antecedent to the relative “who” in this, but is not, for this confirmation is

<FOOT>

saints might be blameless in the day of Christ, and so must design some

other person distinct from him, which is God the Father, (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 1:4), to whom the apostle gives thanks, and continues to do so unto this verse; in which he assures the saints of confirmation in grace by God, the author and giver of all grace: and which may be understood of their confirmation in the love and favour of God, from which there can be no separation; and of their establishment in the person of Christ, and in the doctrines of grace; and of the permanency of the grace of the Spirit in them, and of their perseverance in faith and holiness unto the end: that is, of their days; even until the day of Christ, when the good work begun in them shall be performed and finished; that is, “for ever”, as the Ethiopic version reads it; for the love of God to his people always continues; their interest in Christ can never be lost; grace in them is an immortal seed; nor shall they be ever finally and totally moved away from the hope of the Gospel:

that ye may be blameless; not in themselves, for no man is without his faults; none of God’s children are without their failings and infirmities; they have whereof to blame themselves, and may be blamed by God too in a providential way; but they are so in Christ their head, being justified by his righteousness, and washed in his blood; and so in the sight of God, as considered in Christ; and will appear such

in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven, and take his saints to him, and present them to himself a glorious church, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing.

Ver. 9. *God is faithful, by whom ye were called*, etc.] These words contain arguments, assuring the saints of their confirmation in grace, and of their being preserved blameless to the day of Christ, taken from the faithfulness of God, who is always true to his promises: whatever he has said, he will do it; he will never suffer his faithfulness to fail; and since he has made so many promises concerning the establishment of his people, and their perseverance to grace, they may assure themselves of them; and also from his having called them by his grace, for whom he effectually calls by his grace, he glorifies; and particularly from his having called them

unto the fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord; to partake of his grace, and to be heirs of glory with him; to enjoy communion with him in private and public exercises of religion, which is an evidence of being in him, and of union to him; for it is not merely into the fellowship of his saints or churches, but into the fellowship of his Son they are said to be

called; and such are members of Christ, of his body, of his flesh, and of his bone; and shall never be lost and perish, but shall be confirmed to the end; be preserved in him blameless, and presented to him faultless, and have everlasting life.

Ver. 10. *Now I beseech you, brethren,* etc.] The apostle having observed the many favours and blessings bestowed on this church, proceeds to take notice of the divisions and contentions which were fomented in it; and in the most kind and tender manner entreats them to take every proper step to prevent schisms among them: he does not use his apostolical power and authority, or lay his injunctions and commands upon them, which he might have done, but most affectionately beseeches them; styling them brethren, as they were in a spiritual relation, being children of the same Father, members of the same body, and partakers of the same grace, and is a reason why they should not fail out by the way: and this obsecration is made

by the name of the Lord Jesus; which he wisely judged must have its weight and influence on many of them, to whom that name must be dear and precious, and which they called upon and were called by; and shows, that he was not acting in his own name, and seeking his own profit; but was concerned in and for the name of Christ, and for his honour and interest, which lay at stake by their contentions. His earnest request to them is,

that ye speak the same thing; profess the same truths, and express them in the same words; which shows the lawfulness, yea, necessity and usefulness, of confessions and articles of faith, being made and agreed to by members of churches; and which should be drawn up in a form of sound words, and abode by; for the introducing of new words and phrases is often the means of bringing in new doctrines, and of raising great contentions and animosities; wherefore using the same words to express truth by is a very proper and prudent expedient to prevent them:

and that there be no divisions, or schisms

among you; which are generally made by innovations in doctrine, or worship; by forming new schemes of religion, new articles of faith, and modes of discipline: but

that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment; which regards not only the sameness of love and affection, to

one another, being, as the first Christians were, of one heart and of one soul; but their agreement in their judgments and sentiments, of both doctrine and discipline; and such an entire harmony and symmetry among them, as in the members of the body, where each member and bone being in their proper place, exactly answer to, and tally with each other; and which is the most effectual way to speak the same things, and so bar against all schisms and divisions; and such an agreement is absolutely necessary to the peace, comfort, and well being of a church; for how should “two”, and much less more, “walk together”, unless they are “agreed?” (~~OR~~ Amos 3:3).

Ver. 11. *For it hath been declared unto me, of you, my brethren,* etc.]

Lest the above advice of the apostle should be thought to be impertinent and needless, and to proceed upon groundless suspicions and jealousies of his, he signifies that he not only had some broad hints of their contentions and divisions, but the whole affair was laid open, and made manifest to him: the thing was a clear point to him; he had no reason at all to doubt of the truth of it; nor could they deny it, the proof was so strong, the evidence so full, being given

by them which are of the house of Chloe. Some take Chloe to be the name of a place; a city so called is said to have been in Cappadocia; but it seems rather to have been the name of a woman. Horace^{f2} several times makes mention of a woman of this name, and so does Martial^{f3}. Pausanias^{f4} calls the goddess Ceres by it, the goddess of husbandry; the word signifying green grass of the field. The person the apostle speaks of was one that very probably lived at Corinth, and was a member of the church there, and at the head of a family of great worth and credit; who being grieved at the growing animosities, and disturbances there raised, wrote to the apostle, and gave him a distinct account of them, desiring him to use his interest to put a stop to them. He mentions this family by name, to show that he had not took up an idle tale, and received reports from anybody, nor from a single person only, but from a family of repute among them; and who could have no other views in the relation of it to him, than the good of the church, and the glory of God: and what they had made out clearly to him was,

that there are contentions among you; about their ministers, as appears afterward, as well as about opinions in doctrines, and ceremonies in

worship, which occasioned undue heats, and great indecencies, tending to make rents and schisms among them.

Ver. 12. *Now this I say that everyone of you saith*, etc.] This the apostle affirms not upon his own personal knowledge, but upon the credit of the report the house of Chloe had made unto him; and his meaning is not that every individual member of this church, but that many of them, and the far greater number of them, were in the following factions, some being for one minister, and some for another: one part of them said,

I am of Paul; he had been instrumental in their conversion: he had baptized some of them, and first laid the foundation of a Gospel church among them; was a solid, brave, and bold preacher of the Gospel, and was set for the defence of it; wherefore he was the minister for them, and they were desirous of being called and distinguished by his name: but there was another party that said,

and I of Apollos; in opposition to Paul, whom they despised, as a man whose aspect was mean; his bodily presence weak, made no figure in the pulpit; his speech low and contemptible; his discourses plain, not having that flow of words, and accuracy of expression, as Apollos had; who was an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who coming to Corinth after the Apostle Paul, many were taken with his way of preaching; he was the preacher for them, and they chose to be called after him, and in distinction from others: whilst another company of them said,

and I of Cephas; or Peter, in opposition both to Paul and Apollos; who with them were new upstart ministers, in comparison of Peter, who was with Christ from the beginning, and saw his miracles, and heard his doctrines; and, besides, had the apostleship and Gospel of the circumcision, on which account they highly valued him; for these must be supposed to be the converted Jews among them, who still retained a regard to the ceremonies of the law; wherefore they fixed on Peter as their minister, and to be called by his name: but others said,

and I of Christ; which some take to be the words of the apostle, declaring who he was of, and for, and belonged unto; intimating that they, as he, should call no man father, or master, on earth, or be called by any other name than that of Christ. Others consider them as the words of the Corinthians, a small part of them who were very mean and contemptible, and therefore mentioned last, who chose to be known and called by no

other name than that of Christians; but I rather think that these design a faction and party, to be condemned as the others. These were for Christ, in opposition to Paul, Apollos, and Cephas, and any other ministers of the word. They were for Christ without his ministers; they were wiser than their teachers; they were above being under any ministrations and ordinances; as the others attributed too much to the ministers of the Gospel, these detracted too much from them, and denied them to be of any use and service. Some persons may be, in such sense, for Christ, as to be blame worthy; as when they use his name to deceive men, or divide his interest.

Ver. 13. *Is Christ divided?* etc.] Some read the words as an assertion, “Christ is divided”; that is, his body, the church, is divided by such factions and parties; though in some copies $\mu\eta$, the note of interrogation, is put before the clause, and so to be rendered, “is Christ divided?” no; his human body was not to be divided; a bone of him was not to be broken, (~~6186~~ John 19:36 ~~6187~~ Psalm 34:20); the seamless garment he wore was not to be rent asunder, (~~6183~~ John 19:23,24); nor is his mystical body, the church, to be torn in pieces by schisms and divisions; nor is anyone part of his Gospel different from, or opposite to another part of it; his doctrine is the same as preached by one minister and another, and is all of a piece, uniform and harmonious. Christ is not divided from his Father, not in nature; though he is to be distinguished from him, yet not to be divided; he is one in nature with him, though he is a distinct person from him; nor is he, nor can he, or will be ever separated from him; nor is he to be divided from him in his works and actions, with whom he was jointly concerned in creation, providence, and grace; and such are to be blamed as dividers of Christ from the Father, who talk of Christ to the exclusion of the Father, or to the dropping and neglect of any of his acts of grace; as his everlasting love to his chosen ones, the eternal election of them in Christ, the covenant of grace made with him, and the instance of his grace in the gift and mission of his Son: nor is Christ divided from himself, not in his nature and person; the two natures, human and divine, are united in one person; they are to be distinguished, and not to be confounded, yet not to be separated as to wake two distinct persons: nor in his offices; a whole Christ is to be received; Christ in his kingly as well as in his priestly office; to claim him as a Saviour and disown him as a King, is dishonourable to him; it is to make one end of his death void, as much as in such lies, which is, that he may be Lord of dead and living; and argues a carnal selfish spirit, and that faith in

him is not right: such are to be blamed for being for Christ, and as dividers of him, who talk of being saved by him, and yet would not have him to rule over them. Nor is he divided from his Spirit, not from the person of the Spirit; he is to be distinguished from him as a person, but is one in nature with him; nor from his gifts and graces, which he has as man and Mediator without measure; nor from the work of the Spirit; for it is his grace the Spirit of God implants in the hearts of men: it comes from him, it centres in him, it makes men like him, and glorifies him; such who cry up Christ, and cry down the work of his Spirit upon the soul, are to be blamed for being for Christ, and to be reckoned dividers of them as much as in them lies: nor is Christ divided from his church and people; there is a close union between them, and he dwells in them, and among them; and they are to be blamed that talk of Christ, and never meet with his saints in public service and worship: nor is he divided from his ministers, word, and ordinances; Christ is the sum of the ministry of the word; the ordinances are instituted by him; he submitted to them himself, and is the substance of them, and has promised his presence in them to the end of the world: and what God has put together, let no man put asunder.

Was Paul crucified for you? no; he had taught them another doctrine; namely, that Christ was crucified for them, that he died for their sins, and had bought them with the price of his own blood; and therefore they were not to be the servants of men, or to call any man master, or to be called by his name, or any other man's, only by Christ's, who had redeemed them by his blood; so that they were not their own, nor any other's, but his, and ought to glorify him with their souls and bodies, which were his.

Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul; no; but in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. The apostle did not pretend to be the author of a new revelation, or the propagator of a new religion, but was a preacher of the Gospel, and an administrator of the ordinances of Christ; wherefore he baptized not in his own name, but in the name of Christ: to whose worship and service such as are baptized are devoted, and not to the service of men, and therefore not to be called after their names.

Ver. 14. *I thank God that I baptized none of you,* etc.] The Alexandrian copy and the Syriac version read, "I thank my God"; not that the apostle disliked the ordinance of baptism, or the administration of it; and much less that he thought it criminal, or an evil in him to perform it; nor was he at any time displeased at the numbers of persons who desired it of him; but on

the contrary rejoiced where proper subjects of it were brought to a submission to it; but inasmuch as some persons in the church at Corinth made such an ill use of his having baptized them, he was greatly thankful that it was so ordered in providence, that the far greater part of them were baptized by other ministers, either by those who were with him, or came after him; and that he baptized none of them with his own hands,

but Crispus and Gaius. The former of these was the chief ruler of the Jewish synagogue at Corinth, who hearing the apostle, and believing in Christ, was baptized by him, (~~4188~~ Acts 18:8) and the latter was a very liberal and hospitable man, and was the apostle's host, whilst he was at Corinth; (see ~~4563~~ Romans 16:23).

Ver. 15. *Lest any should say that I had baptized in my own name.*] The Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, "lest anyone should say that ye were baptized in my name"; and the Ethiopic version renders it, "that ye might not say we have been baptized in his name". This gives the true reason why the apostle was so thankful he had baptized no more of the members of this church, lest either some should reproach him, as having done it in his own name, and as seeking his own honour and interest; or lest others should affect, from their being baptized by him, to be called by his name, as if he was the author and patron of a new sect.

Ver. 16. *And I also baptized the household of Stephanas,* etc.] The same name with "Stephanos", or "Stephanio" in Pliny¹⁵. Before he says he had baptized none but Crispus and Gaius; but recollecting things, he corrects himself, and observes, that he had also baptized the household of Stephanas, who by the Greek writers is thought to be the same with the jailer baptized by the apostle at Philippi, but was now removed from thence to Corinth, and was become a famous and useful man there. No argument can be formed from the baptism of his household in favour of infant baptism, since it must be first proved that he had any infants in his family, and that these were baptized; and if his household and the jailer's are the same, it is certain that his household were such who were capable of having the word of God spoke to them, and who actually did believe in God. And if they were not the same, yet it is clear that this household of Stephanas consisted of adult, converted, and very useful persons; they were the firstfruits of Achaia, and had addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints, (~~4165~~ 1 Corinthians 16:15).

Besides, that is, the above mentioned persons,

I know not whether I baptized any other; meaning at Corinth, for he might have baptized, and doubtless did baptize many more in other places, for anything that is here said to the contrary: of this he would not be positive; for though he might fully know, and well remember, on recollection, who, and how many, were baptized by him with his own hands there, yet he could not tell but that some persons might have removed thither, and become members of the church in that place, who had been baptized by him elsewhere.

Ver. 17. *For Christ sent me not to baptize*, etc.] Some think the apostle refers to his particular mission from Christ, (⁴⁴³⁶Acts 26:16) in which no mention is made of his administering the ordinance of baptism; but no doubt he had the same mission the rest of the apostles had, which was to baptize as well as preach; and indeed, if he had not been sent at all to baptize, it would have been unlawful for him to have administered baptism to any person whatever; but his sense is, that baptism was not the chief and principal business he was sent about; this was to be done mostly by those preachers of the word who travelled with him, or followed after him: he was not sent so much about this work,

but to preach the Gospel; for which he was most eminently qualified, had peculiar gifts for the discharge of it, and was greatly useful in it. This was what he was rather sent to do than the other, and this “not with wisdom of words”. Scholastic divinity, or the art of disputation, is by the ¹⁶ Karaites, a sect among the Jews, called **pyrbdh tmkj**, “wisdom of words”: this the apostle seems to refer to, and signifies he was not sent with, or to preach, with words of man’s wisdom, with human eloquence and oratory, with great swelling words of vanity, but in a plain, humble, modest manner; on which account the false teachers despised him, and endeavoured to bring his ministry into contempt with others: but this way and manner of preaching he chose for this reason,

lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect; that is, either lest men’s ears and fancies should be so tickled and pleased with the eloquence of speech, the elegance of diction, and accuracy of expression, the cadency of words, and beauty of the oration, with the manner, and not with the matter of preaching, and so the true use, end, and design of the doctrine of a crucified Christ be defeated; or lest the success of the ministry should be

attributed to the force of enticing words, and the strength and persuasion of oratory, and not to the energy of divine power attending the doctrine of the cross.

Ver. 18. *For the preaching of the cross*, etc.] Not of the Christian's cross, which he is to take up and bear for the sake of Christ; though this is a doctrine taught by Christ, and his apostles, and found to be true by the saints in all ages; and is what is had in great aversion and contempt, being very disagreeable to the natural man: but of the cross of Christ, the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ; or the doctrine of peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, and of righteousness, pardon, atonement, and satisfaction by the offering up of himself upon it as a sacrifice for sin, is here intended; and which

is foolishness in the esteem of many; and that because man's wisdom has no hand either in forming the scheme of it, or in the discovery of it to the sons of men; and besides, being revealed, it is very disagreeable to the carnal reason of man. This way of preaching is very impolite and unfashionable, and therefore despised; it is a doctrine which is not received by the wise and learned, but has been in all ages loaded with reproach, stigmatized either as a novel or licentious doctrine, and attended with persecution; though the only doctrine God owns for conversion, which administers comfort to distressed souls, and is food for the faith of believers; yea, it is a display of the highest wisdom; is what angels approve of, and desire to look into; is wiser than the wisdom of men; it has made foolish the wisdom of this world, and is what is only able to make a man wise unto salvation; and yet this doctrine is accounted foolish, yea foolishness itself; but to whom is it so?

to them that perish. All mankind are in a lost and perishing condition, by reason of sin, and want of righteousness. There are some who shall not perish; the Father has chose them unto salvation, the Son has redeemed them, and the Spirit sanctifies them; but there are others who do perish in their sins; wicked and ungodly men, Carried away with their own lusts and blinded by Satan, the god of this world: these are they that are lost, to whom the Gospel is hid, and who judge it foolishness; but their judgment of it is not to be regarded, being no more capable to judge of the glory and wisdom of the Gospel, than a blind man is of colours: but unto us which are saved; who are chosen in Christ unto salvation; whose persons and grace are secured in Christ, and in the everlasting covenant; for whom

Christ has wrought out salvation; and to whom it is applied by the Spirit of God; and who are kept unto the full enjoyment of it by divine grace: to these

it is the power of God; organically or instrumentally; it being the means of quickening them when dead in sin, of enlightening their dark minds, of unstopping their deaf ears, of softening their hard hearts, and of enemies making them friends to God, Christ, and his people: and it is likewise so declaratively, there being a wonderful display of the power of God in the ministration of it; as may be seen when observed who were the first preachers of it, men of no figure in life, of no education, illiterate mechanics, very mean and abject; into these earthen vessels were put the treasure of the Gospel, that the excellency of the power might appear to be of God, and not man; as also the doctrine they preached, a crucified Christ, disagreeable to the wisdom of men; the manner in which they spread it, not by force of arms, by carnal weapons, but spiritual ones; moreover, the opposition they met with from rabbins, philosophers, princes, kings, and emperors, and all the states and powers of the world; and yet in how short a time, maugre all opposition, did they carry the Gospel throughout the whole world, to the conversion of millions of souls, and the planting of churches everywhere; and which Gospel has continued and increased, notwithstanding the efforts of persecutors and false teachers, and all the power and artifice of men and devils; all which can be attributed to nothing else but the mighty power of God: add to this, that the Gospel is the power of God in the esteem of the saints, who know it to be so by inward experience; they have felt the power of it on their hearts; it has wrought effectually in them, and therefore they are the best judges, and are capable of giving the best account of it.

Ver. 19. *As it is written*, etc.] The passage referred to is in (²³¹⁴Isaiah 29:14) where it is read, “the wisdom of their wise men shall perish; and the understanding of their prudent men shall be hid”; and is rendered by the Septuagint, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will hide the understanding of the prudent”: which is much the same with the apostle’s version of it: and the sense of the prophecy is, that in the times of the Messiah, under the Gospel dispensation, the mysteries of grace should be hid from the wise rabbins among the Jews, the Scribes and Pharisees, who, with all their sagacity, parts, and learning, would not be able to comprehend the doctrines of the Gospel; by these their wisdom and understanding would be nonplussed, so that they would reject them as

foolishness, because their carnal reason could not reach them; which shows what an infatuation they were given up to: and if this should be the case, as it was with the wise and learned philosophers among the Gentiles, it need not be wondered at; it was what was foretold in prophecy concerning the Jews, who had the oracles of God, and the advantage of a divine revelation; and therefore it need not be stumbling to them that are saved, that the Gospel should meet with so much scorn and contempt among them that perish in the Gentile world. These words are very pertinently cited by the apostle, since they are acknowledged by the Jews themselves to signify the departure of wisdom from the wise men of Israel, in the times of the destruction of the temple, as Jarchi on the place observes.

Ver. 20. *Where is the wise? where is the Scribe?* etc.] These are the apostle's own words; though he may allude to (~~23318~~ Isaiah 33:18) where there are some phrases much like these, but the meaning is very different. Though they are interpreted by the Talmudists^{f7} in a sense pretty near the apostle's; for thus they remark upon them,

“where is the Scribe? he that counts all the letters which are in the law; “where is the receiver, or weigher?” who weighs all the light and heavy things in the law; “where is he that counted the towers?” he who counts, or teaches the three hundred traditions:”

so that they understand these of their Scribes and Misnic doctors, and such that are curious searchers into the hidden senses of Scripture. The apostle also seems to allude to a distinction that obtained among the Jews, of wise men, Scribes, and mystical interpreters of the word. They had their **ymkj**, “wise men”, which was a general name for men of learning and knowledge; and their **yrps**, “Scribes”, who interpreted the law in the literal and grammatical sense; and their **ynçrd**, “preachers, or disputers”, who diligently searched into the hidden meaning of the Scriptures, and sought for and delivered out the mystical and allegorical sense of them, and who used to dispute about them in their schools. These three are sometimes to be met with together, and as distinct from each other. They say^{f8} that

“God showed to the first man every generation, **wyçrwdw**, “and its expounders, or disputers”; and every generation, **wymkj w**, “and its wise men”; and every generation, **wyrpws**, “and its Scribes.””

And the apostle's sense is, "where is the wise?" the man that boasts of his superior wisdom and knowledge in the things of nature, whether among the Jews or Gentiles; "where is the Scribe?" the letter learned man, who takes upon him to give the literal sense of the law;

where is the disputer of this world? the Jewish world, who pretends to the knowledge of the more abstruse and secret senses of Scripture; where are these men? they are not to be found among those that God employs in the ministration of the Gospel; he has laid them aside, and chosen others, where are they? what use have they been of to men? are men under their instructions the better, either in principle or practice? where are the thousands that have been turned to God by their wisdom, as can be shown by the faithful ministers of the Gospel? where are they? let them come and produce their cause, and bring forth their strong reasons against the Gospel they account foolishness, and try if these will stand before its superior power and wisdom; where are they? are they not fools, with all their wisdom and learning? The words may be rendered, "where is the searcher, or inquirer of this world?" and may design the same sort of persons whom the Jews call רַבֵּי מַחְשָׁבִים , "the wise men of search, or inquiry"^{f9}, and sometimes רַבֵּי מַחְשָׁבִים , "the men of search, or inquiry"^{f10}; by whom they seem to intend such who search into the nature of things, who study natural philosophy.

Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? by bringing in the Gospel scheme, which the men of the world, the greatest wits in it, are not able to understand; by laying their wisdom aside as useless in the business of salvation; by showing it to be vain and empty, and of no service in things spiritual and divine; by detecting, through the ministration of the Gospel, the sophisms of men, and showing that the schemes both Jews and Gentiles give into abound with folly, with stupid notions, and are full of gross errors and fatal mistakes.

Ver. 21. *For after that in the wisdom of God,* etc.] These words contain a reason proving the infatuation of men, with respect to "the wisdom of God"; by which may be meant either Christ, who is the wisdom of God, was in the world, and yet the world of the Jews, and their chief Rabbins among them, with all their wisdom, neither knew him, nor God his Father; or the Gospel, which is also so called, and though this was come, both into the Jewish and Gentile world, yet neither of them, by their natural wisdom, knew the God of grace, so manifestly revealed in it; or rather the works of

creation, in which there is such a visible display of the wisdom of God: yet “the world by wisdom knew not God”; the author of them: the Gentiles knew him not in any spiritual and saving manner, as in Christ, or the God of all grace; yea, they knew him not as the God of nature to be the one, only, true God; they knew him not so as to glorify him as God, or to worship him in a right way and manner: wherefore,

it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe; it was his purpose and decree within himself; it was his sovereign good will and pleasure; it was what he, without any motion from, or merit in the creature, resolved of himself from all eternity that he would “save”, not the wise man, the Scribe, the disputer of this world, the rationalist, the talker, nor the worker, but “them that believe” in his Son; that look unto him, venture on him, and commit the care and keeping of their souls to him, however weak, mean, and despicable they may otherwise be; or whether they believe with a weak, or a strong faith, so be it, it is but true: the Ethiopic version reads, “that believe in this foolish doctrine”; and this he determined to do, and did, “by the foolishness of preaching”; or by that sort of preaching, which both for the matter of it, Christ, that itself, and the manner of it, the world reckons foolishness; and which are the things of the Father’s grace in election, of the Son’s grace in redemption, and the Spirit’s in regeneration: so the wise men of the world, with all their wisdom, are left ignorant of God, and perish in their sins, whilst the Gospel they despise is the power of God unto salvation to all that believe in Christ; this, through efficacious grace, becomes the means of regenerating and quickening men, showing them their need of salvation, and where it is, and of working faith in them to look to Christ for it.

Ver. 22. *For the Jews require a sign*, etc.] The Jews had always been used to miracles, in confirmation of the mission of the prophets sent unto them, and therefore insisted on a sign proving Jesus to be the true Messiah; except signs and wonders were wrought, they would not believe; and though miracles were wrought in great numbers, and such as never man did, they remained incredulous, and persisted in demanding a sign from heaven, and in their own way; and it was told them that no other sign should be given them, but that of the prophet Jonah, by which was signified the resurrection of Christ from the dead; this was given them, and yet they believed not, but went on to require a sign still; nothing but miracles would do with them, and they must be such as they themselves pleased: the

Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin version, read “signs”, in the plural number:

and the Greeks seek after wisdom; the wisdom of the world, natural wisdom, philosophy, the reason of things, the flowers of rhetoric, the ornaments of speech, the beauties of oratory, the justness of style and diction; as for doctrines they regarded none, but such as they could comprehend with, and account for by their carnal reason, everything else they despised and exploded. Hence we often read^{f11} of *tynewwy tmkj*, “the Grecian wisdom”, or wisdom of the Greeks; which, the Jews say^{f12}, lay in metaphors and dark sayings, which were not understood but by them that were used to it; the study of it was forbidden by them, though some of their Rabbins were conversant with it^{f13}.

Ver. 23. *But we preach Christ crucified*, etc.] Regardless of the sentiments and opinions of Jews and Gentiles, of what the one required and the other sought after; and in opposition to all their senseless and groundless cavils, the apostle and his fellow ministers continued preaching the doctrine of salvation by a crucified Christ, and him only; though it was

unto the Jews a stumblingblock; as was prophesied it should be, and as it came to pass; for they not only stumbled at the meanness of his birth, parentage, and education, at his ministry, miracles, company and audience; but especially at his sufferings and death: it was a stumbling to them that he should die at all, for they understood out of their law, that Christ should abide for ever; and it was more so that he should die the death of the cross, by which, according to their law, he appeared to be accursed; and most of all this was stumbling to them, because they expected a temporal kingdom to be set up by him:

and unto the Greeks foolishness; as that the Son of God should be crucified; that riches should come through his poverty, and men be brought to a kingdom and glory through one so mean and abject; that there should be life for men in his death, and salvation through his crucifixion, or the shameful death of the cross; that blessings should come through his being made a curse; and that his death should be an expiatory sacrifice for the sins of men; and that justification should be by one that was condemned; and peace and pardon should be by his blood; and that he should be raised again from the dead. These things were the subject of their ridicule and banter, and, in their opinion, deserved rather to be laughed at than credited.

The Alexandrian copy, and others, and the Vulgate and all the Oriental versions, read, “unto the Gentiles”.

Ver. 24. *But unto them which are called*, etc.] Effectually, by the grace of God, not merely externally, but internally; these have other sentiments of Christ, and the doctrine of salvation by him; for being called out of darkness, and savingly illuminated by the Spirit of God, they see wisdom, beauty, glory, excellency, and suitableness in Christ, and in his Gospel; and having felt the power of it upon their souls, with them,

both Jews and Greeks, of whatsoever nation they be, and whatsoever their prejudices have been, Christ, to them is,

the power of God, and the wisdom of God: he is “the power of God”; this is opposed to the Jews who stumbled at his weakness, his sufferings and death, even the death of the cross; and is to be understood of him, not as God, in which sense he is Mighty, yea, the Almighty, and which appears by his works of creation and providence; but as Mediator, and of him in his low and mean estate, and even when he was crucified through weakness; in respect to that very thing in which he was weakness, and so stumbling, to others, he is to them that are called the power of God; as is clear by his bearing all the sins of his people in his own body, on the tree, the cross whereon he was crucified, and all the punishment due thereunto; and yet he failed not, nor was he discouraged, nor did he give out, till he had satisfied law and justice perfectly, and made a full end of sin, and an entire reconciliation for iniquity; as also by destroying, by his death, the devil, who had the power of death, and spoiling all his principalities and powers, triumphing over them on his cross; by redeeming his people from all their sins, and the curse of the law, and from him that was stronger than they; by abolishing death, and at last raising himself from the dead; all which show him, even when and “though” crucified, to be the power of God, or to be possessed of Almighty power; for these are things which a mere creature could never have done: and he is “the wisdom of God”, also, in the account of these persons; and which likewise is to be understood, it being opposed to the opinions the Greeks had of him, not of him as the essential wisdom of God, as he is the wise Creator and Governor of the universe; but of him as Mediator, and in respect to that for which the Greeks accounted him foolishness: for in redemption and salvation by a crucified Christ, God hath abounded towards us in all wisdom and prudence: there is in this article a high display of the wisdom of God; for hereby justice was satisfied in that

nature which sinned, and Satan destroyed in that nature which he himself had been the ruin of; hereby sin was condemned, and yet the sinner saved; pardon and justification came to be in a way of grace, and yet of strict justice; all the divine perfections harmonize, and are glorified, and God has hereby executed his wise designs and counsels of old; yea, even the wisdom of God is seen in Christ's dying the death of the cross, whereby he appeared to be made a curse for us, that he might redeem us from the curse of the law, and that the blessing of Abraham might come upon us.

Ver. 25. *Because the foolishness of God*, etc.] Not that there is any such thing as “foolishness” in God, nor the least degree of weakness in him; but the apostle means that which the men of the world esteem so, and therefore, by an ironical concession, calls it by those names; by which is intended either Christ, who, as crucified, is counted foolishness; yet he “is wiser than men”: yea, even than Solomon, who was wiser than all men besides; Christ is greater than he in wisdom, having all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge in him; yea, in redemption by the blood of his cross, which is accounted such an egregious instance of folly, there is such a display of wisdom as surpasses all the wisdom of men and angels: and though he is, as crucified, esteemed as

the weakness of God, yet in this respect,

is stronger than men; stronger than the strong man armed; and has done that by his own arm, has brought salvation for his people, which neither men nor angels could ever have done: or all this may be understood of the Gospel of Christ, which is condemned as folly and weakness, and yet has infinitely more wisdom in it, than is to be found in the best concerted schemes of the wisest philosophers; and has had a greater influence on the minds and manners of men than theirs ever had; it is the manifold wisdom of God, and the power of God unto salvation. Moreover, these words may be applied to the saints, called in (~~1~~1 Corinthians 1:27)

the foolish and weak things of the world; and yet even these, in the business of salvation, how foolish soever they may be in other respects, are wiser than the wisest of men destitute of the grace of God; and however weak they are in themselves, in their own esteem, and in the account of others, they are able to do and suffer such things, through the strength of Christ that no other men in the world are able to perform or endure. The phrases here used seem to be a sort of proverbial ones; and the sense of them is, that whatever, in things divine and spiritual, has the appearance of

folly and weakness, or is judged to be so by carnal men, is wiser and stronger not only than the wisdom and strength of men, but than men themselves with all their wisdom and strength. It is very likely, that proverbial expressions of this kind, with a little alteration, were used by the Jews. The advice the young men gave to Rehoboam is thus paraphrased by the Targumist ^{f14}, *abad hytrwbg ^m apyqt ytwçl j*, “my weakness is stronger than the strength of my father”; which is very near the same with the last clause of this verse.

Ver. 26. *For ye see your calling, brethren,* etc.] That is, those that were called by the grace of God among them; for as circumcision and uncircumcision stand for circumcised and uncircumcised persons, and election for elect persons, and righteousness for righteous persons, (<RB>Romans 3:30, 11:7 <RB>2 Peter 3:13) so here “calling” designs men called by grace; the manner of whose calling, and what sort of persons they were, the apostle signifies, they did or might, or ought, to see, observe, and consider; for respect is here had, not, as some have thought, to the first preachers of the Gospel, who were mechanics, fishermen, illiterate persons, very mean and despicable; but to the members of the church at Corinth, whether public preachers, or private members. The city of Corinth had in it many noble families, of high birth and quality, abounded with learned philosophers and rich merchants; and yet it was easy to be seen,

how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. The apostle does not say that there were none of the wise, the mighty, and noble called; for there were Crispus, and Sosthenes, rulers of the synagogue, and Gains a rich hospitable man, and Erastus the chamberlain of the city, and it may be some others of a like or better figure in life; but there were not many of them; instances of this kind are but few recorded in the Scripture; as Joseph of Arimathea a rich counsellor, Paulus Sergius a Roman deputy, Dionysius the Areopagite, and some in Caesar’s palace; which show that nobility, riches, and learning, as they do not at all contribute towards a man’s salvation, so neither can they hinder it where grace takes place; but, generally speaking, God has thought fit, for wise reasons, to choose and call persons of different characters.

Ver. 27. *But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world,* etc.] So the Jews, in distinction from their wise Rabbins and doctors, call others, *aml [d ^yçpj*, “the fools of the world” ^{f15}; the persons whom God made choice of from all eternity, as appears by his calling them in time, are such

who with respect to the wisdom of the world are foolish; have not those natural parts and abilities, that sagacity and penetration in things natural and civil, that knowledge and learning which many others have; and are therefore esteemed foolish by the men of the world, in comparison of whom; who are the wise and prudent, they are but babes: and God's end in his choice of them, and calling them, is

to confound the wise; who sooner or later will be brought to shame and confusion, to see such idiots, as they took them to be, wiser than they in the business of salvation; having been directed and influenced by divine grace to choose that good part, which shall never be taken from them, when they will be stripped of their nobility, wealth, and wisdom; to see these men go into the kingdom of heaven, and they themselves shut out:

and God hath chosen the weak things of the world; who cannot boast of their birth and pedigree, of their ancient and illustrious families; have no titles of honour to aggrandize them, nor estates, possessions, and worldly substance to support themselves with; and this he has done,

to confound the things which are mighty; as Haman was by the advancement of Mordecai. It will be to the utter confusion of the rich and mighty, to see persons of the lowest class in life made kings and priests by Christ, set among princes, and upon the throne of glory; and they themselves fleeing, and calling to the mountains to fall upon them, and cover them from the sight of him that sits on the throne, and the Lamb.

Ver. 28. *And base things of the world*, etc.] Who are reckoned the filth of the world, and the offscouring of all things; men of mean birth, education, and business of life:

and things that are despised; and set at nought, as poor persons generally are; yet God

hath chosen them; even the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of a kingdom:

yea, and things which are not; some think the Gentiles are here intended, who by the Jews are called "things that are not": as in the apocryphal books:

"O Lord, give not thy sceptre unto "them that be nothing", and let them not laugh at our fall; but turn their device upon themselves,

and make him an example, that hath begun this against us.” (Esther 14:11)

“56 As for the other people, which also come of Adam, thou hast said that “they are nothing”, but be like unto spittle: and hast likened the abundance of them unto a drop that falleth from a vessel. 57 And now, O Lord, behold, these heathen, which have ever been “reputed as nothing”, have begun to be lords over us, and to devour us.” (2 Esdras 6)

See Gill on “~~6017~~Romans 4:17” for note on non-entities, or such who are not in being, are meant; but who are not accounted of, or are reckoned as nothing; and these the Lord calls by his grace, as a fruit and evidence of electing love:

to bring to nought things that are; who, on the account of their noble birth, large possessions, and high attainments in knowledge and learning, thought themselves something; all which will one day be abolished, and will stand them in no stead with regard to future happiness and glory. The Jews ^{f16} have a saying quite contrary to all this, that

“the Shekinah, or presence of God, does not dwell on any but upon a wise man, a mighty man, and a rich man.”

Ver. 29. *That no flesh should glory in his presence.*] That is, “in the presence of God”, as some copies, and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions read; not in their blood, birth, families, lineage, and natural descent; nor in their might, power, and dominion; nor in their riches, wealth, and substance; nor in their wisdom, learning, and parts: for however these may be gloried in before men, yet not before God. These are of no account with him, nor will they be regarded by him, or men on account of them; and he has taken a method in choosing and calling the reverse of these, to stain the glory of all flesh, that no man may attribute his salvation to any thing of the creature, but wholly to the sovereign grace and good pleasure of God.

Ver. 30. *But of him are ye in Christ Jesus,* etc.] These words, as they direct to the proper object of glorying, Christ, so they show the high honour the called ones are brought to in and through Christ, and are opposed to their outward meanness, folly, weakness, poverty, and contempt. They are first of God the Father, of his own rich free grace and goodness, without any regard to any motive, merit, or desert of theirs, put into Christ by electing grace, in whom they are preserved and blessed; and

which is their original secret being in him; and is made manifest by regenerating grace, by their being made new creatures; which also is not owing to their blood, or to the will of the flesh, or to the will of man, but to God and his free favour in Christ: and in consequence of their being in Christ, as their head and representative, he becomes all to them, which is here expressed;

who of God is made unto us wisdom. Though they are foolish creatures in their own and the world's esteem, yet Christ is their wisdom; he is so "efficiently", the author and cause of all that spiritual wisdom and understanding in divine things they are possessed of; he is so "objectively", their highest wisdom lying in the knowledge of his person, blood, and righteousness, of interest in him, and salvation by him; with which knowledge eternal life is connected: and he is so "representatively"; he is their head, in whom all their wisdom lies; he acts for them as their wisdom to God, he is their Counsellor, their Advocate, who pleads and intercedes for them, and as their wisdom to men, and gives them a mouth and wisdom which their adversaries are not able to gainsay; and having the tongue of the learned, he speaks a word in season to themselves, when weary, distressed, and disconsolate, and for them in the court of heaven; he is their wisdom, to direct their paths, to guide them with his counsel, in the way they should go, safe to his kingdom and glory:

and righteousness. He is the "author" of righteousness; he has wrought out and brought in one for them, which is well pleasing to God, satisfying to his justice, by which his law is magnified and made honourable; which justifies from all sin, and discharges from all condemnation, is everlasting, and will answer for them in a time to come; this he has brought in by the holiness of his nature, the obedience of his life, and by his sufferings and death: and which is "subjectively" in him, not in themselves; nor does it lie in any thing wrought in them, or done by them; but in him as their head and representative, who by "imputation" is made righteousness to them; and they the same way are made the righteousness of God in him; or in other words, this righteousness, by an act of the Father's grace, is imputed, reckoned, and accounted to them as their justifying righteousness:

and sanctification; Christ is the sanctification of his people, through the constitution of God, the imputation of the holiness of his nature, the merits of his blood, and the efficacy of his grace, he is so "federally" and "representatively"; he is their covenant head, and has all covenant grace in

his hands for them, and so the whole stock and fund of holiness, which is communicated to them in all ages, until the perfection of it in every saint: this is sanctification in Christ, which differs from sanctification in them in these things; in him it is as the cause, in them as the effect; in him as its fountain, in them as the stream; in him it is complete, in them it is imperfect for the present: and they have it by virtue of union to him; sanctification in Christ can be of no avail to any, unless it is derived from him to them; so that this sanctification in Christ does not render the sanctification of the Spirit unnecessary, but includes it, and secures it: likewise Christ is the sanctification of his people “by imputation”, as the holiness of his human nature is, together with his obedience and sufferings, imputed to them for their justification; Christ assumed an holy human nature, the holiness of it was not merely a qualification for his office as a Saviour, or what made his actions and sufferings in that nature significant and useful, or is exemplary to men; but is a branch of the saints justification before God: the law required an holy nature, theirs is not holy; Christ has assumed one not for, himself, but for them, and so is the end of the law in all respects: and this may be greatly designed in the whole of this passage; “wisdom” may stand in general for the wise scheme of justification, as it is laid in Christ; “sanctification” may intend the holiness of his nature; “righteousness” the obedience of his life; and “redemption” his sufferings and death, by which it is obtained: but then justification and sanctification are not to be confounded; they are two distinct things, and have their proper uses and effects; sanctification in the saints does not justify, or justification sanctify; the one respects the power and being of sin, the other the guilt of it. Moreover, Christ is the sanctification of his people “meritoriously”; through the shedding of his blood, whereby he has sanctified them, that is, expiated their sins, and made full atonement for them; (see ~~8800~~ Hebrews 10:10,14 13:12). Once more, he is their sanctification “efficiently”; by his Spirit, as the author, and by his word, as the means; he is the source of all holiness, it all comes from him, and is wrought by his Spirit in the heart; which lies in filling the understanding with spiritual light and knowledge; the mind with a sense of sin, and a detestation of it; the heart with the fear of God; the affections with love to divine objects and things; the will with submission and resignation to the will of God in all respects; and is exercised in living a life of faith on Christ, and in living soberly, righteously, and godly, before God and man: and this, though imperfect now, will be perfected from and by Christ, without which it is impossible to see the Lord:

and redemption; which he is by the appointment of his Father, being foreordained to it before the foundation of the world; and this sense of the word made will agree with every clause in the text; and he is so efficiently, having obtained eternal redemption from sin, Satan, the law, and this present evil world, for his people; and “subjectively”, it being in him, and every other blessing which is either a part of it, and comes through it, or is dependent on it, as justification, adoption, and remission of sins. Moreover, this may have respect not only to redemption past, which is obtained by Christ; but to that which draws near, the saints are waiting for, and to which they are sealed up by the Spirit of God; even their redemption and deliverance from very being of sin, from all sorrow and sufferings, from death and the grave, and everything that is afflicting and distressing.

Ver. 31. *That, according as it is written*, etc.] (²⁴⁹²Jeremiah 9:23,24).

He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; not in his own wisdom, riches, and strength; but in Christ, as his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption.