

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO 1 PETER 2

This chapter consists of exhortations, in general, to a holy life; and, in particular, to obedience to superiors. It begins with an exhortation to lay aside various vices, which were unbecoming regenerate persons, ([1 Peter 2:1](#)) and, agreeably to their character, as new born babes, to express a desire after the Gospel, which is commended from its nature, being comparable to milk; and from its quality, being reasonable, sincere, and unmixed; and from the end and usefulness of it, a spiritual growth; and the argument engaging to such a desire is the experience they had of the grace of Christ in it, ([1 Peter 2:2,3](#)) whose excellency is declared, under the metaphor of a stone, said to be living, to be chosen of God, and precious to him, though rejected by men; to whom the saints are encouraged to come, as lively stones built up, a spiritual house, for the exercise of the holy office of the priesthood, by offering up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ, ([1 Peter 2:4,5](#)) and that Christ is such a precious stone, is proved from ([Isaiah 28:16](#)) and not only to God, but to all them that believe; though to them that believe not, he is the stone of rejection, stumbling, and offence; to stumble at which, and the doctrine of it, through disobedience, they were of old appointed by God, ([1 Peter 2:6-8](#)) but the character of the persons the apostle writes to was very different, quite the reverse, being chosen and called, and manifestly the people of God, and sharing in his grace and mercy, ([1 Peter 2:9,10](#)) and these he exhorts, suitable to their state and condition, to abstain from sin, as an enemy to their souls, and to live an honest life and conversation among the Gentiles, that they, instead of speaking evil of them, might, by beholding their good works, glorify God, ([1 Peter 2:11,12](#)). And particularly he exhorts them to obedience to civil magistrates, both superior and inferior; partly from the author of them, they being of the Lord; and partly from the usefulness of them to punish wicked men, and to encourage good men; and also from its being the will of God, by such obedience, to silence the cavils of foolish men, ([1 Peter 2:13-15](#)). And whereas it might be objected, that they were made free by Christ, and therefore should not be the servants of men; it is granted, that they were free; but then it is denied, that they should use

their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness: and besides, it should be observed, that they were the servants of God, and therefore ought to do what he enjoined them; and, among other things, yield obedience to civil magistrates, (^{<A126>}1 Peter 2:16). And to this purpose are various exhortations in (^{<A127>}1 Peter 2:17), and another particular one is added, which is to servants, to be subject to their masters, and fear them, whether they be good or bad, (^{<A128>}1 Peter 2:18) and then he comforts such that had bad masters, and encourages them to bear the injuries they received from them patiently; because so to do was grateful to God, and acceptable in his sight; and because they were called unto it by him; and because of the example Christ had left them in suffering for them, (^{<A129>}1 Peter 2:19-21). And this is further urged from the character of Christ, who was without sin, and yet suffered, and from his conduct, who, when reviled, made no return, but left his cause with God, (^{<A122>}1 Peter 2:22,23) which leads on the apostle take notice of the nature of Christ's sufferings in his body on the cross, and the ends of them, which were expiation of sin, healing diseases, and holiness of life, as a consequent thereof, (^{<A124>}1 Peter 2:24) previous to which conversion, which is illustrated by the former state and condition men are in, being as sheep going astray; and by their present one, being returned to Christ, the Shepherd and Bishop of souls, (^{<A125>}1 Peter 2:25).

Ver. 1. *Wherefore, laying aside all malice*, etc.] Since the persons the apostle writes to were born again, and therefore ought to love one another, he exhorts them to the disuse of such vices as were disagreeable to their character as regenerate men, and contrary brotherly love; he dissuades them from them, and advises to “lay them aside”, either as weights and burdens, which it was not fit for new born babes to carry; (see ^{<S121>}Hebrews 12:1) or rather as old worn out clothes, as filthy rags, which should be put off, laid by, and never used more, being what were very unsuitable to their character and profession to wear: the metaphor is the same as in (^{<A122>}Ephesians 4:22 ^{<S123>}Colossians 3:8,9) and the first he mentions is malice; to live in which is a mark of an unregenerate man, and very unbecoming such who are born again; and is not consistent with the relation of brethren, and character of children, or new born babes, who are without malice, and do not bear and retain it: “all” of this is to be laid aside, towards all persons whatever, and in every shape, and in every instance of it:

and all guile; fraud, or deceit, in words or actions; and which should not be found, and appear in any form, in Israelites indeed, in brethren, in the

children of God; who ought not to lie one to another, or defraud each other, nor express that with their lips which they have not in their hearts; which babes are free from, and so should babes in Christ:

and hypocrisies; both to God and men: hypocrisy to God is, when persons profess that which they have not, as love to God, faith in Christ, zeal for religion, fervent devotion, and sincerity in the worship of God; and do all they do to be seen of men, and appear outwardly righteous, and yet are full of all manner of iniquity: hypocrisy to men is, pretence of friendship, loving in word and tongue only, speaking peaceably with the mouth, but in heart laying wait; a sin to be abhorred and detested by one that is born from above; and is contrary to that integrity, simplicity, and sincerity of heart, which become regenerate persons, the children of God, and brethren one of another:

and envies; at each other's happiness and prosperity, riches, honours, gifts temporal or spiritual; for such are works of the flesh, show men to be carnal, are unbecoming regenerated persons, and contrary to the exercise of Christian charity, or love, which envieth not the welfare of others, either respecting body, soul, or estate:

and all evil speakings; backbitings, whisperings, detractions, hurting one another's characters by innuendos, false charges, and evil surmises; which is not acting like men that are made new creatures, and are partakers of the divine nature, nor like brethren, or as Christ's little ones, and who are of God, begotten again to be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

Ver. 2. *As new born babes*, etc.] The Syriac version renders it, “be ye simple as infants”; and as if it was a distinct exhortation of itself, and from that which follows; though it seems rather to be descriptive of the persons spoken to, and a character of them, under which the apostle addresses them; which carries in it a reason strengthening the exhortation after given: he takes it for granted that they were begotten again, according to the abundant mercy of God, and born of incorruptible seed, by the word of God, and that they were just, or lately born; and which is to be understood of them all in general, and not of younger converts among them, who might be called little children with respect to others who were young men or fathers; but that, comparatively speaking, those that had been of the longest standing were but as it were newly born, it being at most but a few years since they were called by grace: and they were as “babes”, not on account of their want of knowledge, or unskilfulness in the word of

righteousness; or of nonproficiency in the learning of divine truths, and their great dulness, backwardness, and imperfection; or because of their incapacity in taking in, and digesting the strong meat and sublimer doctrines of the Gospel; or for their instability and simplicity, being easily deceived and beguiled; nor for their weakness in faith, not being able to walk alone, and their insufficiency to defend, or provide for themselves; but because of their harmlessness and innocence, meekness and humility; and for the sincerity of their faith and love, obedience and profession. The proselytes to the Jews' religion are often said ^{f40} to be *ymd dl wnc ʿwj qk*, “as an infant just born”, or a new born babe; to which the allusion may here be made:

desire the sincere milk of the word; this is not a declaration that these new born souls did do so, though that might be true, but an exhortation to them so to do, as it became them: by “the sincere milk of the word” is meant the Gospel, even the whole of it, and not, as elsewhere, the more plain and easy truths of it; which is compared to milk for its purity in itself, for every word of God is pure and for its purifying nature, as used by the Spirit of God; and for its sweetness and agreeable taste to a regenerate man; and because easy of digestion to a spiritual one; and because it is nutritive to him, by it he is nourished up unto eternal life; and because, as milk is of a cooling nature, so the Gospel is a means, in the hand of the Spirit of God, of assuaging those inflammations, and of allaying that wrath and fiery indignation, raised in the conscience of a sinner by the law; and because as milk, medicinally used, is a restorative in consumptive disorders, so the Gospel is not only the means of helping a declining person, and who is wasted and consumed by sin, but even of quickening such as are dead in sin; it is the savour of life unto life. The Jewish writers speak of *hrwt l q bl j*, “the milk of the law” ^{f41}, of which they generally interpret ^{f42} the passage in (~~280~~ Isaiah 55:1) but it is much better applied to the Gospel, which is the milk of the word, or “rational milk”: not that the Gospel is a scheme according to the carnal reason of men; it is contrary to that, and above sound reason, though not repugnant to it; but it is what is calculated for faith, the spiritual reason of men, and for such who have their spiritual senses exercised, to discern between good and evil; it is a spiritual drink, and is made up of spiritual things, and suited to the spiritual man; it is milk, not in a natural, but in a mystic and spiritual sense: the Syriac version renders it, “the word which is as milk, pure and spiritual”: and it is “sincere”; without mixture, unadulterated with the inventions and doctrines

of men, Jews or heretics: or “without deceit”; being neither deceitfully handled by the faithful ministers of it, nor causing deceit, or deceiving those that cordially receive it. Now, this it becomes regenerate person, to “desire”; and vehemently long after, as a new born babe does after its mother’s milk; for the Gospel is that to one that is born again, as the breast is to a babe: desire after it supposes knowledge of it; and where there is an experimental knowledge, there will be a value and esteem for it, even above necessary food, and, at times, an hungering and thirsting after it, an impatient longing for, and desire of it; when such souls will labour after it, and diligently observe and attend every opportunity of enjoying it, and think long ere the seasons of meeting with it return; for it is suitable food for them, savoury food, such as their souls love, and which indeed they cannot live without: now the end of this exhortation, and of such a desire, and of feeding on the words of faith and sound doctrine, is,

that ye may grow thereby: regenerate persons are not at their full growth at once; they are first children, then young men, and then fathers in Christ; the Gospel is appointed as a means of their spiritual growth, and by the blessing of God becomes so, and which they find to be so by good experience; and therefore this milk of the word is desirable on this account, for the increase of faith, and the furtherance of the joy of it; for their growth in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and in an experience of spiritual strength from him, and unto him, as their head in all things; not merely in the leaves of a profession, but in the fruits of grace, righteousness, and holiness. The Alexandrian copy, and several others, and also the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, add, “unto salvation”: that is, until they come to a perfect knowledge of Christ, and to be perfect men with him, being arrived to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, and in the possession of that salvation he has obtained for them.

Ver. 3. *If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.*] Reference is had to (¹³⁴⁸Psalm 34:8), “O taste and see that the Lord is good”; and the Syriac version here adds, “if ye have seen”: by the Lord is meant, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the following words show, who is gracious and amiable, and lovely in his person; who has a fulness of grace in him for his people; has displayed his grace towards them, in engaging for them as a surety, in assuming their nature, obeying, suffering, and dying in their stead; he is gracious in his word and promises, truths and ordinances, and in all his offices and relations; and regenerate persons have tasted that he is so: an

unregenerate man has no spiritual taste; his taste is vitiated by sin, and not being changed, sin is a sweet morsel in his mouth, and he disrelishes everything that is spiritual; but one that is born again savours the things of the Spirit of God; sin is exceeding sinful to him, and Christ exceeding precious; he, and his fruit, his promises, and blessings of grace, his word and ordinances, are sweet unto his taste: and the taste he has is not a mere superficial one, such as hypocrites may have of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come; but such a taste of Christ, and of his grace, as, by a true faith, to eat his flesh, and drink his blood, and so have everlasting life; such have a saving and experimental knowledge of Christ, an application of him, and his saving benefits to them, a revelation of him in them, so that they find and feel that he dwells in them, and they in him; such receive out of Christ's fulness, and grace for grace, and live by faith upon him, and receive nourishment from him; and of this the apostle made no doubt concerning these persons, but took it for granted that they had had such tastes of Christ, and therefore could not but desire the Gospel, which is a revelation of Christ, and sets forth the glory of his person, and the riches of his grace: and whereas, such as have truly tasted of his grace cannot but desire to have more, and fresh tastes of it; where should they have them, but in his word and ordinances? and therefore, would they grow in grace, and know more of Christ, and taste more of his goodness, it is their interest, as it is their spiritual nature, to desire the Gospel, in the purity and sincerity of it.

Ver. 4. *To whom coming, as unto a living stone*, etc.] Christ here, as often elsewhere, is compared to a "stone"; and Peter, by the use of this metaphor, shows that he is not the rock, but Christ is the rock on which the church is built, and he is the foundation stone on which every believer is laid; and it is chiefly with respect to the usefulness of a stone in building, that Christ is compared to one, who is the foundation and cornerstone, as well as for strength and duration; and he is called a "living" one, because he has life in himself, as God, as Mediator, and as man; and communicates life to others, as natural life to all creatures, and spiritual and eternal life to his people, whose great privilege it is to come to him: and by coming to him is meant believing in him; and it does not design the first act of faith on Christ, or a soul's first coming to Christ, but an after and continued exercise of faith on him; and it supposes Christ to be come at, notwithstanding he is in heaven, and saints on earth, for their faith and hope can enter into, and reach him within the vail, and notwithstanding

their many transgressions and backslidings; it supposes life in them, or they could not come; and a sense of their need of him, of his righteousness to justify them, of his blood for pardoning and cleansing, of his fulness to supply their want of food, rest, peace, comfort, and salvation in him; and a persuasion of his ability and willingness to relieve them: and they are encouraged to come to him under the above considerations, as a stone, a foundation stone; believing that he is laid as a foundation, and that he is the only foundation, and therefore they lay the whole stress of their salvation, and build all their hopes of happiness on him; and as a living stone, deriving grace, life, and strength from him; exercising faith on him for all the mercies, blessings, and comforts of a spiritual life, and looking to his mercy for eternal life.

Disallowed indeed of men; by the Jewish builders, high priests, Scribes, and Pharisees, and the body and bulk of that nation; who rejected him as the Messiah, and stone of Israel, refused him as a foundation stone, and left him out of the building; and laid another foundation, even their own works of righteousness, on which sandy foundation they built themselves, and directed others to do so likewise; and set him, at nought, as a living stone, would not come to him for life, but sought it in the law, the killing letter, and among their dead works; but though Christ was thus disallowed and disesteemed of by men, yet was he highly valued and esteemed by God:

but chosen of God, and precious; his human nature was “chosen” from among, and above all other individuals of mankind; to be united to the Son of God; as God-man and Mediator, he was chosen to that high office, to be the head of the church, and the Saviour of the body; to be the foundation in the spiritual building, and to be the author and giver of spiritual and eternal life to as many as were given him. Moreover, this phrase denotes the superior excellency of Christ to angels and men in the account of God; being the brightness of his glory, the express image of his person, the Son of his love, in whom he was always well pleased, and in whom he took infinite delight, considered both as his Son, and the surety of his people; and to whom he was

precious, and by him highly honoured, made higher than the kings of the earth, than the angels in heaven, than the heavens themselves, being set down at God's right hand, and a name given him above every name in this world, or that to come; and who is precious to the saints too, more so than rubies, or any precious stones, or any thing or creature whatever; his

person is precious, and so are his name, his blood, his righteousness, his truths, his ordinances, and his people.

Ver. 5. *Ye also, as lively stones*, etc.] Saints likewise are compared to stones; they lie in the same quarry, and are the same by nature as the rest of mankind, till dug out and separated from thence by the powerful and efficacious grace of God, when they are hewn, and made fit for the spiritual building; where both for their ornament, beauty, and strength, which they receive from Christ, they are compared to stones, and are lasting and durable, and will never perish, nor be removed out of the building: and because of that life which they derive from him, and have in him, they are called “lively”, or “living stones”; the spirit of life having entered into them, a principle of life being implanted in them, and coming to Christ, the living stone, they live upon him, and he lives in them; and his grace in them is a well of living water, springing up into eternal life. It was usual with poets and philosophers to call stones, as they lie in the quarry before they are taken out of it, “living” ones: so Virgil ^{f43}, describing the seats of the nymphs, says, “*intus aquae dulces vivoque sedilia saxo, nympharum domus*”, etc. but here the apostle calls such living stones, who were taken out from among the rest: the stones which Deucalion and Pyrrha cast over their heads after the flood are called ^{f44} ζωοψεντες λιθοι, “quickened stones”, they becoming men, as the fable says. “Are built up a spiritual house”; these living stones being laid, and cemented together, in a Gospel church state, become the house of God in a spiritual sense, in distinction from the material house of the tabernacle, and temple of old, to which the allusion is; and which is built up an habitation for God, by the Spirit, and is made up of spiritual men; such as have the Spirit of God, and savour the things of the Spirit, and worship God in Spirit and in truth; among whom spiritual services are performed, as prayer, praise, preaching, and hearing the word, and administering ordinances. Some read these words in the imperative, as an exhortation, “be ye built up as lively stones; and be ye spiritual temples and holy priests”, as the Syriac version. A synagogue with the Jews is called *ygj wr tyb*, “a spiritual house” ^{f45}; and so is the third temple which the Jews expect in the times of the Messiah; of which one of their writers ^{f46} thus says:

“it is known from the ancient wise men, that the future redemption, with which shall be the third *ynj wr*, “spiritual” sanctuary, is the work of God, and will not be as the former redemptions: “I will fill

this house with glory”; this is *ynj wr*, “a spiritual” one, for even the walls shall be *μyynj wr*, “spiritual” — for even all this “house” shall be “spiritual”; for that which was then built, which is the second, shall be turned into another a “spiritual” one:”

and which has been already done, and is what the apostle means here, the church, under the Gospel dispensation, or the Gospel church state, in opposition to the worldly sanctuary, and carnal worship of the Jews.

An holy priesthood; in allusion to the priests under the law, who were set apart, and sanctified for that office; but now, under the Gospel, all the saints are priests unto God, and are all appointed and directed

to offer up spiritual sacrifices; their whole selves, souls, and bodies, as a holy, living, and acceptable sacrifice; their prayers and praises, and all good works done in faith, and from love, and to the glory of God; particularly acts of kindness and beneficence to poor saints; these are called spiritual, in distinction from legal sacrifices, and because offered in a spiritual manner, under the influence, and by the assistance of the Spirit of God, and with their spirits. So the Jews speak of spiritual sacrifices, as distinct from material ones:

“the intellectual sacrifice (they say ^{f47}) is before the material sacrifices, both in time and excellency. — Cain brought an offering to the Lord of the fruit of the earth, and behold the intellectual attention did not agree with it, which is *ynj wrh ^brq*, “the spiritual sacrifice”.”

Now such are

acceptable to God by Jesus Christ; through whom they are offered up; for it is through him the saints have access to God, present themselves to him, and their services; and both persons and services are only accepted in Christ, and for his sake, and in virtue of his sacrifice, which is always of a sweet smelling savour to God.

Ver. 6. *Wherefore also it is contained in the Scripture*, etc.] (⁻²³⁸⁶Isaiah 28:16). This is produced as a proof of the excellency of Christ, as compared to a stone; and of his usefulness in the spiritual building; and of his being chosen of God, and precious, though rejected by men; and of the happiness, comfort, and safety of those that believe in him. That this

prophecy belongs to the Messiah, is the sense of some of the Jewish writers: the Targum on it applies it to a mighty king; it does not mention the King Messiah, as Galatinus^{f48} cites it; but Jarchi expressly names him, and interprets it of him:

behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious; Christ is here called a chief corner stone, as in (⁴⁰²⁰Ephesians 2:20) because he not only adorns and strengthens the building, but unites the parts, and keeps them together, even all the saints, Jews or Gentiles, in all ages and places, whether in heaven or earth; and he, as such, is chosen of God for that purpose, and is precious both to God and man, on that account; and is a stone, not of men's laying, but of God's laying in his council, covenant, promises, and prophecies, in the mission of him into this world, and in the Gospel ministry; the place where he is laid is in Sion, the Gospel church, of which he is both the foundation and corner stone: and this account is introduced with a "behold", it being something very wonderful, and worthy of attention: to which is added,

he that believeth on him shall not be confounded: or "ashamed"; of the foundation and cornerstone Christ, nor of his faith in him; and he shall not be confounded by men or devils, neither in this world, nor in that to come; he shall have confidence before Christ, and not be ashamed at his coming; he shall be safe now, being laid on this stone; nor shall he be removed from it, or intimidated by any enemy, so as to flee from it; nor shall he make haste, as it is in (²³⁸⁶Isaiah 28:16) to lay another foundation; and he shall be found upon this hereafter; so that his person and state will be safe, though many of his works may be burnt up.

Ver. 7. *Unto you therefore which believe*, etc.] And such are not all they that can say their creed, or give their assent to the articles of it; nor all that believe a divine revelation, and that the Scriptures are the word of God, and give credit to all that is contained in the sacred oracles; or who believe the whole Gospel, and all the truths of it; as that there is one God; that there are three persons in the Godhead, Father, Son, and Spirit; that Christ is the Son of God, and truly God; that he is the Mediator between God and man; that he is the Messiah, is become incarnate, has obeyed, suffered, and died for men, and is the Saviour of them: that he rose again, ascended to heaven, is set down at the right hand of God, intercedes for his people, and will come a second time to judge the world in righteousness; together with all other truths which arise from, depend upon, and are connected with

these; nor all that say they believe, or profess to do so; but such who have seen themselves lost and undone by sin, their need of a Saviour, and Christ as the only one; who have seen the Son, the beauty of his person, the fulness of his grace, and the necessity and suitableness of salvation by him; who have beheld him as able to save them, as every way proper for them, and desirable by them, for faith is a sight of Christ; who also come to him under the drawings of efficacious grace, as perishing sinners, encouraged by his invitations and declarations, and venture on him; who likewise lay hold upon him, as their Saviour, and will have no other; give up themselves to him, and commit their all into his hands; who rely and stay themselves upon him, trust him with all they have, and for all they want, expecting grace and glory from him; who live upon him, and walk on in him, go on believing in him, till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls. Now to these, in proof of what is asserted in the above passage out of Isaiah, Christ is

precious; he is so in all his names and titles, as Immanuel, God with us, and that cluster of them in (²³⁰⁶ Isaiah 9:6) and particularly his name Jesus, a Saviour, which is as ointment poured forth, and draws the love of believers to him; and so he is in both his natures, divine and human; the perfections of deity in him, his being in the form of God, and equal to him, the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, render him very amiable in the view of believers; who rightly conclude from hence, that all he has done, and does, must answer the purposes for which they are designed; and his having a perfect human nature, like to theirs, excepting sin, in which he wrought salvation for them on earth, and is now glorified in heaven, makes him a delightful object to them: he is also precious to them in all his offices; in his priestly office, his blood is precious, as it must needs be, since by it they are purchased and redeemed; they are justified and sanctified by it; through it they have the forgiveness of sin, and boldness to enter into the holiest of all: his righteousness is precious to them, it being the best robe, the wedding garment, fine linen, clean and white, every way suitable to them, and answerable to the demands of the law; is pure, perfect, and everlasting; that by which they are justified from all things, and which will answer for them in a time to come, and entitles them to eternal life. His sacrifice is precious, of a sweet smelling savour to them, as well as to God; by which their sins are fully expiated, put, and taken away; full satisfaction being made for them, and they themselves thereby perfected for ever. And so he is in his prophetic

office. His word is precious, and all the truths of the Gospel, which are comparable to gold, silver, and precious stones; the promises of it are exceeding great and precious, being suited to the cases of all believers: and he is also precious in his kingly office; his commands are not grievous; his yoke is easy, and burden light; believers love his commandments above gold, yea; above fine gold, and esteem his precepts concerning all things to be right, and delight in his ways and ordinances: moreover, he is precious to them in all his relations, as he is the head of eminence and influence, their kind and loving husband, their everlasting Father, their affectionate brother, and faithful friend; his whole person, in every view, is precious to them that believe; the church of Christ, the members of his body, the sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold, in these is all the delight of saints; everything that is in Christ, that is of him, or belongs to him, is precious to such souls: some read the words, “to you therefore that believe, he is honour”; as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions; and so the word is rendered in (^{<S17>}Romans 13:7), he is both an honour to them, that they are related to him; and he is honoured by them, by believing in him, and obeying him; and he is the cause of all their true honour, both in this and the other world. The Syriac version renders it, “to therefore is this honour given”; namely, that such a stone is laid, and that they were built upon it, and should not be confounded or ashamed, either here or hereafter; connecting the words with the preceding. The Septuagint use the word the apostle here does, in (^{<S110>}Isaiah 11:10) where it is prophesied of the Messiah, that his rest shall be glorious; they render it τιμη, “honour”, or “precious”. The Jewish writers have adopted the word ymyj into their language, and use it for profit and gain^{f49}; in which sense it is applicable to Christ, who is gain to believers, both in life and in death; they being blessed with all spiritual blessings in him, and he being all in all to them: and also they use it, as denoting the intrinsic price and value of anything^{f50}, and which is a right sense of the word; and to believers the price of wisdom, or Christ, is far above rubies, and all the things that can be desired; to them he is precious as a stone, as a foundation and corner stone, and more precious than the most precious stones or things in nature; this he is to them that believe: next follows, in this and the other verse, the account of what he is to them that believe not:

but unto them which be disobedient; who are not persuadable, unbelieving, and are children of disobedience; who neither obey God and his righteous law, nor Christ and his Gospel:

the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner; reference is manifestly had to (^{<4382>}Psalm 118:22) which is a passage that clearly belongs to the Messiah, and which is suggested by Christ himself, (see Gill on "^{<4114>}Matthew 21:42"); and is by our apostle, in (^{<4411>}Acts 4:11,12) applied unto him: by the builders are meant the rulers of the Jews, both civil and ecclesiastical, and especially the latter, the Scribes, Pharisees, and chief priests; who set up for builders of the church of God, but were miserable ones; they built themselves, and taught others to build, on the observance of the ceremonial law, and the traditions of the elders; on their carnal privileges, and moral righteousness; and these disallowed of Christ in the building, rejected him as the Messiah, refused him as the Saviour and Redeemer, and set him at nought, had him in the utmost derision, and reckoned him as a worm, and no man; but, to their great mortification, he is not only laid and retained as the foundation and cornerstone, but made the head of the building, and is exalted at God's right hand above angels and men; he is the head of the body, the church; he is higher than the kings of the earth, and angels are subject to him.

Ver. 8. *And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence*, etc.] The apostle alludes to (^{<2184>}Isaiah 8:14) and which is a prophecy of the Messiah; (see Gill on "^{<6103>}Romans 9:33") and had its accomplishment in the unbelieving and disobedient Jews; who stumbled at his birth and parentage; at the manner of his birth, being born of a virgin; at the meanness of his parents, his supposed father being a carpenter, and his mother, Mary, a poor woman, when they expected the Messiah would have sprung from some rich and noble family; and at the place of his birth, which they imagined was Galilee, from his education and conversation there; they stumbled also at his education, and could not conceive how he should know letters, and from whence he should have his wisdom, having never been trained up in any of their schools and academies, or at the feet of any of their doctors and Rabbins; but, on the other hand, was brought up and employed in the trade of a carpenter; they stumbled at his outward meanness and poverty, when they expected the Messiah would be a rich, powerful, and glorious monarch; and so at the obscurity of his kingdom, which was not of this world, and came not with observation, when they dreamt of an earthly and temporal one, which should be set up in great splendour and glory; and they stumbled likewise at the company he kept, and the audience that attended him, being the poorer sort of the people, and the more illiterate, and also such who had been very profane and wicked, as publicans and

harlots; moreover, they stumbled at his ministry, at the doctrine he preached, particularly at the doctrine of his divinity, and of spiritual communion with him, by eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, and at the doctrines of distinguishing grace; and so at his miracles, by which he confirmed his mission and ministry, some of these being wrought on the sabbath day, and others they imputed to diabolical influence and assistance, in a word, they stumbled at his death, having imbibed a notion that Christ abideth for ever, and especially at the manner of it, the death of the cross; wherefore the preaching of Christ crucified always was, and still is, a stumbling block unto them:

even to them which stumble at the word; either the essential Word, Christ Jesus, as before; or rather at the doctrine of the Gospel, at that part of it which respects a trinity of persons in the Godhead; because their carnal reason could not comprehend it, and they refused to submit to revelation, and to receive the witness of God, which is greater than that of men; and at that part of it which regards the deity of Christ, and that for this reason, because he was a man, and in order to enervate the efficacy of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, and fearing too much honour should be given to him; and also at that part of the word which concerns the distinguishing grace of God, as eternal personal election, particular redemption, and efficacious grace in conversion; against which the carnal mind of man is continually cavilling and replying, and, in so doing, against God himself, charging him with cruelty, injustice, and insincerity; and particularly at that part of the word which holds forth the doctrine of free justification, by the righteousness of Christ; this was the grand stumbling block of the Jews, who sought for righteousness, not by faith, but, as it were, by the works of the law, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and of the spirituality of the law, and of themselves, and their own righteousness, of which they had an overweening opinion:

being disobedient; to the Gospel revelation, and unwilling to submit their carnal reason to it; this is the source and cause of their stumbling at Christ and his Gospel: it is worth while to compare this with the paraphrase of (~~2084~~ Isaiah 8:14) which passage is here referred to; and the paraphrase of it runs thus;

““if ye obey not”, his word shall be among you for revenge, and for a stone smiting, and for a rock of offence to both houses of the

princes of Israel, and for destruction and offence to those who are divided upon the house of Judah, etc.”

whereunto also they were appointed; both to stumble at the word of the Gospel, and at Christ, the sum and substance of it, he being set in the counsel and purpose of God, as for the rising of some, so for the stumbling and falling of others; and also to that disobedience and infidelity which was the cause of their stumbling; for as there are some whom God appointed and foreordained to believe in Christ, on whom he has determined to bestow true faith in him, and who have it as a pure gift, in consequence of such appointment; so there are others, whom he has determined to leave in that disobedience and infidelity into which the fall brought and concluded them, through which they stumble at Christ, and his word, and, in consequence thereof, justly perish; but this is not the case of all; there are some who are the objects of distinguishing grace and favour, and who are described in the following verse.

Ver. 9. *But ye are a chosen generation*, etc.] Or “kindred”; the phrase is to be seen in the Septuagint, on (²³⁶³Isaiah 43:20), to which, and the following verse, the apostle refers here, and in another part of this text. The allusion is throughout to the people of Israel in general, who, in an external way, were all that is here said; but was only true in a spiritual sense of such as were chosen and called among the Jews: and who were a “generation or kindred”; being regenerate, or through abundant mercy begotten, and of an incorruptible seed born again; and were akin to God, he being their Father, and they his children by adopting grace, and which was made manifest by their new birth; and also akin to Christ, he being their head, husband, Father, and brother, and they his members, spouse, children, and brethren; and to the saints, being of the same household and family in heaven and in earth; having the same Father, Lord, Spirit, faith, baptism, and they all brethren: and they were a “chosen” generation or kindred; being famous, and in high esteem with God, and accounted by him for a generation; he having chosen them above all kindreds, tongues, people, and nations, and that from all eternity; and of his own sovereign good will and pleasure; and not on account of their faith, holiness, and good works; and to special benefits, to the relation and kindred they are in, to grace here, and glory hereafter; to regeneration and sanctification, and to salvation and eternal life; just as Israel, as a nation, were chosen above all others, because of the love of God to them, and for no other reason, to many external privileges and favours, which others did not enjoy: now the apostle mentions this

character first, because God's eternal election is the source and spring of all spiritual blessings, which provides and secures them, and according to which they are bestowed, and with which they are inseparably connected:

a royal priesthood; referring to (^{<2906}Exodus 19:6), where the Israelites are called a “kingdom of priests”; which the Chaldee paraphrase renders, kings, priests; (see ^{<6006}Revelation 1:6) a character which one of the Jewish commentators says ^{f51} shall return to the Jews **abl dyt [l** , “in time to come”; and well agrees with all the people of Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, who are all of them kings, through their relation to Christ; and at the present time have a kingdom which cannot be moved, or taken away from them; being not only brought into the Gospel dispensation, the kingdom of the Messiah, and having a right to all the privileges and immunities of it, but have also the kingdom of grace set up within them, or grace, as a reigning principle, implanted in them; which lies not in anything external, but in righteousness and true holiness, in inward peace, and spiritual joy; and they have the power of kings over sin, Satan, and the world; and the riches of kings, being possessed of the riches of grace now, and entitled to the riches of glory in another world; they live like kings, they wear royal apparel, the robe of Christ's righteousness; they sit at the king's table, and feed on royal dainties; and are attended on as kings, angels being their life guards, and ministering spirits to them; and hereafter they shall reign with Christ on earth, and that for the space of a thousand years, and, after that, for ever: being raised up from a low estate, to inherit the crown of glory, to wear the crown of life and righteousness, and possess the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world, of which they are now heirs: and they are “priests”, as well as kings; being made so by Christ, and through his priestly office; are anointed with the Holy Ghost, and sanctified by his grace, and allowed to draw near to God, and offer up by Christ their spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praise; and are enabled and assisted to offer up the sacrifice of a broken heart, and their bodies also, and even their lives when called to it; the allusion is to the kingdom and priesthood being formerly together, and which met in Christ, (^{<3013}Zechariah 6:13) and in his people. The Jews were wont to call the priestly dignity and office **hnhk rtk**, “the crown of the priesthood” ^{f52}:

an holy nation; referring to the same place in (^{<2906}Exodus 19:6) where the Israelites are so called, being separated by God from other nations, and legally and externally sanctified by him; as all the true Israel of God are

sanctified, or set apart by God the Father, in eternal election, to real and perfect holiness; and are sanctified or cleansed from sin, by the blood and sacrifice of Christ; and are internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; have principles of holiness wrought in them, from whence they live holy lives and conversations:

a peculiar people; as the Israelites are called a “peculiar treasure”, (^{<4095>}Exodus 19:5) to which the reference is: God's elect are a peculiar people, to whom he bears a peculiar love; they are chosen by him to be a special people above all others, and have peculiar blessings bestowed on them, and peculiar care is taken of them; they are the Lord's, **hl gs**, his treasure, his jewels, his portion and inheritance, and therefore he will preserve and save them; they are a people for acquisition, purchase, and possession, as the words may be rendered; whom God has obtained, procured, and purchased for himself, with the precious blood of his Son; hence the Syriac version renders them, **aqyrp açnk**, “a redeemed company”: the same with the church God has purchased with his blood, (^{<4018>}Acts 20:28) and the purchased possession, (^{<4014>}Ephesians 1:14) and which are redeemed and purified to be, and appear to be a peculiar people, zealous of good works, (^{<5014>}Titus 2:14) the end of all which grace being bestowed upon them in election, redemption, and regeneration, is,

that ye should show forth the praises of him; that is, God, who has chosen them into a spiritual kindred and relation, made them kings and priests, sanctified them by his Spirit, and redeemed them by his Son, as a peculiar people; all which laid them under obligation to show forth with their lips, and in their lives and conversations, his “virtues”: we read, “praises”; and so the Syriac version; that is, the power, wisdom, goodness, love, grace, and mercy of God, and the commendations of them, displayed in the above instances: the apostle seems to have his eye on (^{<2361>}Isaiah 43:21), where the Septuagint use the same word for “praise”, as here: next follows a periphrasis of God, and in it an argument, or reason for speaking of his virtues, and showing forth his praise:

who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light; which is to be understood, not of an external call by the ministry of the word only; for many are called in this sense, who are not chosen, redeemed, and sanctified; but of an internal, special, powerful, holy, and heavenly calling, by the Spirit and grace of God: and this is, “out of darkness”; out of the darkness of the law, under the former dispensation, which was as night, in

comparison of the Gospel day; and out of that darkness which the Jews were particularly in, in and about the coming of Christ, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and the spirituality of the law; having lost all right notions of the Messiah, and the true sense of the Scriptures, and were carried away with the traditions of the elders, and led by blind guides, the Scribes and Pharisees; out of this darkness, as well as what is common to men, in a state of unregeneracy, having no sight of themselves, their sin, and misery, nor knowledge of divine things, of God in Christ, and of salvation by him, and of the work of the Spirit upon the heart, they were called,

into his marvellous light: by which they saw the exceeding sinfulness of sin, the insufficiency of their righteousness, their need of Christ, and salvation by him; and astonishing it was to them, that they who were born blind, and were brought up in darkness, and were darkness itself, should be made light in the Lord; and the objects they saw were amazing to them; everything in a spiritual way was marvellous in their eyes; especially the sun of righteousness, the light of the world, and also the wonderful things out of the law, or doctrine of Christ, the Gospel, and the surprising love and grace of God, in the whole, and in the several parts of their salvation: it was with them, as if a child, from the moment of its birth, was shut up in a dungeon, where there was not the least crevice to let in the least degree of light, and should continue here till at years of maturity, and then be brought out at once, at noonday, the sun shining in its full strength and glory, when that particularly, and all objects about him, must strike him with wonder and surprise. The Syriac version renders it, “his most excellent light”; the apostle seems to refer to the form of praise and thanksgiving used by the Jews, at the time of the passover; who say ^{f53},

“we are bound to confess, to praise, to glorify, etc. him who hath done for our fathers, and for us, all these wonders; he hath brought us out of bondage to liberty; from sorrow to joy, and from mourning to a good day, *I wdg rwal hl ypamw*, “and out of darkness into great light”; and from subjection unto redemption.”

This was also part of their morning prayer ^{f54};

“I confess before thee, O my God, and the God of my fathers, that thou hast brought me out of darkness into light.”

And it is to be observed, that the third Sephira, or number, in the Jewish Cabalistic tree, which answers to the third Person in the Trinity, among other names, is called, “marvellous light”^{f55}.

Ver. 10. *Which in time were not a people*, etc.] A “Loammi” being put upon them; (see ^{<2000>}Hosea 1:9,10 2:23) to which the apostle here refers: God's elect, whether among Jews or Gentiles, were, from eternity, his chosen people, and his covenant people; and, as such, were given to Christ, and they became his people, and his care and charge; and he saved them by his obedience, sufferings, and death, and redeemed them to himself, a peculiar people: but then, before conversion, they are not a people formed by God for himself, and his praise; nor Christ's willing people, either to be saved by him, or to serve him; nor are they, nor can they be truly known by themselves, or others, to be the people of God: the Syriac version gives the true sense of the phrase, by rendering it “these who before were not” [~]wbcj , “reckoned or accounted a people”; that is, by others:

but are now the people of God; being regenerated, called, and sanctified, they are avouched by God to be his people; they have the witness of the Spirit to their spirits, that they are the people of God; they can then claim their relation to God, and are known, acknowledged, and called the people of God, by others:

which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy; being called formerly, Loruhamah, (^{<2006>}Hosea 1:6 2:23) which passages the apostle has in view: before conversion there is mercy in God's heart towards his elect, and so there is in the covenant of grace, and which was shown in the provision of his Son, as a Saviour, in the mission of him, and redemption by him; but this is not manifested to them, until they are begotten again, according to abundant mercy, and then they obtain mercy; having in their regeneration an evident display of the mercy of God towards them, and an application of his pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of his Son, unto them.

Ver. 11. *Dearly beloved, I beseech you*, etc.] The apostle, from characters of the saints, and which express their blessings and privileges, with great beauty, propriety, and pertinency, passes to exhortations to duties; he addresses the saints under this affectionate appellation, “dearly beloved”, to express his great love to them, and to show that what he was about to exhort them to sprung from sincere and hearty affection for them, and was

with a view to their real good; nor does he in an authoritative way command, as he might have done, as an apostle, but, as a friend, he entreats and beseeches them:

as strangers and pilgrims; not in a literal sense, though they were in a foreign country, in a strange land, and sojourners there, but in a spiritual and mystical sense; they were “strangers”, not to God and Christ, and to the Spirit, to themselves, to the saints, and to all that is good, as they had formerly been, but to the world, the men of it, and the things in it; and therefore it became them to separate from it, and not conform to it; to abstain from all appearance of evil, to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts: and they were “pilgrims”; whose habit is Christ and his righteousness; whose food is Christ and his fulness; whose staff is Christ and the promises; whose guide is the blessed Spirit; the place for which they are bound is heaven, the better country, where is their Father's house, their friends, and their inheritance; this world not being their country, nor their resting place, it became them to have their conversation in heaven, and to

abstain from fleshly lusts; which spring from the flesh, and are concerned about fleshly things, and are exercised in and by the members of the flesh, or body; hence, in the Syriac version, they are called, “the lusts of the body”: these are to be abstained from; not that the apostle thought that they could be without them; for while the saints are in the body, flesh, or corrupt nature will be in them, and the lusts thereof; but then these are not to be indulged, or provision to be made for them, to fulfil them; they are not to be obeyed and served, or lived unto, but to be denied and crucified, being unsuitable to the character of strangers and pilgrims, and also because of their hurtful and pernicious nature:

which war against the soul; (see ^{<8723>}Romans 7:23 ^{<500>}James 4:1 ^{<2163>}Song of Solomon 6:13), these are enemies to the spiritual peace, comfort, and welfare of the soul; and being of a man's household, and in his heart, are the worst enemies he has; and are to be treated as such, to be shunned and avoided, watched and guarded against; for though they cannot destroy the souls of true believers, they may bring much leanness upon them, and greatly distress them, and spoil them of their inward joy, and spiritual pleasure.

Ver. 12. *Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles*, etc.] To have the conversation honest, is to provide things honest in the sight of

men; to live and walk honestly before all; to do those things which are right and honest in the sight of God, and among men; to order the conversation aright, according to the law of God, which is a rule of walk and conversation, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; and which was the more, and rather to be attended to, because these converted Jews were “among the Gentiles”, that knew not God; idolaters, and unbelievers, profane sinners, who were watching for their halting, and that they might take an advantage against them, and the Gospel, and the religion they professed, from their conversations:

that whereas they speak against you as evildoers: charging them with the grossest immoralities, as the Heathens did the Christians in the first ages; which appears evidently from the apologies of Tertullian, Justin Martyr, and others; though it seems that the Jewish converts are here intended, who were accused by the Gentiles of seditious principles and practices, and of acting contrary to the laws of civil government, refusing to yield subjection to Gentile magistrates, and obedience to Heathen masters; and hence the apostle, in some following verses, enlarges on those duties, and which he exhorts them to attend unto, that they might put to silence the ignorance of such foolish accusers: and

that they may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation; or “trial”, or “examination”, as the Syriac version renders it; which may be understood either of human or divine visitation; if of the former, then the sense is, let the saints attend to all the duties of civil life, that when Heathen magistrates come to visit their several districts, and inquire and examine into the conduct of men, and seeing and finding that the Christians behave well and orderly, instead of persecuting them, they will bless God that they are such good subjects; if of divine visitation, which seems most likely, this must either design a visitation by way of judgment, or of mercy; for as the Jews say ^{f56}, there is *hdyqp*, “a visitation”, for good, and a visitation for evil: God sometimes visits in a way of punishment for sin, and sometimes in away of grace, for the good and welfare of men; and then the sense is, that when wicked men take notice of and observe the good works of the saints, their civil, honest, and orderly conversation, they shall glorify God on that account, who has enabled them to perform them; and acknowledge the goodness of them, and the wrong judgment they have passed upon them, and the ill measure they have measured out to them; and this will be, either when God visits them in a way of wrath, as at the day of judgment, or at the time of some

temporal calamity before, or when he visits them in a way of mercy, calls them by his grace, and effectually works upon them by his Spirit: the same argument for the performance of good works is used by Christ, in (~~41516~~ Matthew 5:16).

Ver. 13. *Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man*, etc.] Or, “to every human creation”, or “creature”; not to “all the sons of men”, as the Syriac version renders it; or to all the individuals of mankind; for there are some that are in such stations and circumstances, that they are not to be submitted to, but to be ruled over, and governed: so kings are not to submit to their subjects, nor are parents to be subject to their children, nor husbands to their wives, nor masters to their servants, which would be preposterous; but submission is limited and restrained to persons in such a place and situation: “the human creature”, or “creation”, here designs the Gentiles, who are elsewhere called the creature, the whole creation, every creature, and every creature under heaven, (~~41819~~ Romans 8:19-22 ~~41615~~ Mark 16:15 ~~50023~~ Colossians 1:23) and particularly Heathen magistrates, styled creation, or creature: not as men, for all men, as such, are creatures; but as magistrates, being created, constituted, and appointed such, and installed into, and invested with such an office: and “human”; not only because they were men, and were taken out from among men that bore the office of magistrates, and governed over men, and were for the good and advantage of mankind, but because they were created and placed in such a station by men; though government itself is of God, is a divine institution, yet this and that particular form of government is of man; and especially the forms of government among the Gentiles were human; and are here so called, in distinction from the form of government among the Jews, which was a theocracy, and was divine; wherefore the Jews, and so these converted ones, scrupled yielding obedience to Heathen magistrates; on which account they were spoken against, as evildoers; hence the apostle, in the first place, and as a principal part of their honest conversation among the Gentiles, exhorts them to submission to civil magistrates, though they were creatures of men; and to everyone of them, though a Gentile, an unbeliever, and a wicked man: and this he urges,

for the Lord's sake; for the sake of Christ Jesus the Lord, because of his command, who ordered to give to Caesar the things that are Caesar's; and in imitation of him, who paid tribute to whom tribute was due; and for the sake of his honour and glory, who was ill thought and spoken of by the Gentiles, because of the disregard of the converted Jews to their

magistrates; and which served to prejudice them against Christ and his Gospel: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read, “for God's sake”; because civil government is of God; magistracy is of divine appointment; the powers that he are ordained of God, though this or the other form is of man's prescription: it is the command of God that magistrates should be obeyed; and it makes for his glory, as well as for the good of men, when they are submitted to in things that do not contradict the revealed will of God; for otherwise, not man, but God, is to be obeyed:

whether it be to the king; to Caesar, the Roman emperor; and the then reigning one seems to be Nero, who, though a wicked man, was to be submitted to in things civil and lawful; and it holds good of any other king that has the supreme government of a nation: the Syriac version reads it in the plural number, “to kings”; and though the name of king was odious to the Romans, from the times of Tarquin, nor did they call their chief governor, or governors, by this name, yet other nations did; (see ^{<43015>}John 19:15) and subjection was to be yielded to him, “as supreme”; for the sake, and in consideration of his being in so high and exalted a station, having the supreme power and government of the people in his hands. The Syriac version renders it, “because of their power”; and the Arabic version, “because of his power”; and the Ethiopic version, “because all things are his”; the Roman emperors were absolute monarchs; (see ^{<6101>}Romans 13:1).

Ver. 14. *Or unto governors*, etc.] Inferior magistrates, such as were under the Roman emperor; as proconsuls, procurators, etc. such as Pontius Pilate, Felix, and Festus, who had under the emperor the government of particular nations, provinces, and cities:

as unto them that are sent by him; either by the king, the Roman emperor, by whom they were sent, from whom they received their commission, and derived their authority, under whom they acted, and to whom they were accountable; or by God, by whom they are ordained, and whose ministers they are, and for the ends hereafter mentioned; so that this contains an argument or reason why they should be submitted to:

for the punishment of evildoers; the breakers of the laws of God and men, on whom punishment is to be inflicted, by the civil magistrates, for the breach of them, by lines, scourgings, imprisonment, and death itself, according as the crimes are:

and for the praise of them that do well; who behave according to the laws of God and nations, and are obedient to magistrates, and subject to every ordinance; these have praise of men, of magistrates, and are rewarded by them; by protecting their persons, defending their properties, and preserving them in the peaceable enjoyment of their estates and possessions; (see ~~613B~~ Romans 13:3).

Ver. 15. *For so is the will of God*, etc.] Which refers not so much to what goes before; though it is a truth, that it is the will of God that men should be subject to magistrates, and that magistrates should encourage virtue, and discourage vice, reward the obedient, and punish delinquents; but to what follows:

that with well doing; by doing good works, and those well; by living soberly, righteously, and godly; by having the conversation honest among the Gentiles, agreeably to the law of God, and as becomes the Gospel of Christ; particularly, by living according to the laws of civil society, so far as is consistent with, and not contrary to the commands of God; and by being subject to every civil magistrate, and ordinance of man:

ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men: or, as the Syriac version renders it, “that ye may stop the mouths of those foolish men who know not God”; or, as the Ethiopic version has it, “who know not these things”; who are ignorant of God, of his righteousness, of his law, his Gospel, and ordinances. The Gentiles were very ignorant of these things, and very foolish in their imaginations about religious affairs; and from this their ignorance and folly arose calumnies, reflections, and censures upon the people of God; they neither knew God, nor them, nor true religion, and reproached what they understood not, and for want of knowing it: now the apostle signified, that it was the declared will of God that his people should so behave in civil life, that their enemies should be entirely confounded, and silenced, and have nothing to say against them; the word signifies to be muzzled, to have the mouth shut up, as with a bit or bridle; it is used in (~~412D~~ Matthew 22:12 ~~410D~~ 1 Corinthians 9:9).

Ver. 16. *As free*, etc.] These converted Jews might value themselves on their freedom, partly as the descendants of Abraham, and so freeborn, and not to be brought into bondage to other people; and chiefly because of their liberty which they had in and by Christ Jews. The apostle allows that they were freemen, that they were Christ's freemen, were free from sin, its damning and domineering power, and from the curses and condemnation of

the law, and had freedom of access to God, and a right to all the privileges and immunities of the house of God; but then they were not free to sin, and to live in the contempt of the laws of God and men, to despise government, speak evil of dignities, and break in upon the rules of civil society:

and not using your liberty as a cloak of maliciousness; under a pretence of Christian liberty, to hurt the persons, properties, and estates of men, without looking upon themselves accountable for their conduct to their superiors: some think the apostle alludes to the ancient custom of servants, who, when they were made free, walked with a cap, or covering on their heads, in token of it: it follows,

[but] as the servants of God; for they that are free are the servants of God and Christ, and show themselves to be so by submitting to and obeying those that are under them, and ordained by them; and which is no ways inconsistent with, and contrary to their Christian liberty, which never was designed to thwart and subvert the principles of natural religion, laws of a moral nature, or the rules of civil government; some instances of which are next mentioned.

Ver. 17. *Honour all men*, etc.] To whom honour is due, according to the place, station, and circumstances in which they are, the gifts of providence and grace bestowed on them, and the usefulness they are of, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, rich or poor, believers or unbelievers: it is a saying of Ben Zoma^{f57},

“who is to be honoured, or is worthy of honour? *twyrbh ta dbkm*, “he that honoureth creatures”;

meaning men in general, or the Gentiles particularly, who were sometimes so called by the Jews; (see Gill on “⁴¹⁶⁵Mark 16:15”), and may be meant by “all men” here:

love the brotherhood; or “your brethren”, as the Syriac version renders it: the whole company of the brethren in Christ, who are born of God, are members of Christ, and of the same body, and have the same spirit, belong to the same family, and are of the household of faith, let them be of whatsoever nation, or in whatsoever circumstances of life. The Jews had not that good opinion of, nor that affection for the Gentiles, but were ready to treat them with indifference, neglect, and contempt; and not only those that knew not God, but even believing Gentiles themselves; and which is

the reason of these exhortations, that they should despise no man, but honour all; and especially should express their love, both by words and deeds, to those that were in the same spiritual relation with them, and that without any difference, on account of their being of another nation:

fear God; not with a servile, but a filial fear, the new covenant grace of fear; which springs from the goodness of God, has that for its object, and is increased by the fresh instances and discoveries of it; and which shows itself in a reverential affection for God, a strict regard to his worship and ordinances, and a carefulness of offending him. This is placed between what goes before, and follows after, to show the influence it has on each of them; for where the fear of God is, there will be due respect shown to all men, more or less, and an hearty and affectionate love to all the saints, as brethren, and a proper regard to those that are set in high places of dignity and power:

honour the king; Caesar, the Roman emperor, though a wicked, persecuting Nero, and so any other king or governor; who, so far as he acts the part of a civil magistrate, preserves the peace, the property, and liberty of his subjects, is a terror to evil works, and an encourager of good ones, and rules according to the laws of God, and civil society, is deserving of great honour and esteem from men; and which is to be shown by speaking well of him; by a cheerful subjection to him; by an observance of the laws, and by payment of tribute, and doing everything to make him easy, and honourable in his government: advice much like this is given by Isocrates^{f58};

“fear God, honour parents, revere friends, and obey the laws.”

Ver. 18. *Servants, be subject to your masters*, etc.] This was another notion of the Jews, that because they were the seed of Abraham, they ought not to be the servants of any; and particularly such as were believers in Christ thought they ought not to serve unbelieving masters, nor indeed believing ones, because they were equally brethren in Christ with them; hence the Apostle Peter, here, as the Apostle Paul frequently elsewhere, inculcates this duty of servants to their masters; (see ^{<407>}1 Corinthians 7:20,21 ^{<408>}Ephesians 6:5 ^{<512>}Colossians 3:22 ^{<540>}1 Timothy 6:1) (^{<519>}2 Timothy 2:9) the manner in which they are to be subject to them is,

with all fear; with reverence to their persons, strict regard to their commands, faithfulness in any trust reposed in them, diligence in the discharge of their duty, and carefulness of offending them: and all this,

not only to the good and gentle; those that are good natured, kind, beneficent, and merciful; that do not use them with rigour and severity; are moderate in their demands of service; require no more to be done than what is reasonable; allow them sufficient diet, give them good wages, and pay them duly:

but also to the froward; the ill natured, morose, and rigorous; who exact more labour than is requisite; give hard words, and harder blows; withhold sufficiency of food from them, and keep back the hire of their labours.

Ver. 19. *For this is thankworthy*, etc.] Or “grace”; this is a fruit and effect of grace, an instance of it, in which it shows itself: the Syriac version adds, “with God”; and so it is read in one of Beza's copies, and in the Alexandrian copy, and some others; that is, this is grateful to God, and acceptable with him; as in (⁴¹²²1 Peter 2:20),

if a man for conscience towards God; or, “for a good conscience”, as the Syriac version reads it; for acting according to his conscience, in matters of religion, in the things of God; “for the knowledge of God”, as the Arabic version renders it; for the knowledge of God in Christ; for the Gospel of Christ, and a profession of it: or, “for God”, as the Ethiopic version; for the cause of God and truth, and for the sake of things appertaining to God, and that make for his glory:

endure grief; what occasions grief, as severe words, bitter reproaches, hard censures, and heavy blows; and that with patience, and without murmuring, and with resignation to the will of God:

suffering wrongfully; there being no just cause for an ill look, word, or blow, to be given.

Ver. 20. *For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults*, etc.] Which ye have committed, and are guilty of, and are truly such:

ye shall take it patiently? to be silent, and not murmur when beaten, within measure, for real faults, is no great honour, nor does it deserve any praise; it is the least that can be done:

but if, when ye do well; either in their master's service, or rather in the business of religion, and the things of God; as when what they do is according to the will of God, and from love to him, and in faith, and in the name and strength of Christ, and to the glory of God; without all which there is no well doing:

and suffer for it; reproach and persecution, by words or blows, in person or property:

ye take it patiently; without grieving and repining, or answering again, and making any returns:

this is acceptable with God; is agreeably to his will, and grateful in his sight, what he is well pleased with, is reckoned grace with him; and though it is his own grace, and of his own bestowing, he will reward it with glory.

Ver. 21. *For even hereunto were ye called*, etc.] Both to well doing, of which none but those who are called with an holy and effectual calling are capable; and which they are fitted for, and are under obligation to perform, and to suffer for so doing, which they must always expect, and to patience in suffering for it, which highly becomes them. This being then one end of the saints' effectual calling, is made use of as an argument to engage them to the exercise of the grace of patience in suffering for well doing; and another follows:

because Christ also suffered for us; in our room and stead, to fulfil the law, satisfy the justice of God, and make reconciliation for sin; and not only for our good, or merely as a martyr, to confirm the truth of his doctrine, or barely as an example to us, though this also is true: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read, “for you”; for you servants, as well as others, and therefore should cheerfully and patiently suffer for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel; and the rather, because he suffered,

leaving us, or “you”, as the same copies, and the Vulgate Latin version read,

an example that ye should follow his steps: Christ is an example to his people in the exercise of grace, as of faith, love, zeal, meekness, and humility; and in the discharge of duty, in his regard to the commands of the moral law, and positive institutions of religion; in his constancy in prayer; in frequent attendance on public worship; in his submission to the ordinance of baptism, and his celebration of the supper; and likewise in his

sufferings; and in his meekness, patience, courage, and resignation to the will of God, which is what is here intended, and in which his people are to fellow and imitate him.

Ver. 22. *Who did no sin*, etc.] He was in the likeness of sinful flesh; he looked like a sinful man, being born of a sinful woman, and keeping company with sinful men, being himself a man of sorrows, greatly afflicted, and at last put to death. He was traduced as a sinner by his enemies, and had all the sins of his people on him, which he bore, and made satisfaction for, and were the reason of his sufferings; but he had no sin in his nature, nor did he commit any in his life:

neither was guile found in his mouth; though it was diligently sought for, by the Scribes and Pharisees; there was no deceit in his lips, no falsehood in his doctrine, any more than there was immorality in his conversation; he was an Israelite indeed on all accounts, and in the fullest sense of that phrase; reference is had to (²⁵⁰Isaiah 53:9) and this is observed, partly to show that Christ suffered not for himself, or for any sins of his own, but for the sins of others, for which he was very fit, since he had none of his own; and partly as an argument for patience in suffering; for since Christ suffered, who had no sin, nor did any, nor could any be found in him, charged upon him, and proved against him; and which sufferings of his he bore with patience; then how much must it become sinful men to bear their sufferings patiently, though they may not be criminal with respect to the things for which they suffer, but yet are so in other things, whereas Christ was not criminal, nor blameworthy in anything?

Ver. 23. *Who when he was reviled, reviled not again*, etc.] When he was reproached as a glutton, a winebibber, a friend of publicans and sinners, all the reply he made was, that Wisdom is justified of her children; and when he was charged with casting out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils, he defended himself, not with bad language, but with strong reasonings; and when he was said to be a Samaritan, and had a devil, his only answer was, that he had not, that he honoured his Father, and they dishonoured him; and when he was reviled on the cross, by those that passed by, by the chief priests, and Scribes, and the thieves that were crucified with him, he made no return, he opened not his mouth, and much less in a recriminating way.

When he suffered he threatened not; when he endured buffetings, and scourgings in his body, when the officers in the palace of the high priests

spit in his face, buffeted him, and smote him with the palms of their hands, and bid him prophesy who smote him, all which were very provoking; yet he said not one word to them, much less threatened them with what he would do to them for such usage another day, when he would let them know, with vengeance, who it was that smote him; no, he took all patiently from them, and from Pilate, and the Roman soldiers, when scourged by them; he gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked off the hair; and when he suffered crucifixion, and was put to such distressing pains and agonies, he did not threaten his crucifiers with a future judgment, when he would take vengeance, and execute his wrath upon them, but prays to his Father for the forgiveness of their sins: and, as it follows;

but committed [himself] to him that judgeth righteously; he commended his Spirit, or soul, to God his Father, and committed his cause to him, to vindicate it in what way he should think fit, who he knew was the Judge of all the earth, that would do right; and so the Syriac version supplies it with *hynyd*, “his judgment”: which he left with God, the righteous Judge, to whom vengeance belongs; and which is an example, and an instruction to the saints to do so likewise; not to render railing for railing, or to seek revenge, but to leave their cause with their God, who will, in his own time, avenge the wrongs and injuries done them. The Vulgate Latin version reads, contrary to all the Greek copies, and other versions, “but delivered himself to him that judgeth unjustly”; the sense of which is, that Christ delivered himself into the hands of Pilate, who unjustly condemned him to death; but is neither the reading, nor sense of the text.

Ver. 24. *Who his own self bare our sins*, etc.] As was typified by the high priest bearing the sins of the holy things of the people of Israel, when he went into the most holy place, and by the scape goat bearing the iniquities of all the people unto a land not inhabited, and as was foretold by the Prophet Isaiah. The apostle here explains the nature and end of Christ's sufferings, which were to make atonement for sins, and which was done by bearing them. What Christ bore were “sins”, even all sorts of sin, original and actual, and every act of sin of his people; and all that is in sin, all that belongs to it, arises from it, and is the demerit of it, as both filth, guilt, and punishment; and a multitude of sins did he bear, even all the iniquities of all the elect; and a prodigious load and weight it was; and than which nothing could be more nauseous and disagreeable to him, who loves righteousness, and hates iniquity: and these sins he bore were not his own, nor the sins of

angels, but of men; and not of all men, yet of many, even as many as were ordained to eternal life, for whom Christ gave his life a ransom, whom he justifies and brings to glory; our sins, not the sins of the Jews only, for Peter was a Jew, and so were those to whom he writes, but of the Gentiles also, even the sins of all his people, for them he saves from their sins, being stricken for them. His “bearing” them was in this manner: he becoming the surety and substitute of his people, their sins were laid upon him by his Father, that is, they were imputed to him, they were reckoned as his, and placed to his account; and Christ voluntarily took them upon himself; he took them to himself, as one may take the debt of another, and make himself answerable for it; or as a man takes up a burden, and lays it on his shoulders; so Christ took up our sins, and “carried” them “up”, as the word here used signifies, alluding to the priests carrying up the sacrifice to the altar, and referring to the lifting up of Christ upon the cross; whither he carried the sins of his people, and bore them, and did not sink under the weight of them, being the mighty God, and the man of God's right hand, made strong for himself; and so made entire satisfaction for them, by enduring the wrath of God, the curse of the law, and all that punishment which was due unto them; and thereby bore them away, both from his people, and out of the sight of God, and his vindictive justice; and removed them as far as the east is from the west, and made a full end of them; and this he himself did, and not another, nor by another, or with the help of another; not by the means of a goat, as the high priest, but by himself; though he was assisted in bearing his cross, yet he had no help in bearing our sins; angels could not help him; his Father stood at a distance from him; there was none to help; his own arm brought salvation to him; but

his own self, who knew no sin, nor did any, he by himself purged away our sins, and made reconciliation for them, by bearing them: and which he did

in his own body, and not another's; in that body which his Father prepared for him, and which he took of the virgin, and was free from sin; though not to the exclusion of his soul, which also was made an offering for sin, and in which he endured great pains and sorrows for sin: and all this

on the tree; the accursed tree, the cross; which is expressive both of the shame and pain of his sufferings and death. The end of which was,

that we being dead to sin; “to our sins”, as the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version read; as all the elect are, through bearing their sins, and suffering death for them, so as that sin shall not be imputed to them; it is as

though it never was; it is dead to them, and they to that, as to its damning power and influence; so as that they are entirely discharged from it, and can never come into condemnation on account of it, and can never be hurt, so as to be destroyed by it; nor by death, either corporeal or eternal, since the sting of death, which is sin, is taken away, and the strength of sin, which is the law, is dead to them, and they to that: in short, through the death of Christ they are so dead to sin, that it is not only finished, made an end of, and put away, but the body of it is destroyed, that it should not be served; which is an end subordinate to the former, and expressed in the next clause:

should live unto righteousness; live, and not die the second death, and live by faith on the righteousness of Christ, for justification of life, and soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world; which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ in bearing sin constrains to, and the redemption by his precious blood lays under an obligation to do; for those whose sins Christ has bore are not their own, but being bought with the price of his blood, they are bound to live to him who has a property in them, and a right to claim all obedience from them:

by whose stripes ye were healed; the passage referred to is in (^{251B}Isaiah 53:5) which is a prophecy of the Messiah, as is acknowledged by the Jews ^{f59}, who say ^{f60},

“this is the King Messiah, who was in the generation of the ungodly, as it is said, (^{251B}Isaiah 53:5) “and with his stripes we are healed”; and for this cause God saved him, that he might save Israel, and rejoice with them in the resurrection of the dead.”

Sin is a disease, a natural and hereditary one, an epidemic distemper, that reaches to all men, and to all the powers and faculties of their souls, and members of their bodies; and which is nauseous and loathsome, and in itself mortal and incurable; nor can it be healed by any creature, or anything that a creature can do. Christ is the only physician, and his blood the balm and sovereign medicine; this cleanses from all sin; through it is the remission of sin, which is meant by healing; for healing of diseases, and forgiving iniquities, is one and the same thing; (see ^{1943B}Psalm 103:3 ^{2333B}Isaiah 33:24 ^{1940B}Psalm 41:4) on which latter text a learned Jew ^{f61} has this note,

“this interpreters explain $h j y l s \hat{w} \check{c} l$, “as expressive of forgiveness”;

and the Jews say, there is no healing of diseases but it signifies forgiveness ^{f62}: it is an uncommon way of healing by the stripes of another. Some think the apostle alludes to the stripes which servants receive from their masters, to whom he was now speaking; and in order to encourage them to bear them patiently, observes, that Christ himself suffered stripes, and that they had healing for their diseases and wounds, by means of his stripes, or through his being wounded and bruised for them.

Ver. 25. *For ye were as sheep going astray*, etc.] This is a proof of their being healed, namely, their conversion; in which an application of the blood of Christ, and pardon, and so healing by it, was made to their souls. The apostle has still in view the prophecy of (²⁵³¹⁶ Isaiah 53:6). God's elect are sheep before conversion; not that they have the agreeable properties of sheep, as to be meek, harmless, innocent, clean, and profitable, for they are the reverse of all this; nor can some things be said of them before conversion, as may be after, as that they hear Christ's voice, and follow him; nor are they so called, because unprejudiced against, and predisposed unto the Gospel, for the contrary is true of them; but they are so in electing grace, and were so considered in the Father's gift of them to Christ, and when made his care and charge, and hence they are called the sheep of his hand; and when Christ laid down his life, and rose again, which he did for the sheep, and as the great Shepherd of them; and when called by grace, for their being sheep, and Christ's own sheep by the Father's gift, and his own purpose, is the reason why he looks them up, calls them by name, and returns them: but then they are not yet of his fold; they are lost sheep, lost in Adam, and by his fall, and by their own actual transgressions; they are as sheep going astray from the shepherd, and from the flock, going out of the right way, and in their own ways; and are, like sheep, stupid and insensible of their danger; and as they never return of themselves, until they are sought for, and brought back: hence it follows,

but are now returned; not returned themselves, but were returned by powerful and efficacious grace: saints are passive, and not active in first conversion; they are turned, not by the power of their own free will, but by the power of God's free grace; they are returned under the illuminations and quickenings of the blessed Spirit, and through the efficacious drawings of the Father's love, unto Christ:

unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls; by whom Christ is meant, who bears the office of a Shepherd, and fully performs it by feeding his

sheep, providing a good fold and pasture for them; by gathering the lambs in his arms, and gently leading those that are with young; by healing their diseases, and preserving them from beasts of prey; hence he is called the good, the great, and chief Shepherd: and he is the “Bishop” or “Overseer” of the souls of his people, though not to the exclusion of their bodies: he has took the oversight of them willingly, and looks well to his flock, inspects into their cases, and often visits them, and never forsakes them; nor will he leave them till they receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls; which he has undertook and effected by his obedience, sufferings and death. Philo the Jew^{f63} observes, that

“to be a shepherd is so good a work, that it is not only a title given to kings and wise men, and souls perfectly purified, but to God the governor of all — -who, as a Shepherd and King, leads according to justice and law, setting over them his right Logos, “the first begotten Son”, who has taken the care of this holy flock, as does the deputy of a great king.”