

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO 1 TIMOTHY 3

In this chapter the apostle treats of the qualifications of officers of churches, bishops and deacons, and of their wives; and points at the principal reason of writing this epistle to Timothy: and first, he commends the office of a bishop, as a good and desirable one; and asserts it to be such in the strongest manner, (^{<548E>}1 Timothy 3:1) and then follow the qualifications for it, some of which are of the economical or domestic kind, and regard him as an husband and parent, and the head of the family; others of a moral nature, and relate to sobriety, hospitality, temperance, patience, and liberality; and others of the ecclesiastical sort, as aptness to teach, and that he should not be a novice in religion; and in general, that he should be a man of a blameless life, and of good report in the world, (^{<548E>}1 Timothy 3:2-7), next an account is given of the qualifications of deacons; some which concern their moral character; others their soundness in the faith; and others their domestic affairs, and their conduct in their families; about which they should be first examined, before they were put into their office; the characters of their wives are also given; and for their encouragement in the faithful performance of their office, it is observed, that they hereby obtain a good degree of honour and boldness in the faith of Christ, (^{<548B>}1 Timothy 3:8-13). And the end of the apostle's writing this epistle, and particularly of giving Timothy this account of the qualifications of the officers of the church of God, is, that he might know whom to appoint over it, and how to conduct himself in it; which he commends from its being the house of God, the church of the living God, and the pillar and ground of truth, (^{<548B>}1 Timothy 3:14,15). Of which truth he gives a summary, in several particulars of it, which open the great mystery of godliness, (^{<548B>}1 Timothy 3:16).

Ver. 1. *This is a true saying*, etc.] Some think this clause belongs to the last verse of the preceding chapter; and then the sense is, this is a doctrine that is true, and to be believed, that there is salvation through the birth of a Son, or through the incarnate Son of God, for men and women that believe in him, and continue in the faith of him, and love to him, joined with works

of righteousness and holiness. And so the same phrase seems to belong to what goes before in (^{<5048>}1 Timothy 4:8,9 ^{<5120>}2 Timothy 2:10,11). Though it regards what follows in (^{<5015>}1 Timothy 1:15) and so it seems that it should be considered here; and is used to excite attention, and suggests that what was about to be said was of moment and importance, and what was without controversy, and unquestionably true. The apostle, having denied to women the work and office of teaching, proceeds to observe, that though this belonged to men, yet not to every man; and therefore he gives the qualifications of such; which might serve as a direction to churches, in the choice of them; as well as be a means of stirring up persons in such an office, to a proper regard to themselves and their work:

if a man desire the office of a bishop; which is the same with that of a pastor or elder; and so here the Syriac version renders it, “if a man desires presbytery, or eldership”; and it lies in preaching the word, administering the ordinances of the Gospel, and taking care of the discipline of the church, and in the visiting, inspection, and oversight of it; as the word **ἐπισκοπή**, “episcopacy”, here used, signifies; and this work and office may be lawfully and laudably desired, with a view to the glory of God, and the good of immortal souls. Nor should any undertake it, but such who find in themselves an hearty desire, and inclination to it, on such principles, and a real delight and pleasure in it; and such an one

he desireth a good work: the office of a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, “is a work”, and a very laborious one; wherefore such are called labourers in the word and doctrine: it is not a mere title of honour, and a place of profit, but it is a business of labour and care; yet a good one, a famous and excellent one; it being an employment in things of the greatest excellency in themselves, and of the greatest usefulness for the good of men, and the honour of God; as the doctrines, ordinances, and discipline of the Gospel; and so must be excellently, honestly, pleasantly, and profitably a good work.

Ver. 2. *A bishop then must be blameless*, etc.] Or “an elder”, as the Syriac version renders it; not that it can be expected that such an one should be entirely free from sin, or be blameless in the sight of God; but that he should be one, who is so before men, and has not been guilty of any notorious and flagitious crime; and particularly, is not chargeable with the vices hereafter mentioned or hinted at. So the priests under the law were to

be without blemish, even in their bodies, (^{<R217>}Leviticus 21:17-23) to which the apostle may here allude.

The husband of one wife; which is not to be understood in a mystical and allegorical sense of his being the pastor of one church, since the apostle afterwards speaks of his house and children, that are to be ruled and kept in good order by him, in distinction from the church of God; but in a literal sense of his conjugal estate; though this rule does not make it necessary that he should have a wife; or that he should not marry, or not have married a second wife, after the death of the first; only if he marries or is married, that he should have but one wife at a time; so that this rule excludes all such persons from being elders, or pastors, or overseers of churches, that were “polygamists”; who had more wives than one at a time, or had divorced their wives, and not for adultery, and had married others. Now polygamy and divorces had very much obtained among the Jews; nor could the believing Jews be easily and at once brought off of them. And though they were not lawful nor to be allowed of in any; yet they were especially unbecoming and scandalous in officers of churches. So the high priest among the Jews, even when polygamy was in use, might not marry, or have two wives, at once; if he did, he could not minister in his office until he divorced one of them ^{f44}. For it is written, (^{<R213>}Leviticus 21:13), “he shall take a wife”, *μϣτϙ αλ ω τϣ α*, “one, and not two”, ^{f45}. And the same that is said of the high priest, is said of all other priests; (see ^{<R42>}Ezekiel 44:22), likewise the Egyptian priests might not marry more wives than one, though others might have as many as they pleased ^{f46}; and so the Flamines among the Romans ^{f47}. An elder or pastor must also be one that is

vigilant; or wakeful and watchful, who is diligent in his business, and attends to his care and charge; is watchful over himself, his words, and actions; and watches for the souls of men, to do them all the good he can; and is sober in body, is temperate, and uses moderation in eating and drinking; and in mind, is modest, humble, and prudent; and so the Vulgate Latin Version renders the word “prudent”: and the Ethiopic version, “a wise man”, one of a sound judgment, a good understanding, and prudent conduct; is not wise above what is written, but thinks soberly of himself, as he ought. The Syriac and Arabic versions render it, “chaste”, as free from intemperance, so from uncleanness: and

of good behaviour: neat and decent in his apparel; modest in his whole deportment and conduct, and affable and courteous to all; beautiful in his

life and conversation, being adorned with every thing that is graceful and comely:

given to hospitality: to the love of strangers, and to the entertainment of them; and especially the saints and fellow ministers, who are exiled, or are travelling for the sake of spreading the Gospel, or upon some lawful and laudable account. These he is to assist by his advice and counsel, and with the necessaries of life, according to his abilities. Abraham and Lot are noted instances of this virtue.

Apt to teach; who has a considerable store of knowledge; is capable of interpreting the Scripture to the edification of others; is able to explain, lay open, and illustrate the truths of the Gospel, and defend them, and refute error; and who is not only able, but ready and willing, to communicate to others what he knows; and who likewise has utterance of speech, the gift of elocution and can convey his ideas of things in plain and easy language, in apt and acceptable words; for otherwise it signifies not what a man knows, unless he has a faculty of communicating it to others, to their understanding and advantage.

Ver. 3. *Not given to wine*, etc.] One that does not sit at it, or is continually drinking it, and is intemperate in the use of it; otherwise it is lawful for persons in such an office to drink wine, and sometimes absolutely necessary; (see ⁵⁴⁷²1 Timothy 5:23) it signifies one that is not given to much wine, as in (⁵⁴⁸⁸1 Timothy 3:8) is not addicted to it, or a follower of it; the Syriac version renders it, “who does not transgress over wine”, or go beyond due bounds in the use of it, who is not immoderate in it; the Arabic version renders it, “not insolent through wine”, as one that is heated with it is fierce and furious, and wrangling and quarrelsome, and often very mischievous and injurious; and this sense is followed by some.

No striker; either with his hands, so the Syriac version, “whose hand is not swift to strike”; not one who is nimble and ready at it, who no sooner is abused or injured, but he lifts up his hands and strikes; is but a word and a blow: or with his tongue; so the Arabic version, “not wounding with his tongue”; being too sharp and severe in the admonitions and reproofs of weak brethren, or fallen believers; and especially, he ought not to use scurrilous, reproachful, and contumelious language to any; (see ⁵⁴⁸⁸Jeremiah 18:18).

Not greedy of filthy lucre; not covetous of getting money, of amassing wealth and riches together; or desirous of popular applause and glory from men. This clause is not in the Alexandrian copy, nor in five of Beza's manuscripts and other copies, nor is it in the Vulgate Latin version, nor in any of the Oriental versions; it seems to be transcribed from (^{<500>}Titus 1:7). And indeed it is unnecessary here; since the same is expressed by the word "covetous", at the end of the verse, and makes that a tautology; and moreover, by leaving out this clause, the opposition appears more manifest, between "no striker" and what follows,

but patient; one who patiently bears all reproaches and injuries, puts up with affronts, and gives up what is his right and due, rather than contend, quarrel, and strike; who is patient towards all men, and does not bear hard on those that have offended, but is moderate and mild, and gentle in his censures, reproofs, and admonitions:

not a brawler; not a quarrelsome litigious person, given to fighting, either with the fist or sword, or any other weapon:

not covetous; or a lover of money in an immoderate way, greedy of worldly substance and riches, and insatiable in his desires after them; niggardly, sordid, and illiberal; acting a mercenary part; seeking his own things, and not the things of Christ; his gain from his quarter, and not the good of souls; and withholding from himself, from his family, and the poor, what ought to be enjoyed by them. Whereas, on the other hand, he ought to be generous and liberal, hospitable and charitable, and ready to communicate on all occasions, according to his abilities.

Ver. 4. *One that ruleth well his own house*, etc.] His family, wife, children, and servants; and is not to be understood of his body, and of keeping of that under, and of preserving it chaste and temperate, as appears from what follows:

having his children in subjection with all gravity; keeping a good decorum in his family; obliging his children to observe his orders, and especially the rules of God's word; and not as Eli, who did not use his authority, or lay his commands upon his sons, nor restrain them from evil, or severely reprove them for their sins, but neglected them, and was too mild and gentle with them; (^{<022>}1 Samuel 2:23 3:13 but like Abraham, who not only taught, but commanded his children and his household, to keep the way of the Lord; (^{<0189>}Genesis 18:19) and so should those act who are in such an

office as is here treated of; and should not only rule well in their families, preside over them, go before them, and set an example to them, and keep their children in obedience and subjection; but this should be “with all gravity”: not only in the master of the family, but in the children; who as their father is, or should be, should be brought up in, and used to gravity in words and in dress; and in the whole of their deportment and conversation. This may be observed against the Papists, who forbid marriage to the ministers of the Gospel.

Ver. 5. *For if a man know not how to rule his own house*, etc.] Which is an affair of less importance, and more easy to be done; not requiring so much resolution, prudence, care, and thought:

how shall he take care of the church of God? preside over it, rule in it, provide for it, and see that everything is in its proper place, and done according to the will of God. The argument is from the lesser to the greater.

Ver. 6. *Not a novice*, etc.] Or one newly planted, the Arabic version adds, “in the faith”; meaning not a young man, for so was Timothy himself; but a young professor and church member; one that is lately come to the knowledge of the truth, and has just embraced and professed it, and become a member of a church, a new plant there: so the Hebrew word [J] n, “a plant”, is by the Septuagint in (^{<384D>}Job 14:9) rendered by this very word. The reason why such a person should not be a bishop, elder, or pastor of a church, is,

lest being lifted up with pride; through the dignity of the office he is advanced to, and the high opinion of men he stands in, and the great gifts qualifying him for such a place, he is supposed to have: for pride on account of these is apt to creep in, and swell and elate the minds of young professors especially; so that there is danger

that he fall into the condemnation of the devil; or “of the slanderer”, as the word is rendered in (^{<54B1>}1 Timothy 3:11) and the sense then is, lest he should be censured and condemned by such who are given to calumny and detraction, and are glad of any opportunity to reproach and vilify the ministers of the word: but it is better to understand it of Satan; and then the meaning is, either lest such an one fall under the censure and condemnation of the accuser of the brethren; or rather lest he fall into the same condemnation and punishment the devil is fallen into, their crimes being

alike. For it seems from hence, that pride was the first sin of the devil, and the cause of his apostasy from God; being elated with his own knowledge, strength, and dignity; and not being able to bear it, that the human nature should be advanced above that of angels.

Ver. 7. *Moreover, he must have a good report of them which are without,* &c.] That is, “without the church”, as the Arabic version reads; for wicked men, though they dislike the principles and profession of godly ministers, and despise their office, yet cannot but speak well of their becoming life and conversation. And this part of their character is necessary to invite persons to hear them, and to recommend their ministry to them, as well as for the reasons that follow:

lest he fall into reproach; into the reproach of men; not only of the world, but of professors of religion; who may be apt to upbraid him with his past sins; especially such that may fall under his censures, admonitions, and reproofs, which hereby will become in a great measure useless and ineffectual:

and the snare of the devil; lest Satan should take encouragement from hence to tempt him to other and greater sins; or lest finding himself slighted and despised by the people of God, because of his former sins, he should break out into anger and revenge against them; or into despondency and despair in himself; or should be negligent of his duty, and timorous of exhorting and reproving others, lest they should retort upon him, and reproach him with his former crimes. The Jews have a regard to the wisdom, prudence, gravity, and manners, of a man they appoint as a minister of a congregation. Their rule is this ^{f48}:

“they do not appoint a messenger or minister of a congregation, but he who is the greatest in the congregation for wisdom and works; and if he is an elderly man, it is the better; and they take care that the messenger or minister of the congregation be a man whose voice is pleasant, and he is used to read: but he whose beard is not full grown, though he is a very considerable man, he may not be a minister of the congregation, because of the honour of the congregation.”

Ver. 8. *Likewise must the deacons be grave,* etc.] The apostle proceeds to give the qualifications, and so the rules for choosing another sort of officers in the church, deacons; whose work and business is, not to preach

the Gospel, and administer ordinances; but to take care of the secular affairs of the church, and particularly to serve tables; to provide the bread and wine for the Lord's table, to attend at it, and distribute the elements from the minister to the people, to collect for it, defray the charges of it, and divide what remains among the poor; and they are to take care of the minister's table, that he is provided for in a comfortable way, and to stir up the members to their duty in this respect; and to take care of the poor's table, and distribute what the church collects for them, with simplicity and cheerfulness; and are to be helps to the pastor, in observing the walk of members, in composing differences between them, in visiting the sick and poor, and in preparing matters for church meetings. Their characters are, that they be “grave”; in their speech, gesture, and dress; honest, and of good report among men; and chaste in their words and actions; all which may be signified by the word here used; and the latter may be rather hinted at, because of Nicholas, one of the first deacons, who was charged with uncleanness:

not doubletongued; whose hearts and tongues do not agree together; and who, being a sort of middle persons between the pastor and the members of the church, say one thing to one, and another to the other; which to do is of bad consequence: or who speak well to the poor when they apply to them, and promise them to do them all the service they can, and when it comes to the upshot speak against them:

not given to much wine; which impairs the health, stupefies the mind, and so renders unfit for any such office, as well as wastes the temporal estate; and may lead them to embezzle and consume the church's stock:

not greedy of filthy lucre; for such would withhold from the poor that which is meet for them, and make use of money in their hands, to their own advantage.

Ver. 9. *Holding the mystery of the faith*, etc.] The doctrine of the Gospel, called the “faith”, because it contains things to be believed; proposes Christ the object of faith; is the means by which faith comes, and is unprofitable without it: it is called “the mystery”, because it is of divine revelation, and could have never been discovered by human reason; and now it is revealed, the modus of many things contained in it remains a mystery; several of the doctrines of it are mysterious ones, particularly the doctrine of the Trinity; and which the ancient Jews call by this very name, ^{f49} *atwnmyhmd azr* ,

“the mystery of faith”; the incarnation of the Son of God, the union of the saints to Christ, and their communion with him, and the resurrection of the dead, with others. Now this mysterious doctrine of faith is to be held by deacons; they are to profess it, and to hold fast the profession of it and that

in a pure conscience; with a conscience sprinkled by the blood of Christ; with a conscience void of offence both towards God and man; with a suitable life and conversation; a conversation becoming the Gospel of Christ, and by which it is adorned: and this part of their character is necessary, that such may be able to instruct and establish those who are weak in the faith, and oppose and refute the erroneous, and also recommend the Gospel by their own example; otherwise should their principles or practices be bad, their influence on others might be very pernicious and fatal.

Ver. 10. *And let these also first be proved*, etc.] Not that they should be tried in any part of the deacon's office, to see how capable they are of performing it; but their internal and external characters are to be looked into and examined, and if they appear, to be right, then they are to be approved of, chosen and called unto, and invested with the office:

then let them use the office of a deacon; let them be employed and minister in the several parts and branches of that office:

being found blameless; not without sin, but free from any gross and enormous one; not before God, but in the sight of men; (see Gill on “^{SARE}1 Timothy 3:2”).

Ver. 11. *Even so must their wives be grave*, etc.] Some instead of “wives” read “women”, and understand them of deaconesses, such as were in the primitive churches; whose business it was to visit the poor and sick sisters of the church, and take care of things belonging to them; but it is better to interpret the words of the wives of the deacons, who must be as their husbands, “grave” in speech, gesture, and dress, of an honest report, a good behaviour, and chaste conversation; which will reflect honour and credit to their husbands:

not slanderers; or accusers, and so act like devils, as the word is sometimes rendered; for should they act such a part, and accuse either the poor, or any of the members of the church wrongfully, or on any trifling occasion, as persons addicted to this vice are wont to do, it would be of bad consequence: and they also should be

sober, temperate, not given to wine; excessive drinking is very scandalous in the female sex; and is the rather mentioned here, because women in the eastern countries were too frequently addicted to it:

faithful in all things; as in the marriage bed, so with whatsoever else they are intrusted with in the family, and civil concerns of their husbands; and this is the rather observed, because the wives of deacons may be sometimes intrusted with the church's stock in their husband's absence, to impart to the poor.

Ver. 12. *Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife*, etc.] (See Gill on “^{s48D}1 Timothy 3:2”)

ruling their children and their own houses well. These qualifications are the same with those of the bishop or elder; (see Gill on “^{s48D}1 Timothy 3:4”).

Ver. 13. *For they that have used the office of a deacon well*, etc.] With diligence and faithfulness, with simplicity and cheerfulness; taking good care of the minister and poor, and of the discipline of God's house:

purchase to themselves a good degree; not an higher office, as that of presbytery or episcopacy, which is a sense calculated to serve a hierarchy; nor a degree in glory and happiness hereafter; but rather an increase of gifts and grace; or a degree of respect and honour in the church: or the sense is, they possess and enjoy, which is the meaning of the word rendered “purchase”, a very honourable office in the church; and which is so to them, they using it well, and discharging it in an honourable manner; unless the apostle should design what the Jews called *atwnmyhmd agrd*, “a degree of faith”: ^{f50} but that is expressed in the next clause:

and great boldness in the faith, which is in Christ Jesus: either in the exercise of the grace of faith at the throne of grace; or in asserting the doctrine of faith before men; and in reprovng either for error or immorality: all which may be boldly done by those who use this office well.

Ver. 14. *These things write I unto thee*, etc.] Concerning the offices of bishops and deacons, their several qualifications, and the rules of judging of persons fit for such service:

hoping to come unto thee shortly; at Ephesus. He could not tell whether he could come or not, and therefore makes no promise, but hoped he should;

and since it was uncertain, he thought fit to write the above things for his instruction and use.

Ver. 15. *But if I tarry long*, etc.] Or should long delay coming, defer it longer than may be expected; let it be observed that these things are written,

that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God; that is, the church of God, as it is afterwards explained; called a house, in allusion either to an edifice, it being a spiritual house built of lively stories, or true believers, upon the foundation Jesus Christ, and who also is the door into it; the pillars of it are the ministers of the Gospel; and the windows are the ordinances, and which also are the entertainment in it: or else to a family, as this is sometimes called the household of God, and of faith; the family named of Christ, of which he is the master; and in which are fathers, young men and children; in which ministers are stewards; and which is regulated by good and wholesome laws: and it is called the house of God, because as an edifice, it is of his building and repairing, and in which he dwells; and as a family, is what he provides for. Now the above things were written to Timothy, that he might know bow to order and manage things in this house and family; what became him to do himself, in the character he was; and what persons to direct in the choice of to be officers in it. And of this house it is said,

which is the church of the living God; in opposition to, and distinction from the houses and temples of idols, which are inanimate and senseless creatures; whereas the true God is the living God, has life in himself, essentially, originally, and independently, and is the author and giver of life to others. It is added,

the pillar and ground of the truth; which holds forth the truth to be seen and read of all, as pillars that bear inscriptions; and which supports and maintains truth, as every true church of Christ does so long as it remains so; though truth is the pillar and ground of the church; for if once truth is gone, a church is no more so: rather therefore Timothy himself is here designed; and the sense is, that what was written to him was with this view, that he might the better know how to conduct himself in the church of God, as a pillar and ground of truth, to hold it forth and to secure it: ministers of the Gospel are called pillars, (~~ROM~~ Galatians 2:9) and that with greater propriety than the church itself, which is before called an house: though it may be best of all to understand it of Christ as incarnate, the

great mystery of godliness; who as he is the ground and foundation of the church, and all believers, so he is the foundation of all true doctrine; and particularly the doctrine of his person, as truly God and truly man, is the pillar and ground which supports all other truths, and without which they fall to the ground: and so this clause may be read in connection with the following words, thus; “the pillar and ground of the truth, and without controversy, is the great mystery of godliness, &c”. And this way of speaking is used by the Jews, both of persons and things; so Zebulun is said ^{f51} to be *hrwth dwm* [, “the pillar of the law”; and it is said ^{f52} of

“the great sanhedrim in Jerusalem, they are the root of the oral law; and they are *harwhh ydwm* [, “the pillars of doctrine”; and from them go forth the statutes and judgments unto Israel;”

and the same is said of things as of persons. Maimonides says ^{f53} ,

“the foundation of foundations and the pillar of wisdom, is to know that there is a first Being, that gives being to all beings;”

and R. Sangari, another of their writers, says, ^{f54}

“there are two things which are *hrwth ydwm* [, “the pillars of the law”; the one is, that the law is from God; the other is, that it is received with a faithful (or sincere) heart, from the congregation:”

to which may be added, that it is said ^{f55} that

“the mystery of faith is “*amwyqw arq* [, “the root and ground” of the world;”

all which may serve to illustrate this passage.

Ver. 16. *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness*, etc.] What follows is so, the incarnation of Christ, his birth of a virgin, the union of the two natures, divine and human, in his person; this is a mystery, which though revealed, and so to be believed, is not to be discerned nor accounted for, nor the modus of it to be comprehended by reason: and it is a great one, next, if not equal, to the doctrine of a trinity of persons in the divine essence; and is a mystery of godliness, which tends to encourage internal and external religion, powerful and practical godliness in all the parts and branches of it; and is so beyond all dispute and doubt.

God was manifest in the flesh; not God essentially considered, or Deity in the abstract, but personally; and not the first nor the third Person; for of neither of them can this or the following things be said; but the second Person, the Word, or Son of God; (see ^{<GR8>}1 John 3:8) who existed as a divine Person, and as a distinct one from the Father and Spirit, before his incarnation; and which is a proof of his true and proper deity: the Son of God in his divine nature is equally invisible as the Father, but became manifest by the assumption of human nature in a corporeal way, so as to be seen, heard, and felt: and by “flesh” is meant, not that part of the body only, which bears that name, nor the whole body only, but the whole human nature, consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul; so called, partly to denote the frailty of it, and to show that it was not a person, but a nature, Christ assumed; and the clause is added, not so much to distinguish this manifestation of Christ from a spiritual manifestation of him to his people, as in distinction from all other manifestations of him in the Old Testament, in an human form for a time, and in the cloud, both in the tabernacle and temple. This clause is a very apt and full interpretation of the word “Moriah”, the name of the mount in which Jehovah would manifest himself, and be seen, (^{<Q21P>}Genesis 22:2,14).

Justified in the Spirit; either by the Spirit of God, making his human nature pure and holy, and preserving it from original sin and taint; and by descending on him at his baptism, thereby testifying that he was the Son of God; and by the miracles wrought by his power, which proved Jesus to be the Messiah against those that rejected him; and by his coming down upon the apostles at Pentecost; and who in their ministry vindicated him from all the aspersions cast upon him: or else it is to be understood of the divine nature of Christ, in distinction from his flesh or human nature; in the one he was manifest and put to death for the sins of his people, which were put upon him, and bore by him; and by the other he was quickened and declared to be the Son of God; and being raised from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from all the sins of his people, and they were justified in him; he having made full satisfaction to justice for them.

Seen of angels; meaning not ministers of the Gospel, and pastors of churches, who are sometimes so called; but the blessed spirits, the inhabitants of heaven: by these he was seen at his birth, who then descended and sung praise to God on that account; and in the wilderness, after he had been tempted by Satan, when they ministered unto him; and in the garden upon his agony and sweat there, when one appeared and

strengthened him; and at his resurrection from the dead, who rolled away the stone from the sepulchre, and told the women he was risen from the dead; as also at his ascension to heaven, when they attended him thither in triumph; and now in heaven, where they wait upon him, and worship him, and are ministering spirits, sent forth by him to do his pleasure; and he is seen by them the ministry of the Gospel; into the truths of which they look with pleasure, and gaze upon with unutterable delight and admiration; especially those which respect the person and offices of Christ. Some copies read, “seen of men”, but that is implied in the first clause:

preached unto the Gentiles; the worst of men, and that by the express orders of Christ himself; and which was foretold in the prophecies of the Old Testament, and yet was a mystery, hid from ages and generations past:

believed on in the world; among the Jews, and in the nations of the world, so that he was preached with success; and faith in Christ is the end of preaching; though this is not of a man's self, but is the gift of God, and the operation of his power: and it was a marvellous thing, considering the reproach and ignominy Christ lay under, through the scandal of the cross, that he should be believed on as he was. This can be ascribed to nothing else but to the power of God, which went along with the ministry of the word.

Received up into glory; he was raised from the dead, and had a glory put upon his risen body; he ascended in a glorious manner to heaven, in a cloud, and in chariots of angels, and was received there with a welcome by his Father; and is set down at his right hand, and crowned with glory and honour, and glorified with the glory he had with him before the world was.