

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO COLOSSIANS 2

In this chapter the apostle expresses his great concern for the Colossians, and others he had never seen; exhorts them to constancy in the faith of Christ; warns them of false teachers, and their tenets; takes notice of various blessings and privileges they had by Christ, and cautions against several superstitions and corruptions, which were obtaining among the churches of Christ: in (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:1) the apostle declares the conflict he had for the persons he writes to, and for others, though they had never seen him, which he was desirous they might be acquainted with; partly for the comfort of their hearts, their cement in love, and the improvement of their knowledge of divine things, the treasures of which are in Christ, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:2,3), and partly that they might not be deceived by the enticing words of the false teachers, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:4), and should his absence and distance from them be objected to his professed concern and affection for them, he answers, that notwithstanding that, he was present with them in spirit, and had a discerning of their faith and order, and the steadfastness thereof, with pleasure, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:5), wherefore he exhorts them to perseverance in the faith of Christ, and to an abounding: in it, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:6,7), and to take heed of being hurt by the vain philosophy and traditions of the Jews, but to keep close to Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, seeing all fulness is in him, and they were full in him, who is over all, and superior to all, and therefore had no need to have recourse unto, and hearken to any other, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:9,10), nor did they need any Jewish ordinances, particularly circumcision, since they were partakers of another and better circumcision in Christ; and besides, were buried in baptism with him; and even though they had been dead in sin, and in their fleshly uncircumcision, yet they were alive, quickened with Christ, and had the forgiveness of all their sins for his sake; who had freed them from the ceremonial law, and had rid them of all their former lords and masters, and had brought them into the liberty of the Gospel, (~~SKIP~~Colossians 2:11-15), wherefore he concludes, by way of exhortation and advice, first with respect to Jewish ceremonies, not to suffer them to be imposed upon them, or to regard the censures of men for the non-

observance of them, since these were but shadows, of which Christ is the substance, (<sup><S1216></sup>Colossians 2:16,17), and next with respect to the worship of angels, under a notion of humility, some were for introducing; who are described as bold intruders, vain, proud, and conceited persons, and as not holding the head Christ, to whom the body the church is joined, and by whom it is nourished and increased, (<sup><S1218></sup>Colossians 2:18,19), and seeing now they that are Christ's are dead with him to the ceremonial law, and that dead to them, the apostle argues that they should not be subject to the ordinances, commands, and doctrines of men; some of which he instances in, as if they were still under the rudiments of the world; and the rather, since these things had no true wisdom in them, only a show of it, and were no other than will worship and superstition, and lay in a negligence of the body, and were dishonourable and unsatisfying, (<sup><S1220></sup>Colossians 2:20-23).

**Ver. 1.** *For I would that ye knew what great conflict I have for you,* etc.] This is occasioned by what he had said in (<sup><S1029></sup>Colossians 1:29), that he laboured and strove according to the energy of divine power in him, to present every man perfect in Christ; and lest these Colossians should think that these labours and strivings of his were only for all and every of those persons among whom he was, and to whom he personally preached, he would have them know, observe, and assure themselves, that the great conflict, strife, and agony, in which he was engaged, was for them also; by which he means, his fervent prayers and wrestlings with God, the conflicts he had in his own mind, with his own spirit, about the good of the churches of Christ, the care of which were upon him, and even of those to whom he was by face unknown, sometimes hoping, sometimes fearing, sometimes rejoicing, at other times weeping, at what he heard concerning them; also his combats with the false apostles, striving and earnestly contending for the faith of the Gospel, giving no place to them, no, not for an hour, defending truth, refuting error, and fighting the good fight of faith, by preaching, writing, and disputing; likewise the various persecutions, great afflictions, and hardships he met with from men, for the sake of the Gospel; add to all this, the frequent battles he had with the enemy of souls, his wrestlings against principalities and powers, the many temptations of Satan with which he was attacked, to draw him off from the service of Christ, to weaken his hands, and hinder his success in it; all which he endured and went through with a greatness of mind, and that for the good of the churches of Christ, and the glory of his name, which were the great things he had in view and among others, for the good of these Colossians,

*and [for] them at Laodicea*; the saints of that place, the church of Christ which was there; and is the rather mentioned, because near to Colosse: it was a famous city by the river Lycus, first called Diospolis, and then Rhoas<sup>f15</sup>, and afterwards Laodicea; it was the metropolis of Phrygia, in which Colosse stood: hence this epistle is ordered to be read to them also, they being infested with false teachers, and in the same situation and circumstances as the Colossians were; and though the apostle was unknown to both of them, having never been at either place, yet was heartily concerned for each of their welfare, and he strove for them as he did for others; one of Stephens's copies adds, "and them in Hierapolis"; (see <sup><S14B></sup>Colossians 4:13).

*And [for] as many as have not seen my face in the flesh*; meaning the churches in Christ, and believers in him; such as had never heard him preach, nor had any personal knowledge of him, and conversation with him, which tend to knit the hearts of Christians more firmly together; yet his heart was towards them, he laboured for them, by praying for them, writing to them, suffering all things for their sakes, for the confirmation of them, and of the Gospel of Christ. Christian love and care, and the benefit of the labours and sufferings of Gospel ministers, extend and reach to persons that never saw them.

**Ver. 2.** *That their hearts might be comforted*, etc.] Here follow the reasons why the apostle had so great a conflict, on account of the above persons, and why he was so desirous they should know it; one is, the consolation of their hearts. The hearts of God's people often need comfort, by reason of indwelling sin, the temptations of Satan, the hidings of God's face, and afflictive providences; and by reason of false teachers, who greatly trouble them, unsettle their minds, weaken their faith, and fill them with doubts and perplexities, and which was the case with these churches: now the business of Gospel ministers is to comfort such; this is the commission they are sent with; the doctrines of the Gospel are calculated for this very purpose, such as full redemption, free justification, complete pardon of sin, peace and reconciliation; and the bent of their ministry is to comfort distressed minds, upon what account soever; and it must be a comfort to these churches, when they found that they were regarded by so great an apostle; and it might tend to confirm them in the doctrine they had received at first, and deliver them from the scruples the false apostles had injected into their minds, and so administer comfort to them, when they perceived that the

apostle approved of the Gospel they had heard and embraced, and rejected the notions of the false teachers:

*being knit together in love*: as the members of an human body are, by joints and bands; as love is the bond of union between God and his people, Christ and his members, so between saints and saints; it is the cement that joins and keeps them together, and which edifies and builds them up, and whereby they increase with the increase of God; it makes them to be of one heart and one soul; it renders their communion with one another comfortable and delightful, and strengthens them against the common enemy, who is for dividing, and so destroying; and is what is the joy of Gospel ministers, and what they labour at and strive for, and which is another reason of the apostle's conflict:

*and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding*; that is, spiritual knowledge and understanding, or the understanding of spiritual things; for the understanding of things natural and civil is not designed; nor a mere notional knowledge of spiritual things, which persons may have, and yet not charity, or love, with which this is here joined; and such an one also, which is sure and certain: for as there is such a thing as the assurance of faith, and the assurance of hope, so likewise of understanding of the Gospel, and the truths of it; concerning which there ought to be no doubt, being to be received upon the credit of a divine testimony: moreover, such a knowledge and understanding of divine things is intended, as is large and abundant, signified by “all riches”; for though it is not complete and perfect in this life, yet it takes a vast compass, and reaches to all the deep things of God; to whatever relates to the person and grace of Christ; to all the things of the Spirit of God; to all the blessings and promises of the covenant of grace; to the riches both of grace and glory, to the things of time and eternity, and which is more clearly explained by the following clause:

*to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*; that is, to a greater and more perfect knowledge, approbation, and confession of the Gospel, which he had in the preceding chapter called the mystery; (see <sup>50026</sup>Colossians 1:26,27), and here “the mystery of God”, which he is both the author and subject of: it is by him as the efficient cause, ordained by him, and hid in him before the world was; and it is of him, as the subject matter of it; not as the God of nature and providence, which the works of both declare; but as the God of all grace, as God in Christ, which is the peculiar discovery of the Gospel: and “of” him as “the

Father” of Christ, which is not discoverable by the light of nature, nor known by natural reason, but is a point of divine revelation; and “of” him as the Father of his people by adoption; and of all his grace, in election to grace and glory; in predestination to sonship, and in the council and covenant of grace; in the scheme of salvation and redemption; in the mission of his Son, and the gift of him as a Saviour and Redeemer. The copulative “and” before “the Father”, is left out in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, which read “the mystery of God the Father”; and with it, it may be rendered, as it sometimes is, God, “even the Father”: though the word “God” may be considered essentially, and as after distinguished into two of the persons of the Godhead; “the Father” the first person, so called, in relation to his Son, which is no small part of the mystery of the Gospel; and “Christ” the second person, who is equally God with the Father; and the Spirit, who, though not mentioned, is not excluded from this adorable mystery: and which is the mystery “of Christ”, he being both the efficient cause and the subject matter of it; it treats of his deity and personality; of his offices, as Mediator, prophet, priest, and King; of his incarnation and redemption; of his grace, righteousness, sacrifice, and satisfaction; of justification by him, pardon through him, and acceptance in him.

**Ver. 3.** *In whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.*] This may be understood either of the mystery of the Gospel, which contains the rich mines and hidden treasures of all divine truths; so called, because of the richness and intrinsic value and excellency of them; and because of their variety and abundance, being the unsearchable riches of Christ: or of Christ himself; and not so much of his personal wisdom, either as God, being the all-wise God, the wisdom of God, an omniscient Being, that knows all persons and things whatever, within the whole circle of wisdom and knowledge; or as man, whose wisdom and knowledge, though created, was very large and abundant; or as Mediator, on whom the spirit of wisdom and understanding, of counsel and of knowledge, rests; but of that fulness of truth as well as grace, which dwells in him as in its subject and fountain; by whom it comes, and from whom it is derived unto us; and our highest wisdom and knowledge lies in knowing him, whom to know is life eternal; and the excellency of whose knowledge surpasses everything else; it is the greatest riches, and most valuable treasure; nor is there anything worth knowing but what is in Christ, all is laid up in him: and being said to be “hid” in him, shows the excellency of the wisdom and knowledge that is in

him only valuable things being hid, or compared to hid treasure; that this cannot be had without knowing him; that it is imperfect in the present state, and is not yet fully and clearly revealed; and therefore should be inquired after, and searched for, and Christ should be applied unto for it: **atmkj yznm**, “treasures of wisdom”, is a phrase used by the Targumist <sup>f16</sup>.

**Ver. 4.** *And this I say*, etc.] That he had such a conflict for them, and had told them of his care and fear on their account, and had signified his great desire that they might arrive to a more large and certain knowledge of the mysteries of grace, and had asserted that all solid spiritual wisdom and knowledge were in Christ; all which he said, to show his affection for them; to observe unto them, that there was no need to seek for wisdom and knowledge elsewhere, since there was such a fulness of it in Christ, and the Gospel; and to put them upon their guard against false teachers:

*lest any man should beguile you with enticing words*; by which are meant, not apt and pertinent words, such as are suited to the minds of men, and proper to convey right ideas of divine truth, poignant expressions, sound speech, and strong reasonings; for such the apostle himself used, and yet not enticing words of men's wisdom; and which design mere words, great swelling words of vanity, which like bubbles look big, and make a great noise, but contain nothing but wind and emptiness; fair speeches, specious pretences, false colourings, fallacious reasonings, a show of probability, and appearance of science, falsely so called; whereby deceitful workers, such as the followers of Simon Magus and the Gnostics, used, whom the apostle had in view; beguiled unstable souls, and deceived the hearts of the simple: wherefore the apostle said the above things, showing that all true wisdom was in Christ, and all spiritual knowledge was in the pure and unmixed Gospel; which was not to be parted with for other things, which through art and management, and the cunning craftiness of men, might at first sight carry in them a show of probability, and appearance of truth. The gold, the silver, and precious stones of divine truths, which have been proved by the standard, are not to be given up for such as only look like them, being wrought up through the fallacy of men; who by a set of unmeaning words, paralogisms, and false reasonings, lie in wait to deceive.

**Ver. 5.** *For though I be absent in the flesh*, etc.] Or body, as the Ethiopic version reads it, and as it is expressed in (~~1~~ 1 Corinthians 5:3); here the apostle anticipates an objection which might be made, how he could have such a conflict and concern for them, and express so much affection for

them, and know so much of their affairs, in what condition and situation they were, and how liable to be deceived by false teachers, when he was absent from them, and had never been among them. That he had never been corporeally present with them, nor was he then, he owns; but this did not hinder but that he might be in another sense present with them, and so have cognizance of them and their state, and be affected towards them, and concerned for them:

*yet am I with you in the spirit*; as he was with the Corinthians in the place above cited, judging the incestuous person, determining concerning his case, and delivering him up to Satan, and so he was with these Colossians; for as he was a member of the same body with them, he was actuated by the same spirit; and by virtue of their union to each other in their common head, his spirit went out towards them, his heart was knit unto them; he had the same affection for them, and care of them, though he had never seen them with his bodily eyes, as he had for those whom he had seen: moreover, this may regard that extraordinary discerning and presence of his spirit which he had; and which was of the same kind with that of Elisha, when his servant Gehazi went after Naaman the Syrian, and took a present of him, to whom on his return he said, upon his denying that he had been anywhere, “went not mine heart with thee, when the man turned again from his chariot to meet thee?” (~~1~~<sup>2</sup> Kings 5:26). Elisha's spirit went, and was present with him, and saw and knew all that passed, being under the impulse and inspiration of the Spirit of God, who made all known unto him: so the spirit of the Apostle Paul was at the church at Colosse, and saw: and discerned their whole estate; this being made known by the Spirit of God, under whose inspiration he wrote this letter, suitable to their case:

*joying and beholding your order*; or as the Syriac version renders it, “I rejoice that I can see your order”: that is, with pleasure observe, consider it, and contemplate on it; and that partly from the relation of Epaphras, and chiefly from the intimations of the Spirit of God in an extraordinary way: by their “order” is meant, either their orderly walk and conversation, which being as becomes the Gospel of Christ, was very pleasing and delightful to the apostle; or rather the order of their church discipline, they having regular officers, pastors, and deacons, ordained among them; who rightly performed their offices, and had respect and subjection yielded to them; the ordinances of the Gospel were duly administered, and constantly attended on; the members of the church were watched over, admonitions given, and censures laid where they were necessary, and everything was done decently

and in order; which was a beautiful sight, and gave the apostle an uncommon pleasure. The word used signifies a military order, such as is observed in armies, in battle array; suggesting, that these Christians were good soldiers of Christ, were enlisted under his banners, and kept in due order, in rank and file; stood fast in one spirit, contended and strove together for the faith of the Gospel, fought the good fight of faith, nor could any hardship move them from their station; so that they were, in the apostle's eye, beautiful as Tirzah, comely as Jerusalem, and terrible as an army with banners, (~~2104~~ Song of Solomon 6:4); and so may denote their attachment to the Gospel, and to one another; they were united to, and abode by each other; they served the Lord with one consent, and kept the unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, (~~404B~~ Ephesians 4:3), which is a pleasant thing to behold, as well as what follows;

*and the steadfastness of your faith in Christ*; either in the grace of faith, and the exercise of it on Christ, in opposition to doubtings and unbelief; whereby God is honoured, and with which he is well pleased; souls are filled with peace and joy; Satan is resisted and overcome; and the hearts of others, particularly ministers of the Gospel, are comforted: or in the doctrine of faith respecting Christ, in which they stood fast; notwithstanding there was a majority against it, the wise and learned, the rich and mighty, did not receive it; and though it was opposed by false teachers, persecuted by profane men, and loaded with reproach and obloquy; and also in the profession of it, which they held without wavering: now to see a set of Christians, a church of Christ walking together in Gospel order, steady in their faith on Christ, abiding by the doctrine of faith, and maintaining an honourable profession, how beautiful and delightful is it!

**Ver. 6.** *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord*, etc.]

Receiving Christ is believing in him: faith is the eye of the soul, that sees the beauty, glory, fulness, and suitableness of Christ; the foot that goes to him, and the hand that takes hold on him, and the arm that receives and embraces him; so that this is not a receiving him into the head by notion, but into the heart by faith; and not in part only, but in whole: faith receives a whole Christ, his person as God and man; him in all his offices, as prophet, priest, and King; particularly as a Saviour and Redeemer, he being under that character so exceeding suitable to the case of a sensible sinner; and it receives all blessings of grace along with him, from him, and through him; as a justifying righteousness, remission of sins, adoption of children,



grace for grace, and an inheritance among all them that are sanctified; and both Christ and them, as the free grace gifts of God; which men are altogether undeserving of, and cannot possibly give any valuable consideration for: so these Colossians had received Christ gladly, joyfully, willingly, and with all readiness; and especially as “the Lord”, on which there is a peculiar emphasis in the text; they had received him and believed in him, as the one and only Lord and head of the church; as the one and only Mediator between God and man, to the exclusion of angels, the worship of which the false teachers were introducing; they had received the doctrines of Christ, and not the laws of Moses, which judaizing preachers were desirous of joining with them; they had heard and obeyed the Son, and not the servant; they had submitted to the authority of Christ as King of saints, and had been subject to his ordinances; wherefore the apostle exhorts them to continue and go on, believing in him, and holding to him the head:

*[so] walk ye in him;* not only in imitation of him as he walked, in the exercise of grace, as love, patience, humility, and meekness, and in the discharge of duty; but by faith in him, going on in a way of believing in him, always looking to him, leaning on him, and deriving grace and strength from him: to walk in Christ, is to walk in and after the Spirit of Christ, under his influence, by his direction, and through his assistance; and to walk in the doctrine of Christ, abiding by it, and increasing in the knowledge of it; and to walk in the ordinances of Christ, which with ill's presence and spirit, are ways of pleasantness and paths of peace: particularly here it may signify, to make use of Christ, and walk on in him, as the way, truth, and the life; as the only way of access to God, and acceptance with him; as the way of salvation, as the only true way to eternal life and happiness, in opposition to every creature, angels, or men; the worshipping of the one, or works done by the other.

**Ver. 7.** *Rooted and built up in him,* etc.] By these metaphors, the apostle expresses the safe and happy state of these believers; and which he makes use of as arguments, to engage them to walk on in Christ, and as pointing out the manner in which they should. Believers are sometimes compared to trees, and are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord; and their root is Christ, from whence as such they spring, and by whom they are filled with the fruits of righteousness; in him they are to abide, keep close unto him, and walk in him; deriving all their life, nourishment, fruitfulness, grace, and perseverance in it, from him as their root: they are also

sometimes compared to a building, to an house, a temple, an habitation for God; and Christ is the sure and only foundation on which they are laid, and where they are safe and secure; and, being fitly joined together, grow up as an holy temple to the Lord; and this being their case, they are to go on laying the whole stress of their salvation on him, building their faith and hope of eternal glory entirely upon him; and building up one another also on their most holy faith, of which he is the substance, as it follows:

*and stablished in the faith:* that of Christ, or in the doctrine of faith which respects Christ: the apostle here expresses the same thing without a figure, which he had signified by the two foregoing metaphors, and explains what he means by them; namely, that they were well settled and grounded in their faith in Christ, and thoroughly instructed and established in the doctrines of the Gospel; and a very good thing it is to have the heart established with grace, both as a principle and a doctrine; which is God's work, and was the happy case of these persons; wherefore it became them to act as such, and not be like children tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine, or carried about with divers and strange doctrines, but abide by those which had been preached to them by the faithful ministers of Christ, and they had received: as

*ye have been taught:* by Epaphras their minister, and others; and therefore should not listen to false teachers, and to a contrary doctrine taught by them; considering of whom they had learnt the true doctrine, what evidence it carried with it, and what use it had been of to them, in convincing, converting, comforting, instructing, and establishing them: and therefore should be

*abounding therein with thanksgiving;* that is, in the faith; as in the grace, so in the doctrine of faith; for as saints are to abound in the work of the Lord, and in every good work, and in the exercise of every grace, so in the knowledge of truth; (see ~~1~~ 2 Corinthians 8:7); and to make use of all means for the increase of, and growth in Gospel grace and light, and the knowledge of a crucified Christ, which is meant by abounding: for all which there is great reason for thanksgiving; both for the unspeakable gift of Christ, who is received as such by faith, and in whom believers are rooted and built up; and for faith itself, which is the gift of God; and also for the Gospel, and the truths of it; and for every degree of spiritual light in it, and knowledge of it.

**Ver. 8.** *Beware lest any man spoil you*, etc.] Or despoil you; rob you of the rich treasure of the Gospel, strip you of your spiritual armour, take away from you the truths and doctrines of Christ, and divest you of your spiritual privileges and blessings; suggesting, that the false teachers were thieves and robbers, and men of prey: or drive and carry you away as spoils, as the innocent harmless sheep are drove, and carried away by wolves, and by the thief that comes to steal, to kill, and destroy; intimating, that such as these were the heretics of those times; wherefore it became them to be upon their guard, to watch, look out, and beware, lest they should be surprised by these deceitful workers, who lay in wait to deceive; were wolves in sheep's clothing, who transformed themselves into the apostles of Christ; and therefore it became them to take heed, lest any man hurt them, be he ever so wise and learned, or be thought ever so good, religious, and sincere; since men of this cast put on such masks and false appearances, on purpose to beguile. The things by which they imposed upon weak minds are as follow, and therefore to be shunned, avoided, and rejected:

*through philosophy*: not right philosophy, or true wisdom, the knowledge of God, of the things of nature, of things natural, moral, and civil; which may be attained unto by the use of reason, and light of nature. The apostle does not mean to condemn all arts and sciences, as useless and hurtful, such as natural philosophy in its various branches, ethics, logic, rhetoric, etc. when kept within due bounds, and in their proper place and sphere; for with instances of these the Scriptures themselves abound; but he means that philosophy, or science, which is falsely so called, the false notions of philosophers; such as the eternity of matter, and of this world, the mortality of souls, the worshipping of demons and angels, etc. and also such principles in philosophy, which in themselves, and in the things of nature, are true, but, when applied to divine things, to things above nature, the mere effects of divine power and grace, and of pure revelation, are false; as that out of nothing, nothing can be made, which in the things of nature is true, but not to be applied to the God of nature, who has made the world out of nothing; as also that from a privation to an habit there is no return, which is naturally true, but not to be applied to supernatural things, and supernatural agency; witness the miracles of Christ, in restoring sight to the blind, life to the dead, etc. and therefore is not to be employed against the resurrection of the dead: philosophy may be useful as a handmaid; it is not to be a mistress in theological things; it may subserve, but not govern; it is not to be made use of as a judge, or rule in such matters; the natural man,

on these principles, neither knows nor receives the things of the Spirit of God; judgment is not to be made and formed according to them; as of a trinity of persons in the Godhead; of the sonship of Christ, and his incarnation; of man's redemption by him, of reconciliation and satisfaction by his blood and sacrifice, of the pardon of sin, of a sinner's justification, of the resurrection of the dead, and such like articles of faith: that philosophy which is right, can only be a rule of judgment in things relating to it, and not in those which are out of its sphere: in a word, the apostle here condemns the philosophy of the Jews, and of the Gnostics; the former had introduced natural philosophy into the worship and service of God, and the things appertaining to their religion; and had made the tabernacle and temple, and the most holy place, and the things belonging thereunto, emblems and hieroglyphics of natural things; as of the sun, moon, and stars, and their influences, and of the four elements, and of moral virtue, etc. as appears from the writings of Josephus<sup>f17</sup>, and Philo<sup>f18</sup>; when they were types and representatives of spiritual things under the Gospel dispensation; and the latter had brought in the philosophy of Pythagoras and Plato, concerning abstinences, purgations, sacrifices, and ceremonies of worship, given to demons and angels: in short, the apostle's meaning is, that philosophy is not to be mixed with the pure Gospel of Christ; it has always been fatal to it; witness the school of Pantaenus in Alexandria, in the early times of Christianity, by which the simplicity of the Gospel was greatly corrupted; and the race of schoolmen a few centuries ago, who introduced the philosophy of Aristotle, Averrois, and others, into all the subjects of divinity: to observe no more, such kind of philosophy is here meant, which may be truly called

*vain deceit*: that is, that which is vain and empty, and has no solid foundation, even in nature and reason itself; and which being applied to divine things and religious observances, is deceitful and delusory:

*after the tradition of men*; either of the Gentiles, who had their traditions in religion; or of the Jews, called the traditions of the elders, and of the fathers, which the Pharisees were fond of, by which they transgressed the commandments of God; which the apostle was brought up in, and was zealous of formerly, but now was delivered from, and rightly condemned as idle, trifling, and pernicious:

*after the rudiments of the world*, or “the elements of the world”; not the four elements of earth, air, fire, and water; or the worship of the sun,

moon, and stars, etc. among the idolatrous Gentiles, but the ceremonial laws of the Jews; (see <sup>4048</sup>Galatians 4:8,9); which were that to them in religion, as the A B C, or letters, are in grammar, the elements and rudiments of it; and though these were to them, when children, useful, but now under the Gospel dispensation are weak, beggarly, and useless, and not to be attended to:

*and not after Christ*; what he has taught and prescribed, the doctrines and commandments of Christ, the treasures of wisdom and knowledge which are in him; and therefore all such vain and deceitful philosophy, human traditions, and worldly rudiments, are to be rejected; Christ and his Gospel, the revelation he has made, are the standard of doctrine and worship; he only is to be heard and attended to, and whatever it contrary thereunto is to be guarded against.

**Ver. 9.** *For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily.*] This is to be understood, not of the doctrine, or Gospel of Christ, as being a perfect revelation of the will of God; but of Christ, and particularly of his human nature, as consisting of a true body and a reasonable soul, in which the Godhead dwells in a most eminent manner: God indeed is everywhere by his powerful presence, was in the tabernacle and temple in a very singular manner, and dwells in the saints in a way of special grace; but resides in the human nature of Christ, in the highest and most exalted manner; that is to deity what the human body is to an human soul, it is the house in which it dwells: so Philo the Jew <sup>f19</sup> calls the “Logos” the house of God, who is the soul of the universe; and elsewhere says <sup>f20</sup>, that God himself has filled the divine Logos wholly with incorporeal powers. The Godhead dwells in Christ as in a tabernacle, in allusion to the tabernacle of Moses, which looked mean without side, but glorious within; where God granted his presence, and accepted the sacrifices of his people; the human nature of Christ is the true antitypical tabernacle, which God pitched, and not man; and sometimes is called a temple, in allusion to Solomon's; and which is filled with the train of the divine perfections, signified by fulness here: for not the fulness of grace, or a communicative fulness, is here meant; nor the relative fulness, the church; but the fulness of the divine nature, of all the perfections of deity, such as eternity, immensity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, immutability, necessary and self existence, and every other; for if anyone perfection was wanting, the fulness, much less all the fulness of the Godhead, would not be in him. The act of inhabitation denotes the union of the two natures in Christ, and

expresses the distinction of them; and is to be understood of the Godhead, as subsisting in the person of the Son of God, and not as subsisting in the person of the Father, or of the Spirit; and shows the permanency of this union, it is a perpetual abiding one; and this fulness is not dependent on the Father's pleasure; it is not said of this as of another fulness, (<sup><5019></sup>Colossians 1:19); that it pleased the Father that it should dwell in him: the manner in which it dwells, is “bodily”; not by power, as in the universe; nor by grace, as in the saints; nor by any glorious emanations of it, as in heaven; nor by gifts, as in the prophets and eminent men of God; nor by signs symbols, and shadows, as in the tabernacle and temple; but essentially and personally, or by personal union of the divine nature, as subsisting in the Son of God to an human body, chosen and prepared for that purpose, together with a reasonable human soul; which is the great mystery of godliness, the glory of the Christian religion, and what qualified Christ for, and recommends him to us as a Saviour; and is a reason why, as these words are, that the Gospel should be abode by, continued in, and that with thankfulness: nor should any regard be had to vain and deceitful philosophy, to the traditions of men, or rudiments of the world: Christ only is to be looked to, attended, and followed, who has all fulness in him.

**Ver. 10.** *And ye are complete in him*, etc.] Or “filled up”, or “filled full” in him; that is, are perfect in him: saints are in Christ, and all fulness being in him, they are full too, of as much as they stand in need, and are capable of containing: for these words are not an exhortation to perfection, as the Arabic version reads then, be ye complete in him, like those in (<sup><0170></sup>Genesis 17:1 <sup><0188></sup>Matthew 5:48 <sup><4731></sup>2 Corinthians 13:11); but are an affirmation, asserting not what the saints shall be hereafter, or in heaven, but what they now are; not in themselves, for in themselves none are perfect, not even those who are truly sanctified; for though all grace is seminally implanted in them, and they have a perfection of parts, of all the parts of the new man, or new creature, and are perfect in comparison of what they sometimes were, and of profane persons and hypocrites, and with respect to weaker believers, yet none are absolutely perfect; the good work of grace is not yet finished in them, sin dwells in them, they are full of wants and complaints; the best of them disclaim perfection as attained to by them, and express their desires of it; but they are perfect in Christ their head, who has all fulness in him, in whom they are chosen and blessed: they are complete and perfect in him as to sanctification; he having all fulness of grace and holiness for them, they have it in him; and he is made perfect sanctification

to them: and as to justification, he has perfectly fulfilled the law for them, he has made full atonement for sin, has obtained eternal redemption, brought in a complete and perfect righteousness, by which they are justified from all things; are freed from sin, and made perfectly comely, without spot or wrinkle, or any such thing: and as to knowledge, though it is imperfect in them in their present state, yet in Christ all the treasures of it are, and they have no need to go elsewhere for any; they are filled with the knowledge of God and of his will, and are complete therein in Christ; and what knowledge they have, is eternal life, the beginning, pledge, and earnest of it; so that they have no reason to be beholden to angels or men, only to Christ:

*which is the head of all principality and power*; not only of the body the church, and who is to be held unto as such, from whom all light, life, grace, and strength, are to be derived; but of all others, though in a different sense; and not only of the kings, princes, and potentates of this world, who hold their kingdoms, and receive their crowns from him, and rule by him; but also of the angels, good and bad, often called principalities and powers; especially the former is here meant, of whom Christ is head, being their Creator, Governor, and upholder; who not only maintains them in their beings, but has confirmed them in their state of holiness; so that they are dependent upon him, and beholden to him for all they have and are: with the Jews, “Metatron”, which with them is the name of the angel in <sup>(1230)</sup>Exodus 23:20 and seems to be a corruption of the word “mediator”, and to design the Messiah, is said <sup>f21</sup> to be King over all the angels. This is mentioned, partly to set forth the glory and excellency of Christ; and partly against worshipping of angels, making use of them as mediators, or applying to them on any account, since Christ is the head of these, and of every creature; therefore no creature is to be looked and applied unto, trusted and depended on: unless rather should be meant the Jewish rulers, Scribes, and Pharisees, their doctors, wise men, and Rabbins, called the princes of this world; the Jews' tutors and governors, to whom Christ is superior; he is the only master and Father, and in whom perfection of wisdom is, and not in them; and therefore should not regard them, their vain philosophy, worldly rudiments and traditions.

**Ver. 11.** *In whom also ye are circumcised*, etc.] This is said to prevent an objection that might be made to the perfection of these Gentile believers, because they were not circumcised; for the Jews thought that perfection lay in circumcision, at least that there could be no perfection without it:

“great is circumcision (say they <sup>f22</sup>), for notwithstanding all the commands which Abraham our father did, he was not called perfect until he was circumcised; as it is written, (<sup><0170></sup>Genesis 17:1); “walk before me, and be thou perfect:””

which objection the apostle anticipates, by observing, that they were circumcised in Christ their head, who is made unto them sanctification; and by him as the meritorious and efficient cause of their regeneration and conversion, or internal circumcision, the antitype and perfection of circumcision in the flesh; for the former, and not the latter, is here meant: these believers were circumcised in Christ, or by him; not with external circumcision, which was peculiar to the Jews, the natural seed of Abraham, prefigured Christ, and had its accomplishment in him, the body and substance of all the shadows of the ceremonial law; and so was now nothing, either to Jew or Gentile: as for the Gentiles, they never were obliged unto it; and as for the Jews, it was an insupportable yoke to them, binding them to keep the whole law of Moses, which they could not do, and so it made nothing perfect; but Christ the substance of that, and the end of the whole law, has, the head of the body the church, in whom all the members of it are complete, and are circumcised:

*with the circumcision made without hands*: which is that of the heart, in the spirit; every man, though he may be circumcised in the flesh, is uncircumcised in heart, until he is circumcised by Christ and his Spirit; which is done, when he is pricked to the heart, and thoroughly convinced of sin, and the exceeding sinfulness of it; when the callousness and hardness of his heart is taken off and removed, and the iniquity of it is, laid open, the plague and corruption in it discerned, and all made naked and bare to the sinner's view; and when he is in pain on account of it, is broken and groans under a sense of it, and is filled with shame for it, and loathing and abhorrence of it: now this is effected not “by the hand of man”, as the Ethiopic version reads it, as outward circumcision was; this is not done by any creature whatever; not by angels, who rejoice at the repentance of sinners, but cannot produce it; nor by ministers of the Gospel, who at most are but instruments of regeneration and conversion; nor by men themselves; this is not by might or power of man, by the strength of his free will, but by the Spirit of God: for though men are sometimes exhorted to circumcise themselves, as in (<sup><0506></sup>Deuteronomy 10:16 <sup><200></sup>Jeremiah 4:4), in order to convince them of the corruption of their nature, and the need they stand in of spiritual circumcision; yet whereas there is an utter disability in



them to effect it, and they need the power and grace of God for that purpose, the Lord has graciously promised his people to do it himself for them, (<sup>(6316)</sup>Deuteronomy 30:6); so that this circumcision is in the name sense made without hands, as the human nature of Christ is said to be a tabernacle not made with hands, that, is of men, but of God, being what God has pitched, and not man; and it stands opposed to circumcision in the flesh, which was made with hands, (<sup>(4021)</sup>Ephesians 2:11); and by some instrument, as a sharp knife or stone:

*in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh.* The Vulgate Latin version leaves out the word “sins”, and so the Alexandrian copy and some others; and the Syriac version the word “body”: by “the flesh” is meant corrupt nature, which is born of the flesh, and propagated in a carnal way, and is the source and spring of all sin; by “the sins” of it are intended the works of the flesh, the inward motions of sin in the members, and the outward actions of it: these are said to be a “body”, because sin consists of various parts and members, as a body does; and these united together, and which receive frequent and daily additions; and which are committed and yielded to by the members of the natural body; and which body and bulk of sins arising from the corruption of nature are compared to a garment, and a very filthy one it is; in the putting off of which lies spiritual circumcision: this is done several ways; partly by Christ's wrapping himself in the sins of his people, bearing them in his body, and becoming a sacrifice for them, whereby the old man was crucified, and the body of sin destroyed; and by an application of his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, to the consciences of his people, whereby their iniquities are caused to pass from them, and they are clothed with change of raiment; and by the power of his Spirit, laying sin under the restraints of grace, not suffering it to have dominion, but causing grace to reign through righteousness; and by the saints themselves, under the influence of grace, who put off the old man with his deeds, according to the former conversation:

*by the circumcision of Christ;* not that with which Christ was circumcised at eight days old, that he might appear to be truly man, and a son of Abraham, and under the law, and to fulfil all the righteousness of it, but that which he by his Spirit is the author of, and what is before expressed.

**Ver. 12.** *Buried with him in baptism,* etc.] The apostle goes on to observe how complete and perfect the saints are in Christ; that they are not only circumcised in him in a spiritual sense, and the body of the sins of their

flesh is put off, and removed from them, in allusion to the cutting off and casting away of the foreskin in circumcision; but that they and all their sins were buried with Christ, of which their baptism in water was a lively representation: Christ having died for their sins, was laid in the grave, where he continued for a while, and then rose again; and as they were crucified with him, they were also buried with him, as their head and representative; and all their sins too, which he left behind him in the grave, signified by his grave clothes there; and baptism being performed by immersion, when the person baptized is covered with water, and as it were buried in it, is a very significant emblem of all this; it is a representation of the burial of Christ, and very fitly holds him forth to the view of faith in the state of the dead, in the grave, and points out the place where the Lord lay; and it is also a representation of our burial with him, as being dead to sin, to the law, and to the world, by him. This shows now, that baptism was performed by dipping, or covering the whole body in water, for no other form of administration of baptism, as sprinkling, or pouring water on the face, can represent a burial, or be called one; and this is what many learned interpreters own, and observe on this place:

*wherein also ye are risen with [him]*; Christ is risen from the dead as the head and representative of his people, and they are risen with him; and their baptism is also an emblem of his and their resurrection, being administered by immersion, in which way only this can be signified; for as the going down into the water, and being under it, represents Christ's descending into the state of the dead, and his continuance in it, so the emersion, or coming up out of the water, represents his rising from the dead, and that of his people in him, in order to walk in newness of life; for the apostle's meaning is, that in baptism saints are risen with Christ, as well as in it buried with him: and this

*through the faith of the operation of God*; that is, it is through faith that saints see themselves buried and risen with Christ, to which the ordinance of baptism is greatly assisting, where there is true faith; for otherwise, without faith, this ordinance will be of no use to any such end and purpose; and it is not any faith that will avail, but that which is of God's operation; faith is not naturally in men, all men have it not; and those that have it, have it not of themselves, it is the gift of God; it is what he works in them, and by his power performs:

*who hath raised him from the dead*; this is a periphrasis of God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is generally ascribed; though not to the exclusion of Christ, and of the Spirit, who were also concerned; and is here added, partly to show in what respect faith, which is God's work, has him for its object, as having raised Christ from the dead, who was delivered for offences, but is risen again through the power of God for justification, and whoever with his heart believes this shall be saved; and partly to show, that the same power is exerted in working true faith in the heart, as was put forth in raising Christ from the dead.

**Ver. 13.** *And you being dead in your sins*, etc.] Not corporeally, though sin had subjected them to a corporeal death, and their bodies were really mortal, and in a little time must die; but morally, sin had brought a death upon them in a moral sense, they were separated from God, as at death the body is from the soul, and so were alienated from the life of God, and consequently must be dead; they had lost the image of God, which consisted in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and were dead as to the understanding of what was good, as to their affections for it, or will and capacity to do it; and, like dead men, were insensible of their state, their sin, and misery; and altogether inactive and helpless in spiritual things, being destitute of spiritual life, strength, and motion; and were moreover in themselves deserving of eternal death, and according to the law of works, under the sentence of it, and so liable and exposed unto it; and all this for, and on account of their sins, their actual sins and transgressions here meant; which separated them from God, deformed his image in them, and hardened their hearts, that they had no true sight and sense of themselves; as also on account of the corruption of their nature, signified in the next clause:

*and the uncircumcision of your flesh*; which is to be taken not literally, for the prepuce, or foreskin of their flesh, which was a sign and token of the corruption of nature, but figuratively that itself; it being usual with the Jews to call the vitiosity of nature  $\text{I r}$  [ , “uncircumcision”; which, they say<sup>123</sup>, is one of the seven names of  $\text{[ r rxy}$ , “the evil imagination”, or corrupt nature, denoting the pollution, loathsomeness, and abominableness of it:

*hath he quickened together with him*; that is, with Christ; this may be understood either of the quickening of them in conversion and sanctification; for as they were dead in sin in a moral sense, in conversion a principle of life was implanted in them, or grace, as a living principle, was

wrought in their souls by the Spirit of life from Christ; so that they could see their lost state, their need of Christ, the glory of his person and righteousness, the fulness and suitableness of his grace; feel their burdens, and handle the word of life; could hear the Gospel, speak the language of Canaan, breathe in prayer and spiritual desires, walk in Christ, and do all things through him; and this was God's act and not theirs, and owing to his rich mercy and great love: and this may be said to be done "with Christ", because this is in consequence of his being quickened, or raised from the dead; and by it they were made partakers of the life of Christ, they became one spirit with him; and it was not so much they that lived, but Christ lived in them; and besides, they were quickened, in order to live a life of grace and communion with him here, and of glory hereafter: or it may be interpreted of the quickening of them in justification; and the rather, because of what is said in the next clause; and that either openly, as when a sinner is convinced that he is dead in a legal sense, and faith is wrought in him to behold pardon and righteousness in Christ; upon which he prays for the one, and pleads the other; and the Spirit of God seals unto him the pardon of his sins, brings near the righteousness of Christ, enables him to lay hold on it as his, and pronounces him justified by it; and may well be called justification of life, for he is then alive in a legal sense, in his own comfortable view and apprehension of things: or secretly in Christ, as the head and representative of all his people; who when he was quickened, they were quickened with him; when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; and when he was justified, they were instilled in him, and this seems to be the true sense of this passage:

*having forgiven you all trespasses.* This was a past act, being done and over; not only at first conversion, when a discovery of it was made, but at the death of Christ, whose blood was shed for the remission of sin; yea, even as early as Christ became a surety, when the sins of his people were not imputed to them, but to him: and this was a single act, and done and complete at once; forgiveness of sin is not done by piecemeals, or at different times, or by divers acts, but is done at once, and includes sin past, present, and to come; and is universal, reaches to all sin, original and actual, before and after conversion; sins of thought, word, and action: and this is God's act, and his only; not men, nor ministers, nor angels, can forgive sin; this is the peculiar prerogative of God, and is owing to his abundant mercy and free grace, and which is signified by the word here used. The Syriac and Arabic versions read, "having forgiven us all our

trespasses”; and so the Alexandrian copy, and some others, read “us” instead of “you”.

**Ver. 14.** *Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances*, etc.] Various are the senses interpreters give of these words; some think by the handwriting is meant the covenant God made with Adam, (<sup><00217></sup>Genesis 2:17), which being broken, obliged him and all his posterity to the penalty of death, but is cancelled and abolished by Christ; others, the agreement which the Israelites made with God at Mount Sinai, when they said, “all that the Lord hath said will we do, and be obedient”, (<sup><0247></sup>Exodus 24:7); which was as it were setting their hands, and laying themselves under obligation to obedience, and, in case of failure, to the penalty of the law; others, God's book of remembrance of the sins of men, out of which they are blotted when pardoned; others, the book of conscience, which bears witness to every debt, to every violation and transgression of the law, which may be said to be blotted out, when pacified with an application of the blood and righteousness of Christ; rather with others it signifies the ceremonial law, which lay in divers ordinances and commands, and is what, the apostle afterwards speaks of more clearly and particularly; and may be called so, because submission to it was an acknowledgment both of the faith and guilt of sin; every washing was saying, that a man was polluted and unclean; and every sacrifice was signing a man's own guilt and condemnation, and testifying that he deserved to die as the creature did, which was offered in sacrifice: or rather the whole law of Moses is intended, which was the handwriting of God, and obliged to obedience to it, and to punishment in case of disobedience; and this the Jews<sup>f24</sup> call *bwj rj ç*, “the writing of the debt”, and is the very phrase the Syriac version uses here: now this was as a debt book, which showed and testified the debts of men; that is, their sins, how many they are guilty of, and what punishment is due unto them: and may well be said to be that

*that was against us, which was contrary to us*; its nature being holy, just, good, and spiritual, is contrary to the unholy and carnal heart of man, and its commands disagreeable to his mind and will; nor can he perform what it requires; nor can he be subject to it without the grace of God, any more than he can like its precepts; and besides, it is contrary to him, and against him, as it charges him with debts, and proves them upon him, so that he has nothing to say in his defence; yea, it proceeds against him, and curses and condemns, and kills him: but God has “blotted” it out, Christ having engaged as a surety for his people, to pay off all their debts; and this being

done by him, God has crossed the debt book of the law, has blotted it out, so that this book is of no force; it does not stand against these persons, it cannot show or prove any standing debt, it cannot demand any, or inflict any penalty: nay, he has

*took it out of the way*; it is not to be seen or looked into as a debt book; it is abolished and done away; it is no more as administered by Moses, as a covenant of works, or as to its rigorous exaction, curse, and condemnation; this is true of the whole law of Moses, as well as of the ceremonial, which is utterly abolished and disannulled in every sense, because of the weakness and unprofitableness of it:

*nauling it to his cross*: to the cross of Christ, showing that the abolition of it is owing to the cross of Christ; where and when he bore the curse and penalty of the law for his people, as well as answered all the types and shadows of it: it is thought to be an allusion to a custom in some countries, to cancel bonds, or antiquate edicts and decrees, by driving a nail through them, so that they could not be legible any more: or it may be to the writing of Pilate, which contained the charge and accusation against Christ; and which was placed over his head upon the cross, and fastened to it with nails<sup>f25</sup>; every nail in the cross made a scissure in this handwriting, or bond of the law, that lay against us, whereby it was so rent and torn, as to be of no force: thus the Holy Ghost makes use of various expressions, to show that there is nothing in the law standing against the saints; it is blotted out, and cannot be read; it is took away, and cannot be seen; it is nailed to the cross of Christ, and is torn to pieces thereby, that nothing can ever be produced from it to their hurt and condemnation.

**Ver. 15.** [*And*] *having spoiled principalities and powers*, etc.]

Principalities of hell, the infernal powers of darkness, the devil that had the power of death, the accuser of the brethren, who often objected their debts, with all his works and posse: these Christ has divested of their armour, wherein they trusted to have ruined men, as sin, the law, and death; he has ransomed his people from him that was stronger than they, and taken the prey out of the hands of the mighty; he has bruised the serpent's head, demolished his works, destroyed him himself, and all his powers, and defeated all their counsels and designs against his elect: some render the word *απεκδυσαμενος*, “having put off”, or “unclothed”: and which some of the ancient writers apply to the flesh of Christ, and understand it of his putting off the flesh by death, whereby he gave the

death blow to Satan and his powers, (<sup><S1214</sup>Hebrews 2:14), to which sense agrees the Syriac version, which renders the words, *hrgp j l çbw*, “and by the putting off of his body, he exposed to shame principalities and powers”: but it may be better interpreted of unclathing, or stripping principalities and powers of their armour, with which they were clothed; as is usually done to enemies, when they fall into the hands of their conquerors: unless rather this is to be understood of Christ's taking away the power and authority of the Jewish ecclesiastical rulers and governors, by abolishing the ceremonial law, and the ordinances of it; declaring himself to be the alone King and Lawgiver in his house, and requiring subjection to his institutions and appointments, which sense agrees with the context:

*he made a show of them openly*; when being raised from the dead, he ascended on high, and led captivity captive; he led Satan and his principalities and powers captive, who had led others, as he passed through the air, the territories of the devil, in the sight of God and the holy angels:

*triumphing over them in it*; which some understand of the cross, as if where and by what he got the victory, there he triumphed; the cross, where his enemies thought to make a show of him, expose him to public scorn and contempt, and to triumph over him, was as it were the triumphant chariot, in which he triumphed over all the powers of hell, when he had conquered them by it: but the words may be rendered “in himself”, as they are by the Vulgate Latin and Syriac versions; and the sense be, that as he by himself got the victory, his own arm brought salvation to him, so he alone shared the glory and honour of the triumph: or it may be rendered “in him”, and the whole in this and the preceding verse be applied to God the Father, who, as in (<sup><S1212</sup>Colossians 2:12,13); is said to raise Christ from the dead, to quicken sinners dead in sins, and to forgive all their trespasses; so he may be said to blot out the handwriting of ordinances, and to spoil principalities and powers, expose them to public view and shame, and triumph over them, “in him”, in and by his Son Jesus Christ: the whole is an allusion to the victories, spoils, and triumphs, of the Roman emperors, who when they had obtained a victory, a triumph was decreed for them by the senate; in which the emperor was drawn in an open chariot, and the captives being stripped of their armour, and their hands tied behind them, were led before him and exposed to public view and disgrace; while he was shouted and huzzaed through the city of Rome, and had all the marks of honour and respect given him <sup>f26</sup>: now all that is said in the preceding

verses show how complete the saints are in and by Christ; and stand in no need of the philosophy of the Gentiles, or the ceremonies of the Jews; nor have anything to fear from their enemies, sin, Satan, and the law, for sin is pardoned, the law is abolished, and Satan conquered.

**Ver. 16.** *Let no man therefore judge you*, etc.] Since they were complete in Christ, had everything in him, were circumcised in him; and particularly since the handwriting of the law was blotted out, and torn to pieces through the nails of the cross of Christ, the apostle's conclusion is, that they should be judged by no man; they should not regard or submit to any man's judgment, as to the observance of the ceremonial law: Christ is the prophet who was to be raised up like unto Moses, and who only, and not Moses, is to be heard; saints are to call no man master upon earth but him; they are not to be the servants of men, nor should suffer any yoke of bondage to be imposed upon them; and should they be suffered and condemned by others, as if they were transgressors of the law, and their state bad, for not observing the rituals of the former dispensation, they should not regard such censures, for the judaizing Christians were very censorious, they were ready to look upon and condemn a man as an immoral man, as in a state of damnation, if he did not keep the law of Moses; but such rigid censures were to be disregarded, “let no man judge”, or “condemn you”; and though they could not help or hinder the judgment and condemnation of men, yet they could despise them, and not be uneasy with them, but set light by them, as they ought to do. The Syriac version renders it, *^wkdwdn*, “let no man trouble you”, or make you uneasy, by imposing ceremonies on you: the sense is, that the apostle would not have them submit to the yoke they would lay upon them, nor be terrified by their anathemas against them, for the non-observation of the things that follow:

*in meat or in drink*; or on account of not observing the laws and rules about meats and drinks, in the law of Moses; such as related to the difference between clean and unclean creatures, to abstinence in Nazarites from wine and strong drink, and which forbid drinking out of an uncovered vessel, and which was not clean; hence the washing of cups, etc. religiously observed by the Pharisees. There was no distinction of meats and drinks before the law, but all sorts of herbs and animals, without limitation, were given to be food for men; by the ceremonial law a difference was made between them, some were allowed, and others were forbidden; which law stood only in meats and drinks, and such like things, but is now abolished; for the kingdom of God, or the Gospel dispensation, does not lie in the



observance of such outward things, but in internal ones, in righteousness and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost; it is not any thing that goes into the man that defiles, nor is anything in its own nature common or unclean, but every creature of God is good, so be it, it be used in moderation and with thankfulness:

*or in respect of an holyday*; or feast, such as the feast of the passover, the feast of tabernacles, and the feast of Pentecost; which were three grand festivals, at which all the Jewish males were obliged to appear before the Lord; but were never binding upon the Gentiles, and were what the Christians under the Gospel dispensation had nothing to do with, and even believing Jews were freed from them, as having had their accomplishment in Christ; and therefore were not to be imposed upon them, or they condemned for the neglect of them. The phrase **εν μερει**, which we render “in respect”, has greatly puzzled interpreters; some reading it “in part of a feast”; or holyday; as if the sense was, that no man should judge or condemn them, for not observing some part of a festival, since they were not obliged to observe any at all: others “in the partition”, or “division of a feast”; that is, in the several distinct feasts, as they come in their turns: some<sup>f27</sup> think the apostle respects the Misna, or oral law of the Jews, in which are several treatises concerning a good day, or an holyday, the beginning of the new year, and the sabbath, which treatises are divided into sections or chapters; and that it is one of these sections or chapters, containing rules about these things, that is here regarded; and then the sense is, let no man judge you or condemn you, for your non-observance of feast days, new moons, and sabbaths, by any part, chapter, or section, of **bwj μwy**, or by anything out of the treatise “concerning a feast day”; or by any part, chapter, or section, of **hñçh çar**, the treatise “concerning the beginning of the year”; or by any part, chapter, or section, of **tbç**, the treatise “concerning the sabbath”; and if these treatises are referred to, it proves the antiquity of the Misna. The Syriac version renders it, **ada[d agl wpb**, “in the divisions of the feast”: frequent mention is made of **gj h swrp**, “the division”, or “half of the feast”, in the Jewish writings: thus for instance it is said<sup>f28</sup>,

“three times in a year they clear the chamber (where the half-shekels were put), **swrpb**, “in the half”, or middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and in the middle of the feast.”

again <sup>f29</sup>

“there are three times for tithing of beasts, in the middle of the passover, in the middle of Pentecost, and the middle of the feast;”

that is, of tabernacles: and this, the Jewish commentators say <sup>f30</sup>, was fifteen days before each of these festivals: now whether it was to this, *swrp*, “middle”, or “half space”, before each and any of these feasts the apostle refers to, may be considered:

*or of the new moon*; which the Jews were obliged to observe, by attending religious worship, and offering sacrifices; (see <sup><031></sup>Numbers 28:11) (<sup><1023></sup>2 Kings 4:23).

*Or of the sabbath [days]*, or “sabbaths”; meaning the jubilee sabbath, which was one year in fifty; and the sabbath of the land, which was one year in seven; and the seventh day sabbath, and some copies read in the singular number, “or of the sabbath”; which were all peculiar to the Jews, were never binding on the Gentiles, and to which believers in Christ, be they who they will, are by no means obliged; nor ought they to observe them, the one any more than the other; and should they be imposed upon them, they ought to reject them; and should they be judged, censured, and condemned, for so doing, they ought not to mind it. It is the sense of the Jews themselves, that the Gentiles are not obliged to keep their sabbath; no, not the proselyte of the gate, or he that dwelt in any of their cities; for they say <sup>f31</sup>, that

“it is lawful for a proselyte of the gate to do work on the sabbath day for himself, as for an Israelite on a common feast day; R. Akiba says, as for all Israelite on a feast day; R. Jose says, it is lawful for a proselyte of the gate to do work on the sabbath day for himself, as for an Israelite on a common or week day:”

and this last is the received sense of the nation; nay, they assert that a Gentile that keeps a sabbath is guilty of death <sup>f32</sup>; (see Gill on <sup><4027></sup>Mark 2:27”). Yea, they say <sup>f33</sup>, that

“if a Gentile sabbatizes, or keeps a sabbath, though on any of the days of the week, if he makes or appoints it as a sabbath for himself, he is guilty of the same.”

It is the general sense of that people, that the sabbath was peculiarly given to the children of Israel; and that the Gentiles, strangers, or others, were not punishable for the neglect and breach of it <sup>f34</sup>; that it is a special and an additional precept, which, with some others, were given them at Marah, over and above the seven commands, which the sons of Noah were only obliged to regard <sup>f35</sup>; and that the blessing and sanctifying of it were by the manna provided for that day; and that the passage in (<sup>0001B</sup>Genesis 2:3); refers not to the then present time, but **dyt [ h l ]**, “to time to come”, to the time of the manna <sup>f36</sup>.

**Ver. 17.** *Which are a shadow of things to come*, etc.] By Christ, and under the Gospel dispensation; that is, they were types, figures, and representations of spiritual and evangelical things: the different “meats and drinks”, clean and unclean, allowed or forbidden by the law, were emblems of the two people, the Jews and Gentiles, the one clean, the other unclean; but since these are become one in Christ, the distinction of meats is ceased, these shadows are gone; and also of the different food of regenerate and unregenerate souls, the latter feeding on impure food, the ashes and husks of sensual lusts, or their own works, the former on the milk and meat in the Gospel, the wholesome words of Christ; and likewise the clean meat was a shadow of Christ himself, whose flesh is meat indeed, and whose blood is drink indeed. The “holy days”, or “feasts” of the Jews, the feasts of tabernacles, of the passover and Pentecost, were types of Christ; the feast of tabernacles, though it was in remembrance of the Israelites dwelling in tents and booths when they came out of Egypt, yet was also a representation of the people of God dwelling in the earthly houses of their tabernacles here on earth; and particularly of Christ's dwelling, or tabernacling in human nature, and who likewise was born at the time of this feast; (see Gill on “<sup>4014</sup>John 1:14”). The passover, as it was a commemoration of the deliverance of the Israelites out of Egypt, and of God's passing over their houses when he smote the firstborn of the Egyptians, so it was a type of Christ our passover sacrificed for us, and was kept by Moses in the faith of him, (<sup>4015</sup>Hebrews 11:28); there is a very great resemblance, in many particulars, between Christ and the paschal lamb; (see Gill on “<sup>4016</sup>1 Corinthians 5:7”). The feast of Pentecost, or the feast of harvest and firstfruits, was a shadow of the firstfruits of the Spirit, which Christ having received, gave to his disciples on that day; and of the harvest of souls to be gathered under the Gospel dispensation, of which the conversion of the three thousand on the day of Pentecost was an earnest

and pledge. The “new moon” was typical of the church, which is fair as the moon, and receives all her light from Christ the sun of righteousness; and of the renewed state of the church under the Gospel dispensation, when the old things of the law are passed away, and all things relating to church order, ordinances, and discipline, are become new. The “sabbaths” were also shadows of future things; the grand sabbatical year, or the fiftieth year sabbath, or jubilee, in which liberty was proclaimed throughout the land, a general release of debts, and restoration of inheritances, prefigured the liberty we have by Christ from sin, Satan, and the law, the payment of all our debts by Christ, and the right we have through him to the heavenly and incorruptible inheritance. The seventh year sabbath, in which there was no tilling of the land, no ploughing, sowing, nor reaping, was an emblem of salvation through Christ by free grace, and not by the works of men; and the seventh day sabbath was a type of that spiritual rest we have in Christ now, and of that eternal rest we shall have with him in heaven hereafter: now these were but shadows, not real things; or did not contain the truth and substance of the things themselves, of which they were shadows; and though they were representations of divine and spiritual things, yet dark ones, they had not so much as the very image of the things; they were but shadows, and like them fleeting and passing away, and now are gone:

*but the body [is] of Christ:* or, as the Syriac version reads it, “the body is Christ”; that is, the body, or sum and substance of these shadows, is Christ; he gave rise unto them, he existed before them, as the body is before the shadow; not only as God, as the Son of God, but as Mediator, whom these shadows regarded as such, and as such he cast them; and he is the end of them, the fulfilling end of them; they have all their accomplishment in him: and he is the body of spiritual and heavenly things; the substantial things and doctrines of the Gospel are all of Christ, they all come by him; all the truths, blessings, and promises of grace; are from him and by him, and he himself the sum of them all. The allusion seems to be to a way of speaking among the Jews, who were wont to call the root, foundation, substance, and essence of a thing, *apwg*, “the body of it”<sup>f37</sup>: so they say<sup>f38</sup>,

“the constitutions concerning the sanctification of the offerings and the tithes, are, both the one and the other, *hrwt ypwg*, “the bodies”, or substantial parts of the law:”

and again<sup>f39</sup>, that

“the constitutions or rules about the sabbath, the festivals and prevarications, they are as mountains that hang by an hair; for the Scripture is small, and the constitutions are many; the judgments and the services, the purifications and uncleannesses, and the incests, they have, upon which they can support themselves, and these, and these, are **hrwt ypwg**, “the bodies of the law”:

they say <sup>f40</sup> of a small section, or paragraph, that all the bodies of the law depend upon it: once more <sup>f41</sup>,

“the sabbaths, and the good days (the feasts or holy days) are **pwg**, “the bodies” of the sign;”

which the phylacteries or frontlets were for; but our apostle says, that Christ is the body and substance of all these shadows, in opposition to these sayings and notions of the Jews: some connect this last clause with the former part of the following verse, rendering it as the Arabic version thus, “because of the communion of the body of Christ, let no man condemn you”; and the Ethiopic version thus, “and let no man account you fools, because of the body of Christ”, but there is nothing in the text to support these versions.

**Ver. 18.** *Let no man beguile you of your reward*, etc.] Or prize; the allusion is to the Olympic games, one of which was running races; in which the stadium, or race plot was fixed, a mark set up to look and run unto, a corruptible crown proposed to be run for, and which was held by one who sat as judge, and determined who got the victory, and to whom the crown belonged; these judges sometimes acted the unfair part, and defrauded the victors of their proper right, and to such the apostle compares the false teachers: the Christian's reward, or prize he is running for, is the incorruptible and never fading crown of glory, life, and righteousness; the race plot is the Christian life, spent in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty, and in holding fast, and holding out in a profession of faith unto the end; the mark he looks at, and presses towards, is Jesus Christ; and his great concern, the apostle by this metaphor suggests should be, lest by false teachers he should be defrauded of the prize of the high calling of God, through their removing the mark Christ from him, by denying his person and Godhead; or by intercepting his sight of him, placing other objects before him, such as angels, to be worshipped and adored; or by darkening of it, joining Moses and Christ, law and Gospel, works and

grace together, in the business of salvation; whereby he might seem to come short, or be in danger of coming short of the heavenly glory:

*in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels*; these things the apostle instances in, as in what lay their danger of being beguiled of their reward, or prize. True humility is an excellent grace; it is the clothing and ornament of a Christian; nor is there anything that makes a man more like Christ, than this grace; but in these men here respected, it was only the appearance of humility, it was not real; it was in things they devised and willed, not in things which God commanded, Christ required, or the Scriptures pointed at; they would have been thought to have been very lowly and humble, and to have a great consciousness of their own vileness and unworthiness to draw nigh to Christ the Mediator immediately, and by him to God; wherefore in pretence of great humility, they proposed to make use of angels as mediators with Christ; whereby Christ, the only Mediator between God and man, would be removed out of sight and use; and that humble boldness and holy confidence with God at the throne of grace, through Christ, which believers are allowed to use, would be discouraged and destroyed, and the saints be in danger as to the outward view of things, and in all human appearance of losing their reward: “worshipping of angels” was a practice which very early prevailed among some that were called Christians, and for a long time continued in Phrygia and Pisidia; some make Simon Magus, and others Cerinthus, the author of this idolatry; but was not only a branch of the Platonic philosophy, and so a part of that philosophy and vain deceit before mentioned, (<sup>5118</sup>Colossians 2:8), which these men might have borrowed from the Gentiles, but was a notion and practice of the Jews: before the Babylonish captivity, the names of angels were not known, nor are they ever mentioned by name in Scripture; hence they say <sup>f42</sup>, that

“the names of angels came up with them, or by their means from Babylon.”

after this they began to talk much of them, and to have too high a veneration for them, and ascribe too much to them; and observing that the law was ordained, spoken, and given by them, and that the administration of things under the former dispensation was greatly by their means, they fell to worshipping of them <sup>f43</sup>; and the believing Jews were hereby in great danger of falling into the same practice: hence the author of the epistle to the Hebrews, writing to the Jewish church, largely insists on the proof of

Christ being superior to angels; showing that he has a more excellent name than they had; that he was the Son of God in such sense as they were not the sons of God; that they were worshippers of him, yea, that they were creatures made by him, and even ministering spirits to his saints, the heirs of salvation: and very rightly, is worshipping of angels condemned here by the apostle, since God only is the object of worship; since these are creatures, and so not to be adored; are worshippers of God and Christ themselves, and have refused adoration when it has been offered to them: that the Jews did, and do worship angels, and make use of them as mediators and intercessors, is clear from their liturgy, or prayer books, where they say <sup>f44</sup>

“*μυμj r ykaI m*, “O ye angels of mercies”, or ye merciful angels, ministers of the most High, entreat now the face of God for good:”

and elsewhere <sup>f45</sup>,

“they say three times, let Juhach keep us, let Juhach deliver us, and let Juhach help us:”

now Juhach was the name of an angel, who they supposed had the care of men, and is taken from the final letters of those words in (<sup>3911b</sup> Psalm 91:11), “for he shall give his angels charge over thee”: so they speak of an angel whom they call Sandalphon, who they say is appointed over the prayers of the righteous <sup>f46</sup>: with this notion the judaizing and false teachers seem to have been tinctured, and against which the apostle here cautions the saints, lest, under a show of humility, they should be drawn into it: and to preserve them from it, he observes, that such an one who should spread and propagate such a notion, was one that was

*intruding into those things which he hath not seen*; thrusting himself in a bold and daring manner into an inquiry and search after, debate upon, and affirmation of things he could have no certain knowledge of; as of angels, whose nature, qualities, works, and ministrations, he had never seen with his bodily eyes; nor could ever discern with the eyes of his understanding any such things in the Scriptures, which he ascribed to them; but they were the birth of his own mind, the fruits of his own fancy and imagination, things devised in his own brain: being

*vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind*; judging of things not according to the word of God, and with a spiritual judgment, and according to a spiritual

sense and experience, but according to his own carnal reason, and the vanity of his mind; being puffed and swelled with an high opinion of himself, of his great parts and abilities, of his knowledge of things above others, and of his capacity to penetrate into, and find out things which were not seen and known by others: this shows that his humility was forced, and only in outward appearance, and was not true and genuine.

**Ver. 19.** *And not holding the head*, etc.] Christ, as some copies express it; for by making use of angels as mediators and intercessors, Christ the only Mediator, the Lord and head of angels, and of the church, was dropped and laid aside; which is another reason the apostle gives, why such men, and their principles and practices, should be shunned and avoided by all those that had a regard for Christ the head:

*from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God:* by “all the body”, or the whole body, is meant the church, the mystical body of Christ; which, like an human body, consists of various members, all in union with one another, and with Christ the head: and “by joints and bands” are intended, either the grace of Christian charity, or love, the bond of perfectness; which is that in Christ's mystical body, as joints and bands are in an human body; for by this the members of Christ are joined, united, and knit together, and make increase: or else the ordinances of the Gospel, by which the saints are kept together in order, and through which is spiritual “nourishment ministered”, from Christ the head to them; who hates not his own flesh, the members of his body, but nourishes and cherishes them, with the wine of divine love, with the water of life, with himself the bread of life, with his flesh which is meat indeed, and with his blood which is drink indeed; with his own wholesome words, even the words of faith and sound doctrine: and it is from him, that the saints “are knit together”: both to one another in him the cornerstone, and also to him, being made one body and one spirit with him; and so from and through him, this body “increaseth with the increase of God”: that which God has appointed for his church, and which he gives; and which it will arrive unto, when all the elect are gathered in, and they are filled with all the gifts and graces of the Spirit, and these are brought to their proper pitch and full degree; all which is had from, and owing to Christ: for if Christ the head is not held, the body will have no nourishment, but soon become a skeleton; the members of it will soon loosen from one another and fall into pieces, and there will be no spiritual increase or edification: all which are so many



reasons, why the saints should be upon their guard against these false teachers, and judaizing Christians, and which argument and exhortation the apostle further pursues in the following verses.

**Ver. 20.** *Wherefore if ye be dead with Christ*, etc.] Or “seeing ye are dead with Christ”; for these words do not signify any doubt about it, but suppose it, and press what is taken for granted. They were dead with Christ by virtue of union to him; they being one with him, and considered in him as their head and representative, died in him, and with him; they were crucified with him, as they are said to be buried with him, and risen with him; they were dead with him, by having communion with him in his death; they partook of the benefits of it, as redemption, pardon, justification, and reconciliation; and they were planted together with him in the likeness of his death, not merely partakers of his sufferings, or suffered with him, and were conformable unto his death, by undergoing such like things as he did, but as he died unto sin, and lived unto God, so did they; and through the virtue and efficacy of his death were dead to sin, so as that it was not imputed to them, so as to be freed and discharged from it, that it could not damn and destroy them; yea, so as that itself was crucified with him, and destroyed by him: and also to the law, to the moral law; not but that they lived according to it, as in the hands of Christ, in their walk and conversation, but did not seek for life, righteousness, and salvation by it; they were dead unto it as to justification by it, and even to obedience to it in a rigorous and compulsive way; and to all its terrors and threatenings, being moved to a regard to it from a principle of love to Christ; and to all its accusations and charges, its curses and condemnation, and as a ministration of death, fearing neither a corporeal, nor an eternal one: they were dead also to the ceremonial law, and were free

*from the rudiments*, or “elements”

*of the world*: the ordinances of a worldly sanctuary, the rites and ceremonies of the world, or state of the Jews, in opposition to, and distinction from, the Gospel dispensation, or times of the Messiah, called, and that by them, *abh μl w*], “the world to come”: these were like letters to a language, or like the grammar, which contains the rudiments of it; these were the first principles of the oracles of God, which led to Christ, and had their accomplishment and end in him; and so believers were dead unto them, and delivered from them, as they were also to the world, the Jewish state, and were entered into the world to come; and even to this

present evil world, and to the men and things of it, being by Christ crucified to it, and that to them: upon all which the apostle thus reasons,

*why, as though living in the world;* since ye are dead unto it, and from the rudiments of it, why should ye be as though ye lived in it? his meaning is not, that they should not live in the world, nor among the men of it, for then they must needs go out of the world; saints may live in the world, though they are not of it, and among the inhabitants of it, though they do not belong to them, but to another and better country: nor does he suggest, that they lived according to the course of the world, as they did in their unregenerate state; but what he seems to blame them for, and reason with them about, was, that they acted as if they sought for life and righteousness in the rudiments of the world, or by their obedience to ceremonial rites, or human inventions: for he adds,

*are ye subject to ordinances?* not civil and political ones, which are for the better and more orderly government of kingdoms, states, and cities, for these the saints ought to be subject to, both for the Lord's sake, and conscience sake; nor Gospel ordinances, as baptism, and the Lord's supper, for such all believers ought to submit unto; but either legal ones, the weak and beggarly elements, the yoke of bondage, the law of commandments contained in ordinances, the handwriting of ordinances, which some were desirous of conforming to; or rather the ordinances and appointments of the Jewish fathers, the traditions of the elders, their constitutions and decrees, which are collected together, and make up their Misna, or oral law; and so the argument is from the one to the other, from the greater to the less, that if they were delivered by Christ from the burdensome rites of the ceremonial law, which were originally appointed by God, it must be great weakness in them to be subject to the ordinances of men; or both the institutions of the ceremonial law, and the decrees of the Jewish doctors about them, which were devised by them, and added to them, and imposed as necessary to be observed, may be intended; of which the apostle gives some particulars in (<sup><small>S1021</small></sup>Colossians 2:21).

**Ver. 21.** *Touch not, taste not, handle not.*] This the apostle says, not of himself, but in the person of the Jewish doctors; who urging the use of the ceremonial law, to which they added decrees and constitutions of their own, said, “touch not” the dead body of any man, the bone of a man, or a grave, any man or woman in their uncleanness; not only their flesh, but the bed they lay on, or the seat they sat on; or any creature that was by the law

unclean; of a Gentile, or any notorious sinner, or common man: hence the Pharisees used to wash themselves when they returned from market, lest they should have been by any means accidentally defiled by touching any thing unclean. There is a treatise in their Misna, called Oholot, which gives many rules, and is full of decrees about things [gmb μyamj m, “that defile by touching”. And so they likewise said, “taste not”, neither the fat, nor the blood of any creature which might be eaten itself, nor swine's flesh, nor the flesh of any creature that chewed the cud, or divided the hoof; nor might the Nazarites taste wine, or strong drink, or vinegar made of either, or moist grapes, or even the kernels and husks; and if a man ate but the quantity of an olive of any of the above things, he was, according to the Jewish canons, to be cut off, or beaten<sup>f47</sup>: and they also said, “handle not”; or, as the Syriac and Arabic read, “do not come near”, or “draw not nigh”, to a Gentile, to one of another nation, or any unclean person, to whom they forbid any near approach or conversation; or “handle not” any of the above things. Some think that these several rules have respect only to meats; as “touch not”, that is, do not eat of things forbidden ever so little; nay, “taste not”, do not let anything of them come within your lips; yea, “handle not”, do not so much as touch them with your fingers. Others think that touch not regards abstinence from women; (see ~~400~~ 1 Corinthians 7:1); and respects the prohibition of marriage by some in those times; and “taste not”, the forbearance of certain meats, at certain times, which God had not restrained any from; and “handle not”, that is, make no use of, or enjoy your own goods, and so designs that voluntary poverty which some entered into under the direction of false teachers.

**Ver. 22.** *Which all are to perish with the using*, etc.] Meaning either the ordinances concerning touching, tasting, and handling, which bring destruction and death on them that use them, and comply with them, in order to obtain righteousness and life; for instead of enjoying salvation through them, they were the cause of damnation to them. Or rather the meats not to be touched, tasted, or handled; these are in their own nature perishing things, and perish by being used; they are only of service to the body, and can be of none to the soul; the using of them cannot defile the man, nor an abstinence from them sanctify him, or commend him to God; they only relate to this present life, and will cease with it, and can have no manner of influence on the spiritual and eternal concerns of men: and besides, the ordinances concerning them are not of God, but are

*after the commandments and doctrines of men*; for so even the ceremonial law, being now abolished, though originally of God, yet the imposition of it, as necessary to salvation, was a commandment and doctrine of man's; and particularly the traditions of the elders, and the various rules and decrees, which the doctors among the Jews obliged men to regard, were human inventions and devices: and this is another reason the apostle makes use of to dissuade from any regard unto them; for whatever is of man, and not of God, in religious worship, ought to be rejected.

**Ver. 23.** *Which things have indeed a shew of wisdom*, etc.] The authors of them set up for men of wisdom, and were esteemed such, and are often styled  $\mu\upsilon\mu\kappa\jmath$  , “wise men”; and their scholars that received their traditions, and explained and enforced them on others,  $\mu\upsilon\mu\kappa\jmath$   $h$   $y$   $d$   $y$   $m$   $l$   $t$  , “the disciples of the wise men”: and they pretended, that these constitutions of theirs were “a hedge for the law”, and for the honour of it, and to preserve it, and keep men from transgressing it; and this carried in it some appearance of wisdom: and their pretensions to it lay in the following things,

*in will worship*; being what was over and above that which was commanded by God, and so, like the freewill offerings under the law, must be acceptable to him; this was one of their colours, which had some show of wisdom, religion, and zeal:

*and humility*: in worshipping of angels, and not coming directly, and with boldness, to God or Christ; or rather in subjecting themselves to the yoke of the law, and submitting to the decrees of the fathers and doctors of the church, who were more wise, and learned, and knowing than they, and so had the appearance of prudence, gentleness, and goodness:

*and neglecting of the body*; by fastings and watchings, whereby they seemed to be very religious and devout, holy and mortified persons, who kept under their bodies, subdued their unruly appetites, and fulfilled not the lusts of the flesh: but then this was only a show of wisdom and godliness; there was no truth nor reality in these things; they were only a mere form, an outside show, a mere pretence; there was no true devotion nor religion in them: and so

*not in any honour*; or to be had in any esteem; for if the rites of the ceremonial law itself were weak and beggarly elements, much more must

these additions to it, and corruptions of it, be such; and at most only regarded things external, that were

*to the satisfying, of the flesh*; either the body, or the carnal mind, in which they were vainly pulled up: though some consider this last clause as explanative of the former, “neglecting of the body”, or not sparing it, but afflicting it with austerities of life; depriving it of its proper right, what is necessary for it, not taking due care of it, so as to satisfy nature; whereby instead of honouring, they dishonoured it: for though the body is not to be pampered, and the lusts of it indulged, or luxury and intemperance to be encouraged; yet since the body is the work of God's hands, is the habitation of the soul, and by which it performs its offices, and is the purchase of Christ, the temple of the Holy Spirit, and will be raised a glorious body at the last day, it ought not to be neglected and dishonoured; but should have a sufficiency of food and clothing, whereby it may be comfortably and honourably nourished and supported.