

EPHESIANS

INTRODUCTION TO THE BOOK OF EPHESIANS

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

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

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 1

In this chapter are contained the inscription of the epistle, the salutation of the persons to whom it is written, the apostle's thanksgiving for blessings received by him, and them; in which the efficient, moving, procuring, and final causes of salvation are taken notice of, and the several parts and branches of it observed; and the whole is concluded with prayers for the Ephesians; in which mention is made of various things to the comfort of the saints, and to the glory of Christ. The inscription is in (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:1), in which the author of the epistle puts his name, declares his office, and how he came into it; and describes the persons to whom he wrote it, by their religious characters, and the place of their abode. The salutation is in (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:2), which is common to all his epistles: and in (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:3), is the thanksgiving to God, as the God and Father of Christ, for spiritual blessings in Christ in general; and then he proceeds to particulars, and begins with election, which is represented as an act of God the Father, as of particular persons, as done in Christ, and from the foundation of the world, the end of which is perfect holiness and love, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:4), and which is further illustrated under the name of predestination; the blessing which that is an appointment to, is the adoption of children; the moving cause of it, is the good pleasure of the divine will; the instrumental cause, or means, is Christ Jesus; the end with God is for himself, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:5), and which, in the next verse, is explained of the glory of his grace; to which grace, acceptance with him in Christ is owing; and which is another spiritual blessing, or a branch of election and predestination, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:6). To which is added another, and that is redemption; the author of which is Christ; the price, or procuring and meritorious cause of it is his blood; a branch of which is forgiveness of sins; and the whole is according to the plenteous and free grace of God, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:7), the entire plan and scheme of which is the produce of abundant wisdom and prudence, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:8), and is no other than the mystery of the will of God revealed in the Gospel, according to his sovereign will and purpose, (~~400B~~Ephesians 1:9), which lay hid within himself until the fulness of times, or the Gospel dispensation, in which

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

Ver. 1. *Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, &c.*] (See Gill on “^{<4001>}Romans 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4001>}1 Corinthians 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4002>}2 Corinthians 1:1”). (See Gill on “^{<4001>}Galatians 1:1”).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

until the redemption of the purchased possession, or “of the peculiar people”; (see ^{<400>}1 Peter 2:9), for this is not to be understood of heaven, which is never said to be purchased, nor can it with any propriety be said to be redeemed; but of saints, of the church of God, who are bought with a price, and are purchased with his blood; and who, as they were redeemed from sin, Satan, and the law, when they were purchased, so will be redeemed again in the resurrection morn, which is called the day of redemption, (^{<400>}Ephesians 4:30 ^{<4218>}Luke 21:28), and which will be a redemption of them from the weakness, corruption, and mortality of the body; from their present state of absence and pilgrimage; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions, both inward and outward; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from a tempting devil, and an unbelieving heart; from all doubts and fears; and from death and the grave; and so the Syriac version very justly renders it, “until the redemption of them that are saved”. Now till such time, the Spirit of God abides as an earnest, even until the whole felicity is enjoyed both in soul and body; and this shows the perpetuity of the Spirit's inhabitation, and grace, the final perseverance of the saints, and the security of the inheritance to them.

Unto the praise of his glory; as to the glory of the Father, by whom the saints are chosen and predestinated, (^{<4006>}Ephesians 1:6) and to the glory of the Son, by whom they are redeemed, in whom they obtain the inheritance, and in whom they trust, (^{<4012>}Ephesians 1:12), so to the glory of the Holy Spirit, by whom they are sealed, and who is their earnest; for he must have his share of glory in the salvation of the elect, as well as the other two persons.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

spiritual light, and that the eyes of their understandings might be more and more enlightened; the phrase, $\text{I K\eta h \textasciitilde{y}[}$, $\text{\textcirc{m}\mu\alpha \text{ \textasciitilde{t}\eta\varsigma \text{ \textasciitilde{d}\iota\alpha\nu\omicron\iota\alpha\varsigma}}$, “the eye of the understanding”, is Rabbinical, and often to be met with in Jewish writings¹⁶; the Alexandrian copy, and several others, the Complutensian edition, the Vulgate Latin, and all the Oriental versions, read, “the eyes of your heart”; and to, $\text{t\textcirc{w}b\textcirc{b}l h \text{ \textasciitilde{y}n\text{y}[}$, “the eyes of the hearts, or minds”, is a phrase used by the Jewish writers¹⁷:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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