

CHAPTER 2

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 2

The design of the apostle in this chapter, is to magnify the riches of divine grace, in the effectual calling and salvation of sinners, by Christ Jesus; in order to which, he describes the sad estate they are in by nature, and before conversion, even God's elect among the Jews, and especially among the Gentiles; and then observes how peace is made for and between them both, by Christ the peacemaker; and the various privileges and blessings which both enjoy, in consequence of it: he begins with the Ephesians, and expresses the former state they were in by a death, which is ascribed to trespasses and sins, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:1), and represents their walk and conversation to have been according to the world, and after Satan; who is described by his dominion over other devils that dwell in the air, and by his influence upon disobedient men, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:2), and that it might not be thought that the case of these Gentile Ephesians was worse than others, the apostle observes of himself, and other saints among the Jews, that their conversation before conversion was among the men of the world, and so according to the course of it, as the Gentiles; and that it was a very carnal conversation they had spent, in fulfilling the desires and lusts of the flesh; and that they were as deserving of, and as liable to the wrath of God in themselves, as other persons, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:3), to which former state he opposes their present one; they were not now dead in sin, but were quickened; which is ascribed to God as the efficient cause, and to his rich mercy and great love as the moving cause; and to Christ as the meritorious and procuring cause, by whose grace they were saved, and in whom they were not only quickened, but raised, and made to sit together in heavenly places; and the final cause and end of all this was, to show forth the abundant grace and kindness of God, through Christ, (~~400~~Ephesians 2:4-7). The doctrine of salvation by grace, the apostle takes up again from (~~400~~Ephesians 2:5), and to the moving cause of salvation, the grace of God, he adds the means, or instrument by which it is received and enjoyed, which is faith; and that is denied to be owing to the power of men, but is said to be a gift of God (~~400~~Ephesians 2:8), and the end in view, in putting salvation upon the foot of grace and not works, is to prevent boasting in

the creature, (^{<4119>}Ephesians 2:9), and that works cannot be the causes of salvation, either efficient, moving, or procuring, is evident; since though they are to be performed as being agreeable to the purposing, as well as commanding will of God, yet they are effects, both of the work of grace upon the soul in time, called a creation, and of the decrees of God from eternity, (^{<4120>}Ephesians 2:10), when the apostle goes on to put the Ephesians in mind of their former state in unregeneracy, with the same view as before, to magnify the grace of God, but in a different manner; not as common to them with the Jews, but as peculiar to them as Gentiles; as that they were had in contempt by the Jews, and were in a state of alienation, not only from them, but from God and Christ, and the enjoyment of various privileges, (^{<4121>}Ephesians 2:11,12), wherefore the grace of God was the more conspicuous in their present state of nearness both to God and his people, brought about by the blood of Christ, (^{<4123>}Ephesians 2:13), who, as the peacemaker, not only made peace by the blood of his cross between God and them, but between them and the true Israel of God among the Jews; which was done, partly by abolishing the ceremonial law, which occasioned enmity, and kept up a division among them, (^{<4124>}Ephesians 2:14-16), and partly by sending, and preaching the Gospel of peace to them both, (^{<4127>}Ephesians 2:17), and by opening a way of access for them both unto the Father through himself, under the direction and influence of the Spirit, (^{<4128>}Ephesians 2:18), from all which it appeared, that they were not in a state of distance and alienation as before, but all belonged to the same city and family, and were built on the same foundation, and were united together in the same corner stone, Jesus Christ, (^{<4129>}Ephesians 2:19,20), and as the apostle compares Christ to a foundation, and a corner stone, so the church of Christ, consisting of Jews and Gentiles, to a temple; which being fitly put together, becomes, an Holy One in the lord, and a suitable habitation for God through the Spirit, (^{<4122>}Ephesians 2:21,22).

Ver. 1. *And you hath he quickened*, &c.] The design of the apostle in this and some following verses, is to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and to set forth the sad estate and condition of man by nature, and to magnify the riches of the grace of God, and represent the exceeding greatness of his power in conversion: the phrase

hath he quickened, is not in the original text, but is supplied from (^{<4125>}Ephesians 2:5), where it will be met with and explained: here those

who are quickened with Christ, and by the power and grace of God, are described in their natural and unregenerate estate,

who were dead in trespasses and sins; not only dead in Adam, in whom they sinned, being their federal head and representative; and in a legal sense, the sentence of condemnation and death having passed upon them; but in a moral sense, through original sin, and their own actual transgressions: which death lies in a separation from God, Father, Son, and Spirit, such are without God, and are alienated from the life of God, and they are without Christ, who is the author and giver of life, and they are sensual, not having the Spirit, who is the spirit of life; and in a deformation of the image of God, such are dead as to their understandings, wills, and affections, with respect to spiritual things, and as to their capacity to do any thing that is spiritually good; and in a loss of original righteousness; and in a privation of the sense of sin and misery; and in a servitude to sin, Satan, and the world: hence it appears, that man must be in himself unacceptable to God, infectious and hurtful to his fellow creatures, and incapable of helping himself: so it was usual with the Jews to call a wicked and ignorant man, a dead man; they say ^{f9},

“there is no death like that of those that transgress the words of the law, who are called, **μytm**, “dead men”, and therefore the Scripture says, “turn and live”.”

And again ^{f10},

“no man is called a living man, but he who is in the way of truth in this world. — — And a wicked man who does not go in the way of truth, is called, **tm**, “a dead man”.”

And once more ^{f11} “whoever is without wisdom, lo, he is **tmk**, “as a dead man”;

(See Gill on “~~S486~~ 1 Timothy 5:6”). The Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and one of Stephens's, and the Vulgate Latin version, read, “dead in your trespasses and sins”; and the Syriac version, “dead in your sins and in your trespasses”; and the Ethiopic version only, “dead in your sins”.

Ver. 2. *Wherein in time past ye walked*, &c.] Sins and transgressions are a road or path, in which all unconverted sinners walk; and this path is a dark, crooked, and broad one, which leads to destruction and death, and yet is

their own way, which they choose, approve of, and delight to walk in; and walking in it denotes a continued series of sinning, an obstinate persisting in it, a progress in iniquity, and pleasure therein: and the time of walking in this path, being said to be in time past, shows that the elect of God before conversion, walk in the same road that others do; and that conversion is a turning out of this way; and that when persons are converted, the course of their walking is altered, which before was

according to the course of this world meaning this world, in distinction from the world to come, or the present age, in which the apostle lived, and designs the men of it; and the course of it is their custom, manner, and way of life; to which God's elect, during their state of unregeneracy, conform, both with respect to conversation and religious worship: great is the force that prevailing customs have over men; it is one branch of redemption by Christ, to deliver men from this present evil world, and to free them from a vain conversation in it; and it is only the grace of God that effectually teaches to deny the lusts of it; and it is only owing to the prevalent intercession and power of Christ, that even converted persons are kept from the evil of it:

according to the prince of the power of the air: which is not to be understood of any supposed power the devil has over the air, by divine permission, to raise winds, but of a posse, or body of devils, who have their residence in the air; for it was not only the notion of the Jews^{f12}, that there are noxious and accusing spirits, who fly about *rywab*, “in the air”, and that there is no space between the earth and the firmament free, and that the whole is full of a multitude of them; but also it was the opinion of the Chaldeans^{f13}, and of Pythagoras^{f14}, and Plato^{f15}, that the air is full of demons: now there is a prince who is at the head of these, called Beelzebub, the prince of devils, or the lord of a fly, for the devils under him are as so many flies in the air, (~~402b~~ Matthew 12:24) and by the Jews called^{f16}, *ajj wrd ^whbr*, “the prince of spirits”; and is here styled, the Spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience; by which spirit is meant, not the lesser devils that are under the prince, nor the spirit of the world which comes from him, and is not of God; but Satan himself, who is a spirit, and an evil, and an unclean one; and who operates powerfully in unbelievers, for they are meant by children of disobedience, or unbelief; just as *atwnmyhm ynb*, “children of faith”^{f17}, in the Jewish dialect, designs believers; and over these Satan has great influence, especially the reprobate

part of them; whose minds he blinds, and whose hearts he fills, and puts it into them to do the worst of crimes; and indeed, he has great power over the elect themselves, while in unbelief, and leads them captive at his will; and these may be said in their unregeneracy to walk after him, when they imitate him, and do his lusts, and comply with what he suggests, dictates to them, or tempts them to.

Ver. 3. *Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past, &c.*] What the apostle says of the Gentile Ephesians before conversion, he says of himself and other Jews; and this he does, partly to show that it was not from ill will, or with a design to upbraid the Gentiles, that he said what he did; and partly to beat down the pride of the Jews, who thought themselves better than the sinners of the Gentiles; as well as to magnify the grace of God in the conversion of them both: the sense is, that the apostle and other Jews in the time of their unregeneracy, had their conversation according to the customs of the world, and to the prince of the air, and among unbelievers, as well as the Gentiles; and that they were equally sinners, and lived a like sinful course of life:

in the lusts of our flesh; by “flesh” is meant, the corruption of nature; so called, because it is propagated by natural generation; and is opposed to the Spirit, or principle of grace; and has for its object fleshly things; and discovers itself mostly in the body, the flesh; and it makes persons carnal or fleshly: and this is called “our”, because it belongs to human nature, and is inherent in it, and inseparable from it in this life: and the “lusts” of it, are the inward motions of it, in a contrariety to the law and will of God; and are various, and are sometimes called fleshly and worldly lusts, and the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life: and persons may be said to have their conversations in these, when these are the ground of their conversation, when they are solicitous about them, and make provision for the fulfilling of them, and constantly employ themselves in obedience to them, as follows:

fulfilling the desires of the flesh, and of the mind: or the wills of them; what they incline to, will, and crave after: various are the degrees of sin, and its several motions; and universal is the corruption of human nature; not only the body, and the several members of it, are defiled with sin, and disposed to it, but all the powers and faculties of the soul; even the more noble and governing ones, the mind, understanding, and will, as well as the affections; and great is the power and influence which lust has over them:

and were by nature children of wrath, even as others: by which is meant, not only that they were wrathful persons, living in malice, hateful, and hating one another; but that they were deserving of the wrath of God, which comes upon the children of disobedience, among whom they had their conversation; and which is revealed from heaven against such sins as they were guilty of, though they were not appointed to it: and they were such “by nature”; really, and not in opinion, and by and from their first birth: so a Jewish commentator^{f18} on these words, “thy first father hath sinned”, (~~2387~~ Isaiah 43:27) has this note;

“how canst thou say thou hast not sinned? and behold thy first father hath sinned, and he is the first man, for man *aj j b [bj wm*, “is naturally in sin”;

or by nature a sinner, or sin is naturally impressed in him; and hence being by nature a sinner, he is by nature deserving of the wrath of God, as were the persons spoken of:

even as others; as the rest of the world, Jews as well as Gentiles; and Gentiles are especially designed, in distinction from the Jews, the apostle is speaking of; and who are particularly called in the Jewish dialect *pyrj a*, “others”; (See Gill on “~~2381~~ Luke 18:11”).

Ver. 4. *But God, who is rich in mercy*, &c.] Mercy is a perfection of the divine nature, and is essential to God; and may be considered with respect to the objects of it, either as general, extending to all men in a providential way; or as special, reaching only to some in a way of grace; for though mercy is his nature, yet the display and exertion of it towards any object, is the act of his will; and special mercy, with all the blessings and benefits of it, is only exhibited in Christ Jesus: and God is said to be “rich” in it, because he is free and liberal in dispensing it, and the effects of it; and that to a large number of persons, in great abundance and variety, by various ways, and in divers instances; as in the covenant of grace, in the mission of Christ, in redemption by him, in regeneration, in pardon of sin, and in eternal salvation; and yet it is inexhaustible and perpetual; and this sets forth the excellency and glory of it:

for his great love wherewith he loved us; the love of God to his chosen people is very great, if it be considered who it is that has loved them, God and not man; who is an infinite, unchangeable, and sovereign Being; and his love is like himself, for God is love; it has heights and depths, and

lengths and breadths immeasurable; it admits of no variation nor alteration; and is altogether free, arising from himself, and not from any motives and conditions in men: and if the persons themselves are considered, who are the objects of it, men, sinful men, unworthy of the divine notice and regard; and that these are loved personally, particularly, and distinctly, and not others; nakedly, and not theirs, or for any thing in them, or done by them, and that notwithstanding their manifold sins and transgressions: to which may be added, that this love is represented as a past act; and indeed it is from everlasting, and is antecedent to their being quickened, and was when they were dead in trespasses and sins; and is the source and spring of the blessing next mentioned: so the divine love is often called in the Cabalistic writings of the Jews ^{f19}, *hbr hbha*, “great love”.

Ver. 5. *Even when we were dead in sins*, &c.] (See Gill on “~~am~~ Ephesians 2:1”).

Hath quickened us together with Christ: which may be understood either of regeneration, when a soul that is dead in a moral or spiritual sense, is quickened and made alive; a principle of life is infused, and acts of life are put forth; such have their spiritual senses, and these in exercise; they can feel the load and weight of sin; see their lost state and condition, the odiousness of sin, and the beauty of a Saviour, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, and the fulness and suitableness of Christ's; breathe after divine and spiritual things; speak in prayer to God, and the language of Canaan to fellow Christians; move towards Christ, exercise grace on him, act for him, and walk on in him: and this life they have not from themselves, for previous to it they are dead, and in this quickening work are entirely passive; nor can regenerate persons quicken themselves, when in dead and lifeless frames, and much less unregenerate sinners; but this is God's act, the act of God the Father; though not exclusive of the Son, who quickens whom he will; nor of the Spirit, who is the Spirit of life from Christ; and it is an instance of the exceeding greatness, both of his power and love; and this may be said to be done with Christ, because he is the procuring and meritorious cause of it, by his death and resurrection from the dead; and is the author and efficient cause of it; and he is the matter of it, it is not so much the quickened persons that live, as Christ that lives in them, and it is the same life he himself lives; and because he lives, they shall live also; it is in him as in the fountain, and in them as in the stream: or else this may be understood of justification; men are dead in a legal sense, and on account of sin, are under the sentence of death; though they naturally

think themselves alive, and in a good state; but when the Spirit of God comes, he strikes dead all their hopes of life by a covenant of works; not merely by letting in the terrors of the law upon the conscience, but by showing the spirituality of it, and the exceeding sinfulness of sin; and how incapable they are of satisfying the law, for the transgressions of it; and then he works faith in them, whereby they revive and live; they see pardon and righteousness in Christ, and pray for the one, and plead the other; and also lay hold and live upon the righteousness of Christ, when the Spirit seals up the pardon of their sins to them, and passes the sentence of justification on them, and so they reckon themselves alive unto God; and this is the justification of life, the Scripture speaks of; and this is in consequence of their being quickened with Christ, at the time of his resurrection; for when he rose from the dead, they rose with him; when he was justified, they were justified in him; and in this sense when he was quickened, they were quickened with him:

by grace ye are saved: the Claromontane copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “by whose grace”; and the Arabic and Ethiopic versions, “by his grace”; either by the grace of him that quickens, or by the grace of Christ with whom they were quickened; the Syriac version renders it, “by his grace he hath redeemed us”; which seems to refer to the redeeming grace of Christ; and so the Ethiopic version, “and hath delivered us by his grace”; and there is a change of the person into “us”, which seems more agreeable to what goes before, and follows after; (see Gill on “~~4:11~~ Ephesians 2:8”).

Ver. 6. *And hath raised us up together*, &c.] Which refers either to a spiritual resurrection, to a resurrection from a death in sin, to a spiritual life; and which is the effect of almighty power, and of rich grace and mercy; and in which Christ is concerned: he is the efficient cause of it, he raises the dead in this sense, and quickens whom he will; and his resurrection is the virtual cause of it; and also the exemplar, between which there is a great likeness; both bear the same name; both are a declaration of sonship; and both the first step to glory in Christ and in his people; and both are instances of the exceeding greatness of God's power: or it may refer to a corporeal resurrection, said to be already, because it is in faith and hope, and because of the certainty of it; and to be together with Christ, because of the conformity of it to his resurrection, and to the influence of which it is owing; and chiefly because that when Christ rose from the dead, all his people rose in him, and with him, as their head and representative, he

being the firstfruits of them that slept; so called, in allusion to the firstfruits of the harvest under the law, which represented and sanctified the whole:

and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: Christ is entered into heaven as the forerunner, to take possession of it for his people, in their name; and to prepare mansions of glory for them, and in these they sit; which imports honour, pleasure, rest from labour and weariness, and safety and security: and what adds to the happiness of this is, that it is together with all the saints, and with Christ himself; and in these they are made to sit already; which is so said, because of the certainty of it, for the same glory Christ has, they shall have; and because of their right to such a blessing; and chiefly because Christ their head is set down therein, who sustains their persons, bears their names on his heart, and represents them.

Ver. 7. *That in the ages to come,* &c.] This is the end of God's permitting sin, in which men are morally dead; and of his suffering them to go on in sin, in a state of unregeneracy; and of his quickening them with Christ, and raising them up, and causing them to sit together with him: namely, that

he might show the exceeding riches of his grace: riches being added to grace, denote the valuableness of it, as well as its plenty and abundance; and also the freeness and liberality of God in giving it; and likewise the enriching nature of it: and these riches are exceeding; they exceed the riches of this world, in the immenseness of them, being unsearchable; and in the inexhaustibleness of them, for though such large treasures have been expended upon such numbers of persons, yet there is still the same quantity; and in the duration of them, they last forever; and in the profit and satisfaction they yield, when other riches fade away, are not profitable nor satisfying; and they exceed the conception, knowledge, and comprehension of men; and intend the utmost stretch of the grace of God: and which are evidently and remarkably displayed,

in his kindness towards us through Christ Jesus; in providing him as a Saviour for his people; in the mission of him into this world; in not sparing, but giving him up as a sacrifice to justice for their sins; and blessing them with all spiritual blessings in him: all which God designed to show forth, in the ages to come; meaning either the ages following to the end of time, in distinction from the ages that were past: hence it appears, that the world was not expected to be immediately at an end; and that the writings of the New Testament were to be continued, and the Gospel preached unto the

end of time, in which the riches of divine grace are held forth to view; and that these ages to come, are seasons and days of grace; for a day of grace will never be over, as long as the Gospel of grace is preached; and that the instances of grace through Christ, and in the times of the apostles, are encouraging to men in ages succeeding; and that the same grace that was displayed then, is shown forth in these: or else the world to come is meant, which will take place at the end of this; and may lead us to observe, that there will be ages in the other world; and that God has not only prepared a great deal of grace and glory for his people, but he has appointed ages enough for them to enjoy it in; and that their riches lie in another world, and are in some measure hid; and that these are the produce of the grace of God; and that the exceeding riches of that will be then manifested, when it will also appear that God's giving grace to men, is not only with a view to his own glory, but is an act of kindness to them; and that eternal happiness will be heartily and freely bestowed upon them, and that through Jesus Christ their Lord: the Syriac version renders it, "that unto ages to come he might show", &c. that is, to men in ages to come; the sense is much the same.

Ver. 8. *For by grace are ye saved, &c.*] This is to be understood, not of temporal salvation, nor of preservation in Christ, nor of providential salvation in order to calling, and much less of being put in a way of salvation, or only in a salvable state; but of spiritual salvation, and that actual; for salvation was not only resolved upon, contrived and secured in the covenant of grace, for the persons here spoken to, but it was actually obtained and wrought out for them by Christ, and was actually applied unto them by the Spirit; and even as to the full enjoyment of it, they had it in faith and hope; and because of the certainty of it, they are said to be already saved; and besides, were representatively possessed of it in Christ their head: those interested in this salvation, are not all mankind, but particular persons; and such who were by nature children of wrath, and sinners of the Gentiles; and it is a salvation from sin, Satan, the law, its curse and condemnation, and from eternal death, and wrath to come; and includes all the blessings of grace and glory; and is entirely owing to free grace: for by grace is not meant the Gospel, nor gifts of grace, nor grace infused; but the free favour of God, to which salvation in all its branches is ascribed; as election, redemption, justification, pardon, adoption, regeneration, and eternal glory: the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions read, "by his grace", and so some copies; and it may refer to the grace of

all the three Persons; for men are saved by the grace of the Father, who drew the plan of salvation, appointed men to it, made a covenant with his Son, in which it is provided and secured, and sent him into the world to obtain it; and by the grace of the Son, who engaged as a surety to effect it, assumed human nature, obeyed and suffered in it for that purpose, and has procured it; and by the grace of the Spirit, who makes men sensible of their need of it, brings it near, sets it before them, and applies it to them, and gives them faith and hope in it: hence it follows,

through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; salvation is through faith, not as a cause or condition of salvation, or as what adds anything to the blessing itself; but it is the way, or means, or instrument, which God has appointed, for the receiving and enjoying it, that so it might appear to be all of grace; and this faith is not the produce of man's free will and power, but it is the free gift of God; and therefore salvation through it is consistent with salvation by grace; since that itself is of grace, lies entirely in receiving grace and gives all the glory to the grace of God: the sense of this last clause may be, that salvation is not of ourselves; it is not of our desiring nor of our deserving, nor of our performing, but is of the free grace of God: though faith is elsewhere represented as the gift of God, (~~John~~ John 6:65 ~~Philippians~~ Philippians 1:29) and it is called the special gift of faith, in the Apocrypha:

“And blessed is the eunuch, which with his hands hath wrought no iniquity, nor imagined wicked things against God: for unto him shall be given the “special gift of faith”, and an inheritance in the temple of the Lord more acceptable to his mind.” (Wisdom 3:14)

— — - (I asked the following question from a Greek and Hebrew professor:

“In this verse, to what does the word “that” refer to? Adam Clarke, Wesley & company say that it is neuter plural and “Faith” is feminine hence it cannot refer to faith, (Such an admission would destroy their theological system.) However “Grace” is also feminine as is “Salvation”.”

His reply was:

“Here you ask a wonderful theological/exegetical question to which I can only give an opinion, and not a definitive answer. The problem is that there is NO precise referent. Grace is feminine.

Faith is feminine. And even Salvation (as a noun) is feminine. Yet it must be one of these three at least, and maybe more than one, or all three in conjunction. Since all three come from God and not from man, the latter might seem the more likely. However, it is a tautology to say salvation and grace are “nor of yourselves,” and in that case it certainly looks more like the passage is really pointing out that man cannot even take credit for his own act of faith, but that faith was itself created by God and implanted in us that we might believe (i.e. the normal Calvinistic position). In which regard the whole theological issue of “regeneration preceding faith” comes into play. So, that is basically my opinion, though others obviously disagree strenuously, but from an exegetical standpoint, the other positions have to explain away the matter of the tautology.”

Whether you accept the reply or not, it is sufficient to show that the Greek is not as definitive in this verse as some scholars would have you believe.
Editor)

Ver. 9. *Not of works, &c.*] Of any kind, moral or ceremonial, before or after conversion, done without faith or in it, nor of these in any sense; works are neither the moving causes, nor the procuring causes, nor the helping causes, nor “*causa sine qua non*”, or conditions of salvation; the best works that are done by men, are not done of themselves, but by the grace of God, and therefore can never merit at his hand: and salvation is put upon such a foot,

lest any man should boast; of his works before God, and unto men; wherefore he has denied works any place in justification and salvation, in order to exclude all boasting in man; and has fixed it in a way of grace, and has chosen and called poor sinful worthless creatures to enjoy it, that whoever glories, may glory in the Lord.

Ver. 10. *For we are his workmanship, &c.*] Not as men only, but as Christians; not as creatures merely, but as new creatures; the work of grace upon the soul seems chiefly designed, which like a poem, as the word may be rendered, is a very curious work; the king's daughter is all glorious within, for this is an internal work, and is a good and excellent one; it is not indeed perfected at once, but is gradually carried on, till the finishing stroke is given to it by that hand which begun it; the author of it is God, it is not man's work; nor is it the work of ministers, no, nor of angels, but it is God's work: sometimes it is ascribed to the Spirit, who regenerates and

sanctifies; and sometimes to the Son of God, who quickens whom he will; and sometimes to the Father, who reveals his Son, and draws men to him, and who seems to be meant here: the subjects of this divine operation, are the persons described in (~~the~~ Ephesians 2:1-3) and include both Jews and Gentiles; and express the distinguishing grace of God, that they and not others, and who were by nature children of wrath as others, should be his workmanship: and this is mentioned to show, that salvation can not be by any works of men, since all their works are either wrought for them, or in them, by God; salvation is a work wrought for them without them; and sanctification is a work wrought in them by God, of his good pleasure; and all their good works are fruits of his grace, as follows:

created in Christ Jesus unto good works; the work of grace is a creation, or a creature, a new creature; not a new vamp of old Adam's principles, but; an infusion of new ones, and is a work of almighty power; and such who have it wrought in them, are said to be created in Christ; because as soon as a man becomes a new creature, he is openly and visibly in Christ; and by these new principles of grace which are created in him, he is fit and ready, and in a capacity to perform good works; the new man formed in him, is formed for righteousness and true holiness; the internal principle of grace both excites unto, and qualifies for, the performance of righteous and holy actions:

which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them, or has “before prepared”; for the preparation of good works to be performed by saints, and the preparation of them for the performance of them; are both from the Lord; God has appointed good works to be done by his people and in his word he has declared what they are he would have done; and it is his will not only that they should do them, but continue to do them; not only that they should do a single act or more, but walk in them; their conversation and course of life should be one continued series of good works; but the intention is not that they should be saved by them, but that they should walk in them; and this being the pre-ordination of God, as it shows that predestination is not according to good works, since good works are the fruits and effects of it, so likewise that it is no licentious doctrine; seeing it provides for the performance of good works, as well as secures grace and glory.

Ver. 11. *Wherefore remember, that ye be in time past Gentiles in the flesh*, &c.] This, with what follows in the next verse, the apostle puts the

converted Ephesians in mind of, in order to magnify the grace of God in their conversion; and to humble them in a view of their former state and condition; and to teach them that they could never be saved by any works of theirs: particularly he would have them call to mind, that they were in “time past Gentiles”; which does not so much regard the nation and country they were of, for in that sense they were Gentiles still; but their state and condition; they had been very blind and ignorant, were Gentiles that knew not God; they had been very wicked and profligate sinners of the Gentiles; and they had been “Gentiles in the flesh”: not according to the flesh, or by birth, for so they were then; but in the time of their unregeneracy they were carnal, and minded the things of the flesh, walked after it, and fulfilled the lusts, and did the works of it; particular respect seems to be had to their uncircumcision in the flesh, to which circumcision in the flesh is opposed in the next clause:

who are called uncircumcision by that which is called circumcision in the flesh made by hands; that is, they were by way of reproach and contempt called uncircumcised persons; than whom none were more abominable to the Jews, and hated by them, who were called circumcised persons from that circumcision which is outward, in the flesh, in a particular part of the body; and which is done by the hands of a man, who was called *l hwm*, “the circumciser”; which any one might be, except a Gentile^{f20}; an Israelite adult and skilful was preferred; yet these were not circumcised persons with that circumcision that is inward, and is of the heart, in the Spirit, and is made without the hands of men, and by the Spirit and power of God.

Ver. 12. *That at that time ye were without Christ*, &c.] Or separate from him: they were chosen in him and were preserved in him, and were redeemed by him before; but they were without any knowledge of him, faith in him, love to him, communion with him, or subjection to him, his Gospel, government, laws, and ordinances; and particularly they were without any promises of him, or prophecies concerning him, which were peculiar to the Jews; hence the Messiah is called *l arçyd aj yçm*, “the Christ of Israel”^{f21}, and who as he was promised, so he was sent only to the lost sheep of the house, of Israel: hence it follows,

being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel; both from their civil and church state; the Gentiles might not dwell among them, nor have any dealings with them in things civil, unless they conformed to certain laws; nor might the Jews go into any, nor eat or converse with any, that were

uncircumcised; so great an alienation and distance were there between these two people; and much less might they eat the passover and join with them in religious worship; the word for “commonwealth” here used, Harpocratian says ^{f22}, is commonly used by Greek writers for a “democracy” though the original constitution of the Israelites was properly a “theocracy”:

strangers to the covenants of promise; to the covenant of circumcision given to Abraham; and to the covenant at Mount Sinai, made with Israel; and to the dispensation of the covenant of grace to that people, sometimes called the first covenant and the old covenant, and which peculiarly belonged to them, (~~εἰς~~ Romans 9:4) one copy reads, “strangers to the promises of the covenant”; which is natural enough; the Vulgate Latin version joins the word “promise” to the next clause, and reads,

having no hope of the promise of the promised Messiah: “having no hope”; of the Messiah and salvation by him, of the resurrection of the dead, of a future state, and of eternal life; none that is sure and steadfast, that is purifying, and makes not ashamed; or which is a good hope through grace, is the gift of God, the fruit of his love, and the effect of his power; and this is to be in a miserable condition: Philo, the Jew ^{f23}, observes, that

“the Chaldeans call a man Enos, as if he only was truly a man that expects good things, and supports himself with good hopes; and adds, hence it is manifest that one without hope is not reckoned a man, but a beast in an human form; since he is destitute of hope, which is the property of the human soul;”

and without God in the world; without the knowledge of God in Christ; without the image of God, which was defaced by sin; without the grace and fear of God; and without communion with him, and the worship of him; and while they were so they were in the world, among the men of it, and were a part of it, not being yet called out of it: the word signifies “atheists”: so some of the Gentiles were in “theory”, as they all were in practice; and they were by the Jews reckoned no other than “atheists”; it is a common saying with them ^{f24} that

“he that dwells without the land (of Israel) is like one **hwl a wl** **yaç**, “who has no God”:

Ver. 13. *But now in Christ Jesus*, &c.] Being openly and visibly in Christ, created in him, and become believers in him; as they were before secretly in him, as chosen and blessed in him before the foundation of the world:

ye who sometimes were far off; who in their state of unregeneracy were afar off from God, and from his law, and from any spiritual knowledge of him and fellowship with him; and from Jesus Christ, and from the knowledge of his righteousness, and the way of salvation by him; and from the Spirit, and any acquaintance with the things of the Spirit, and from minding them, and from walking after him; and from the saints and people of God, and from any love to them, and communion with them; and from any solid hopes of happiness, or real peace and comfort; which distance was owing both to Adam's sin and to their own transgressions: it is an observation of a Jewish writer ^{f25} on (~~GEN~~ Genesis 3:9) "where art thou?" he (God) knew where he was, but he said so to show him that he was **pj wrm**, "afar off from" God by his sin: (see ~~ISA~~ Isaiah 59:2), and yet

are made nigh by the blood of Christ: so as to have nearness of access to and communion with God, Father, Son, and Spirit, and the saints, in virtue of the blood of Christ; which gives boldness and speaks peace; by which their persons are justified, the pardon of their sins is procured, reconciliation is made, and their garments are washed, and made white; and so they draw nigh with confidence by the faith of him.

Ver. 14. *For he is our peace*, &c.] The author of peace between Jew and Gentile: there was a great enmity of the Jew against the Gentile, and of the Gentile against the Jew; and chiefly on account of circumcision, the one being without it, and the other insisting on it, and branding one another with nicknames on account of it; but Christ has made peace between them by abrogating the ceremonial law, which was the occasion of the difference, and by sending the Gospel of peace to them both, by converting some of each, and by granting the like privileges to them all, as may be observed in the following verses: and Christ is the author of peace between God and his people; there is naturally in man an enmity to God; sin has separated chief friends; nor can man make his peace with God; what he does, or can do, will not do it; and what will, he cannot do; Christ is the only fit and proper person for this work, being a middle person between both, and is only able to effect it, being God as well as man; and so could draw nigh to God, and treat with him about terms of peace, and agree to them, and perform them; and which he has brought about by his blood, his

sufferings and death; and which is made on honourable terms, by a full satisfaction to the law and justice of God; and so is a lasting one, and attended with a train of blessings: moreover, Christ is the donor of peace, of external peace in his churches, and of internal peace of conscience, and of eternal peace in heaven: this is one of the names of the Messiah with the Jews ^{f26};

“says R. Jose the Galilean, even the name of the Messiah is called **פּוֹלָה** **שָׁלוֹם**, “peace”; as it is said, (²³⁰⁶Isaiah 9:6) “the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace”;

(see ³⁸⁸⁵Micah 5:5) where it is said, “and this man shall be the peace”; which the Jewish ^{f27} writers understand of the Messiah:

who hath made both one; Jews and Gentiles, one people, one body, one church; he united them together, and caused them to agree in one, and made them to be of one mind and judgment by the above methods; as well as he gathered them together in one, in one head, himself, who represented them all:

and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; the ceremonial law, which was made up of many hard and intolerable commands, and distinguished, and divided, and kept up a division between Jews and Gentiles: so the Jews call the law a wall, “if she be a wall”, (²⁸⁸⁹Song of Solomon 8:9) **הַרְוֵת** **וְזָרָה**, “this is the law”, say they ^{f28}: and hence we read of **הַרְוֵת** **תְּמוּךְ**, “the wall of the law” ^{f29}; and sometimes the phrase, a “partition wall”, is used for a division or disagreement; so R. Benjamin says ^{f30}, that between the Karaites and Rabbanites, who were the disciples of the wise men, there was **הַחֲזֵק** **מִן**, “a middle wall of partition”; a great difference and distance; and such there was between the Jew and Gentile, by reason of the ceremonial law; but Christ removed it, and made up the difference: the allusion seems to be to the wall which divided the court of Israel from the court of the Gentiles, in the temple, and which kept them at a distance in worship.

Ver. 15. *Having abolished in his flesh the enmity*, &c.] The ceremonial law, as appears by what follows,

even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; which consisted of many precepts, and carnal ordinances; and is so called because it was an indication of God's hatred of sin, by requiring sacrifice for it; and because it

was an occasion of stirring up the enmity of the natural man, it being a burden and a weariness to the flesh, by reason of its many and troublesome rites; and because it was the cause of enmity between Jew and Gentile: the Jews say ^{f31}, that Sinai, the mount on which the law was given, signifies “hatred”; and that it is so called because from it descended *hanç*, “hatred” or “enmity” to the nations of the world: now this Christ abolished, “in his flesh”, or by it; not by his incarnation, but by the sacrifice of his flesh, or human nature, and that as in union with his divine nature; but not until he had fulfilled it in himself, which was one end of his coming into the world; and then he abolished it, so as that it ought not to be, and so as that it is not, and of no use and service; and that because it was faulty and deficient, weak and unprofitable, as well as intolerable; and because there was a change in the priesthood; and because it was contrary to a spirit of liberty, the great blessing of the Gospel; and that there might be a reconciliation and a coalition between Jew and Gentile, as follows:

for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace; which explains what is meant before by making both one; and expresses the strictness of the union between Jew and Gentile, they became as one man; and points at the manner in which they became so strictly united; and that is by being made new men, or new creatures, by having a work of grace upon their souls, and so baptized into one body, and made to drink of one and the same Spirit; the foundation of which union is in himself; for Jew and Gentile, male and female, bond and free, are all one in Christ Jesus; he is the cornerstone in which they all meet, and the head to which the whole body is joined.

Ver. 16. *And that he might reconcile both unto God, &c.*] This is another end of the abrogation of the ceremonial law: the Jews had run up a long score against the ceremonial law, as well as against the moral law; and Christ by fulfilling it for them, and thereby abrogating it, reconciled them; and the Gentiles could not be reconciled together with them, without the abrogation of it: and this reconciliation of them is made to God, who was the person offended; and who yet first set on foot a reconciliation, in which his glory is greatly concerned; and reconciliation with others depends upon reconciliation with him: and this is made

in one body by the cross; by which “body” is meant, the human body of Christ, which the Father prepared for him, and he assumed, and that in order to make reconciliation for his people; and is said to be “one” body,

because it was in one and the same body, which he reconciled both Jews and Gentiles unto God, and in or by one sacrifice of that body; reconciliation being so effectually made by it that there is no need of a reiteration: or the sense is, he reconciled them into “one body”; into one mystical body, the church, of which he is head; and this he did “by the cross”, that is, by his blood shed on the cross, or by his suffering the death of the cross; which shows that reconciliation is made in a way of satisfaction to the law and justice of God, by Christ's bearing the penalty of the law, and suffering the strokes of justice on the cross; and expresses the efficacy of his blood and sacrifice, and the greatness of his condescension and love:

having slain the enmity thereby; the ceremonial law, as before; and the slaying it is the same with abolishing it; unless the enmity between God and man is meant, which was slain by removing the cause of it, sin; and which laid a foundation for the slaying of it in the hearts of his people in regeneration, when sin is made odious to them, and they are reconciled to God's way of salvation; hence being slain in both senses, peace with God can never be broken.

Ver. 17. *And came and preached peace to you which were afar off, &c.]* Which is to be understood not of Christ's coming in the flesh; for when he came in the flesh, he came only to the Jews that were nigh, and preached the Gospel in his own personal ministry to them, and not to the Gentiles, who are the persons afar off; (~~4112~~ Ephesians 2:12,13) but of his coming by his Spirit in the ministry of his apostles, to whom he gave a commission after he had made peace and reconciliation by the blood of his cross, to go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the Gentiles in the furthest parts of the earth; and on whom he bestowed gifts, qualifying them for such service, and succeeded them in it by his power and grace: and the subject of their ministry was peace, Christ who is our peace, and peace made by his blood, and the Gospel of peace, which declares both these; and it is the means of making persons of peaceable dispositions; its doctrines and promises, when powerfully applied, give peace to distressed minds, and quiet to doubting saints; and it shows the way to eternal peace:

and to them that were nigh; to the Jews, to whom the Gospel of peace was preached in the first place, not only by Christ and his apostles, before his death; but by his apostles after his resurrection, and after the commission was given to preach it to the Gentiles; though they are mentioned last,

because the apostle was speaking to Gentiles; and this also verifies what Christ says, the first shall be last, and the last first: the Alexandrian copy, some others, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, read “peace”, in this clause, as in the former; the apostle seems to have respect to (²⁵⁷⁹Isaiah 57:19) a like description and distinction of Jews and Gentiles may be observed in the writings of the Jews^{f32}; so they say,

“the Israelites are near unto the holy King, and the rest of the nations are far from him.”

Ver. 18. *For through him we both have an access*, That is, both Jews and Gentiles; the Arabic version reads, “we both factions”: being made one, and reconciled unto God, and having the Gospel of peace preached to both, they have through Christ freedom of access and boldness in it:

by one Spirit unto the Father: they may come to God as the Father of spirits, and of mercies, who has made their souls or spirits, and bestowed his mercies on them in great abundance; and as the Father of Christ, and as their God and Father in Christ: and the rather they should consider him in this relation to them, in order to command in them a reverence and fear of him; to secure a freedom and liberty in their approach to him; and to encourage an holy boldness, and a fiducial confidence in him; and to teach them submission to his will: and their access to him is “through” Christ, who has made peace for them, and atonement for their sins; who has satisfied law and justice, and brought in an everlasting righteousness for them; so that there is nothing lies in their way to hinder them; and besides, he takes them as it were by the hand, and leads them into the presence of his Father, and presents their petitions for them, on whose account they have both audience and acceptance with God: and this access is also “by one Spirit”; the “Holy Spirit”, as the Ethiopic version reads; and who is necessary in access to God, as a spirit of adoption, to enable and encourage souls to go to God as a father; and as a spirit of supplication, to teach both how to pray, and for what, as they should; and as a free spirit to give them liberty to speak their minds freely, and pour out their souls to God; and as a spirit of faith to engage them to pray in faith, and with holy boldness, confidence, and importunity; and he is said to be “one”, both with respect to the persons to and by whom access is had, the Father and Christ, for he is the one and the same Spirit of the Father and of the Son; and with respect to the persons who have this access, Jews and Gentiles, who as they make up one body, are actuated and directed by, and drink into one

and the same Spirit: hence this access to God is of a spiritual kind; it is a drawing nigh to God with the heart, and a worshipping him in spirit; and is by faith, and may be with freedom, and should be, with reverence, and ought to be frequent; and is a peculiar privilege that belongs to the children of God; and who have great honour bestowed upon them, to have access to God at any time, as their Father, through Christ the Mediator, and under the influence, and by the direction and assistance of the Holy Spirit: this is a considerable proof of a trinity of persons in the Godhead, of their deity and distinct personality.

Ver. 19. *Now therefore ye are no more strangers.* &c.] Alluding to the name *yrkn*, “a stranger”, by which the Jews called the Gentiles; meaning that they were not now strangers to God, to the grace of God, the love of God, and communion with him, nor to the throne of his grace; nor to Christ, to his person, his work and office, to his righteousness, to his voice, and to believing in him; nor to the Holy Spirit, as an enlightener, a comforter, the spirit of adoption, and as a seal and earnest of future glory; nor to their own hearts, the corruption and deceitfulness of them; nor to the devices of Satan; nor to the covenant of grace, its blessings and promises:

and foreigners: in the commonwealth of Israel, in the church of God;

but fellow citizens with the saints: the city they belong to is either the church below, which is the city of God, of his building, and where he dwells, of which Christ is the foundation, which is strongly fortified with the walls and bulwarks of salvation, is delightfully situated by the river of divine love, and is endowed with various privileges; or heaven above, which is a city of God's preparing and building also, and where he has his residence, and which is the habitation of angels and saints; of this city in either sense saints are citizens; such who are saints by separation, who are set apart by the Father's grace, and by imputation, or through Christ's being made sanctification to them, and by the regenerating grace of the blessed Spirit; and these, as they have a right to a name and a place in the church on earth, have also their citizenship in heaven; and which they have not by birth, nor by purchase, but by the free grace of God, which gives them both a right and a meetness; and believing Gentiles are upon equal foot of grace and privilege with believing Jews:

and of the household of God: and which is sometimes called the household of faith, the church of God consisting of believers, the family in heaven and in earth named of Christ; in which family or household God is the Father, Christ is the firstborn, ministers are stewards; and here are saints of various growth and size, some fathers, some young men, some children: and to this family all believers belong, whether Gentiles or Jews; and which they come into, not by birth, nor by merit, but by adopting grace; and happy are they that belong to this city and house! they are freed from all servitude and bondage; they can never be arrested, or come into condemnation; they have liberty of access to God, and share in the fulness of grace in Christ; they are well taken care of; they are richly clothed, and have plenty of provisions; and will never be turned out, and are heirs of a never fading inheritance.

Ver. 20. *And are built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets,* &c.] The prophets of the Old Testament, and the apostles of the New, who agree in laying ministerially the one and only foundation, Jesus Christ; for not the persons of the apostles and prophets, nor their doctrines merely, are here meant; but Christ who is contained in them, and who is the foundation on which the church, and all true believers are built: he is the foundation of the covenant of grace, of all the blessings and promises of it, of faith and hope, of peace, joy, and comfort, of salvation and eternal happiness; on this foundation the saints are built by Father, Son, and Spirit, as the efficient causes, and by the ministers of the Gospel as instruments: these lie in the same common quarry with the rest of mankind, and are singled out from thence by efficacious grace; they are broken and hewn by the word and ministers of it, as means; and are ministerially laid on Christ the foundation, and are built up thereon in faith and holiness; yea, private Christians are useful this way to build up one another:

Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone; which cements and knits together angels and men, Jews and Gentiles, Old and New Testament saints, saints above, and saints below, saints on earth, in all ages and places, and of every denomination; and which is the beauty and glory, as well as the strength of the building, which keeps all together; and Christ is the chief, the headstone of the corner, and who is superior to angels and men. This phrase is used by the Jews to denote excellency in a person; so a wise scholar is called *hnyq ba*, “a cornerstone”; ^{f33} (see ^{118:22} Psalm 118:22 ^{28:16} Isaiah 28:16) (^{10:4} Zechariah 10:4). It may be rendered, “the chief cornering-stone”; it being such an one that is a foundation stone, as well as

a cornerstone; and reached unto, and lay at the bottom of, and supported the four corners of the building; for the foundation and corner stone in this spiritual building, is one and the same stone, Christ: it is said of the temple of Latona, at Buto, in Egypt, that it was made, *εξ ενος λιψου*, “of one stone”, as Herodotus^{f34} an eyewitness of it, attests.

Ver. 21. *In whom all the building fitly framed together*, &c.] This building is to be understood of all the saints, and people of God; of the whole universal church, which is God's building; and is a building of a spiritual nature, and will abide for ever: and this is fitly framed together; it consists of various parts, as a building does; some saints are comparable to beams, some to rafters, others to pillars, &c. and these are joined and united to one another, and are set in an exact symmetry and proportion, and in a proper subserviency to each other; and so as to make for the good, the strength, and beauty of the whole. And it all centres in Christ; he has a great concern in this building; he is the master builder, and the foundation and cornerstone; and it being knit together in him,

groweth unto an holy temple in the Lord: it grows by an accession of new stones, or of souls called by grace, and added to it; for this building is not yet openly and visibly completed, as it will be; in order to which the ministry of the word, and administration of ordinances are continued; and this will be in the latter day, when the number of God's elect, among Jews and Gentiles, shall be gathered in: and this growth may be understood also of an increase of those, who are openly laid in the building; of their spiritual growth into their head, Christ; and of an, increase of grace in them; which the word and ordinances are means of, under a divine blessing: and this building grows unto an “holy temple”, the Gospel church state, called a “temple”, in allusion to the temple at Jerusalem; whose materials were stones made ready and hewn, before they were brought thither; and whose magnificence, beauty, and glory, were very great; and it was the place of public worship, and of the divine abode, and was a very significant emblem of the church of God; (see ~~2~~ 2 Corinthians 6:16), which is an “holy” one, set apart for holy uses, and internally sanctified by the Spirit of God; and which is discovered by external holiness of life, and conversation in the members of it: and this is said to be “in the Lord”; which phrase may refer to the word “groweth”, and denotes that growth and increase, both of persons and grace, the church has in, and from the Lord Jesus Christ; or to the word “holy”, and intimates, that the holiness of

the church, and every member of it, is also in and from the Lord; or to the word “temple”, which is built for him to dwell in.

Ver. 22. *In whom you also are builded together, &c.*] As the church universal, so every particular church is a building that is compact together, in and upon Christ, as the church at Ephesus was: God is the builder of it; Christ is the foundation; true believers are the proper materials; the door, or entrance into it, is Christ, and faith in him; the ministers of the Gospel are pillars in it; the ordinances are its windows; its furniture is of various sorts, there are vessels of small, and of great quantity; and its provisions are large and entertaining. A church is a building compact together; it consists of many parts; and these are joined together, by agreement, and are knit and cemented in love; and being thus joined together, they are designed for social worship, and their great concern should be to edify one another. The phrase, “in whom”, may either refer to the holy temple before spoken of, the church universal, of which a particular church is a part; or to Christ, who is the master builder, by whom they are built together, and the foundation on whom they are built, and the cornerstone in whom they meet and are united. And the end of their being thus built together is, for an habitation of God through the Spirit; which may be understood of God the Father, since he is distinguished from Christ, in whom, and from the Holy Spirit, through whom, they are built for this purpose, though not to the exclusion of either of them; for a particular church is an habitation of Father, Son, and Spirit: and it being the habitation of God, shows his great grace and condescension, and the great value and regard he has for it; and this makes it a desirable, delightful, and pleasant habitation to the saints; and hence it is a safe and a quiet one, and they are happy that dwell in it; and hither should souls come for the enjoyment of the divine presence: and whereas it is said to be such through the Spirit; hence it appears, that the Spirit is concerned with the other two persons in the building of it; and that hereby it becomes a spiritual house; and is, through his grace, a fit habitation for the holy God to dwell in; and that God dwells in his churches by his Spirit.