

CHAPTER 4

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 4

The apostle having in the three former chapters treated of the doctrines of grace, and explained and established them, proceeds in the three following to exhort to the duties of religion; and in this advises to a becoming conversation in general, and to brotherly concord and unity in particular; and dehorts from several vices, and encourages to the contrary virtues. And inasmuch as these Ephesians were called with an holy calling, he entreats them, if they had any regard for him as a prisoner of Christ, that they would walk worthy of it, ([Ephesians 4:1](#)), and directs to the manner in which they should act becoming it, with all humility, patience, forbearance, and love; seeking to preserve a spiritual harmony, unity, and peace, one among another, ([Ephesians 4:2,3](#)), for the encouragement of which, he makes use of various arguments, taken from the unity of the body, of which they were members; from their being quickened and influenced by one and the same Spirit; from having the same hope of eternal happiness, to which they were called; from their having one Lord over them, who is Christ; from their having the same like precious faith in him; from their being baptized with the same baptism in him; and from their having one, and the same God and Father, ([Ephesians 4:4-6](#)), and from all of them having gifts, though different, for mutual usefulness; which gifts are described by the author and donor of them, Christ, ([Ephesians 4:7](#)), which is proved ([Ephesians 4:8](#)), out of a passage in ([Psalm 68:18](#)), which is explained of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ, of his descent from heaven, and ascension thither; the end of which latter was to fill all things, or persons, with gifts, ([Ephesians 4:9,10](#)), of which a particular enumeration is given, ([Ephesians 4:11](#)), the design of which is, to fit men for the work of the ministry, and by them to convert sinners, and edify saints, ([Ephesians 4:12](#)), which ministry is to be continued, until all the saints arrive to a perfection of spiritual knowledge, and make up one perfect man, or body of men in Christ, ([Ephesians 4:13](#)), for the use and end of the Gospel ministry is not, that such who are converted by it should continue children, be in suspense about truth, and under the deceptions of men, ([Ephesians 4:14](#)), but that through speaking the

truth in love, they should grow up into Christ their head; from whom supplies of grace are communicated, for the increase and edification of every member of the body, (^{<4045>}Ephesians 4:15,16), and seeing these Ephesians to whom the apostle writes were separated in the effectual calling from the rest of the Gentiles, they ought not to walk as the others did; whose minds were vain, their understandings darkened, and their hearts blinded, hardened, and ignorant; and had no sense of things, but were given up to all manner of wickedness, (^{<4047>}Ephesians 4:17-19), whereas they had learned Christ, and through hearing had been taught the truth of the Gospel, as it was in him, (^{<4041>}Ephesians 4:20,21), wherefore it became them in their conversation, not to follow the dictates of corrupt nature, called the old man, that being full of lusts, corrupt, and deceitful, but to act becoming the renewing work of the Spirit upon their souls, and agreeably to the new principles of the grace of God created in them, in order to righteousness and holiness, (^{<4042>}Ephesians 4:22-24), and in particular it became them to avoid lying, and on the contrary to speak truth to one another; and that for this reason, because they were members of the same body, and of one another, (^{<4025>}Ephesians 4:25), and likewise to abstain from sinful anger, and not continue a wrathful disposition, (^{<4043>}Ephesians 4:26), nor was it advisable to yield to the suggestions, solicitations, and temptations of Satan, (^{<4047>}Ephesians 4:27), nor to commit theft, but on the other hand give themselves to manual labour at some commendable calling, that they might have for their own use, and others too, (^{<4043>}Ephesians 4:28), and it was also right to be careful not to suffer corrupt and unchaste words to come out of their mouths, but such as would be grateful and useful to others, (^{<4049>}Ephesians 4:29), and the rather this, and all the rest of the things mentioned, and likewise what follows, should be attended to; since by such evil lusts, words, and actions, the Holy Spirit of God is grieved, who should not, since he is the sealer of the saints unto the day of redemption, (^{<4041>}Ephesians 4:30). And the chapter is concluded with a dehoration from several vices of the mind and tongue, respecting wrath and revenge; and an exhortation to the contrary virtues, kindness, tenderness, and forgiveness; to which encouragement is given, by the example of God, who forgives for Christ's sake, (^{<4051>}Ephesians 4:31,32).

Ver. 1. *I therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you, &c.*] Or “in the Lord”; that is, for the Lord's sake; (See Gill on “^{<4041>}Ephesians 3:1”). Some connect this phrase, “in the Lord”, with the following word, “beseech”: as

if the sense was, that the apostle entreated the believing Ephesians, in the name of the Lord, and for his sake, to take heed to their walk and conversation, that it be as became the calling by grace, and to glory, with which they were called: and this exhortation he enforces from the consideration of the state and condition in which he was, a prisoner, not for any wickedness he had been guilty of, but for the Lord's sake, which seems to be the true sense of the word; and that, if they would not add afflictions to his bonds, as some professors by their walk did, he beseeches them, as an ambassador in bonds, that they would attend to what he was about to say; and the rather, since such doctrines of grace had been made known to them, which have a tendency to promote powerful godliness; and since they were made partakers of such privileges as laid them under the greatest obligation to duty, which were made mention of in the preceding chapters.

That ye walk worthy of the calling wherewith ye are called; by which is meant, not that private and peculiar state and condition of life, that the saints are called to, and in: but that calling, by the grace of God, which is common to them all; and is not a mere outward call by the ministry of the word, with which men may be called, and not be chosen, sanctified, and saved; but that which is internal, and is of special grace, and by the Spirit of God; by whom they are called out of darkness into light, out of bondage into liberty, out of the world, and from the company and conversation of the men of it, into the fellowship of Christ, and his people, to the participation of the grace of Christ here, and to his kingdom and glory hereafter; and which call is powerful, efficacious, yea, irresistible; and being once made is unchangeable, and without repentance, and is holy, high, and heavenly. Now to walk worthy of it, or suitable to it, is to walk as children of the light; to walk in the liberty wherewith Christ and his Spirit make them free; to walk by faith on Christ; and to walk in the ways of God, with Christ, the mark, in their view, and with the staff of promises in their hands; and to walk on constantly, to go forwards and hold out unto the end: for this walking, though it refers to a holy life and conversation, a series of good works, yet it does not suppose that these merit calling; rather the contrary, since these follow upon it; and that is used as an argument to excite unto them: but the phrase is expressive of a fitness, suitableness, and agreeableness of a walk and conversation to such rich grace, and so high an honour conferred on saints.

Ver. 2. *With all lowliness and meekness,* &c.]. In the exercise of humility, which shows itself in believers, in entertaining and expressing the meanest

thoughts of themselves, and the best of others; in not envying the gifts and graces of others, but rejoicing at them, and at every increase of them; in a willingness to receive instruction from the meanest saints; in submission to the will of God in all adverse dispensations of Providence; and in ascribing all they have, and are, to the grace of God: and so to behave, is to walk agreeably to their calling of God; and what the consideration of that may engage them to, when they serve the low estate and condition out of which they are called, in which they were before calling: and that in effectual calling they have nothing but what they have received; and that others are called with the same calling that they are: and to walk humbly before God and man, is to walk according to the will of God that calls; and it is walking as Christ walked, who is meek, and lowly; and is agreeable to the blessed Spirit, one of whose fruits is meekness; and is what is very ornamental to the saints, and is well pleasing in the sight of God.

With longsuffering; bearing much and long with the infirmities of each other; without being easily provoked to anger by any ill usage; and not immediately meditating and seeking revenge for every affront given, or injury done; and so to walk, is to walk worthy of the grace of calling, or agreeable to it, to God that calls by his grace, who is longsuffering both with wicked men, and with his own people.

Forbearing one another in love; overlooking the infirmities of one another, forgiving injuries done, sympathizing with, and assisting each other in distressed circumstances, the spring of all which should be love; by that saints should be moved, influenced, and engaged to such a conduct, and which should be so far attended to, as is consistent with love; for so to forbear one another, as to suffer sin to be on each other, without proper, gentle, and faithful rebukes for it, is not to act in love.

Ver. 3. *Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit, &c.*] That is, a spiritual union: there is an union between God and his people, and between Christ and his members, and between saints and saints, and the bond of each union is love; and that it is which knits and cements them together; and it is the last of these which is here intended: the saints are united under one head, and are members of one and the same body, and should be of the same mind and judgment, and of one accord, heart, and affection: and this may be called “the unity of the Spirit”; because it is an union of spirits, of the spirits or souls of men; and that in spiritual affairs, in the spiritual exercises of religion; and it is effected by the Spirit of God, by whom they

are baptized into one body. Now to endeavour or study to keep and preserve this, supposes that this union does already exist; that it is very valuable, as making much for the glory of God, the mutual comfort and delight of saints, and is worth taking some pains about; and that it is very difficult to secure, there being so many things which frequently arise, and break in upon it, through the devices of Satan, and the corruptions of men's hearts: but though it is difficult, and may sometimes seem to be impossible, yet it becomes the saints to be diligent in the use of means to keep it up, and continue it; and which they may be said to endeavour after, when they abide with one another, and do not forsake each other upon every occasion; when they perform all offices of love to one another, and stir up each other to the like: and the way and manner in which this is to be kept, is

in the bond of peace: the Arabic version reads, “by the bond of love and peace”: by maintaining peace among themselves, and seeking those things which tend to, and make for peace, and spiritual edification; and which is called a bond, in allusion to the Greek word used, which comes from one that signifies to knit, join, and bind together, and because it is of a knitting and uniting nature. Now so to act is to walk worthy of calling grace, or agreeably to it: peace is what the saints are called unto in the effectual calling: and what is suitable to God, who is the God of peace; and to Christ, who is the Prince of peace; and to the Holy Spirit, whose fruit is peace; and to the Gospel, which is the Gospel of peace; and to the character which the saints bear, which is that of sons of peace.

Ver. 4. *There is one body*, &c.] The church; in what sense that is a body, and compared to one, (See Gill on “⁴⁰¹²³Ephesians 1:23”). It is called “one” with relation to Jews and Gentiles, who are of the same body, and are reconciled in one body by Christ, and are baptized into it by the Spirit; and with respect to saints above and saints below, who make up one general assembly; and with regard to separate societies; for though there are several particular congregations, yet there is but one church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven; and saints of different ages, places, states, and conditions, are all one in Christ Jesus, who is the one, and only head of this body: and this is an argument to excite the saints to unity of Spirit; since they are, as one natural body is, members one of another, and therefore should not bite and devour one another; they are one political body, one kingdom, over which Christ is sole King and lawgiver, and a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand; they are one

economical body, one family, they are all brethren, and should not fall out by the way.

And one Spirit; the Holy Spirit of God, who animates, quickens, and actuates the body: there is but one Spirit, who convinces of sin, enlightens, regenerates, and makes alive; who incorporates into the body, the church; who comforts the saints; helps them in their access to God through Christ; makes known the things of Christ to them, is a spirit of adoption, and the seal and earnest of the heavenly glory; and the consideration of this should engage to unity, because a contrary conduct must be grieving to the Spirit of God, unsuitable to his genuine fruits, and very unlike the true spirit of a Christian: and by one spirit may be meant the spirit of themselves, who, as the first Christians were, should be of one heart, and of one soul, of the same mind, and having the same affections for one another; which sense is favoured by the Syriac and Arabic versions; the former rendering the words, “that ye may be one body and one spirit”, making this to be the issue and effect of their endeavours after union and peace; and the latter reads them as an exhortation, “be ye one body and one spirit”; that is, be ye cordially and heartily united in your affections to one another:

even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; that is, the glory hoped for, and which is laid up in heaven, and will be enjoyed there, to which the saints are called in the effectual calling, is one and the same: there are no degrees in it; it will be equally possessed by them all; for they are all loved with the same love, chosen in the same head, and secured in the same covenant; they are bought with the same price of Christ's blood, and are justified by the same righteousness; they are all equally the sons of God, and so heirs of the same heavenly inheritance; and are all made kings and priests unto God, and there is but one kingdom, one crown, one inheritance for them all; and the holiness and beatific vision of the saints in heaven will be alike; and therefore they should be heartily affected to one another here on earth, who are to be partners together in glory to all eternity. So the Jews say ^{f39}, that in the world of souls, all, small and great, stand before the Lord; and they have a standing alike; for in the affairs of the soul, it is fit that they should be all μῦνς, “equal”, as it is said (⁴⁰¹⁵Exodus 30:15), “the rich shall not give more”.

Ver. 5. *One Lord*, &c.] The Lord Jesus Christ, who, by right of creation, is Lord of all; and by right of marriage, and redemption, is the one and only Lord of his church and people; he has betrothed them to himself, and is

their husband, and so their Lord, whom they are to worship and obey; he has redeemed them, he has bought them with the price of his blood, and therefore they are not their own, but his, and should glorify him both with their bodies and souls, which are his; he is the head of his body the church, the King of saints, and Father and master of the family named of him, and therefore they ought to agree among themselves, and not be many masters, and usurp a domination over one another. The Ethiopic version reads, “one God”, but that is expressed in the following verse.

One faith; there is but one grace of faith; there are indeed different sorts of faith; there is the faith of miracles, and an historical, temporary faith, but there is but one true grace of faith; and which, though it is in different subjects, and its degrees and acts are various, yet as to its nature, it is like precious faith in all; and has the same author and object, Jesus Christ, and springs from the same cause, the free grace of God, and has equally in all everlasting salvation connected with it, and consequent upon it: and there is but one doctrine of faith; the Gospel is so called, because it consists of things to be believed, is the means of implanting faith, it proposes the object to be believed in, and requires the exercise of it upon it, and should be mixed with faith whenever heard. Now this is but one, and is all of a piece, and consistent with itself, and so should the professors of it be, and love one another in the faith.

One baptism, there were divers baptisms under the law, but there is but one baptism under the Gospel; for John's and Christ's are the same: there are, besides, figurative or metaphorical ones, which are so in an improper sense, as the baptism of the Spirit, and the baptism of blood, or of sufferings; but there is but one baptism, literally and properly so called, which is water baptism; and which is to be administered in one and the same way, by immersion in water; and on one and the same subjects, believers in Christ; and in one and the same name, the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and to be performed but once, when rightly administered.

Ver. 6. *One God and Father of all*, &c.] That there is but one God is the voice of nature and of revelation; and may be concluded from the perfections of deity, for there can be but one eternal, infinite, immense, omnipotent, all-sufficient, perfect, and independent Being; and from one first cause of all things, and the relations he stands in to his creatures: there is but one God, who is truly, and really, and properly God, in opposition to

all nominal and figurative deities, and which are not gods by nature, and to the fictitious deities and idols of the nations; and there is but one God of Jews and Gentiles; nor is the unity of the Godhead inconsistent with a trinity of persons in it: and this one God is the Father of all; the Father of all mercies, and of all spirits, both angels and souls of men; and he is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ, and of all the elect in him: and seeing that they have all one covenant God and Father, who has predestinated them to the adoption of children, and who has put them among the children, and adopted them into his family, and stand in the same relation to him, and enjoy the same privileges, they ought to love as brethren:

who is above all; which may denote the superior excellency of his nature, not above his Son and Spirit, who are of the same nature with him, but above angels and men; and the extensiveness of his government, over all creatures in general, and over his church and people in particular:

and through all; the Arabic version renders it, “taking care of all”; which may have respect to his providence, which is either universal, and reaches to all creatures his hands have made; or special, and concerns his own chosen people, who belong to his family, and to whom he stands in the relation of a covenant God and Father: or this clause may refer to the perfections of his nature, which appear through the whole of the salvation of all the chosen ones; as his wisdom, love, grace, mercy, justice, holiness, truth, and faithfulness:

and in you all; which is to be understood, not of his being in his creatures, by his powerful presence, which is everywhere supporting them; but of the gracious union there is between him and his people, and of his gracious inhabitation in them by his Spirit. The Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, the Complutensian edition, and some copies, read, “in us all”; and the Alexandrian copy, and the Ethiopic version, read only, “in all”.

Ver. 7. *But unto everyone of us is given grace*, &c.] Which may refer to the saints in common, and may be interpreted of justifying, pardoning, adopting, sanctifying, and persevering grace, bestowed upon them all, freely and liberally, not grudgingly, nor niggardly, and without motive and condition in them; or to the ministers of the Gospel, and so design gifts fitting for the ministry, which every one has, though differing one from another, and all of free grace:

according to the measure of the gift of Christ: either according to the gift of grace to Christ before the world began, and the measure of it, which he communicates to them in time, even grace for grace; or according to that measure of gifts which Christ received from men at his ascension: it may be observed that every member of Christ, and minister of his, receive more or less grace and gifts from him; and that what they receive is all of free grace, and in measure; and though they may have gifts differing one from another, yet all are useful; so that there is no room for pride, envy, and contempt, which would break in upon the unity of the Spirit; for what is said from (^{<401B>}Ephesians 4:3) contains so many arguments to stir up the saints to endeavour to preserve that.

Ver. 8. *Wherefore he saith,* &c.] God in the Scripture, (^{<10618>}Psalm 68:18)

when he ascended up on high; which is not to be understood of Moses's ascending up to the firmament at the giving of the law, as some Jewish writers ^{f40} interpret it; for though Moses ascended to the top of Mount Sinai, yet it is never said that he went up to the firmament of heaven; nor of David's going up to the high fortresses of his enemies, as another of those writers ^{f41} would have it; nor of God's ascent from Mount Sinai, when he gave the law, of which there is no mention in Scripture; but of the Messiah's ascension to heaven, which may very well be signified by this phrase, "on high"; (see ^{<39A29>}Psalm 102:19) (^{<32531>}Jeremiah 25:30), and which ascension is to be taken not in a figurative, but literal sense, and as real, local, and visible, as Christ's ascension to heaven was; being from Mount Olivet, attended by angels, in the sight of his apostles, after he had conversed with them from the time of his resurrection forty days; and which ascension of his was in order to fulfil the type of the high priest entering into the most holy place; and to make intercession for his people, and to send down the Spirit with his gifts and graces to them, and to make way and prepare mansions of glory for them, and receive the glory promised and due to him: in the Hebrew text it is, "thou hast ascended"; there the psalmist speaks to the Messiah, here the apostle speaks of him; though the Arabic and Ethiopic read there, "he ascended", as here:

he led captivity captive; which is expressive of Christ's conquests and triumph over sin, Satan, the world, death, and the grave; and indeed, every spiritual enemy of his and his people, especially the devil, who leads men captive at his will, and is therefore called captivity, and his principalities and powers, whom Christ has spoiled and triumphed over; the allusion is to

the public triumphs of the Romans, in which captives were led in chains, and exposed to open view^{f42}:

and gave gifts unto men; meaning the gifts of the Holy Ghost, and particularly such as qualify men for the work of the ministry; these he received **μδab**, “in man”; in human nature, in that nature in which he ascended to heaven; **hl [ml [wdyh μδab**, “in the man that is known above”^{f43}, as say the Jews; and these he bestows on men, even rebellious ones, that the Lord God might dwell among them, and make them useful to others: wherefore the Jews have no reason to quarrel with the version of the apostle as they do^{f44}; who, instead of “received gifts for” men, renders it, “gave gifts to men”; since the Messiah received in order to give, and gives in consequence of his having received them; and so Jarchi interprets the words, **μtll**, “to give them” to the children of men; and besides, as a learned man has observed^{f45}, one and the same Hebrew word signifies to give and to receive; to which may be added that their own Targum renders it **atbhy**, “and hast given gifts to the children of men”; and in like manner the Syriac and Arabic versions of (^{<99818>}Psalm 68:18) render the words; very likely the apostle might use the Syriac version, which is a very ancient one: it was customary at triumphs to give gifts to the soldiers^{f46}, to which there is an allusion here.

Ver. 9. *Now that he ascended*, &c.] These words are a conclusion of Christ's descent from heaven, from his ascension thither; for had he not first descended from thence, it could not have been said of him that he ascended; for no man hath ascended to heaven but he that came down from heaven, (^{<9913>}John 3:13) and they are also an explanation of the sense of the psalmist in the above citation, which takes in his humiliation as well as his exaltation; which humiliation is signified by his descent into the earth:

what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? this the Papists understand of his decent into a place they call Limbus Patrum, which they make to be contiguous to hell; and where they say the patriarchs were detained till Christ's coming; and that he went thither to deliver them out of it; and that these are the captivity he led captive; all which is fictitious and fabulous: for certain it is, that the place where Abraham was with Lazarus in his bosom was not near to hell, but afar off, and that there was a great gulf between them, (^{<9163>}Luke 16:23,26) and the spirits or souls of the patriarchs returned to God that gave them, when

separated from their bodies, as the souls of men do now, (²¹¹⁷Ecclesiastes 12:7) nor did Christ enter any such feigned place at his death, but went to paradise, where the penitent thief was that day with him; nor were the patriarchs, but the principalities and powers Christ spoiled, the captivity he led captive and triumphed over: some interpret this of Christ's descent into hell, which must be understood not locally, but of his enduring the wrath of God for sin, which was equivalent to the torments of hell, and of his being in the state of the dead; but it may rather design the whole of his humiliation, as his descent from heaven and incarnation in the virgin's womb, where his human nature was curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth; and his humbling himself and becoming obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, when he was made sin and a curse for his people, and bore all the punishment due to their transgressions; and his being in Hades, in the state of the dead, in the grave, in the heart of the earth, as Jonah in the whale's belly: reference seems to be had to (¹⁸¹⁵Psalm 139:15) where “the lower parts of the earth”, is interpreted by the Targum on the place of *amad asyrk*, “his mother's womb”; and so it is by Jarchi, Aben Ezra, Kimchi, and Ben Melec. The Alexandrian copy and the Ethiopic version leave out the word “first” in this clause.

Ver. 10. *He that descended is the same also that ascended*, &c.] It was the same divine Person, the Son of God, who assumed human nature, and suffered in it, which is meant by his descent, who in that nature ascended up to heaven: this proves that Christ existed before he took flesh of the virgin; and that though he has two natures, yet he is but one person; and disproves the Popish notion of the descent of Christ's soul into Limbus or hell, locally taken: and this ascension of his was,

up far above all heavens: the visible heavens, the airy and starry heavens; Christ ascended far above these, and went into the third heaven, the holiest of all; and this is expressive of the exaltation of Christ, who is made higher than the heavens; and the end of his ascension was,

that he might fill all things, or “fulfil all things”; that were types of him, or predicted concerning him; that as he had fulfilled many things already by his incarnation doctrine, miracles, obedience, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead; so he ascended on high that he might accomplish what was foretold concerning his ascension to heaven, and session at the right hand of God, and answer to the type of the high priest's entering once a year into the holiest of all: or that he might complete,

perfect, and fill up all his offices; as the remainder of his priestly office, his intercession for his people; and more finally his prophetic office by the effusion of his Spirit; and more visibly his kingly office, by sending forth the rod of his strength out of Zion, and subduing the people under him: or that he might fill all places; as God he fills all places at once being infinite, immense, and omnipresent; as man, one after another; at his incarnation he dwelt with men on earth at his crucifixion he was lifted up between heaven and earth; at his death he descended into the lower parts of the earth, into hell, “Hades”, or the grave; and at his resurrection stood upon the earth again, and had all power in heaven and in earth given him; and at his ascension he went through the airy and starry heavens, into the highest heaven; and so successively was in all places: or rather that he might fill all persons, all his elect, both Jews and Gentiles; and so the Arabic version renders it, “that he might fill all creatures”; as the Gentiles were called; particularly that he might fill each and everyone of his people with his grace and righteousness, with his Spirit, and the fruits of it, with spiritual knowledge and understanding, with food and gladness, with peace, joy and comfort; and all his churches with his gracious presence, and with officers and members, and all with gifts and graces suitable to their several stations and work.

Ver. 11. *And he gave some apostles,* &c.] That is, he gave them gifts by which they were qualified to be apostles; who were such as were immediately called by Christ, and had their doctrine from him, and their commission to preach it; and were peculiarly and infallibly guided by the Spirit of God, and had a power to work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrine; and had authority to go everywhere and preach the Gospel, and plant churches, and were not confined to anyone particular place or church; this was the first and chief office in the church, and of an extraordinary kind, and is now ceased; and though the apostles were before Christ's ascension, yet they had not received till then the fulness of the Spirit, and his extraordinary gifts to fit them for their office; nor did they enter upon the discharge of it in its large extent till that time; for they were not only to bear witness of Christ in Jerusalem, in Judea and Samaria, but in the uttermost parts of the earth:

and some prophets; by whom are meant, not private members of churches, who may all prophesy or teach in a private way; nor ordinary ministers of the word; but extraordinary ones, who had a peculiar gift of interpreting the Scriptures, the prophecies of the Old Testament, and of foretelling

things to come; such were Agabus and others in the church of Antioch, (~~4117~~ Acts 11:27 13:1)

and some evangelists; by whom are designed, not so much the writers of the Gospels, as Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, some of which were also apostles; as preachers of the Gospel, and who yet were distinct from the ordinary ministers of it; they were below the apostles, and yet above pastors and teachers; they were the companions of the apostles, and assistants to them, and subserved them in their work; such were Philip, Luke, Titus, Timothy, and others; these were not fixed and stated ministers in anyone place, as the following officers be, but were sent here and there as the apostles thought fit:

and some pastors and teachers, or doctors; these may be thought to differ, but not so much on account of the place where they perform their work, the one in the church, the other in the school; nor on account of the different subject of their ministry, the one attending to practical, the other to doctrinal points; but whereas the pastors are the shepherds of the flock, the overseers of it, and the same with the bishops and elders, and the teachers may be the gifted brethren in the church, assistants to the pastors, bare ministers of the word; so the difference lies here, that the one has the oversight, and care, and charge of the church, and the other not; the one can administer all ordinances, the other not; the one is fixed and tied to some certain church, the other not: though I rather think they intend one and the same office, and that the word “teachers” is only explanative of the figurative word “pastors” or shepherds; and the rather because if the apostle had designed distinct officers, he would have used the same form of speaking as before; and have expressed himself thus, “and some pastors, and some teachers”; whereas he does not make such a distribution here as there; though the Syriac version reads this clause distributively as the others; and among the Jews there were the singular men or wise men, and the disciples of the wise men, who were their companions and assistants; and it is asked ^{f47},

“who is a singular man? and who is a disciple? a singular man is everyone that is fit to be appointed a pastor or governor of a congregation; and a disciple is one, that when he is questioned about any point in his doctrine, gives an answer:”

wherefore if these two, pastors and teachers, are different, it might be thought there is some reference to this distinction, and that pastors answer

to the wise men, and teachers to their disciples or assistants; and so Kimchi in (^{248B}Jeremiah 3:15) interprets the pastors there of **ל [רָצוּד מְיֻסְרָפ]**, “the pastors of Israel”, which shall be with the King Messiah, as is said in (^{318B}Micah 5:5) and undoubtedly Gospel ministers are meant: from the whole it may be observed, that as there have been various officers and offices in the Gospel dispensation, various gifts have been bestowed; and these are the gifts of Christ, which he has received for men, and gives unto them; and hence it appears that the work of the ministry is not an human invention, but the appointment of Christ, for which he fits and qualifies, and therefore to be regarded; and that they only are the ministers of Christ, whom he makes ministers of the New Testament, and not whom men or themselves make and appoint.

Ver. 12. *For the perfecting of the saints, &c.*] The chosen ones, whom God has sanctified or set apart for himself in eternal election: the ministry of the word is designed for the completing the number of these in the effectual calling; and for the perfecting of the whole body of the church, by gathering in all that belong to it, and of every particular saint, who is regenerated and sanctified by the Spirit of God: for the best of saints are imperfect; for though there is a perfection in them, as that designs sincerity, in opposition to hypocrisy, and as it may be taken comparatively with respect to what others are, or they themselves were; and though there is a perfection of parts of the new man in them, yet not of degrees; and though there is a complete perfection in Christ, yet not in themselves, their sanctification is imperfect, as their faith, knowledge, love, &c. sin is in them, and committed by them, and they continually want supplies of grace; and the best of them are sensible of their imperfection, and own it: now the ministration of the word is a means of carrying on the work of grace in them unto perfection, or “for the restoring or joining in of the saints”; the elect of God were disjointed in Adam's fall, and scattered abroad, who were representatively gathered together in one head, even in Christ, in redemption; and the word is the means of the visible and open jointing of them into Christ, and into his churches, and also of restoring them after backslidings:

for the work of the ministry; gifts are given unto men by Christ to qualify them for it: the preaching of the Gospel is a work, and a laborious one, and what no man is sufficient for of himself; it requires faithfulness, and is a good work, and when well performed, those concerned in it are worthy of

respect, esteem, and honour; and it is a ministering work, a service and not dominion:

for the edifying the body of Christ; not his natural body the Father prepared for him; nor his sacramental body in the supper; but his mystical body the church; and gifts are bestowed to fit them for the preaching of the Gospel, that hereby the church, which is compared to an edifice, might be built up; and that the several societies of Christians and particular believers might have spiritual edification, and walk in the fear of the Lord, and in the comforts of the Holy Ghost, and their numbers be increased, and their graces be in lively exercise.

Ver. 13. *Till we all come in the unity of the faith*, &c.] These words regard the continuance of the Gospel ministry in the church, until all the elect of God come in: or “to the unity of the faith”; by which is meant, not the union between the saints, the cement of which is love; nor that which is between Christ and his people, of which his love, and not their faith, is the bond; but the same with the “one faith”, (~~ROM~~ Ephesians 4:5) and designs either the doctrine of faith, which is uniform, and all of a piece; and the sense is, that the ministration of the Gospel will continue until the saints entirely unite in their sentiments about it, and both watchmen and churches see eye to eye: or else the grace of faith, which as to its nature, object, author, spring, and cause, is the same; and it usually comes by hearing; and all God's elect shall have it; and the work and office of the ministry will remain until they are all brought to believe in Christ;

and of the knowledge of the Son of God; which is but another phrase for faith in Christ, for faith is a spiritual knowledge of Christ; it is that grace by which a soul beholds his glory and fulness, approves of him, trusts in him, and appropriates him to itself; and such an approbatory, fiducial, appropriating, practical, and experimental knowledge of Christ, is here intended; and which is imperfect in those that have it, and is not yet in many who will have it; and inasmuch as the Gospel ministry is the means of it, this will be continued until every elect soul partakes of it, and arrives to a greater perfection in it: for it follows,

unto a perfect man; meaning either Christ, who is in every sense a perfect man; his human nature is the greater and more perfect tabernacle, and he is perfectly free from sin, and has been made perfect through sufferings in it; and coming to him may be understood either of coming to him now by faith, which the Gospel ministry is the means of, and encourages to; or of

coming to him hereafter, for the saints will meet him, and be ever with him, and till that time the Gospel will be preached: or else the church, being a complete body with all its members, is designed; for when all the elect of God are gathered in and joined together, they will be as one man; or it may respect every individual believer, who though he is comparatively perfect, and with regard to parts, but not degrees, and as in Christ Jesus, yet is in himself imperfect in holiness and knowledge, though hereafter he will be perfect in both; when he comes

unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: not of Christ's natural body, but of his mystical body the church, which will be his fulness when all the elect are gathered in; and when they are filled with his gifts and graces, and are grown up to their proportion in it, they will be come to the measure and stature of it: or it may be understood of every particular believer, who has Christ formed in him; who when the work of grace is finished in him, will be a perfect man in Christ, and all this will be true of him; till which time, and during this imperfect state, the Gospel ministry will be maintained: the phrase is taken from the Jews, who among the forms and degrees of prophecy which the prophets arrived to, and had in them the vision of God and angels, make *hmqw rw[ç*, “the measure of the stature”^{f48}, a principal one; and is here used for the perfection of the heavenly state in the vision, and enjoyment of God and Christ.

Ver. 14. *That we henceforth be no more children,* &c.] Meaning not children of men, for grace does not destroy natural relations; nor children of God, which is a privilege, and always continues; nor indeed children of disobedience, though the saints cease to be such upon conversion; but in such sense children, as they were when first converted, newborn babes, little children: there are some things in which they should be children still, namely, with respect to an ardent and flaming love to God and Christ, and to the saints; and with regard to their eager desire after the sincere milk of the word; and as to pride, malice, envy, evil speakings, guile and hypocrisy; in these things it becomes them to be children: but not in understanding; they should not always remain ignorant, imprudent, or be always fed with milk, and not able to digest meat; nor be unable to go unless led, and be tender and incapable of bearing hardships for Christ and his Gospel, and of defending it, and his cause and interest; but should play the man, and quit themselves as such and be strong, which the Gospel ministry is a means of, and encourages to:

tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine; false doctrine, which may be compared to wind for its lightness and emptiness, and for its swelling and puffing nature, and for the noise and bluster it makes, and for its rapidity and force, with which it sometimes comes and bears all before it, and for its infectiousness, which is the nature of some winds; and to be tossed to and fro, and carried about with it, is expressive of much ignorance and want of a discerning spirit, and implies hesitation, and doubts and scruples, and shows credulity, fickleness, and inconstancy: and which is brought on

by the sleight of men; either through the uncertain and changeable state of things in life; the mind of man is fickle, the life of man is uncertain, and all the affairs of human nature are subject to change, by reason of which men are easily imposed upon; or rather through the tricking arts of false teachers; the word here used is adopted by the Jews into their language, and with them *aybwq* signifies the game at dice^{f49}; and *swj swybwq*, is a gamester at that play, and is interpreted by them, one that steals souls^{f50}, and deceives and corrupts them; and may be filly applied to false teachers, who make use of such like artifices and juggling tricks, to deceive the hearts of the simple, as the others do to cheat men of their money: hence it follows,

and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; or “unto the deceitful methods or wiles of the devil”, as the Alexandrian copy reads; which not only suggests that their principal end in view is to deceive, but their insidious, private, and secret way of deceiving, and their expertness in it, which they have from the devil; and now the ministration of the Gospel is the best and surest guard and antidote against such fluctuations and deceptions.

Ver. 15. *But speaking the truth in love*, &c.] Either Christ himself, who is the truth, and is to be preached, and always spoken of with strong affection and love; or the Gospel, the word of truth, so called in opposition to that which is false and fictitious; and also to the law, which is shadowish; and on account of its author, the God of truth, and its subject matter, Christ, and the several doctrines of grace; and because the spirit of truth has dictated it, and does direct to it, and owns and blesses it: this, with respect to the ministers of the Gospel, should be spoken openly, honestly, and sincerely, and in love to the souls of men, and in a way consistent with love, in opposition to the secret, ensnaring, and pernicious ways of false

teachers; and with respect to private Christians, as they are to receive it in love, so to speak of it to one another from a principle of love, and an affectionate concern for each other's welfare, to the end that they

may grow up into him in all things which is the head, even “Christ”: the work of grace upon the soul is a gradual work, and an increase of this in the exercise of faith, hope, love, and spiritual knowledge, is a growth; and this is a growth in all things, in all grace, as in those mentioned, so in others, as humility, patience, self-denial, resignation of the will to the will of God, and especially the knowledge of Christ; for it is a growing into him, from whom souls receive all their grace and increase of it; for he is the head of influence to supply them, as well as the head of eminence to protect them; (see ⁴⁰¹²Ephesians 1:22) and now the preaching of the Gospel, or the sincere speaking of the truth, is the instrumental means of such growth.

Ver. 16. *From whom the whole body fitly joined gether*, &c.] By which is meant, the church; (see ⁴⁰¹³Ephesians 1:23) sometimes it designs all the elect of God in heaven and in earth, but here the church militant, which only can admit of an increase; this body is from Christ, as an head, and the phrase denotes the rise and origin of the church from Christ, her dependence upon him, and union to him, and of its members one to another; she has her being and form, from him, and all her blessings, as her life and light, righteousness and holiness, her grace and strength, her joy, peace, and comfort, her fruitfulness and final perseverance; and her dependence is upon him for subsistence, sustenance, protection and safety, and for grace and glory; and her union to him is very near, strict and close, and indissoluble; and the union between the several members is also very close, and both are very beautiful:

and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part. The Alexandrian copy reads, “of every member”; and so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the author of the union of the members of Christ's body to one another is the Spirit of God, by him they are baptized into one body; the cement or bond of this union is the grace of love wrought in their souls by him; and the means are the word and ordinances, and these convey a supply from Christ the head to every member, suitable to the part it bears in the body, according to the energy of the Spirit, who makes all effectual: and so

maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love; the increase of the body the church, is either in numbers, when persons are converted and added to it; or in the exercise of grace, under the influence of the Spirit, through the ministration of the word and ordinances; and both these tend to the edifying or building of it up; and nothing is of a more edifying nature to the church than love, which bears the infirmities of the weak, and seeks for, and follows after those things which make for peace and godly edification, (~~400~~1 Corinthians 8:1).

Ver. 17. *This I say therefore and testify in the Lord*, &c.] These words may be considered either as an assertion, and so a testimonial of the different walk and conversation of the saints at Ephesus, from the rest of the Gentiles; or as an exhortation in the name of the Lord to such a walk, the apostle here returning to what he stirs them up to in (~~400~~Ephesians 4:1)

that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind; every natural man walks in a vain show; the mind of man is vain, and whoever walk according to the dictates of it, must walk vainly: the phrase is expressive of the emptiness of the mind; it being naturally destitute of God, of the knowledge, fear, and grace of God; and of Jesus Christ, of the knowledge of him, faith in him, and love to him; and of the Spirit and his graces; and it also points at the instability and changeableness of the human mind, in which sense man at his best estate was altogether vanity; as also the folly, falsehood, and wickedness of it in his fallen state: and the mind discovers its vanity in its thoughts and imaginations, which are vain and foolish; in the happiness it proposes to itself, which lies in vain things, as worldly riches, honours, &c. and in the ways and means it takes to obtain it, and in words and actions; and the Gentiles showed the vanity of their minds in their vain philosophy and curious inquiries into things, and in their polytheism and idolatry: to walk herein, is to act according to the dictates of a vain and carnal mind; and it denotes a continued series of sinning, or a vain conversation maintained, a progress and obstinate persisting therein with pleasure: now God's elect before conversion walked as others do, but when they are converted their walk and conversation is not, at least it ought not to be, like that of others: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions, leave out the word "other", and only read, "as the Gentiles", &c.

Ver. 18. *Having the understanding darkened*, &c.] Not that the natural faculty of the understanding is lost in men, nor the understanding in things

natural and civil, and which is quick enough, especially in things that are evil; but in things spiritual it is very dark and ignorant, as about the nature and perfections of God, his holiness and righteousness; about sin and the consequences of it; about Christ, his person, office, and work, and salvation by him; about the Spirit, and his work of grace upon the soul; and about the Scripture, and the doctrines contained in it; and so it came to be by sin: the understanding of man was at first filled both with natural and divine knowledge; but man was not content with this, and being ambitious of more, even of being as God, lost what he had; for on account of his sin he was banished from the divine presence, which brought not only a darkness upon him, but upon all his posterity; and which is increased by personal iniquity, and oftentimes by Satan the god of this world, who blinds the minds of men; and sometimes men are given up in just judgment by God, to a judicial blindness and hardness of heart; and which issues in utter darkness, in blackness of darkness for evermore:

being alienated from the life of God; not that which God lives in himself, but that which he lives in his people; nor that natural life which men receive from him, but a spiritual life, a life of grace, faith and holiness; and which may be called the life of God, because it is infused by the Spirit of God, and the word of God is the means of it, and it is supported and secured by the power of God, and is according to the will of God, and is directed to his glory: now wicked and unconverted men are alienated from this life; they are estranged from God the fountain of it; and go astray from the law, the rule of an holy life; and are entirely destitute of a principle of life, from whence men can only act and are utterly unacquainted with the pleasures and sweetness of the life of faith and holiness; nor do they approve of such a life, but have the utmost aversion to it:

through the ignorance that is in them; every unregenerate man is an ignorant man, and especially the Gentiles were very ignorant of God, and of divine things; ignorance is natural to men, it comes by sin, and is itself sinful, and is sometimes the punishment of sin, and also the cause of it, as here of alienation from the life of God; for where is ignorance of God, there can be no desire after him, no communion with him, no faith in him, had dependence on him; no true worship of him, or living according to his will, and to his glory: and this ignorance is,

because of the blindness of their hearts, or “the hardness of it”; there is a natural hardness of the heart, the heart is naturally stony, and so it remains

till grace takes away the stony heart, and gives an heart of flesh; it is insensible and inflexible, and not susceptible of any impression; and there is a voluntary hardness of it, men willingly harden themselves against the Lord, and make their hearts like an adamant stone, all sin is of an hardening nature; and there is a judicial hardness, which God gives up men unto; and when and where this is the case, in either sense, it is no wonder men should be so ignorant of God, and so alienated from the life of him: *bl h twyms*, “blindness of heart”¹⁵¹, is a Rabbinical phrase.

Ver. 19. *Who being past feeling*, &c.] Their consciences being cauterized or seared as with a red hot iron, which is the consequence of judicial hardness; so that they have lost all sense of sin, and do not feel the load of its guilt upon them, and are without any concern about it; but on the contrary commit it with pleasure, boast of it and glory in it, plead for it and defend it publicly, and openly declare it, and stand in no fear of a future judgment, which they ridicule and despise: the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions, and the Claromontane exemplar read, who “despairing”: of mercy and salvation, saying there is no hope, and therefore grow hardened and desperate in sin;

have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness; by “lasciviousness” is meant all manner of lusts, and a wanton and unbridled course of sinning; and their giving themselves over unto it denotes their voluntariness in sinning, the power of sin over them, they being willing slaves unto it, and their continuance in it; and this they do in order

to work all uncleanness; to commit every unclean lust, to live in a continued commission of uncleanness of every sort; and that

with greediness; being like a covetous man, never satisfied with sinning, but always craving more sinful lusts and pleasures.

Ver. 20. *But ye have not so learned Christ*, &c.] Some distinguish these words, and make two propositions of them, “but ye not so”, or “ye are not so, ye have learned Christ”; the first of these propositions has respect to what goes before, and suggests that regenerate persons are not as other men: they do not walk in the vanity of their minds as others, their minds are not empty and vain; but are filled with God, with a saving knowledge of God in Christ, with the fear and love of God, and with Christ, with a spiritual knowledge of him, with faith in him and love to him, and with the

Spirit, with his graces and fruits of righteousness; and though there is a great deal of vanity, instability, treachery, and sinfulness in them, yet their walk and the course of their conversation is not according to this: nor are their understandings darkened as others; they are enlightened to see their lost state and condition by nature, the plague of their own hearts, the insufficiency of their own righteousness, the way of life and salvation by Christ, and that salvation from first to last is all of grace; they have some light into the doctrines of the gospel, and have some glimpse of glory; and their light is of an increasing nature: they are not alienated from the life of God as others, but live a life of communion with him, a life of faith upon him, and a life of holiness according to his mind; they are not past feeling as others, they are sensible of sin, and are often pressed down with the weight of it, and groan, being burdened by it; they cannot sin with that delight and pleasure as others do, nor will they plead for it, but confess it with shame and sorrow; nor do they give up themselves to it, and continue in it, and in an insatiable pursuit of it: the reason of all which is, they “have learned Christ”: so as to know him as God over all blessed for ever; as the Lord and heir of all things; as the Alpha and Omega of the covenant of grace; as intrusted with all that is near and dear to his Father; as the Father's free gift to men, and as the sinner's Saviour; as the way of access to God and acceptance with him; as the church's head and husband; as the saints' prophet, priest, and King, and as the only Mediator between God and men; and so as to receive him, believe in him, and commit their souls unto him; and so as to embrace his truths, and submit to his ordinances: and this lesson they learn, not in the book and school of nature, nor of carnal reason, nor of the law; but in the book of the covenant, and of the Scripture; and in the school of the church, and under the ministry of the Gospel; for the ministers of the Gospel are the instructors, the instruments of teaching; though the Spirit of God is the efficient cause, the anointing which teacheth all things, and leads into all truth, as it is in Jesus: and this lesson being truly learnt, will teach men to walk differently from others; to deny ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly.

Ver. 21. *If so be that ye have heard him,* &c.] Not heard him preach, but heard him preached; and that not merely externally, with the outward hearing of the ear; though oftentimes spiritual conviction and illumination, true faith in Christ, real comfort from him, and establishment and assurance of interest in him, come this way, as to these Ephesians, (~~4013~~ Ephesians

1:13) but internally, so as to know him, understand his word, and distinguish his voice; so as to approve of him and love him, and believe in him; feel the power of his Gospel, relish his truths, and obey his ordinances, and so bring forth fruit to his glory; as such do, who are quickened by him, whose ears are unstopped, and their hearts opened, and their understandings enlightened; and who have hearing ears, and understanding hearts given them:

and have been taught by him: not personally, but by his Spirit and ministers; for Christ is not only the subject of the ministry of the word, and whom the Spirit of God teaches and directs souls to for righteousness, pardon, cleansing, and for every supply of grace; but he is the efficient cause of teaching; and there is none who teaches like him: and those who are taught by him, are taught

as the truth is in Jesus; as the Gospel is in him, as in its original and subject; for he is truth itself, and grace and truth came by him; and as it was preached by him, and so is pure and unmixed.

Ver. 22. *That ye put off concerning the former conversation, the old man, &c.]* Which is the corruption of nature; why this is called a man, and an old man, (see Gill on “^{<816>}Romans 6:6”), the putting him off, is not a removing him from the saints, nor a destroying him in them, nor a changing his nature; for he remains, and remains alive, and is the same old man he ever was, in regenerate persons; but it is a putting him off from his seat, and a putting him down from his government; a showing no regard to his rule and dominion, to his laws and lusts, making no provision for his support; and particularly, not squaring the life and conversation according to his dictates and directions; and therefore it is called a putting him off, concerning the former conversation: the change lies not, in the old man, who can never be altered, but in the conversation; he is not in the same power, but he retains the same sinful nature; he is put off, but he is not put out; and though he does not reign, he rages, and often threatens to get the ascendant: these words stand either in connection with (^{<817>}Ephesians 4:17) and so are a continuation and an explanation of that exhortation; or else they point out what regenerate souls are taught by Christ to do, to quit the former conversation, to hate the garment spotted with the flesh, and to put it off; for the allusion is to the putting off of filthy garments, as the works of the flesh may be truly called, which flow from the vitiosity of nature, the old man:

which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts; the old man, or the vitiosity of nature, has its lusts; and these are deceitful; they promise pleasure and profit, but yield neither in the issue; they promise liberty, and bring into bondage; they promise secrecy and impunity, but expose to shame, and render liable to punishment; they sometimes put on a religious face, and so deceive, and fill men with pride and conceit, who think themselves to be something, when they are nothing: and through these the old man is corrupt; by these the corruption of nature is discovered; and the corruption that is in the world is produced hereby; and these make a man deserving of, and liable to the pit of corruption; and this is a good reason, why this corrupt old man, with respect to the life and conversation, should be put off.

Ver. 23. *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind.*] Or by the Spirit that is in your mind; that is, by the Holy Spirit; who is in the saints, and is the author of renovation in them; and who is the reviver and carrier on, and finisher of that work, and therefore that is called the renewing of the Holy Spirit, (^{<3015>}Titus 3:5) or rather the mind of man, which is a spirit, of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal, and is the seat of that renewing work of the Spirit of God; which shows, that the more noble part of man stands in need of renovation, being corrupted by sin: and this renewing in it, designs not the first work of renovation; for these Ephesians had been renewed, and were made new creatures in Christ; but the gradual progress of it; and takes in, if not principally intends, a renewal, or an increase of spiritual light and knowledge, of life and strength, of joy and comfort, and fresh supplies of grace, and a revival of the exercise of grace; and in short, a renewal of spiritual youth, and a restoration of the saints to that state and condition they were in, in times past: and the exhortation to this can only mean, that it becomes saints to be concerned for such revivings and renewings, and to pray for them, as David did, (^{<3510>}Psalm 51:10) for otherwise, this is as much the work of the Spirit of God, as renovation is at first; and he only who is sent forth, and renews the face of the earth, year by year, can renew us daily in the Spirit of our minds.

Ver. 24. *And that ye put on the new man,* &c.] Which some understand of Jesus Christ, who is truly and really man, and a new or extraordinary one, (^{<3812>}Jeremiah 31:22) and as such is God's creature, and is made after his image, and which appears in his perfect holiness and righteousness; and the phrase of putting on well agrees with him, (^{<3134>}Romans 13:14 ^{<3827>}Galatians 3:27) whose righteousness is a garment, pure and spotless, and which is

put on by the hand of faith: though rather by the “new man” is meant, the new nature, the new principle, or work of grace in the soul, elsewhere called a new creature; and it bears this name in opposition to, and distinction from the old man, or corruption of nature, before spoken of; and because it is “de novo”, or anew, put into the hearts of men; it is not what was in them naturally; nor is it any old principle renewed, or wrought up in another and better form; but it is something that is infused, that was never there before: and because it is new in all its parts; such who have it, have new hearts and new spirits given unto them; they have new eyes to see with, and new ears to hear with, and new hands to handle and work with, and new feet to walk with; and they live a new life and conversation: so the Jews says of a man that truly repents of sin, and does not return to it, that he is **ꝥdj j ya**, “a new man”^{f52}: now to put on this new man, is not to make ourselves new creatures; for this is not by the power of man, but by the Spirit of God; this is God's work, and not man's; it is he who made us at first, remakes us, and not we ourselves; besides, these Ephesians the apostle writes to, were already made new men, or new creatures; but to put on the new man, is to walk in our lives and conversations agreeably to the new man, or work of grace upon the soul; as to put off the old man, respects the former conversation, or a not walking as formerly, and agreeably to the dictates of corrupt nature, so to put on the new man, is to walk according to the principles of grace and holiness formed in the soul: and of this new man it is further said,

which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness; the principle of the soul is “created”, and therefore is not the effect of man's power, which cannot create; it is peculiar to God only to create; it is a creature, and therefore not to be trusted in, and depended on; for not grace, but the author of grace, is the object of trust: it is created “after God”; by his power, according to his mind and will, and after his image, and in his likeness; which greatly consists “in righteousness and true holiness”; called “true”, in opposition to the typical and ceremonial holiness of the Jews, and to the pretended holiness of hypocrites; and denotes the truth and genuineness of the Spirit's work of sanctification upon the heart; unless this should rather be considered as the effect of his grace upon the soul; for so the words may be rendered, “unto righteousness and true holiness”; for the new man is of such a nature, and so formed, as to tend to acts of righteousness and holiness, and to engage men to the performance

of them: some copies read, “in righteousness, and holiness, and truth”; and so the Ethiopic version seems to have read.

Ver. 25. *Wherefore putting away lying, &c.]* Which is one of the deeds of the old man, and a branch of the former conversation agreeable to him: a lie is a voluntary disagreement of the mind and speech, with a design to deceive; it is to speak that which is false, contrary to truth shining in the mind; and it is spoken knowingly and willingly, and with a design to impose upon others; hence a man may speak what is false, and not be a liar, if he does not know it to be so; and hence parables, fables, tropes, figures, hyperboles, &c. are not lies, because they are not used to deceive, but to illustrate and enforce truth: there are several sorts of lies; there is an officious lie, which is told for the service of others, but this is not lawful; for evil is not to be done, that good may come of it; and a man may as well tell a lie to serve himself, as another; and any other sin by the same rule may be allowed of, and tolerated; besides, it is not lawful to lie for God, and therefore not for a creature: and there is a jocose lie; this ought not to be encouraged; all appearance of evil should be abstained from; every idle word must be accounted for; and hereby also an evil habit of lying may be acquired: and there is a lie which is in itself directly hurtful, and injurious; as is every false thing, said with a design to deceive: and there are religious lies, and liars; some practical ones, as those who do not sincerely worship God, and who are dissolute in their lives, and their practice is not according to their profession; and there are others who are guilty of doctrinal lies, as antichrist and his followers, who are given up to believe a lie; and such who deny the deity, incarnation, Messiahship, work, office, grace, righteousness, and sacrifice of Christ; and who profess themselves to be Christians, and are not: the springs and causes of lying are a corrupt heart and the lusts of it, which prompt unto it; such as covetousness, malice, and the fear of men; and also a tempting devil, the father of lies; and who is a lying spirit, in the hearts and mouths of men; this is a vice which ought to be put away, especially by professors of religion; the effects of it are sad; it brings infamy, disgrace, and discredit, upon particular persons; and has brought judgments upon nations, where it has in general obtained; and has been the cause of corporeal diseases and death; and even makes men liable to the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death: it is a sin exceeding sinful; it is a breach of God's law; an aping of the devil; it is against the light of nature, and is destructive of civil society, and very abominable in the sight of God: wherefore

Speak every man truth with his neighbour; both with respect to civil and religious affairs, in common conversation, in trade and business, and in all things relating to God and men:

for we are members one of another; as men, are all of one blood, descended from one man, and so are related one to another; and as in civil society, belong to one body politic; and in a religious sense, members of the same mystical body, the church; of which Christ, who is the truth itself, is the head; and therefore should not attempt to deceive one another by lying, since there is such a near relation and close union of one to another.

Ver. 26. *Be ye angry, and sin not*, &c.] There is anger which is not sinful; for anger is fouled in God himself, in Jesus Christ, in the holy angels, and in God's people; and a man may be said to be angry and not sin, when his anger arises from a true zeal for God and religion; when it is kindled not against persons, but sins; when a man is displeased with his own sins, and with the sins of others: with vice and immorality of every kind; with idolatry and idolatrous worship, and with all false doctrine; and also when it is carried on to answer good ends, as the good of those with whom we are angry, the glory of God, and the promoting of the interest of Christ: and there is an anger which is sinful; as when it is without a cause; when it exceeds due bounds; when it is not directed to a good end; when it is productive of bad effects, either in words or actions; and when it is soon raised, or long continues: the Jews have a like distinction of anger; they say ^{f53},

“there is an anger and an anger; there is an anger which is blessed above and below, and it is called blessed, as it is said (^{<OH49>}Genesis 14:19) and there is an anger which is cursed above and below, as it is said (^{<OKB14>}Genesis 3:14 49:7)”

And these two sorts are compared to “Ebal” and “Gerizzim”, from the one of which proceeded blessing, and from the other cursing: anger for the most part is not only sinful, but it tends to sin, and issues in it; hence that saying of the Jews, *yj j t al w j trt al*, “be not angry, and thou wilt not sin” ^{f54}: the spring of it is a corrupt heart, it is stirred up by Satan, encouraged by pride, and increased by grievous words and reproachful language:

let not the sun go down upon your wrath; there is an allusion to (^{<R240>}Deuteronomy 24:10,13-15) it seems to be a proverbial expression; and

the design of it is to show, that anger should not be continued; that it should not last at furthest more than a day; that when the heat of the day is over, the heat of anger should be over likewise; and that we should not sleep with it, lest it should be cherished and increased upon our pillows; and besides, the time of the going down of the sun, is the time of evening prayer, which may be greatly interrupted and hindered by anger. R. Jonah^{f55} has an expression or two like to this;

“let not the indignation of anyone abide upon thee; and let not a night sleep with thee, and anger be against any one:”

it should be considered, that as God is slow to anger, so he does not retain it for ever; and that to retain anger, is to gratify the devil; wherefore it follows,

Ver. 27. *Neither give place to the devil.*] Or “to the accuser”, or “slanderer”; that is, to any adversary, that takes delight in slandering and reproaching the saints; give such no room, nor reason, to calumniate the doctrine and ways of Christ, through an unbecoming conversation, by lying and sinful anger, or by other means; or rather the devil, the great accuser of the brethren is meant; and the Ethiopic version renders it, “do not give way to Satan”; which is done, when men indulge any lust or corruption; and when they easily fall in with his suggestions and temptations; when they are off of their watch and guard; and when they do not resist, but quietly yield unto him.

Ver. 28. *Let him that stole steal no more,* &c.] Stealing, or theft, is a fraudulent taking away of another man's goods, without the knowledge and will of the owner, for the sake of gain; to which evil may be reduced, not making good, or not performing payments, all unjust contracts, detention of wages, unlawful usury, unfaithfulness in anything committed to trust, advising, encouraging, and receiving from thieves: theft is a very great evil; it is a breach of the common law of nature, to do to others, as we would be done by; it is contrary to particular laws of God, and is against common justice, and ought not to be continued in, and is punishable by God and man; it springs from a corrupt heart, and often arises from poverty, idleness, sloth, covetousness, and prodigality: the remedy against it follows,

but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good; labouring with diligence and industry, at any manufacture, trade, or

business, which is honest, lawful, and of good report, is a proper antidote against theft; and ought to be preferred to such a scandalous way of living, and to be constantly attended to: and that for this end among others,

that he may have to give to him that needeth; and not take away another man's property; needy persons are the objects of charity; and what is given to them, should be a man's own; and what a man gets by his hand labour, he should not prodigally spend, or covetously lay up, but should cheerfully distribute it to indigent persons.

Ver. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, &c.*] As unsavoury speech, foolish talking, light and frothy language, that which is filthy, unprofitable, noxious, and nauseous, and all that is sinful; such as profane oaths, curses, and imprecations, unchaste words, angry ones, proud, haughty, and arrogant expressions, lies, perjury, &c. which may be called corrupt, because such communication springs from a corrupt heart; is an evidence of the corruption of it; the subject matter of it is corrupt; and it conveys corruption to others, it corrupts good manners; and is the cause of men's going down to the pit of corruption: wherefore a restraint should be laid upon the lips of men; men have not a right to say what they please; good men will be cautious what they say, otherwise their religion is in vain; and conscious of their own weakness, they will pray to God to set a watch before their mouth, and to keep the door of their lips, and not suffer anything to come out,

but that which is good for the use of edifying: or “for edification”, as the Syriac version renders it; the Arabic version reads, “for the edification of all”; that is, that hear; and the Vulgate Latin version and Claromontane exemplar, “for the edification of faith”: for the building up of saints on their most holy faith, and for the encouragement and increase of the grace of faith: in the Greek text it is literally, “for the edification of use”; for useful edification, or what is useful for edification; and is suited to the present want or opportunity, as the word is by some rendered: and that must be “good”, which answers such an end; meaning not that the language should be formally and grammatically good, though to speak with propriety is useful and serviceable, and tends the more to instruction and edification; but that which is materially good, or the subject of it is good; that which is true, pure, pleasant, and profitable:

that it may minister grace unto the hearers; may be grateful and acceptable to them, or may minister the grace of God to them; that is, the doctrine of

grace, the Gospel of the grace of God; and be a means of conveying the principle of grace into the hearts of the hearers, and of drawing it forth into exercise where it is; and such speech or communication which springs from a gracious heart, and from a principle of grace in the heart, and is upon the subject of the grace of God, is most likely to be thus useful and edifying: agreeably to all this are some sayings of the Jews^{f56},

“says R. Joshua ben Levi, for ever let not a man suffer any thing **hnwgm**, “that is filthy”, or unseemly, to proceed out of his mouth; says R. Ishmael, for ever let a man discourse **hyyqn ʿwçl b**, “in a pure language”;

not corrupt.

Ver. 30. *And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God*, &c.] Not a believer's own spirit, sanctified by the Holy Ghost, which is grieved by sin; nor the spirit of a good man, that hears our words and sees our actions, and is displeased and troubled at them; but the third person in the Trinity: and this is said of him by an anthropopathy, and supposes something done that is offensive to him; and he may be grieved, not only by unconverted persons, by their stubborn resistance and opposition to the Gospel and means of grace, and by their contempt of his person, office, and grace, but by believers themselves, and who are here spoken to; and which may be done both by their words, lying, angry, and corrupt ones, before cautioned against, (^{40ES}Ephesians 4:25,26,29) and by their actions, their behaviour towards God, their conversation in the world, and by their carriage to one another, which is suggested in the following verse: also he may be grieved by their thoughts, their vain and sinful thoughts, and that they are no better employed; and especially when they entertain any undervaluing ones of Jesus Christ, whose glorifier he is; and by the unbelief of their hearts, and by their unmindfulness of the things of the Spirit; and when they disregard the rules, dictates, and advice of the Spirit, and make no use of him: and his being grieved appears by his departure from them; which is to be perceived by the darkness of their souls, the prevailings of corruption, the weakness of grace, and their backwardness to duty: and now there are many reasons why he should not be grieved; as because he is God, and the author of the new birth, the implanter and applier of all grace, and the finisher of it; because he is the saints' comforter, their advocate, helper, and strengthener; and their constant companion, who dwells in them, and will remain in them, until death: and it follows,

whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption; of the sealing work of the Spirit, (see Gill on “^{<4013>}Ephesians 1:13”). By “the day of redemption” may be meant, either the day of death, when the saints have a deliverance from the incumbrance of the body; from their present state of exile and banishment; from the body of sin and death; from all sorrows and afflictions; from the reproaches and persecutions of men; from the temptations of Satan; from doubts, fears, and unbelief; and from all fear of death, corporeal, spiritual, and eternal: or the day of the resurrection, when the body will be redeemed from mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour; when it will be refined and spiritualized, so that it will not stand in need of natural sustenance; will be endowed with great agility, like that of spirits; and will be subject to the soul, or spirit, and will be suited to spiritual objects; to which may be added, the day of judgment, (^{<4213>}Luke 21:28) when Christ shall appear in glory, and his saints with him, and he will put them, soul and body, into the possession of everlasting happiness; which will consist in the vision of Christ, in conformity to him, and in that happy company and conversation that will then be enjoyed, and that delightful employment they will be taken up in: and now the saints being sealed up by the Spirit unto this time, shows the perpetual indwelling of the Spirit in them; and that it will continue even after death, who will give them confidence at the day of judgment; and that it is the Spirit which works up the saints, and makes them meet for glory; and gives them the assurance of it, and therefore they should not be grieved.

Ver. 31. *Let all bitterness*, &c.] These words are a dehortation from several vices good men are liable to, by which the Spirit of God is grieved: “bitterness” sometimes designs the corruption of nature, which is the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity; and sometimes actual sins and transgressions, even those of God’s own people, which are evil and bitter things; and sometimes heretical doctrines, which are roots of bitterness; and sometimes sinful words spoken by the saints, one against another; and here perhaps it signifies, the first offence taken in the mind, against any person, upon any account, which should at once be put away, and not encouraged:

and wrath: heat of spirit, which follows upon bitterness, or upon the spirit being embittered and offended; (see ^{<4134>}Ezekiel 3:14).

And anger; a sinful one, cautioned against before, (^{<4013>}Ephesians 4:26).

And clamour and evil speaking; such as brawlings, contentions, contumelies, reproaches, slanders, &c. arising from an embittered, wrathful, and angry disposition: these should all

be put away from you, with all malice; being the deeds of the old man, unbecoming such as are born again, and grieving to the Spirit of God.

Ver. 32. *And be ye kind one to another*, &c.] Good, affable, courteous; which appears in looks, words, and actions; by looking pleasantly on each other, speaking kindly to one another, and mutually doing every good office that lies in their way, and in their power:

tender hearted: which is opposed to a being hard hearted to them that are in distress, and close at hand to the needy; to cruelty and severity to such who are subject to them, or have injured them; and to a rigid and censorious spirit to them that are fallen:

forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you; whatever offences are given, or injuries done by the saints one to another, and so far as they are committed against them, they should forgive, and should pray to God for one another, that he would manifest his forgiveness of them, as committed against him; and this should be done in like manner as God forgives in Christ, and for his sake; that is, fully and freely, and from their hearts; and so as to forget the offences, and not to upbraid them with them hereafter; yea, they should forgive them before they repent, and without asking for it, and that for Christ's sake, and because they are members of his: the Complutensian edition reads, "even as Christ hath forgiven us": the Arabic version also reads us, and so some copies: the words may be rendered, "giving freely to one another, even as God in Christ has given freely to you"; saints should give freely to one another, for outward support, where it is needful; and should impart spiritual gifts and experience for inward comfort, where it is wanted, and as they have ability; and that from this consideration, that all they have, whether in temporals or spirituals, is freely given by God in Christ, and for his sake; with whom he freely gives them all things; in whom he has given them grace, and blessed them with all spiritual blessings; as peace, pardon, righteousness, and eternal life.