

CHAPTER 5

INTRODUCTION TO EPHESIANS 5

The apostle, in this chapter, goes on with his exhortations to the duties of religion; and such in general as relate to purity of life, and against uncleanness; and particularly treats of the duties of married persons. And whereas in the latter part of the preceding chapter, he had exhorted to kindness and tenderness, and which he enforced by the example of God himself, he here repeats and urges it; and to it adds the example of Christ in loving his people, and giving himself for them a propitiatory sacrifice, acceptable to God, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:1,2), then follows a dehortation from several vices of the impure kind, some as being filthy actions, and unbecoming saints, and not to be named by them, and much less done, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:3), others, and such as are vices of the tongue, as being inconvenient, and to which thanksgiving is preferred, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:4), and the former especially, as excluding from having any part or portion in the kingdom of God and Christ (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:5), and all of them, as bringing the wrath of God upon men, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:6), wherefore professors of religion should avoid such sins, and not join with the children of disobedience in the commission of them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:7), to which exhortation they should the rather give heed, from the consideration of their present state, illustrated by their former one; who were once darkness, but now light, and therefore should walk as enlightened persons, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:8), and as having the Spirit of God, which is known by its fruits, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:9), studying to know, approve of, and do that which is acceptable to God, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:10), and on the contrary, should have no society and communion with men in the commission of sins, the works of darkness, but should reprove them for them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:11), since the things done by them were such, that it was a shame to relate them, and much more to commit them, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:12), and the rather this was incumbent upon them, since it was agreeably to their character, as being made light in the Lord; seeing it is the property of light to make manifest and detect what is done in the dark, (~~4RB~~Ephesians 5:13), which is confirmed by a passage of Scripture pertinently produced, to stir up drowsy and lifeless professors to the

discharge of their duty, (^{<4054>}Ephesians 5:14), and from hence the apostle enforces a wise and circumspect walk and conversation, one part of which lies in redeeming time; and which should be done for this reason, because the present days were evil ones, (^{<4055>}Ephesians 5:15,16), and that they might avoid a foolish walk, and order their conversation wisely and aright, he suggests it would be proper to learn what was the will of the Lord, which is the rule of a Christian's walk and conversation, (^{<4057>}Ephesians 5:17), and whereas drunkenness is oftentimes the cause of all the above mentioned vices, the apostle cautions against that, and on the contrary advises them to be concerned for a larger measure of the Spirit of God; that under his influence they might sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, in a melodious manner, and heartily to the Lord; and so express their thankfulness to him, for all mercies from him; and not abuse their mercies and themselves, spend their time in singing lewd and profane songs, as drunkards often do, (^{<4058>}Ephesians 5:18-20), and hence he passes to the special duties of wives and husbands, to which he premises a general exhortation to submission to one another, (^{<4021>}Ephesians 5:21), and begins with the subjection of wives to their husbands, this being the will of the Lord, (^{<4052>}Ephesians 5:22), and besides, the relation which the wife stands in to her husband, being her head, requires it; and which is illustrated by Christ being the head and Saviour of his body, the church, (^{<4053>}Ephesians 5:23), and which is further urged and enforced by the instance and example of the church's subjection to Christ, (^{<4054>}Ephesians 5:24), and next the apostle exhorts husbands to love their wives, in imitation of Christ, who has loved his church; and as an instance of it, has given himself to death for her; than which, there cannot be a greater instance of love, (^{<4055>}Ephesians 5:25), the ends of which were, the sanctification and cleansing of the church with his blood, by means of water and the word; and the presentation of her to himself, all glorious and beautiful, (^{<4056>}Ephesians 5:26,27), and then another argument is used, to engage the affections of husbands to their wives, they being their own bodies; so that loving them, is loving themselves, (^{<4058>}Ephesians 5:28), nor was it ever known, and it would be unnatural, for a man to hate his own flesh, but on the contrary, he nourishes and cherishes it; and therefore seeing the wife is a man's own flesh, he ought not to hate her, but to nourish and cherish her; and this is also enforced by the example of Christ, who does not hate his church, but nourishes and cherishes her, (^{<4059>}Ephesians 5:29), the reason of which is, because the saints which make up the church are members of him, one flesh and blood with him, (^{<4060>}Ephesians 5:30), which is the case of a man and

his wife; and hence it is, that according to the original law of marriage, a man was to leave father and mother, and cleave to his wife, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:31), the whole of which is a mystery, and typical of the marriage relation and union between Christ and his church, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:32), and the chapter is closed with a recapitulation of the mutual duties of husband and wife, love in the one, and reverence in the other, (~~HEB~~ Ephesians 5:33).

Ver. 1. *Be ye therefore followers of God*, &c.] Not in his works of infinite wisdom and almighty power, which is impossible; but in acts of righteousness and holiness, and particularly in acts of mercy, goodness, and beneficence; as in forgiving injuries and offences, and in freely distributing to the necessities of the saints; as the connection of the words with the preceding chapter, and the instance and example in the following verse show: and this should be done by the saints,

as dear children; and because they are such by adopting grace; being predestinated unto the adoption of children, in the eternal purpose of God, and taken into that relation in the covenant of grace; and which is declared and made manifest in regeneration, and by faith in Christ Jesus: and they are dear, or beloved children, being loved with an everlasting and unchangeable love, and which is the spring and source of their adoption; and their being dear to him is seen by what he is unto them, their covenant God and Father; and by what he has done for them, in giving his Son to them, and for them; as well as in choosing, calling, and quickening them by his grace, and by the account he makes of them, as his jewels, his peculiar treasure, and the apple of his eye; and by the pity and compassion he has for them, and the care he takes of them; and therefore it becomes them to imitate him; for who should they imitate and follow after, but their Father, and especially when they are so dear unto him?

Ver. 2. *And walk in love*, &c.] To God; to which the saints are obliged, not only by the law of God, which requires it, but by the goodness of God, and the discoveries of his love to them; and which shows itself in fearing to offend him, in a conformity to his will, in making his glory the chief end of all actions, and in loving all that belong to him: and also the saints should walk in love to Christ; who is to be loved fervently, constantly, in sincerity, with all the heart, and above all creatures and things; because of the loveliness of his person, the love he bears to them, and the things he has done for them, and the relations he stands in to them; and which is manifested in keeping his commands, in delighting in his presence, and in a

concern at his absence: and also they should walk in love to one another, which is chiefly designed; which is Christ's new commandment, and is an evidence of regeneration; and without which a profession of religion is in vain: and to “walk” in love, is not merely to talk of it, but to exercise it; and to do all that is done for God, and Christ, and the saints, from a principle of love; and to advance, increase, and abound in it, and to go on and continue therein: the example to be copied after, and which carries in it an argument engaging to it is,

as Christ also hath loved us; with a love exceeding great and strong, which is wonderful, inconceivable, and unparalleled; and even as the Father has loved him; with a love that is free and sovereign, unchangeable and everlasting, of which he has given many instances; and a principal one is hereafter mentioned: the “as” here is a note of similitude, not of equality; for it cannot be thought that the saints should love God, or Christ, or one another, with a love equal to Christ's love to them, but only that theirs should bear some likeness to his: the Alexandrian copy and Ethiopic version, instead of “us”, read “you”:

and hath given himself for us; not the world, and the things of it, which are his; not men, nor angels, nor animals, but himself; he gave away his time, service, and strength; his name, fame, and reputation; all the comforts of life, and life itself; his whole human nature, soul and body, and that as in union with his divine person; and that not only for the good of his people, but in their room and stead; not for angels, nor for all men, but for his chosen ones, the church, his sheep, his people, and when they, were sinners; in the following manner, and for the said purpose:

an offering and a sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour; Christ was both priest and sacrifice; he offered up himself a propitiatory sacrifice for the sins of his people, to expiate them, and make reconciliation and satisfaction for them; and this he offered up to God, against whom they had sinned, and whose justice must be satisfied, who called him to this work, and engaged him in it; and which was well pleasing to him, he smelled a sweet savour of rest in it, it being an unblemished sacrifice, and voluntarily offered up; and was complete, full, and adequate to the demands of his justice; by it sin was put away, finished, and made an end of, and his people perfected for ever; (see ^{CHESD}Genesis 8:20,21).

Ver. 3. *But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, &c.*] The apostle proceeds to dehort from several vices, which are unbecoming the

dear children and followers of God; and which the love of Christ should constrain them to avoid: the first of these, which is simple “fornication”, is the sin which is committed between single or unmarried persons; and is contrary to the law of God, is a work of the flesh, and is against a man's own body; it renders persons unfit for church communion, brings many temporal calamities upon them, and exposes them to divine wrath, and excludes from the kingdom of heaven, without repentance; and the reason why it is so often taken notice of is, because it was very frequent among the Gentiles, and not thought criminal: “all uncleanness” takes in adultery, incest, sodomy, and every unnatural lust; and “covetousness” seems not so much to design that sin which is commonly so called, namely, an immoderate desire after worldly things, as a greedy and insatiable appetite after the above lusts:

let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; that is, neither one or other of them; the sense is, that they should not be committed; so that there might be no occasion to speak of them, even though with abhorrence, as if there were no such vices in being; and much less should they be named with pleasure, and pleaded for: for thus it becomes such who are set apart by God the Father, whose sins are expiated by the blood of Christ, and whose hearts are sanctified by the Spirit of God; who profess the Gospel of Christ, and have a place and a name in God's house, better than that of sons and daughters.

Ver. 4. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, &c.*] The former of these may include all filthy gestures and behaviour, every indecent habit and attire, and all actions which have a tendency to excite lust; and also all impure words, these discover an impure heart, and are the means of corrupting men's minds and manners; filthy speaking, is a verbal commission of the things that are spoken of; and it may include all impure songs and books, and the reading or hearing of them; this is what the Jews call *hp l wbn*, “filthiness of the mouth”, obscene words; which they say they do not use on feast days, as the Gentiles do^{f57}: “foolish talking” does not so much design every imprudent thing that is said, as that which is wicked, corrupt, unsavoury, light, vain, idle, and unprofitable; and takes in all fabulous stories, and mimicking of fools in words and gestures: and “jesting”, when it is with wantonness, and excites unto it, and is inconsistent with truth, and when the Scriptures are abused by it, and not our neighbour's edification, but hurt, is promoted by it, ought not to be used:

which are not convenient; are disagreeable to the will of God, and unsuitable to the characters of the saints, and are very unbecoming them to practise:

but rather giving of thanks; instead of these, as the Syriac version renders it; it is much more suitable and becoming to give thanks to God for temporal and spiritual mercies, and to speak those things which are grateful to good men; this is to use the tongue to much better purpose, than in an obscene, foolish, or jocose way: one of Stephens's copies read, "but only of giving of thanks".

Ver. 5. *For this ye know*, &c.] Or, "know ye this", as the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read:

that no whoremonger, nor unclean person; anyone that is guilty of fornication, adultery, incest, &c.

Nor covetous man, who is an idolater: as every man is, that indulges his lusts, the idols of his own heart; and who serves divers lusts and pleasures, and gives up himself to work all uncleanness with greediness; never having his fill of sin, but is ever craving and coveting it; as well as he who is immoderately desirous of worldly things: the covetous man may be called an idolater, because the idolater and he worship the same in substance, gold and silver, and brass, or what is made of them; the covetous man admires his gold, lays it up, and will not make use of it, as if it was something sacred; and through his over love to mammon, whom he serves, he neglects the worship of God, and the good of his own soul, and puts his trust and confidence in his riches: now no such person

hath inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God; meaning either a Gospel church state, in which persons of such characters, and living in such sins, ought not to be; or else the kingdom of heaven and of glory, which may be called the kingdom of Christ, because it is in his hands, for his people; and it is his righteousness that gives a title to it, and his Spirit and grace which make meet for it; and it is by his power saints are preserved unto it; and he will put them into the possession of it; and which will greatly consist in the enjoyment of him: and this is also the kingdom of God, either of Christ who is God, or of God the Father; it being of his preparing and giving, and which he calls unto, and makes meet for; and this may be said to be an inheritance, because it is peculiar to children, the

bequest of their heavenly Father, and is not purchased or acquired by them, but comes to them from the free donation of God, through the death of Christ; and to have an inheritance in it, is to have a right unto it, a meetness for it, and to be possessed of it: now the meaning of these words is, not that all who have been guilty of these sins shall be excluded the kingdom of God, but all such who live and die in them, without the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ.

Ver. 6. *Let no man deceive you with vain words,* &c.] With vain philosophy, vain babblings, with foolish and filthy talking; suggesting that these were not sinful the apostle had condemned; or that they were small sins, the frailties of human life; and that God would take no notice of them, and they might continue in them with impunity: such deceivers there were, doctrinal and practical ones, who lay in wait to deceive men with such vain pretences; and there was danger of being carried away with their error; for the heart is deceitful and desperately wicked, and is easily taken in such snares: wherefore the apostle cautions against such deceptions, adding,

for because of these things; fornication, uncleanness, covetousness, filthiness, foolish talking, and jesting:

the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience; in temporal judgments, and in eternal ruin; there have been instances of it; it is usually the case, and always if grace prevents not; this wrath comes down from above, and sometimes suddenly, with great force and power, like a mighty flood; and there is no standing up under it, and against it; and though it falls upon the children of disobedience, such as are disobedient both to law and Gospel, are unbelievers in Christ, and not persuadable by his ministers, are stubborn, obstinate, and rebellious; yet it shows how much these things are displeasing to God, and resented by him, and therefore should be avoided by his people; and the consideration of their not being appointed to this wrath, though deserving of it as others, and of their deliverance from it by Christ, should engage them the more to abstain from these sins.

Ver. 7. *Be not ye therefore partakers with them.*] In their sins, and acts of disobedience; by keeping needless company with them; by abetting and encouraging sinful practices; by conniving at them, and not reproofing for them; or by committing the same things.

Ver. 8. *For ye were sometimes darkness,* &c.] Not only dark, but darkness itself; exceeding blind, dark, and ignorant, respecting spiritual things; so the

Gentiles were wont to be called by the Jews, *ÆϞwh*, “darkness”^{f58} itself; of this darkness, (see Gill on “~~4048~~ Ephesians 4:18”).

But now [are ye] light in the Lord; either in, or by the Lord Jesus Christ, the light of men, from whom all spiritual light comes; or by the Lord the Spirit, by whom the eyes of their understandings were enlightened, to see the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in heart and life; the insufficiency of their own righteousness and moral virtues, to justify them before God; and the true and right way of righteousness, life and salvation by Christ; and to have some light into the several doctrines of the Gospel, and even a glimpse of the invisible glories and realities of another world: and this light is so great, that they are not only said to be enlightened, but to be light itself; and this they have not of, and from themselves, but the Lord; and therefore should

walk as children of light; not in sins, which are works of darkness, but in faith, truth, and holiness.

Ver. 9. *For the fruit of the Spirit, &c.*] Either of the spirit of man, as renewed, or rather of the Spirit of God; the allusion is to fruits of trees: the believer is a tree of righteousness; Christ is his root; the Spirit is the sap, which supports and nourishes; and good works, under the influence of his grace, are the fruit: the Alexandrian copy, and some others, and the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions, read “the fruit of light”; which agrees with the preceding words: and the genuine fruit of internal grace, or light,

[is] in all goodness, and righteousness, and truth; the fruit of “goodness”, lies in sympathizing with persons in distress; in assisting such according to the abilities men have in a readiness to forgive offences and injuries; and in using meekness and candour in admonishing others: “righteousness” lies in living in obedience to the law of God; in attending the worship and service of him; and in discharging our duty to our fellow creatures; and this as goodness, is very imperfect, and not to be boasted of, or trusted to, nor is salvation to be expected from it: “truth” is opposed to lying, to hypocrisy, to error and falsehood; and where the Spirit of God, and the work of grace are, there will be more or less an appearance of these fruits.

Ver. 10. *Proving what is acceptable unto the Lord.*] There are many things that are acceptable to God, as the person of Christ, his righteousness, sacrifice, sufferings, death, and mediation; the persons of his people, their

services, sufferings, sacrifices of prayer, and praise to him, and of bounty and liberality to the poor; their graces, and the exercise of them; and the actions of their lives and conversations, when they are becoming the Gospel, are according to the will of God, and are done in faith, and are directed to his glory: and these things which are acceptable to God, as all the truths of the Gospel, and duties of religion are, should be proved, or tried by men; and in order to the trial of spiritual things, it is necessary that the mind be renewed, the understanding be enlightened, the spiritual senses be in exercise, and all be under the influence and directions of the Spirit of God: and the trial is to be made, not according to human reason, which is corrupt and fallible; and besides, there are some things in revelation above it; but according to the Scriptures, which are the word of God, and the rule of faith and practice; and whither the prophets, Christ, and his apostles, always sent men for the trial of divine things; and things being here tried, and found to be right, should be approved of, valued, and esteemed, cleaved to and held fast.

Ver. 11. *And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness,* &c.] It is not said with the workers of darkness, or with the men of the world, who are in darkness, and are darkness itself; to have fellowship with them in a civil way, or to dwell among them, is not prohibited; it is allowed of, and countenanced by the greatest examples; and especially it is lawful and right, when there is any prospect of doing good to the souls of men; and even when natural right, relation, and necessity require it; and indeed, the contrary is impracticable: conversation with them in things sinful and superstitious should be abstained from; and when it tends to draw off the soul from Christ and his interest, and is infectious; and when weak ones are offended, and sinners are hereby hardened and confirmed in sin; and the name of God is blasphemed, and the Gospel is evil spoken of: but fellowship is not to be maintained “with the works of darkness”; which are sins, so called, because they are opposite to light; to the light of nature, to the light of the divine word, both law and Gospel, to the light of grace, to God the fountain of light, and to Christ the light of the world; and because the source and spring of them are the original darkness of the mind, and Satan the prince of darkness; and because they are generally committed in the dark; and because the effect and consequence of them is utter darkness, and blackness of darkness: and these are “unfruitful”; they are of no profit and advantage, they bring forth no fruit, unless it be guilt, fear, shame, corruption, and death; wherefore no fellowship should be had with them,

by committing the same, by assisting in them, by consenting to them, by approving of them, by receiving any worldly advantage from them, and by winking and conniving at them: it is contrary to the character of saints to have fellowship with such, as the apostle says, (~~47614~~ 2 Corinthians 6:14), where he gives the mystical explanation of the law, in (~~476210~~ Deuteronomy 22:10); agreeably to which, and to the passage here, is the sense of a Jewish commentators ^{f59} who upon it observes, that that law

“intimates that a righteous man, **Ἄγιος ἀλλὰ ἄδικος**, “should have no fellowship” with a wicked man;”

this is to be unequally yoked, signified by the ox and the ass ploughing together:

but rather reprove [them]; both by words and by deeds, by an agreeable life and conversation, which last seems to be the design of the apostle here; because it is not a brother, but such who are in darkness, and live in works of darkness; yea, not sinners, but sins are to be reprov'd, which can be done no other way; nor are all saints proper to reprove verbally, nor are they qualified for it; but all should, and may by facts; and the light discovers darkness, by its own splendour; and this appears from the apostle's reasoning in the next words.

Ver. 12. *For it is a shame even to speak of those things*, &c.] This is a reason, why persons should walk as children of light; why they should prove what is acceptable to God; why they should have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness; why the apostle exhorts to reprove them, and yet does not express what they are; and why they should be reprov'd rather by deeds than by words: and he tacitly intimates, that if it is a shame to speak of those sins

which are done of them in secret, it is much more shameful to commit them; the persons the apostle refers to, are the unconverted Gentiles in general; such who have no inheritance in the kingdom of God, who deceive men with vain words, who are children of disobedience, who are in darkness, and destitute of the Spirit; and it may be that respect may be had to the followers of Simon Magus, the Gnostics, and such like impure professors, by whom the vilest things were done in secret; for sins, works of darkness, will not bear the light; there is a consciousness in men of the evil of sin, unless past feeling, and therefore they do not care that others should know their crimes; and besides, there is an imaginary pleasure in

committing sin secretly; but then though these things are secret to men, they are not to God; nor will they always remain secrets, they will be brought to light, and therefore no fellowship should be had with them; and especially when they are of such a scandalous nature, that it is a shame to mention the very names of them.

Ver. 13. *But all things that are reprov'd, &c.*] As all sins should be, by the ministers of the Gospel, and by other saints, and will be by God; either by his Spirit convincing of them, or by his judgments, and the letting out of his wrath and fury, either here or hereafter, for the punishment of them:

are made manifest by the light: either by the saints, who are made light in the Lord, and detect and reprove the sins of others; or by the word of the Lord, which discovers the heinousness of sins; or by Christ the light of the world, who as Judge will bring to light the hidden things of darkness; or by the omniscience of God, to whom darkness and light are both alike

for whatsoever doth make manifest, is light; this is true in things natural and spiritual, whether of the sun in the firmament, or of Christ the sun of righteousness; or of the divine word, or of good men.

Ver. 14. *Wherefore he saith, &c.*] Either the man that is light in the Lord, who reproves the unfruitful works of darkness; or else the Holy Ghost by Paul, who here speaks after the manner of the prophets; or God, or the Spirit, or the Scripture; (see ⁵⁰⁴⁶James 4:6); but where is it said? some think the apostle refers to (^{239D}Isaiah 9:2); others to (^{239B}Isaiah 26:19); others to (^{230D}Isaiah 60:1); some are of opinion the words are cited out of an apocryphal book of Jeremy, or from some writing now lost; and some have thought them to be a saying of Christ, that was fresh in memory: it may not be improper to observe what Maimonides says ^{f60}, that

“the blowing of the trumpet in the beginning of the year had an intimation in it, as if was said, **μυνησθητε** [“awake ye that sleep”, from your sleep, and ye that slumber rouse up from your slumber, and search into your actions, and return by repentance, and remember your Creator;”

whether any reference may be had to this, may be considered: the words are spoken not to unregenerate men, for though they are asleep, and dead in sin, and need awaking out of sleep, and raising from the dead, yet they are never called upon to awake and arise of themselves; such a sense would

countenance the doctrine of man's free will and power, against the quickening and efficacious grace of God; but to regenerate persons, professors of religion, to whom the epistle in general was written; and who are spoken to, and exhorted in the context:

awake thou that sleepest: the children of God are sometimes asleep, and need awaking; of the nature, causes, and ill consequences of such sleeping, and of the methods by which they are sometimes awaked out of it, (see Gill on “[Romans 13:11](#)”).

And arise from the dead; living saints are sometimes among dead sinners, and it becomes them to arise from among them, and quit their company, which is oftentimes the occasion of their sleepiness: besides, the company of dead sinners is infectious and dangerous; it is a means of hardening in sin, and of grieving of the people of God, who observe it; and by abstaining from their company, a testimony is bore against sin, and conviction is struck into the minds of sinners themselves; to which add, that so to do is well pleasing to God, who promises to receive such who come out from among them, and separate themselves from them: and it follows here as an encouragement, and Christ shall give thee light; for such who are made light in the Lord, stand in need of more light; and by keeping close to the word, ways, ordinances, and people of Christ, they may expect more light from Christ: they need fresh light into pardoning grace and mercy, through the blood of Christ; they want more to direct them in the way they should go; and they are often without the light of God's countenance; and they may hope for light from Christ, since it is sown in him, and promised through him; and he is given to be a light unto them, and he is the giver of it himself.

Ver. 15. *See then that ye walk circumspectly*, &c.] The Alexandrian copy and the Vulgate Latin version read, “see then, brethren”, it being an exhortation to the saints at Ephesus, upon the foregoing discourse and citation, to take heed to their walk: the believer's walk is both inward and outward; his inward walk is by faith on Christ; his outward walk is his conversation among men: this supposes life; requires strength and prudence; denotes continuance and progression; with patience and courage: this walk should be seen to, and watched over; a man should see to it that he does walk, and to the way in which he walks, and how he walks; that he walks circumspectly, with his eyes about him; that he walks with diligence, caution, accuracy, and exactness, to the uttermost of his

strength and power; and with wisdom and prudence, looking well to his going:

not as fools, but as wise; such walk like fools, whose eyes are not upon their ways; who walk in their own ways, which are crooked, and ways of darkness, and lead to destruction; who walk after the flesh, and naked, without the garments of a holy life and conversation; and with lamps, but no oil in them: and such walk as wise men, who walk according to the rule of God's word, make Christ their pattern, have the Spirit for their guide, and walk as becomes the Gospel of Christ; inoffensively to all men, in wisdom towards them that are without, and in love to them that are within; and as pilgrims and strangers in this world, looking for a better country; and so as to promote the glory of God, and the good of souls.

Ver. 16. *Redeeming the time*, &c.] Or “buying time”; a like expression is used in (²¹⁸⁸Daniel 2:8), which we render, gain time: but in the Chaldee text it is, “buy time”: and so Jacchiades, a Jewish commentator on the place, renders it, μϣϣϣ ϣϣϣ ϣϣϣ ϣϣϣ, “ye buy this opportunity”; and the Septuagint version uses the same phrase the apostle does here; but there it seems to signify a study to prolong time, to put off the business to another season; but here taking time for a space of time, it denotes a careful and diligent use of it, an improvement of it to the best advantage; and shows that it is valuable and precious, and is not to be trifled with, and squandered away, and be lost, as it may be; for it can neither be recalled nor prolonged: and taking it for an opportunity of doing good to ourselves or others, it signifies that no opportunity of discharging our duty to God and man, of attending on the word and ordinances of the Gospel, and to the private and public exercises of religion, of gaining advantage to our own souls, or of gaining the souls of others, and of doing good either to the bodies or souls of men, should be neglected; but even all risks should be run, and means used to enjoy it: in the Syriac and Chaldee languages, anmz, “time”, comes from ^bz, “to redeem”: the reason the apostle gives for the redemption of time is,

because the days are evil; as such are, in which iniquity abounds, and many wicked men live, and errors and heresies prevail, and are days of affliction or persecution; (see ⁴⁷⁹Genesis 47:9).

Ver. 17. *Wherefore be ye not unwise*, &c.] No one would be thought to be unwise, but such are, who do not redeem time, and are ignorant of the will

of the Lord; believers should not act the unwise part, neither in their talk, nor in their walk and conversation, nor in their use of time:

but understanding what the will of the Lord [is]; or “of God”, as read the Alexandrian copy, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions: there is the secret will of God, which is the rule of all his proceedings; and is unknown to men, till facts make it appear; this is always fulfilled, and sometimes by persons who have no regard to his revealed will; to this the wills of the people of God should be always resigned: and there is his revealed will, which lies partly in the Gospel; which declares it to be his will, that Christ should work out the salvation of his people, which is what he came to do; that whoever believes in him shall be saved; that all that are redeemed shall be sanctified; and that they shall persevere to the end, and be glorified; and partly in the law, in the precepts and commands of it, which contain the good, perfect, and acceptable will of God: and the understanding of it is not a mere speculative knowledge of it, but a practical one; when a man not only knows, but does the will of God, and his heart and actions agree with it; and this is to be done in faith, in virtue of grace and strength received, with a view to the glory of God, having no dependence on what is done; and to the right understanding of it, so as to act according to it, as should be, the word of God, and the illuminations, instructions, and grace of the Spirit, are necessary: the Alexandrian copy, Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, read the words as an exhortation, “understand ye the will of God”.

Ver. 18. *And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess,* &c.] The sin of drunkenness here dehorted from, is a custom, or habit, of voluntary excessive drinking of any strong liquor, whereby the mind is disturbed, and deprived of the use of reason: though wine is only here mentioned, that being the usual liquor drank in the eastern countries, yet the same holds good of any other strong liquor, as of that; nor is drinking wine for necessary use prohibited, nor for honest delight and lawful pleasure; but excessive drinking of it, and this voluntary, and with design, and on purpose; otherwise persons may be overtaken and intoxicated, through ignorance of the strength of the liquor, and their own weakness; and it is a custom, or habit of excessive drinking, for not a single act, but a series of actions, a course of living in this sin, denominates a man a drunkard; and generally speaking, excessive drinking deprives persons of the use of reason, though not always; and such are criminal, who are mighty to drink wine, and strong to mingle strong drink; as are also such, who though not

guilty of this sin themselves, are the means of it in others: the sin is very sinful; it is one of the works of the flesh; it is an abuse of the creature; it is opposed to walking honestly; for it persons are to be excluded from the communion of the church; and, without the grace of true repentance, shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven: many things might be said to dissuade from it; it hurts the mind, memory, and judgment; deprives of reason, and sets a man below a beast; it brings diseases on the body, and wastes the estate; it unfits for business and duty; it opens a door for every sin, and exposes to shame and danger; and therefore should be carefully avoided, and especially by professors of religion:

but be filled with the Spirit; that is, “with the Holy Spirit”, as read the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions; with the gifts and graces of the Spirit: some have been filled with them in an extraordinary way, as the apostles on the day of Pentecost; and others in an ordinary manner, as common believers; and who may be said to be filled with the Spirit, as with wine, or instead of it, or in opposition to it, when the love of God is shed abroad in their hearts by the Spirit, which is compared to wine, for its antiquity, purity, and refreshing nature; and they are filled with it, who have a comfortable sense of it, and a firm persuasion of interest in it, and are delighted with the views of it, and are as it were inebriated with it; and they are filled with the Spirit, in whom his grace is a well of living water, and out of whose belly flow rivers of it; and who have a large measure of spiritual peace and joy, expressed in the following manner.

Ver. 19. *Speaking to yourselves in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, &c.*] By psalms are meant the Psalms of David, and others which compose the book that goes by that name, for other psalms there are none; and by “hymns” we are to understand, not such as are made by good men, without the inspiration of the Spirit of God; since they are placed between psalms and spiritual songs, made by men inspired by the Holy Ghost; and are put upon a level with them, and to be sung along with them, to the edification of churches; but these are only another name for the Book of Psalms, the running title of which may as well be the Book of Hymns, as it is rendered by Ainsworth; and the psalm which our Lord sung with his disciples after the supper, is called an hymn; and so are the psalms in general called hymns, by Philo the Jew^{f61}; and songs and hymns by Josephus^{f62}; and *twj bçwtw twryç*, “songs and praises”, or “hymns”, in the Talmud^{f63}; and by “spiritual songs” are meant the same Psalms of David, Asaph, &c. and the titles of many of them are songs, and sometimes

a psalm and song, and song and psalm, a song of degrees; together with all other Scriptural songs, written by inspired men; and which are called “spiritual”, because they are indited by the Spirit of God, consist of spiritual matter, and are designed for spiritual edification; and are opposed to all profane, loose, and wanton songs: these three words answer to $\mu\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{o}\nu \mu\upsilon\lambda\acute{\iota}\nu \eta\tau\acute{\iota} \mu\upsilon\sigma\iota\kappa\acute{o}\nu$ the several titles of David's Psalms; from whence it seems to be the intention of the apostle, that these should be sung in Gospel churches; for so he explains speaking to themselves in them, in the next clause:

singing and making melody in your hearts to the Lord; singing, as it is a distinct thing from prayer, so from giving of thanks, which is mentioned in (Ephesians 5:20) as another duty; it is not a mental praising of God, for it is called speaking, and teaching, and admonishing, but it is a praising of God with the modulation of the voice; and is rightly performed, when the heart and voice agree; when there is a melody in the heart, as well as in the tongue; for singing and making melody in the heart, is singing with, or from the heart, or heartily; of as elsewhere, “with grace”, and which the Alexandrian copy reads here; that is, either with gratitude and thankfulness, or with grace in exercise; and the end in view should be the glory of God.

Ver. 20. *Giving thanks always for all things, &c.*] For things temporal, for our beings, and the preservation of them, and for all the mercies of life; for things spiritual, for Christ, and for all spiritual blessings in him; for electing, redeeming, sanctifying, adopting, pardoning, and justifying grace; for a meetness for heaven, and for eternal life itself; for the Gospel, promises, truths, ordinances, and ministry; and this is to be done always, at all times, in times of adversity, desertion, temptation, affliction, and persecution, as well as in prosperity:

unto God, and the Father; to God who is, and as he is the Father of mercies, and of all creatures; and as he is the Father of Christ, and of all the elect in him:

in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ; for all the mercies of God's people, both temporal and spiritual, come through him, and for his sake; and thanksgivings for them are only acceptable to God as they are offered up by him; nor is there any other way of bringing them to God, but through him: this duty, as it stands connected with the former, shows that praise and thanksgiving are the principal subject matter of psalms, hymns, and

spiritual songs, to be sung; and that the manner of singing is with thanksgiving; and that the end of it is to give thanks to God.

Ver. 21. *Submitting yourselves one to another, &c.*] Which may be understood either in a political sense, of giving honour, obedience, and tribute, to civil magistrates, since they are set up by God for the good of men, and it is for the credit of religion for the saints to submit to them; or in an economical sense; thus the wife should be subject to the husband, children to their parents, and servants to their masters, which several things are afterwards insisted on, as explanative of this rule; or in an ecclesiastic sense, so the Ethiopic version renders it, “subject yourselves to your brethren”: thus members of churches should be subject to their pastors, not in the same sense as they are to Christ, the head, nor are they obliged to believe or do everything they say, right or wrong; yet honour and esteem are due to them, and submission and obedience should be yielded to their doctrines, precepts, and exhortations, when they are agreeably to the word of God; since God has set them in the highest place in the church, called them to the highest service, and most honourable work, and bestowed on them the greatest gifts; the younger members should also submit to the elder, and the minority to the majority; one member should submit to another, to the superior judgment of another, and to the weakness of another, and to the admonitions of others, and so as to perform all offices of love: and the manner in which this duty is to be performed, is

in the fear of God; which may be considered as the moving cause of submission, or, as the rule of it; submission should be on account of the fear of God, and so far as is consistent with it; and indeed, the fear of God is that which should influence and engage to every duty; and which should be before our eyes, and in exercise in our hearts, in all concerns, civil and religious: the Alexandrian copy and some others, the Complutensian edition, and the Vulgate Latin and Ethiopic versions read, “in the fear of Christ”; who is the head of the church, and King of saints, and as such to be feared and revered; and for his sake there should be a submission to one another; the Syriac version reads, in the love of Christ, which should constrain the saints to this duty.

Ver. 22. *Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, &c.*] This is an instance, explaining the above general rule; which subjection lies in honour and reverence, (⁴¹⁸³ Ephesians 5:33), and in obedience; they should think well of their husbands, speak becomingly to them, and respectfully of

them; the wife should take care of the family, and family affairs, according to the husband's will; should imitate him in what is good, and bear with that which is not so agreeable; she should not curiously inquire into his business, but leave the management of it to him; she should help and assist in caring and providing for the family; and should abide with him in prosperity and adversity, and do nothing without his will and consent: and this subjection is only to her husband; not to any other man, nor to her children, nor to her servants, or any brought into her house; and this consideration should render the subjection more easy, voluntary, and cheerful: and which is but reasonable that it should be; as may be gathered from the time, matter, and end of the woman's creation, she was made after him, out of him, and for him; and from her fall, and being first in the transgression; and from her being the weaker and inferior sex; and from the profitableness and comeliness of it; and the credit of religion requires it, that so the word of God be not blasphemed: wherefore it follows,

as unto the Lord; that is, either as the Lord has commanded, that so it should be, showing a regard to his precepts; or as in the sight of the Lord, and so yielding it sincerely and heartily; or in things pertaining to the Lord, which are consistent with the law of the Lord, and the Gospel of Christ; and in like manner as the church is subject to Christ, her Lord and husband, as follows.

Ver. 23. *For the husband is the head of the wife, &c.*] (See Gill on “^{410B}1 Corinthians 11:3”).

Even as Christ is the head of the church; all the elect; (see Gill on “^{402E}Ephesians 1:22”). And he is the Saviour of the body; not “of our body”, as the Ethiopic version reads, of that part of man, which is called the body; though that indeed is redeemed and saved by Christ, as well as the soul; but “of his body”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads; that is, of the church, which is his body; (see ^{402E}Ephesians 1:23); of which he is the Saviour; he provides everything for it, preserves and protects it, and has wrought out salvation for it, which every member of it partakes of.

Ver. 24. *Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, &c.*] Her head, being wholly dependent upon him, and entirely resigned to him, and receiving all from him; from whom alone is all her expectation of provision, protection, comfort, and happiness; wherefore she has respect to all his commands, and esteems all his precepts concerning all things to be right; and yields a cheerful, voluntary, sincere, and hearty obedience to them;

arising from a principle of love to him, and joined with honour, fear, and reverence of him:

so [let] the wives [be] to their own husbands in everything: political, domestic, and ecclesiastic; that is consistent with the laws of God, and the Gospel of Christ.

Ver. 25. *Husbands, love your wives,* &c.] Which consists in a strong and cordial affection for them; in a real delight and pleasure in them; in showing respect, and doing honour to them; in seeking their contentment, satisfaction, and pleasure; in a quiet, constant, and comfortable dwelling with them; in providing all things necessary for them; in protecting them from all injuries and abuses; in concealing their faults, and covering their infirmities; in entertaining the best opinion of their persons and actions; and in endeavouring to promote their spiritual good and welfare: this love ought to be hearty and sincere, and not feigned and selfish; it should be shown in private, as well as in public: it should be chaste and single, constant and perpetual; it should exceed that which is bore to neighbours, or even to parents, and should be equal to that a man bears to himself; though not so as to hinder, and break in upon love to God and Christ: many are the reasons why husbands should love their wives; they are given to be helps unto them; they are companions of them; they are wives of covenant; they are their own wives, yea, their own bodies, their own flesh, nay, as themselves; they are their image and their glory; and especially the example of Christ, in his love to his church and people, should engage to it:

even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it: (see Gill on “^{MRD}Ephesians 5:2”); the Syriac and Ethiopic versions read, “his own church”; his bride and spouse, whom he betrothed to himself from all eternity, the Father having given her to him; and is no other than the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven, even all the elect of God.

Ver. 26 *That he might sanctify and cleanse it,* &c.] Being defiled, both with original sin and actual transgressions; for God's elect, whom Christ loved and espoused from everlasting, fell in Adam with the rest of mankind; and, in their natural state, live in sin as others do; and so are under the guilt, and in the pollution of it, as others be: Christ gave himself for them, that he might deliver them out of this state; he gave himself a sacrifice for them, that he might expiate their sins and make atonement and satisfaction for them; he shed his blood that he might cleanse them from

them; and he wrought out a righteousness that he might justify them from all their iniquities; and which being put upon them, makes them to appear pure and spotless in the sight of divine justice; for this sanctifying and cleansing does not so much refer to the inward work of sanctification of the Spirit, though that is a fruit and effect of the death of Christ, and is brought about by the following means, as to the justification of them by the blood and righteousness of Christ: which is said to be,

with the washing of water; not baptism, which is never expressed by washing; nor does it purify or cleanse from sin; nor is it the means of sanctification and regeneration, which ought to be before it; nor the grace of the Spirit, though that is often compared to water, and regeneration and sanctification are owing to it; yet the saints are not so cleansed from sin by it, as to be without spot or wrinkle; but the blood of Christ, which is the fountain to wash in, and which cleanses from all sin:

by the word; not the form of words in baptism; but either the Gospel, which brings the good news and glad tidings of peace, pardon, atonement, and justification by Christ; or the sentence of justification pronounced upon the conscience by him; (see ~~ACT~~ John 15:2).

Ver. 27. *That he might present it to himself a glorious church, &c.*] There is a presentation of the church by Christ to his Father at his death, when he gathered the elect together in one, brought them nigh, and reconciled them to God, and presented them to holy, unblamable, and unreprieveable in his sight; and now in heaven, where he represents their persons, appears and makes intercession for them; and at the last day, when he will deliver the whole number of them complete and perfect, in consequence of his suretyship engagements: but this is a presentation of them to himself; and is either in this life, when they are brought to him in raiment of needlework, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood, and he beholds them all fair, and without spot; or at the first resurrection, and during the thousand years' reign; as well as in the ultimate glory, when the open marriage of the Lamb will be come, when his bride will be arrayed with line linen, clean and white; and have the glory of God upon her, and appear in glory with Christ, and will be a glorious church indeed:

not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; the bodies of the saints will be like to Christ's glorious body, and will shine as the sun in the kingdom of their Father; and in their souls they will be completely conformed to the image of Christ, and enjoy uninterrupted communion with him, and have

perfect knowledge of him; they will be always in his presence, and he will take unspeakable delight and complacency in them, which his presentation of them to himself is expressive of; the church will then be free from all spots and blemishes; from all hypocrites and formal professors; and all heresies and heretics; from all declensions and infirmities, and from all sin and iniquity: the allusion seems to be to the customs and practices of the Jews, in their espousals: if a man espoused a woman on condition that she had no spots in her, and afterwards spots were found in her, she was not espoused; for spots or blemishes, as in priests, so in women, render them unfit; as the one for service, so the other for marriage; and they reckon up eight several spots or blemishes, for which they may be rejected ^{f64}: but Christ's church has no spots or blemishes, nor anything like them; and will never be rejected by him, but will be always pleasing in his sight:

but that it should be holy and without blemish; as it is, being justified by his righteousness, washed in his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit.

Ver. 28. *So ought men to love their wives as their own bodies*, &c.] It is a common saying with the Jews, that a man's wife is *wpwgk*, “as his own body” ^{f65}; and it is one of the precepts of their wise men, that a man should honour his wife more than his body, *wpwgk hbhaw*, and “love her as his body” ^{f66}; for as they also say, they are but one body ^{f67}; the apostle seems to speak in the language of his countrymen; however, his doctrine and theirs agree in this point: wherefore

he that loveth his wife loveth himself; because she is one body and flesh with him.

Ver. 29. *For no man ever yet hated his own flesh*, &c.] This is unnatural, contrary to the first principles of nature; (see ~~2880~~ Isaiah 58:7); which the ^{f68} Jews understand of one that is near akin, and there is none nearer than a wife:

but nourisheth and cherisheth it; feeds and clothes it:

even as the Lord the church; who never hated her, but nourishes and cherishes her: Christ never hated his church and people; for his love is not only a love of benevolence, but of complacency and delight: there is a difference between anger and hatred, Christ may be angry with them, but not hate them; and there is a difference between persons and actions, Christ may hate their actions, but not their persons; and there is a difference

between desert and fact, they may be deserving of his wrath and hatred, but are not the objects of it in fact; and there is a difference between what is real, and what is imaginary, they may imagine themselves to be hated by him, when they are not; and there is a difference between hatred, and a non-discovery of love, Christ may not manifest his love, and yet not hate; as he never does his own people, for his love is everlasting and unchangeable: and he “nourishes” them, as a father his child, as a shepherd his flock, and as an husband his wife; he feeds them with that which is nourishing, and with himself the bread of life, with his covenant and promises, with the Gospel and the doctrines of it, and with his love and grace; and by his Spirit, ministers, word, and ordinances: and he “cherishes” them, he grants them near and intimate communion with himself, than which nothing is more desirable by them, or joyful to them; nor is there anything that more revives and encourages faith, hope, and love; he clothes them suitable to their dignity and character, as his spouse and bride; and with which they are well contented, and in which they look exceeding comely in his sight: these phrases are expressive of the whole care Christ takes of his church, in furnishing her with everything pertaining to life and godliness; for her comfort and happiness in this world, and that to come: instead of the Lord, the Alexandrian copy, and some others, the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Ethiopic versions read, Christ; and the Arabic version reads, “as the Lord loves the church”.

Ver. 30. *For we are members of his body,* &c.] Not of his natural body, for this would make Christ's human nature monstrous; Christ, as man, is of our flesh and of our bones, or a partaker of the same flesh and blood with us; or otherwise, his incarnation would have been of no service to us; and had our human nature been from Christ, it would not have been corrupted; but our bodies, flesh, and bones, are from the first, and not the second Adam, and so corrupt and sinful; Christ indeed, as God, is the former of all human nature, and, as man, was set up in God's thoughts as the pattern of it; but the apostle is here speaking of the saints, not as men, but as Christians, as new creatures in Christ; and of what is peculiar to them; and therefore this must be understood of Christ's mystical body the church; which is his by the Father's gift, and his own purchase; and of which he is the head, and which is united to him; now of this saints are members; (see [Romans 12:5](#) [1 Corinthians 12:12,18,27](#)).

Of his flesh and of his bones: for so the church may be called, his own flesh, his flesh and bones, on account of the marriage relation she stands in

to him, and that spiritual union there is between them, which these phrases are expressive of; and which the near relation of man and wife is an emblem of; these words are wanting in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 31. *For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, &c.]*

These words contain the law of marriage, and are cited from (⁴⁰⁰²⁴Genesis 2:24); and declare what ought to be, and are a prophecy of what should be; and are observed against polygamy, and to stir up mutual affection; (see Gill on ⁴⁰⁰¹⁵Matthew 19:5”).

Ver. 32. *This is a great mystery, &c.]* It has something mysterious in it; it is a figure and emblem of the mysterious union between Christ and his people: for so it follows,

but I speak concerning Christ and the church; or mention this law and institution of marriage, with respect to them; for the leaving of father and mother prefigured Christ's coming forth from the Father, and coming into this world in human nature, and his disregard to his earthly parents, in comparison with his people, and his service for them; the man cleaving to the wife very aptly expresses the strong affection of Christ to his church, and the near communion there is between them; and their being one flesh denotes the union of them; and indeed, the marriage of Adam and Eve was a type of Christ and his church; for in this the first Adam was a figure of him that was to come, as well as in being a federal head to his posterity: Adam was before Eve, so Christ was before his church; God thought it not proper that man should be alone, so neither Christ, but that he should have some fellows and companions with him: the formation of Eve from Adam was typical of the church's production from Christ; she was made of him while he was asleep, which sleep was from the Lord, and it was not an ordinary one; which may resemble the sufferings and death of Christ, which were from the Lord, and were not common; and which are the redemption of his church and people; and which secure their comfort and happiness, and wellbeing: she was taken out of his side, and built up a woman of one of his ribs; both the justification and sanctification of the church are from Christ, from the water and the blood which issued out of his side, when on the cross: the bringing and presentation of Eve to Adam has its mystery; it was God that brought her to him; and she was the same that was made out of him; and to the same Adam was she brought of whose rib she was made, and that not against her will: so it is God that draws souls to Christ, and

espouses them to him, even the same that he has chosen in him, and Christ has redeemed by his blood; and to the same are they brought, who was wounded for their transgressions, and bruised for their sins; and they are made willing in the day of his power upon them, to come and give themselves to him. Adam's consent and acknowledgment of Eve to be his wife, shadow forth Christ's hearty reception and acknowledgment of the saints, as being of him, and his, when they are brought unto him under the influences of his grace and Spirit.

Ver. 33. *Nevertheless, let everyone of you in particular, &c.*] The apostle returns to his former subject, and recapitulates the mutual duties of husband and wife, after he had enforced them from the instance and example of Christ, and his church; and would have every married person in particular take the directions and instructions given, to themselves: as that the husband

so love his wife even as himself; since they two are one flesh:

and the wife [see] that she reverence [her] husband; since he leaves father and mother for her, and is the head of her; (see Gill on “⁴⁰²Ephesians 5:22”).