

# CHAPTER 2

## INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 2

This chapter contains several exhortations to unity, love, and concord, to humility, and lowliness of mind, and to a becoming life and conversation; and concludes with commendations of two eminent ministers of Christ, Timothy and Epaphroditus. The arguments engaging to harmony and mutual affection, are taken from the consolation that is in Christ, the comfort there is in love, the fellowship of the Spirit, and the bowels and mercies which become saints, (<sup><5011></sup>Philippians 2:1), as also from the joy this would fill the apostle with; and the things exhorted to are expressed by likeness of mind, sameness of love, and unity of soul, (<sup><5012></sup>Philippians 2:2), and the manner directed to for the preservation of such a spirit, is to do nothing in a contentious and vainglorious way, but in an humble and lowly manner, having a better opinion of others than themselves; and observing their superior gifts and graces, and so submit things unto them, (<sup><5013></sup>Philippians 2:3,4), and which humble deportment is further urged, from the instance and example of our Lord Jesus Christ, (<sup><5014></sup>Philippians 2:5), which is illustrated by the dignity of his person, the glorious divine form in which he was, and his indisputable equality with his Father, (<sup><5015></sup>Philippians 2:6), and yet such was his great condescension, that he became man, appeared in the form of a servant, and was humbled to the lowest degree, even to die the death of the cross, (<sup><5016></sup>Philippians 2:7,8), nevertheless God exalted him as man, and gave him superior honour to all creatures; and will oblige all to be subject to him, and acknowledge his dominion over them, to the glory of his divine Father, (<sup><5017></sup>Philippians 2:9-11), hereby suggesting, that in like manner, though not to the same degree, such who are humble and lowly minded shall be exalted by the Lord; and then with the greatest affection to the Philippians, and with high commendations of them, the apostle renews his exhortation to do all the duties of religion with humility and modesty; knowing that all the grace and strength in which they performed them was owing to the internal operation of divine power in them, (<sup><5018></sup>Philippians 2:12,13), and therefore should be done without murmuring against God, or disputings among themselves, (<sup><5019></sup>Philippians 2:14), and next he proceeds to exhort to an unblemished

and inoffensive life and conversation, as the end and issue of a modest and humble behaviour; and this he enforces on them, from the consideration of their relation to God, being his children, which would appear hereby; and from the wickedness and perverseness of the people they lived among; and therefore should be careful, lest they be ensnared by them, to the dishonour of God, and the grief of themselves; and from their character as lights in the world, whose business it was to hold forth the word of life; and also from this consideration, that it would be the joy of the apostle in the day of Christ, that his labours among them had not been fruitless, (<sup>50415</sup>Philippians 2:15,16), yea, such was his love to them, that if even he was to die on their account, it would be matter of joy and gladness to him; and he desires they would express the same joy with him, (<sup>50617</sup>Philippians 2:17,18), and though he could not be with them in person, he hoped in a little time to send Timothy, for this end, that he might know how things stood with them; which if well, would be a comfort to him, (<sup>50619</sup>Philippians 2:19), the reasons why he picked Timothy as a messenger to them were, because there were none like him, for the sincere regard he had for their spiritual good, (<sup>50620</sup>Philippians 2:20), and which is illustrated by the contrary disposition and conduct of others, who sought themselves, and not Jesus Christ, his honour and interest, (<sup>50621</sup>Philippians 2:21), and besides, they themselves were witnesses of his filial affection to the apostle, and of his faithful service with him in the Gospel, (<sup>50622</sup>Philippians 2:22), and then he repeats his hopes of sending him quickly, as soon as ever he knew how it would go with him, whether he should be released or suffer, (<sup>50623</sup>Philippians 2:23), the former of which he had some confidence of, and that he should be able to see them himself in a little time, (<sup>50724</sup>Philippians 2:24), however, in the mean while he thought it proper to send Epaphroditus to them, whom he commends as a brother of his, a co-worker, a fellow soldier, a messenger of theirs, and a minister to his wants, (<sup>50725</sup>Philippians 2:25), the reasons of sending him were, because he longed to see them, and because he was uneasy that they had heard of his sickness; which was not only true that he had been sick, but his sickness was very dangerous, and threatened with death; however, through the mercy of God to him, he was recovered; and which was a mercy also to the apostle, who otherwise would have had an additional sorrow; wherefore another reason of sending him was, that upon the sight of him they might be filled with joy, and the apostle himself have less sorrow, (<sup>50726</sup>Philippians 2:26-28), and then he exhorts them, that when he was returned to them, they would gladly receive him, and highly esteem of him; and the rather, since the

dangerous illness he was attended with was brought upon him through his labours in the service of Christ, and also of the apostle, which he performed in their stead, even to the neglect of his health and life, (<sup><B1B2></sup>Philippians 2:29,30).

**Ver. 1.** *If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ,* etc.] Or “exhortation”, as the word is sometimes rendered; that is, either if there is any exhortation of Christ to love and unity, as there is in (<sup><B1B3></sup>John 13:34 15:11,17), and this is of any weight and value; or if an exhortation hereunto made in the name of Christ, by any of his ministers, messengers, and ambassadors, will be regarded, as it ought to be, then fulfil ye my joy, etc. (<sup><B1B2></sup>Philippians 2:2), but as the word is frequently translated “consolation”, as it is here in the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions; the sense may be either, if there is any comfort to be given to them that are in Christ Jesus, as every converted man is, and as the apostle was, and especially to them that are afflicted and persecuted for the sake of Christ, are prisoners in him, and on his account, which was the apostle's case, then he desired they would attend to his following request: or if there was any consolation for them, and they had had any comfort in and from Christ; as all true, solid, strong, and everlasting consolation is only in Christ, and is founded on the greatness of his person, as God our Saviour, on the fulness of his grace, the efficacy of his blood, the perfection of his righteousness and sacrifice, and on the great salvation he is the author of: agreeably the Syriac version renders it, “if therefore ye have any consolation in Christ”; and the Arabic version, “if therefore ye enjoy any consolation from the grace of Christ”; which is displayed in the Gospel, as undoubtedly they did; and since then all this comfort was enjoyed by them, through the Gospel the apostle preached to them, the argument from hence must be strong upon them, to attend to what he desired of them:

*if any comfort of love;* in it, or from it; as from the love of God the Father, which is everlasting and unchangeable, and must be comforting, when shed abroad in the heart by the Spirit; and from the love of the Son, which is the same, and equally immovable and lasting, and which passeth knowledge; and from the love of the Spirit, in applying the grace of the Father, and of the Son, whereby he becomes a glorifier of them, and a comforter of his people; and from the love of the saints to one another, which renders their communion with each other comfortable, pleasant, and delightful: or the apostle's sense is, if they had so much love for him, as to wish and desire he might be comforted in his present situation, and that they would be willing

to make use of any methods to comfort him, then he desires this; and this is all he desires, mutual love, peace, harmony, and agreement among themselves:

*if any fellowship of the spirit*: of the spirit of one saint with another; if there is such a thing as an union of spirits, an oneness of souls, a tasting of each other's spirits, and a communion with one another, then care should be taken to keep this unity of the Spirit, in the bond of peace, (<sup><4013></sup>Ephesians 4:3): or if there is any fellowship of the Holy Spirit of God, any communion with him, any such thing as a witnessing of him to, and with our spirits, or as fellowship with the Father and the Son by him, and saints are baptized into one body by one Spirit, and have been made to drink of the same Spirit, (<sup><41213></sup>1 Corinthians 12:13), then it becomes them to be of one mind, and to stand fast in one Spirit, (<sup><51127></sup>Philippians 1:27):

*if any bowels and mercies*; as there are in God, and in the Lord Jesus Christ, moving towards the saints; or such as become Christians, who, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ought to put on bowels of mercies to one another; express the most hearty, inward, tender, and compassionate concern for each other's welfare, temporal and spiritual. Thus the apostle premises the most moving and pathetic arguments, leading on to the exhortations and advice, to love, harmony, and unity, given in (<sup><51112></sup>Philippians 2:2).

**Ver. 2.** *Fulfil ye my joy*, etc.] The Arabic version adds, “by these things”; meaning not his joy in the Lord Jesus Christ, which arose from views of interest his person, blood, and righteousness; which was had by believing in him, by enjoying communion with him, and living in hope of the glory of God; this in a fruit of the Spirit, (<sup><8122></sup>Galatians 5:22), and is called joy in the Holy Ghost; who, as he was the author, must be the finisher of it, and not the Philippians; much less does he mean that fulness of joy in the presence, and at the right hand of God in heaven, which he expected to have; but that which arose from the state, conduct, and mutual respect of the saints to each other; he had much joy in them, on account of the good work being begun, and carrying on in their souls; and because of their steadfastness in the faith, notwithstanding the persecutions they met with; and on account of their continued love to him, and the late fresh instance of it they had given, in sending their minister with a present to him, and who had given him a particular account of their affairs; but his joy was not yet full, there were some things which damped it; as the unbecoming walk and

conversation of some, of whom he spoke with grief of heart, and tears in his eyes; and the inclination of others to listen to the false teachers, those of the concision, or circumcision; and the murmurings, disputings, and divisions of others among them, that were contentious and quarrelsome; wherefore to crown his joy, and fill it brimful, he signifies that their unity in affection, judgment, and practice, would do it, for so he explains it as follows:

*that ye be likeminded*, or “equally affected to one another”; that since they were but as one man, were one body, and had but one head, and one Spirit, that quickened and comforted them, and had but one faith and one baptism, they ought to be one in affection, practice, and judgment; this is the general, of which the following are the particulars:

*having the same love*; both for quality, being hearty, sincere, and unfeigned; and for quantity, returning the same that is measured to them; and with respect to objects, loving the same Christ, the same doctrines of Christ, the same ministers of the Gospel, and all the saints, rich and poor, high and low, weak or strong believers, without making any difference, by which means unity is preserved: for if one loves Christ, and another antichrist; one loves one doctrine, and another the opposite to it; one loves a teacher of the law, and another a preacher of the Gospel, one loves one Gospel minister, and one loves another, in distinction from, and opposition to the other; one loves the rich and not the poor, men of great gifts and grace, and neglects the meaner saints; when this is the case, they cannot be said to have the same love, nor can there be harmony, concord, and agreement:

*[being] of one accord*, or “being alike in soul”; having the same soul, not in substance and number, as some philosophers have asserted, but having the same affection, judgment, and will, as the first Christians are said to be of one heart and of one soul; or “unanimous” in their sentiments about doctrines and ordinances, being all of a piece in their practices; and agreeing in all their counsels, debates, acts, and votes, in their church meetings:

*of one mind*; in the doctrines of grace, in the ordinances of the Gospel; and in the discipline of the church: the means of preserving and increasing such affection, unity, and agreement, are next directed to.

**Ver. 3.** [*Let nothing [be done] through strife*, etc.] About words merely; otherwise they were to strive for the faith of the Gospel, the purity of Gospel ordinances, worship and discipline; but the apostle would not have them strive merely to carry a point determined on, without having any regard to reason and truth, or yielding to the infirmities of the weak; which is the case and conduct of contentious persons; than which nothing can be more contrary to the Spirit of the Gospel, or the peace of churches: the apostle adds,

*or vain glory*; for where this is predominant, persons will always be singular in their sentiments, and never relinquish them, let what reason soever be given against them; nor will they give way to the judgment of others, but right or wrong will have their own wills; Diotrophes like, loving to have the preeminence in all things, (~~600~~3 John 1:9); and such persons and conduct are very injurious to the comfort and harmony of the saints:

*but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves*; not as to the things of the world, in respect of which one man may be a better man than another, and he must know and think himself so; nor with respect to the endowments of the mind, and acquired abilities, which one man may have above another; and the difference being so great in some, it must be easily discerned, that one is more learned and knowing, in this or the other language, art, or science; but with regard to, grace, and to spiritual light, knowledge, and judgment: and where there is lowliness of mind, or true humility, a person will esteem himself in a state of grace, as the great apostle did, the chief of sinners, and less than the least of all saints; one in whom this grace reigns will pay a deference to the judgment of other saints, and will prefer their experience, light, and knowledge, to his own; and will readily give way, when he sees such that are of longer standing, of greater experience, and more solid judgment, as he has reason to think, than himself, are on the other side of the question; and so peace, love, and unity, are preserved. This grace of humility is an excellent ornament to a Christian, and wonderfully useful in Christian societies.

**Ver. 4.** *Look, not every man on his own things*, etc.] Not but that a man should take care of his worldly affairs, and look well unto them, and provide things honest in the sight of all men, for himself and his family, otherwise he would be worse than an infidel; but he is not to seek his own private advantage, and prefer it to a public good; accordingly the Syriac version reads it, “neither let anyone be careful of himself, but also everyone

of his neighbour”; and the Arabic version thus, “and let none of you look to that which conduces to himself alone, but let everyone of you look to those things which may conduce to his friend”; but this respects spiritual things, and spiritual gifts: a Christian should not seek his own honour and applause, and to have his own will, and a point in a church carried his own way, but should consult the honour of Christ, the good of others, and the peace of the church; he should not look upon his own gifts, he may look upon them, and ascribe them to the grace of God, and make use of them to his glory, but not to admire them, or himself for them, and pride himself in them, and lift up himself above others, neglecting and taking no notice of the superior abilities of others:

*but every man also on the things of others*; not on their worldly things, busying himself with other men's matters, and which he has nothing to do with, but on the sentiments and reasons of others; which he should well weigh and consider, and if they outdo and overbalance his own, should yield unto them; he should take notice of the superior gifts of others, and own and acknowledge them; which is the way to submit to one another in the fear of God, and to promote truth, friendship, and love.

**Ver. 5.** *Let this mind be in you*, etc.] The Arabic version renders it, “let that humility be perceived in you”. The apostle proposes Christ as the great pattern and exemplar of humility; and instances in his assumption of human nature, and in his subjection to all that meanness, and death itself, even the death of the cross in it; and which he mentions with this view, to engage the saints to lowliness of mind, in imitation of him; to show forth the same temper and disposition of mind in their practice,

*which also was in Christ Jesus*; or as the Syriac version, “think ye the same thing as Jesus Christ”; let the same condescending spirit and humble deportment appear in you as in him. This mind, affection, and conduct of Christ, may refer both to his early affection to his people, the love he bore to them from everlasting, the resolution and determination of his mind in consequence of it; and his agreement with his Father to take upon him their nature in the fulness of time, and to do his will, by obeying, suffering, and dying in their room and stead; and also the open exhibition and execution of all this in time, when he appeared in human nature, poor, mean, and abject; condescending to the lowest offices, and behaving in the most meek and humble manner, throughout the whole of his life, to the moment of his death.



**Ver. 6.** *Who being in the form of God*, etc.] The Father; being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person. This form is to be understood, not of any shape or figure of him; for as such is not to be seen, it is not to be supposed of him; or any accidental form, for there are no accidents in God, whatever is in God, is God; he is nothing but nature and essence, he is the **το ον**, the Jehovah, I am what I am; and so is his Son, which is, and was, and is to come, the fountain of all created beings nor does it intend any outward representation and resemblance of him, such as in kings; who, because of the honour and dignity they are raised unto, the authority and power they have, and because of the glory and majesty they are arrayed with, are called gods: nor does it design the state and condition Christ appeared in here on earth, having a power to work miracles, heal diseases, and dispossess devils, for the manifestation of his glory; and so might be said to be in the form of God, as Moses for doing less miracles is said to be a God unto Pharaoh; since this account does not regard Christ; as he was on earth in human nature, but what he was antecedent to the assumption of it; or otherwise his humility and condescension in becoming man, and so mean, will not appear: but this phrase, “the form of God”, is to be understood of the nature and essence of God, and describes Christ as he was from all eternity; just as the form of a servant signifies that he was really a servant, and the fashion of a man in which he was found means that he was truly and really man; so his being in the form of God intends that he was really and truly God; that he partook of the same nature with the Father, and was possessed of the same glory: from whence it appears, that he was in being before his incarnation; that he existed as a distinct person from God his Father, in whose form he was, and that as a divine person, or as truly God, being in the glorious form, nature, and essence of God; and that there is but one form of God, or divine nature and essence, common to the Father and the Son, and also to the Spirit; so that they are not three Gods, but one God: what the form of God is, the Heathens themselves<sup>f7</sup> say cannot be comprehended nor seen, and so not to be inquired after; and they use the same word the apostle does here<sup>f8</sup>: and now Christ being in this glorious form, or having the same divine nature with the Father, with all the infinite and unspeakable glories of it,

*thought it no robbery to be equal with God*; the Father; for if he was in the same form, nature, and essence, he must be equal to him, as he is; for he has the same perfections, as eternity, omniscience, omnipotence,



omnipresence, immutability, and self-existence: hence he has the same glorious names, as God, the mighty God, the true God, the living God, God over all, Jehovah, the Lord of glory, etc. the same works of creation and providence are ascribed to him, and the same worship, homage, and honour given him: to be “in the form of God”, and to be “equal with God”, signify the same thing, the one is explanative of the other: and this divine form and equality, or true and proper deity, he did not obtain by force and rapine, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do, and as Adam by his instigation also affected; and so the mind of a wicked man, as Philo the Jew says <sup>f9</sup>, being a lover of itself and impious, **οιομενος ισος ειναι ψεω**, “thinks itself to be equal with God”, a like phrase with this here used; but Christ enjoyed this equality by nature; he thought, he accounted, he knew he had it this way; and he held it hereby, and of right, and not by any unlawful means; and he reckoned that by declaring and showing forth his proper deity, and perfect equality with the Father, he robbed him of no perfection; the same being in him as in the Father, and the same in the Father as in him; that he did him no injury, nor deprived him of any glory, or assumed that to himself which did not belong to him: as for the sense which some put upon the words, that he did not “affect”, or “greedily catch” at deity; as the phrase will not admit of it, so it is not true in fact; he did affect deity, and asserted it strongly, and took every proper opportunity of declaring it, and in express terms affirmed he was the Son of God; and in terms easy to be understood declared his proper deity, and his unity and equality with the Father; required the same faith in himself as in the Father, and signified that he that saw the one, saw the other, (~~414b~~ Mark 14:61,62) (~~417~~ John 5:17,18 10:30,33 14:1,10). Others give this as the sense of them, that he did not in an ostentatious way show forth the glory of his divine nature, but rather hid it; it is true, indeed, that Christ did not seek, but carefully shunned vain glory and popular applause; and therefore often after having wrought a miracle, would charge the persons on whom it was wrought, or the company, or his disciples, not to speak of it; this he did at certain times, and for certain reasons; yet at other times we find, that he wrought miracles to manifest forth his glory, and frequently appeals to them as proofs of his deity and Messiahship: and besides, the apostle is speaking not of what he was, or did in his incarnate state, but of what he was and thought himself to be, before he became man; wherefore the above sense is to be preferred as the genuine one.

**Ver. 7.** *But made himself of no reputation*, etc.] Or “nevertheless emptied himself”; not of that fulness of grace which was laid up in him from everlasting, for with this he appeared when he was made flesh, and dwelt among men; nor of the perfections of his divine nature, which were not in the least diminished by his assumption of human nature, for all the fulness of the Godhead dwelt in him bodily; though he took that which he had not before, he lost nothing of what he had; the glory of his divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke out through his works and miracles, yet his glory, as the only begotten of the Father, was beheld only by a few; the minds of the far greater part were blinded, and their hearts hardened, and they saw no form nor comeliness in him to desire him; the form of God in which he was, was hid from them; they reputed him as a mere man, yea, as a sinful man, even as a worm, and no man: and to be thus esteemed, and had in such account, he voluntarily subjected himself, though infinitely great and glorious; as he did not assume deity by rapine, he was not thrust down into this low estate by force; as the angels that sinned when they affected to be as God, were drove from their seats of glory, and cast down into hell; and when man, through the instigation of Satan, was desirous of the same, he was turned out of Eden, and became like the beasts that perish; but this was Christ's own act and deed, he willingly assented to it, to lay aside as it were his glory for a while, to have it veiled and hid, and be reckoned anything, a mere man, yea, to have a devil, and not be God: O wondrous humility! astonishing condescension!

*and took upon him the form of a servant*; this also was voluntary; he “took upon him”, was not obliged, or forced to be in the form of a servant; he appeared as one in human nature, and was really such; a servant to his Father, who chose, called, sent, upheld, and regarded him as a servant; and a very prudent, diligent, and faithful one he was unto him: and he was also a servant to his people, and ministered to men; partly by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about to do good, both to the bodies and souls of men; and chiefly by obtaining eternal redemption for his chosen ones, by being made sin and a curse for them; which though a very toilsome and laborious piece of service, yet as he cheerfully engaged in it, he diligently attended it, until he had finished it: so he was often prophesied of as a servant, in (<sup>240</sup> Isaiah 42:1 52:13 <sup>308</sup> Zechariah 3:8), in which several places he is called in the Targum, *aj yçm ydb* [ , “my servant the Messiah”: put these two together,

“the form of God”, and “the form of a servant”, and admire the amazing stoop!

*and was made in the likeness of men*; not of the first Adam, for though, as he, he was without sin, knew none, nor did any; yet he was rather like to sinful men, and was sent in the likeness of sinful flesh, and was traduced and treated as a sinner, and numbered among transgressors; he was like to men, the most mean and abject, such as were poor, and in lower life, and were of the least esteem and account among men, on any score: or he was like to men in common, and particularly to his brethren the seed of Abraham, and children of God that were given him; he partook of the same flesh and blood, he had a true body, and a reasonable soul, as they; he was subject to the like sorrows and griefs, temptations, reproaches, and persecutions; and was like them in everything, excepting sin: a strange and surprising difference this, that he who was “equal to God”, should be “like to [sinful] men!”

**Ver. 8.** *And being found in fashion as a man*, etc.] Not that he had only the show and appearance of a man, but he was really a man; for “as” here, denotes not merely the likeness of a thing, but the thing itself, as in (~~414B~~ Matthew 14:5 ~~411A~~ John 1:14), *ως* here, answers to the Hebrew *k*, which is sometimes by the Jews <sup>f10</sup> said to be *ˆwymdh* Pk, and signifies likeness, and sometimes *twtmah* Pk, and designs truth and reality; which is the sense in which the particle is to be taken here: though he was seen and looked upon as a mere man, and therefore charged with blasphemy when he asserted himself to be the Son of God, he was more than a man; and yet found and known by men in common to be no more than a man, than just such a man as other men are; and so far is true, that his scheme, his habit, his fashion, his form, were like that of other men; though he was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet he lay nine months in his mother's womb, as the human foetus ordinarily does; he was born as children are, was wrapped in swaddling bands when born, as an infant is; grew in stature by degrees, as men do; the shape and size of his body were like other men's, and he was subject to the same infirmities, as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, grief, sorrow, and death itself, as follows:

*he humbled himself*: by becoming man, and by various outward actions in his life; as subjection to his parents, working at the trade of a carpenter, conversing with the meanest of men, washing his disciples' feet, etc. and

the whole of his deportment both to God and man, his compliance with his Father's will, though disagreeable to flesh and blood, his behaviour towards his enemies, and his forbearance of his disciples, showed him to be of a meek and humble spirit; he humbled himself both to God and man:

*and became obedient unto death*, or “until death”; for he was obedient from the cradle to the cross, to God, to men, to his earthly parents, and to magistrates; he was obedient to the ceremonial law, to circumcision, the passover, etc. to the moral law, to all the precepts of it, which he punctually fulfilled; and to the penalty of it, death, which he voluntarily and cheerfully bore, in the room and stead of his people:

*even the death of the cross*; which was both painful and shameful; it was an accursed one, and showed that he bore the curse of the law, and was made a curse for us: this was a punishment usually inflicted on servants, and is called a servile punishment<sup>f11</sup>; and such was the form which he took, when he was found in fashion as a man: this is now the great instance of humility the apostle gives, as a pattern of it to the saints, and it is a matchless and unparalleled one.

**Ver. 9.** *Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him*, etc.] The apostle proceeds to observe the exaltation of Christ, for the encouragement of meek and humble souls; that whereas Christ, who so exceedingly demeaned himself, was afterwards highly exalted by God, so all such who, in imitation of him, behave to one another in lowliness of mind, shall be exalted in God's due time; for whoso humbleth himself, shall be exalted. The first step of Christ's exaltation was his resurrection from the dead, when he had a glory given him as man; his body was raised in incorruption, in glory, in power, and a spiritual one; it became a glorious body, and the pledge and exemplar of the saints at the general resurrection, of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and prelude; and he was also glorified then as Mediator, he was then justified in the Spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of his people, he took upon him and bore, having satisfied for them; and all God's elect were justified in him, for he rose as a public person, as their head, for their justification; yea, in some sense he was then glorified, as a divine person; not that any new additional glory was, or could be made to him as such; but there was an illustrious manifestation of his natural, essential, and original glory; he was declared to be the Son of God with power, by his resurrection from the dead: the next step of his high exaltation was his ascending on high up to the third

heaven, where he is made higher than the heavens; when he was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after his resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, the seat of the devils, he led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on his cross; and then entering into heaven, he sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of his exaltation; and shows that he had done his work, and that it was approved and accepted of; and had that glory and honour bestowed on him, which never was on any mere creature, angels or men, to sit down on the right hand of the Majesty on high; which as it is the highest pitch of the exaltation of the human nature of Christ, so by it there is a most illustrious display of the glory of his divine person as the Son of God; who was with God, as one brought up with him from all eternity; and was so likewise when here on earth, but not so manifestly; but now he is openly and manifestly glorified with himself, with that glory he had with him before the world began: moreover, Christ's exaltation lies in his having the gifts of the Spirit without measure, to bestow on his ministers and churches, in all succeeding generations, for the carrying on of his interest, and the enlargement of his kingdom; in having all power in heaven and in earth, to complete his work and great designs; in having dominion and authority over all creatures and things, which are made to be subservient to the execution of his mediatorial office; and in having the right and power of judging the world at the last day, when there will still be a more glorious display of his eternal deity and divine sonship; for he will come in his Father's glory, and in his own, and with his holy angels: now the causes of Christ's exaltation are these: the efficient cause is God; though he made himself of no reputation, and humbled himself, these were voluntary acts of his own; yet he did not exalt himself, but God exalted him, even God the Father; with him the covenant of grace and redemption was made, in which glory was promised Christ, in consideration of his obedience, sufferings, and death; and which he prayed to him for, and pleaded for with him, having done his work; and which exaltation of Christ is always ascribed to God, even the Father; (see <sup>423</sup>Acts 2:33 3:13 5:31); the impulsive or moving cause, and indeed the meritorious cause, were the humiliation of Christ; because he, though he was originally so great and glorious, yet made himself as it were nothing, humbled himself to become man, and was contented to be accounted a mere man, and went up and down in the form of a servant; and because he became so cheerfully obedient to the whole

law, and to death itself, for the sake of his people, and out of love to them, “therefore” God exalted him: the exaltation of Christ was not only a consequence of his obedience and death, and his humiliation merely the way to his glory; but his high and exalted estate were the reward of all this; it was what was promised him in covenant, what was then agreed upon, what he expected and pleaded, and had as a recompense of reward, in consideration of his having glorified God on earth, and finished the work he undertook to do: it follows as an instance of the exaltation of Christ,

*and [hath] given him a name which is above every name.* The Syriac version renders it, “which is more excellent than every name”; and the Arabic version translates it, “which is more eminent than every name”; and the Ethiopic version thus, “which is greater than every name”: by which is meant, not any particular and peculiar name by which he is called; not the name of God, for though this is his name, the mighty God, and so is even the incommunicable name Jehovah, and which may be truly said to be every name; but neither of these are given him, but what he has by nature; and besides were what he had before his exaltation in human nature: it is true indeed, upon that this name of his became more illustrious and manifest unto men; it is a more clear point, that he is God over all blessed for evermore; and it will still be more manifest at his glorious appearing, that he is the great God, as well as our Saviour: to which may be added, that the name Jehovah in the plate of gold on the high priest's forehead, was set above the other word; so says Maimonides <sup>f12</sup>,

“the plate of gold was two fingers broad, and it reached from ear to ear; and there was written upon it two lines, “holiness to the Lord”; **çdq**, “holiness”, was written below, and **hl [ml m hwhyl]**, “to the Lord”, or “to Jehovah”, above:”

whether here may not be an allusion to this, I leave to be considered: nor do I think that the name of the Son of God is meant; this is indeed a name of Christ, and a more excellent one than either angels or men have; for he is in such sense the Son of God, as neither of them are; but this is a name also which he has by nature, and is what he had before his exaltation; and was before this attested by his Father, and confessed by angels, men, and devils; though indeed upon his exaltation, he was declared more manifestly to be the Son of God, as he will be yet more clearly in his kingdom and glory: much less is the name Jesus intended, which was given him by the angel before his conception and birth, and was a name common to men

among the Jews; but it seems to design such fame and renown, honour, glory, and dignity, as were never given unto, and bestowed upon creatures; as his rising from the dead as a public person, his ascending on high in the manner he did, his session at the right hand of God, his investiture with all gifts, power, dominion, authority, and with the judgment of the world; and whatever name of greatness there is among men or angels, Christ has that which is superior to it. Was a priest a name of honour and dignity among the Jews? Christ is not only a priest, and an high priest, but a great high priest; a priest not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek, (<sup><3071></sup>Hebrews 7:11), and a greater than he himself. Is a king a great name among men? Christ has on his vesture and on his thigh a name written, King of kings, and Lord of lords. Is a deliverer of a nation a title of great honour? Christ is exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour of men of all nations; nor is there any other name but his, that is given among men, whereby we must be saved. Is a mediator between warring princes and kingdoms accounted a name of greatness and glory? Christ is the one only Mediator between God and man, and of a new and better covenant. Are angels, seraphim, cherubim, thrones, dominions, principalities, and powers, great names in the other world? Christ is the Angel of God's presence, an eternal one, the Angel of the covenant, the head of all principality and power. These are all subject to him, and he is set at God's right hand far above them.

**Ver. 10.** *That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow*, etc.] Which is to be understood, not of the outward act of bowing the knee upon hearing the name, and the syllables of the mere name Jesus pronounced; for in the bare name there can be nothing which can command such a peculiar respect; it was a name common with the Jews: Joshua is so called in (<sup><3043></sup>Hebrews 4:8); and the name of Elymas the sorcerer was Barjesus: that is, the son of Jesus, (<sup><4136></sup>Acts 13:6); Now, how monstrously ridiculous and stupid would it be, for a man, upon hearing these passages, and upon the pronouncing of this word, to bow the knee? Moreover, the words ought not to be rendered at, but “in the name of Jesus”; that is, in and by reason of the power, authority, and dignity of Jesus, as exalted at God's right hand, every creature is to be subject to him: add to this, that there are several creatures included in the following account, who, in a corporeal sense, have not knees to bow with, as angels, the souls of men departed, and devils; and therefore an external corporeal bowing of the knee cannot



be meant. The Jews indeed, upon hearing the name Jehovah pronounced by the high priest, in the holy of holies, used to bow: they say<sup>f13</sup>,

“that the priests, and the people, that stand in the court, when they hear Shemhamphorash (i.e. the name “Jehovah”) pronounced by the high priest, מַיְ[רַוְכַּ וַיִּהַ, “bowed”, and worshipped, and fell upon their faces, and said, blessed be the name of the glory of his kingdom, for ever and ever:”

though it can hardly be thought there is any reference to this here. But inasmuch as this action is a token of reverence, worship; and subjection, it is used for those things themselves; and the sense is, that Christ is exalted as before described, that every creature may give him reverence, worship, and adoration, submit and be subject to him, as all do, and shall, either freely or forcedly. Some really and heartily trust in his name, are baptized in his name, and ascribe honour, and glory, and blessing to him from their whole hearts; and others feignedly, and whether they will or not, are subject to him, and sooner or later shall acknowledge his authority over them: and he shall be owned to be Lord

*of [things] in heaven:* the angels there, and the souls of departed saints, with those who are already clothed with their bodies:

*and [things] in earth;* both good men, and bad men:

*and [things] under the earth;* or “in the abyss”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; meaning either the devils in the bottomless pit; or rather the dead bodies of men in the grave, which shall come forth and stand before the judgment seat of Christ.

**Ver. 11.** *And [that] every tongue should confess,* etc.] Whether of angels or men, or of men of whatsoever nation. Confession is either true and hearty, as when the mouth and heart agree in confessing, and which is made only by true believers; or verbal only, or in mere outward form, and by force, as in hypocrites, wicked men, and devils themselves; who all either have confessed, or will confess,

*that Jesus Christ [is] Lord:* the holy angels confess him to be Lord, and their Lord truly, and are unfeignedly subject to him; and true believers heartily own him as their Lord, and cheerfully submit to his commands and ordinances; and the foolish virgins, and the goats on Christ's left hand, will,

at the last day, call him Lord, Lord; and the worst of men, yea, even devils, will be obliged to own his lordship and dominion; which will be

*to the glory of God the Father.* The Syriac reads, “his Father”, who has chose and constituted him as the Mediator, invested him with his office, ordained him to be Judge of quick and dead, and given him all power and authority, and exalted him at his own right hand; so he that honoureth the Son, honoureth the Father also. The Vulgate Latin version renders the words, “because the Lord Jesus Christ is in the glory of God the Father”: being in the form of God, of the same nature and essence with him, and equal to him; as he will appear to be at his second coming, for then he will come in the glory of his Father.

**Ver. 12.** *Wherefore, my beloved,* etc.] This is an inference from the instance and example of Christ; that since he, who was God over all, blessed for ever, made himself so low in human nature, in which he is now so highly exalted, having done the work and business he came about with such condescension, humility, and meekness; therefore it becomes those who profess to be his followers, to do all their affairs as men and Christians, with, and among one another, in all lowliness of mind. The apostle calls the saints here, “my beloved”, he having a strong affection for them, which he frequently expresses in this epistle; and he chooses to make use of such an endearing appellation, that it might be observed, that what he was about to say to them sprung from pure love to them, and a hearty desire for their welfare, and from no other end, and with no other view; and to encourage them to go on in a course of humble duty, he commends them for their former obedience,

*as ye have always obeyed;* not “me”, as the Arabic and Ethiopic versions supply; but either God, acting according to his revealed will, they had knowledge of; or Christ, by receiving him as prophet, priest, and King, by submitting to his righteousness, and the sceptre of his grace; or the Gospel, by embracing the truths of it, professing them, and abiding in them, and by subjecting to the ordinances of it, and doing all things whatsoever Christ has commanded: and this they did “always”; they were always abounding in the works of the Lord, doing his will; they abode by Christ, and continued steadfastly in his doctrines, and kept the ordinances as they were delivered to them, and walked in all the commandments of the Lord blameless.

*Not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence;* which clause may either be referred to the foregoing, which expresses their

obedience; and so signifies that that was carefully and cheerfully performed, not only while the apostle was with them, but now when he was absent from them, and much more when absent than present:; which shows, that they were not eye servants, and menpleasers, but what they did they did sincerely and heartily, as to the Lord: or to the following exhortation, that they would attend to it; not only as they had done when he was among them, of which he was witness, but that they would much more do so now he was absent from them, namely,

*work out your own salvation with fear and trembling*; which is to be understood not in such a sense as though men could obtain and procure for themselves spiritual and eternal salvation by their own works and doings; for such a sense is contrary to the Scriptures, which deny any part of salvation, as election, justification, and calling, and the whole of it to be of works, but ascribe it to the free grace of God; and is also repugnant to the perfections of God, as his wisdom, grace, and righteousness; for where are the wisdom and love of God, in forming a scheme of salvation, and sending his Son to effect it, and after all it is left to men to work it out for themselves? and where is the justice of God in admitting of an imperfect righteousness in the room of a perfect one, which must be the case, if salvation is obtained by men's works? for these are imperfect, even the best of them; and is another reason against this sense of the passage; and were they perfect, they could not be meritorious of salvation, for the requisites of merits are wanting in them. Moreover, was salvation to be obtained by the works of men, these consequences would follow; the death of Christ would be in vain, boasting would be encouraged in men, they would have whereof to glory, and their obligations to obedience taken from the love of God, and redemption by Christ, would be weakened and destroyed: add to all this, that the Scriptures assure us, that salvation is alone by Christ; and that it is already finished by him, and not to be wrought out now by him, or any other; and that such is the weakness and impotence of men, even of believers, to whom this exhortation is directed, that it is impossible for them ever to affect it; therefore, whatever sense these words have, we may be sure that this can never possibly be the sense of them. The words may be rendered, "work about your salvation"; employ yourselves in things which accompany salvation, and to be performed by all those that expect it, though not to be expected for the performance of them; such as hearing of the word, submission to Gospel ordinances, and a discharge of every branch of moral, spiritual, and evangelical obedience for which the apostle

before commends them, and now exhorts them to continue in; to go on in a course of cheerful obedience to the close of their days, believing in Christ, obeying his Gospel, attending constantly to his word and ordinances, and discharging every duty in faith and fear, until at last they should receive the end of their faith, the salvation of their souls: agreeably the Syriac version renders the words, *˘wkyyj d anj l wp wj wl p*, “do the work”, or “business of your lives”; the work you are to do in your generation, which God has prescribed and directed you to, which the grace of God teaches, and the love of Christ constrains to. Do all that “with fear and trembling”; not with a slavish fear of hell and damnation, or lest they should fall away, or finally miscarry of heaven and happiness; since this would be a distrust of the power and faithfulness of God, and so criminal in them; nor is it reasonable to suppose, that the apostle would exhort to such a fear, when he himself was so confidently assured, that the good work begun in them would be performed; and besides, the exhortation would be very oddly formed, if this was the sense, “work out your salvation with fear” of damnation: but this fear and trembling spoken of, is such as is consistent with the highest acts of faith, trust, confidence, and joy, and is opposed to pride and vain glory; (see <sup><3011></sup>Psalm 2:11 115:11 <sup><5112></sup>Romans 11:20); and intends modesty and humility, which is what the apostle is pressing for throughout the whole context; and here urges to a cheerful and constant obedience to Christ, with all humility of soul, without dependence on it, or vain glorying in it, but ascribing it wholly to the grace of God, for the following reason.

**Ver. 13.** *For it is God which worketh in you*, etc.] Which is both an encouragement to persons conscious of their own weakness to work, as before exhorted to; (see <sup><3011></sup>Haggai 2:4); and a reason and argument for humility and meekness, and against pride and vain glory, since all we have, and do, is from God; and also points out the spring, principle, and foundation of all good works; namely, the grace of God wrought in the heart, which is an internal work, and purely the work of God: by this men become the workmanship of God, created unto good works, (<sup><4110></sup>Ephesians 2:10), and are new men, and fitted for the performance of acts of righteousness, and true holiness; and this grace, which God works in them, is wrought in a powerful and efficacious manner, so as not to be frustrated and made void. The word here used signifies an inward, powerful, and efficacious operation; and the “king's manuscript”, mentioned by Grotius and Hammond, adds another word to it, which makes the sense still stronger, reading it thus, “which worketh in you”, *δυναμει*, “by power”;

not by moral persuasion, but by his own power, the power of his efficacious grace. The Alexandrian copy reads, *δυναμεις*, “powers”, or “mighty works”: God works in his people

*both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure*; God works in converted men a will to that which is spiritually good; which is to be understood, not of the formation of the natural faculty of the will; or of the preservation of it, and its natural liberty; or of the general motion of it to natural objects; nor of his influence on it in a providential way; but of the making of it good, and causing a willingness in it to that which is spiritually good. Men have no will naturally to come to Christ, or to have him to reign over them; they have no desire, nor hungerings and thirstings after his righteousness and salvation; wherever there are any such inclinations and desires, they are wrought in men by God; who works upon the stubborn and inflexible will, and, without any force to it, makes the soul willing to be saved by Christ, and submit to his righteousness, and do his will; he sweetly and powerfully draws it with the cords of love to himself, and to his Son, and so influences it by his grace and spirit, and which he continues, that it freely wills everything spiritually good, and for the glory of God: and he works in them also “do”; for there is sometimes in believers a will, when there wants a power of doing. God therefore both implants in them principles of action to work from, as faith and love, and a regard for his glory, and gives them grace and strength to work with, without which they can do nothing, but having these, can do all things: and all this is “of [his] good pleasure”; the word “his” not being in the original text, some have taken the liberty to ascribe this to the will of man; and so the Syriac version renders it, “both to will and to do that”, *wtna ybx d*, “which ye will”, or according to your good will; but such a sense is both bad and senseless; for if they have a good will of themselves, what occasion is there for God to work one in them? no; these internal operations of divine power and grace are not owing to the will of men, nor to any merits of theirs, or are what God is obliged to do, but what flow from his sovereign will and pleasure; who works when, where, and as he pleases, and that for his own glory; and who continues to do so in the hearts of his people; otherwise, notwithstanding the work of grace in them, they would find very little inclination to, and few and faint desires after spiritual things; and less strength to do what is spiritually good; but God of his good pleasure goes on working what is well pleasing in his sight.

**Ver. 14.** *Do all things*, etc.] Not evil things, these are to be abhorred, shunned, and avoided, even all appearance of them, they are not to be done, even the sake of good; nor all indifferent things at all times, and under all circumstances, when the peace and edification of others are in danger of being hurt by so doing; but all good things, all that are agreeable to the righteous law and good will of God; all those good things which accompany salvation, as hearing the word, and attendance on ordinances: all church affairs relating to public worship, private conference, everything at church meetings, and which concern the discipline and laws of Christ's house; and all things that are civilly, morally, spiritually, and evangelically good; even all things that God would have done, or we would desire should be done to us by fellow creatures and fellow Christians: let all these be done

*without murmurings*; either against God and Christ, as if anything hard and severe was enjoined, when Christ's yoke is easy, and his burden light, (<sup>(4113)</sup>Matthew 11:30), and none of his commands grievous; and because their presence is not always enjoyed, and that communion and comfort in ordinances had, which may be desired: or against the ministers of the Gospel, in whose power it is not to give grace, comfort, and spiritual refreshment; any more than it was in Moses and Aaron to give bread and water to the Israelites in the wilderness, for which they murmured against them, and in so doing against God himself, (<sup>(4112)</sup>Exodus 16:2,7); or against one another, because of superior enjoyment in nature, providence, and grace; but all things, both of a moral, civil, and religious nature, with respect to God, and one another, should be done readily, freely, cheerfully, and heartily; and also without

*disputings*; or “without hesitations”, as the Vulgate Latin, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions render it. Whatever appears to be agreeable to the will of God, should be done at once without dispute upon it, or hesitation about it, however disagreeable it may be to carnal sense and reason; the will of God is not to be disputed, nor flesh and blood to be consulted, in opposition to it; nor should the saints enter into any carnal reasonings, and contentious disputations, either at their public or private meetings, but do all they do decently, and in order, and in the exercise of brotherly love.

**Ver. 15.** *That ye may be blameless*, etc.] This, and what follows, show the end to be answered, by observing the above exhortation. This respects not their being blameless in the sight of God, which the saints are not in

themselves, being not without sin, though they are, as considered in Christ, clothed with his righteousness, and washed in his blood; but their being blameless before men: and this may be understood both actively and passively; actively, that they might be without blaming others; some are so unhappy in their disposition and conduct, as to be always finding fault with, and blaming all persons they are concerned with, and all things in them, and done by them, right or wrong, without any just reason; and this ought not to be, and may be prevented by doing all things, as before directed: or passively, that they might not be blamed by others justly; for no man can escape the blame and censure of everyone; our Lord himself did not, nor this our apostle; but doing, as before exhorted to, will, in a great measure, preclude any just reason for blame and complaint: it is added,

*and harmless*; that is, that they might be, and appear to be so; harmless as doves, in imitation of Christ, who was holy in his nature, and harmless in his conversation, as his followers should be; doing no injury to any man's person or property, behaving in an inoffensive manner to all men, to Jew and Gentile, and to the church of God: it follows,

*the sons of God*; not that they might be sons by so doing; but be “as the sons of God”, as the Syriac version renders it, be like them, and behave as such; for they were the sons of God already; not by creation only, as angels, and all men are, not merely by profession of religion, but by adopting grace; they were predestinated to the adoption of children, and were taken into this relation in the covenant of grace, Christ had redeemed them from under the law, that they might receive this blessing, and it was actually bestowed upon them by him in conversion: but the sense is, that they might appear to be the children of God, by acting as becomes such; not that they might appear so to themselves, for they were openly and manifestly to themselves the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus, and through the testimony of the Spirit, witnessing to their spirits that they were in such a relation to God; but that they might appear so to others, that they were the adopted sons of God, and also begotten again by him, and made partakers of the divine nature; by their being followers of God as dear children, and by their being obedient ones to him in all holiness and godly conversation, yielding a ready and cheerful obedience to his will, without repining at it, or disputing about it; and to be

*without rebuke*; not without the rebuke of their heavenly Father, for whom he loves he rebukes, and every son that he receives into his family he



scourges and chastises, not in wrath and anger, or with rebukes of fury, but of love; but without the rebuke of men, both of the churches and ministers of Christ, whose business it is to reprove and rebuke, publicly and privately, as cases and their circumstances require; and of the men of the world, who when they have any occasion, make use of it to speak reproachfully, as a railing Rabshakeh did, when it is a time of rebuke and blasphemy, and to be shunned and guarded against as much possible: especially since the saints live

*in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation:* or age and generation, as every age is; saints are like lilies in the valleys, liable to be trampled upon by the foot of every wild beast; like roses among thorns, to be scratched and torn; and like Lots in the midst of Sodom, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: the whole world lies in sin, and the saints are enclosed on every side with wicked men. Philippi, where these saints lived, was a place of wickedness, and so no doubt was the whole region of Macedonia; the inhabitants were evil for the most part; their ways were crooked, and their works perverse, being contrary to the law of God, and Gospel of Christ; and therefore the following exhortation to the saints there was very suitable.

*Among whom ye shine;* or “shine ye”, as it may be rendered,

*as lights in the world.* This world is, in a moral sense, what the original chaos was in a natural sense, covered with darkness; the darkness of ignorance and unbelief, of impiety and superstition, has spread itself over the far greater part of the world; the men of it are children of the night, and of darkness; their works are works of darkness, and they are going on in darkness, not knowing where they are going. The saints are the lights of the world, they were once darkness itself, but are made light in and by the Lord; they are called into marvellous light, and are filled with light spiritual and evangelical; they are like the moon and stars, that give light to the world in the night; and as they receive their light from the sun, and communicate it to the world, so do the saints receive theirs from Christ, the sun of righteousness, and show it forth to others, both by doctrine and practice: or rather the churches of Christ are as candlesticks, in which the light of the Gospel is put, and held forth to men, as follows, (see ~~4054~~ Matthew 5:14-16).

**Ver. 16.**  *Holding forth the word of life,* etc.] By which may be meant, either Christ the essential Word, in whom life was, and is, and who is called

the quick or living Word, (~~<B001>~~John 1:1,4 ~~<S042>~~Hebrews 4:12); and here may be styled the Word of life, because he has all life in him; he has a divine life in him, as God, he is the living God; and it is given to him to have life in himself, as Mediator, for all his people; and he ever lives as man to make intercession for them: and because he is the author of life in every sense, of natural life to all men, of spiritual and eternal life to as many as the Father has given him: or else the Gospel is intended, and the doctrines of it; and which are sometimes called the words of eternal life, and of this life, (~~<B118>~~John 6:68 ~~<A151>~~Acts 5:20); and that because they are a means of quickening dead sinners, they are a savour of life unto life, (~~<A116>~~2 Corinthians 2:16), and the Spirit that giveth life, and of enlivening and comforting living saints; they treat of Christ who is the life; by the Gospel, life and immortality are brought to light; that gives an account of everlasting life; points out Christ as the way to it, shows that meetness for it lies in regenerating grace, and a right unto it is in the righteousness of Christ. Now this Word of life is held forth, partly by the preaching of it to a dark world, as by some; and partly by professing it publicly, as it should be by all who are enlightened with it; and also by living lives and conversations becoming and suitable to it.

*That I may rejoice in the day of Christ.* The apostle having observed the advantages that would accrue to themselves, and the benefit they might be of to the men of the world, by regarding the several exhortations he had given them, and which ends he mentions as reasons and arguments to enforce them, closes with taking notice of the use and service it would be to himself; it would give him joy and pleasure when Christ should come a second time to judge the world; and when dead in Christ would be raised, and set at his right hand, and these among the rest, to whom the apostle had been useful; and who continued to bear an honourable testimony in the world to Christ, and his Gospel, to the end:

*that I have not run in vain, nor laboured in vain;* being blessed with such converts under his ministry, as were a credit to religion, an honour to the Gospel, and a crown of rejoicing to him. He expresses his ministerial function, and the discharge of it, by running in a race, as the ministry of a person is sometimes called his course, (~~<A135>~~Acts 13:25 20:24 ~~<S041>~~2 Timothy 4:7); in allusion to the Olympic games, which the apostle often refers to, when the conqueror obtained a crown; and it was enough for our apostle, and a crown of rejoicing to him, that his spiritual children walked in the truth, and as became it, to the end: and also by labour, and hard service, as

the ministerial work is, when faithfully performed; and especially as his was, which was attended with so many difficulties, and yet with such constancy, diligence, and indefatigableness, all which was not in vain; and he could look back upon it with pleasure, when his followers stood fast in the faith, and adorned the doctrine of Christ.

**Ver. 17.** *Yea, and if I be offered*, etc.] Or “poured out”, as the drink offerings of wine or oil were; meaning the effusion of his blood, which he compares to a libation, or drink offering, which was poured upon the sacrifice; and the laying down of his life for the sake of Christ, and his Gospel: which he knew not how soon might be, though he was in some hopes of a deliverance for the present, and therefore speaks of it in an hypothetical way: yet he expected it sooner or later; and that whenever it was, it would be as the libation upon the offering.

*Upon the sacrifice and service of your faith*; he had been the means of bringing them to the faith of Christ, in which they were an offering acceptable to God, being sanctified by the Holy Ghost; (see <sup><516></sup>Romans 15:16); and should he suffer and shed his blood in the cause of Christ, it would be as a libation on them, as a sacrifice; it would be for the sake of preaching the doctrine of faith, by which they were brought to believe on Christ; and it would be for the further confirmation of their faith, and as a drink offering acceptable unto God; upon all which accounts it would be matter of joy to him.

*I joy and rejoice with you all*; meaning at his sufferings and death, and the advantages thereof to Christ, to his churches, and to himself.

**Ver. 18.** *For the same cause also do ye joy and rejoice with me*.] He would not have them be sorrowful, should they hear of his death for the sake of the Gospel, and of his blood being poured out in such a cause, since it was as a libation on their faith, and for the confirmation of it, and would be gain to Christ, and his interest, and to the apostle also: and therefore they should be so far from indulging grief and sorrow on that account, that they should rather joy and rejoice with him, who was ready to be offered up, or poured out; since he had run out his race, and that not in vain, but to so good a purpose, and especially among them.

**Ver. 19.** *But I trust in the Lord Jesus*, etc.] Or “hope”; not in himself, his wisdom, will, resolutions, and purposes; nor in an arm of flesh, in any human aid and power; nor in princes, nor in Nero, the Roman emperor, as

expecting a release from bonds by him, when he could the more easily part with Timothy; but in the Lord Jesus, in the Lord whom every tongue shall confess to be so; and in that Jesus, in whose name every knee shall bow; who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, and the only Saviour and Deliverer of his people; who has the hearts of all men in his hands, and all power in heaven and in earth: he hoped and trusted, that through the goodness and power of Christ, opening a way for him, he should be able

*to send Timotheus shortly unto you*; one that had known the Scriptures from his youth, and was very early converted to the Christian faith, was an eminent preacher of the Gospel, and well known to the Philippians. The apostle hoped to send him to them “shortly”, in a very little time; this he said in order to encourage them, and thereby suggesting, that he thought his own deliverance was at hand: this hope did not arise from a sure and certain persuasion of the thing, but from love to these saints; he had a very great affection for them; he knew that a Gospel minister, and particularly Timothy, would be of great comfort and service to them; wherefore, from that love which hopes all things, he hoped he should, in a short time, be able to serve them in love that way: the end he proposed in it is next expressed,

*that I also may be of good comfort when I know your state*; not their worldly estate, their secular affairs, and whether they prospered in their trades and business, and increased in riches; nor their corporeal estate, or state of health, and whether they prospered in their bodies, not but that the knowledge of each of these would be welcome to the apostle; nor everyone's personal spiritual estate, what was the particular case and state of each member; for though it is the business of a pastor of a church to look diligently to the state of his flock, and learn the case of every particular member, the apostle could not be thought to come at such an exact knowledge of things, who had the care of all the churches upon him; but their ecclesiastical state, their church state in general; how the Gospel stood with them, and they in that; whether they held it fast, and strove for it, and what ground the false teachers got among them; how the ordinances of the Gospel were regarded and attended on by them; with what life and light, and liberty and zeal, their ministers preached the word; and what success they had to the conversion of sinners, and comfort of saints; and how they behaved towards them, in honouring, obeying, and submitting to them, and esteeming them highly for their works' sake; what an increase of gifts, grace, and numbers there was among them; and what harmony, love,

peace, and concord subsisted between them; and what afflictions and persecutions they endured for the sake of Christ; and with what patience, faith, and cheerfulness they bore them. By the return of Timothy he hoped to have knowledge of these things, that so he might “also be of good comfort”; as they would be by the coming of Timothy to them, by his preaching among them, and relating to them the case and circumstances of the apostle, how cheerful he was under his afflictions, and of what use they were to the cause of Christ. The comfort and pleasure of Gospel ministers lie in the good of the churches of Christ; it puts them in good heart and soul, as the word here used signifies, when they hear of their steadfastness in the faith of Christ, of their love to one another, and all the saints, and of their patience under sufferings.

**Ver. 20.** *For I have no man likeminded,* etc.] With myself; as my soul, so the Syriac version renders it. Timothy had a soul like the apostle's, which none that were with him, besides him, had; he was of the same judgment with him in the doctrines of grace; he received and preached the same Gospel as he did; he preached the same Christ, the Son of God, without yea and nay; he had the same affection for the apostle, and the souls of men, as he had; his soul was knit to his, and they had, as it were, but one soul in two bodies; he was engaged in the same work of the Lord, and pursued it with the same zeal and diligence: he was a second Paul in the pulpit; and there was no man likeminded as he, or so well disposed to the Philippians as he was, that had their good and cause at heart, and was willing to take so long a journey to do them service; for he had a particular affection for them, having been among them with the apostle, when he first preached the Gospel to them:

*who will naturally care for your state.* There were none like him that would; many were like the shepherds of Israel, that fed themselves and not the flock; but he was one that was diligent to know the state of the flock, and looked well to the herd under his care; and had an anxious care and solicitude, as the word signifies, for the good of souls. The work of a faithful Gospel minister is a work of care; one of his characteristics is, that he cares for the church of God; and though anxious care in worldly things is forbidden, yet in the affairs of Christ's house it is highly commendable, and especially when it is natural, or genuine and sincere, as Timothy's was: he had a sincere love, an hearty and real concern for their good; and which he would show by delivering to them the sincere milk of the word, by preaching the Gospel in the power and purity of it, with all sincerity and

uprightness, with a single eye to the glory of Christ, and the good of their souls; and which is the apostle's reason for sending him unto them.

**Ver. 21.** *For all seek their own*, etc.] Meaning not every individual, but the greatest part; and not merely such as were manifestly false teachers, but such as were with the apostle, as ministers of the word; and we may suppose him to be stripped, by one means or another, of the more valuable preachers of the Gospel, and to be in much such a case as he describes himself to be, in (<sup>540D</sup>2 Timothy 4:10-12). He had none with him, excepting a very few, but such as he speaks of in the preceding chapter, that preached Christ of envy, strife, and contention; and these chiefly sought their own worldly interest and advantage; they sought great things for themselves, and looked every man for his gain from his quarter, Demas like, loving this present world, (<sup>540D</sup>2 Timothy 4:10); they sought for dominion and authority over men, and their faith, to lord it over God's heritage, as Diotrophes, who loved to have the preeminence, (<sup>640D</sup>3 John 1:9); they sought for popular applause, for honour and glory of men, as the Pharisees of old did; and particularly their own ease and health, and did not choose to undertake such a fatiguing journey as from Rome to Philippi:

*not the things which are Jesus Christ*; they had no true regard to the Gospel of Christ, to the continuance, establishment, and spread of it in the world, or in any particular place; nor any hearty affection for the ordinances of Christ, and the retaining and preserving of them in their purity and simplicity; nor for the churches of Christ, and their spiritual good and welfare, as the Jews formerly, they cared not if the house of God lay waste, provided they dwelt in their ceiled houses; nor had they any concern for the honour and glory of Christ. But Timothy was a man of a quite different spirit and complexion; and which is another reason of the apostle's sending him to this place and people.

**Ver. 22.** *But ye know the proof of him*, etc.] They had had an experiment of him, a trial of his spirit, and a proof of his gifts and ministry, when he was among them with the apostle at his first preaching the Gospel to them, to the conversion of Lydia, and of the jailer, and their households, which laid the foundation of a Gospel church state among them, (see <sup>440B</sup>Acts 16:3,12). The Vulgate Latin version reads in the imperative, “know ye the proof of him”; but the former reading is to be preferred:

*that as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the Gospel*; he served not the apostle, but with him; he served God as the apostle did, in

the Gospel of his Son; he served Jesus Christ, whose Gospel he preached, the interest and spread of which he greatly laboured in with him, as a fellow servant or work fellow; (see ~~612~~Romans 16:21); which expresses the modesty of the apostle, and the great honour put upon Timothy, and which was not abused by him; for as a son honours, obeys, and imitates his father, so did he honour the apostle, and give him all respect and reverence that was due to him on account of his office, age, and usefulness; and obeyed his orders cheerfully, going wherever he sent him, and doing whatever he bid him; and imitated him in his ministry, in his constancy, diligence, and zeal, having a true filial affection for him.

**Ver. 23.** *Him therefore I hope to send presently*, etc.] For the reasons now given:

*so soon as I shall see how it will go with me*; whether he should be released from his bonds or not; whether he should live or die; whether he should be set free, or be called to suffer martyrdom for the sake of Christ; for he expected, that the matter would be determined in a very short time, when, be it at it would, Timothy would be spared.

**Ver. 24.** *But I trust in the Lord*, etc.] The Syriac version reads, “in my Lord”:

*that I also myself shall come shortly*: this he adds, partly to let them see, that he still retained a secret hope and persuasion in his own mind of a deliverance, though he could not be certain of it, how things would go with him; and partly, that he might not be thought to put them off with sending Timothy to them; for notwithstanding that, his intention still was, should he be released, to pay them a visit himself. The Alexandrian copy adds, “to you”: so the Vulgate Latin, Syriac, and Arabic versions.

**Ver. 25.** *Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus*, etc.] In the mean while, before either he or Timothy could come to them. This man was sent by the Philippians to the apostle with a present, and had been detained at Rome for some time, partly through business, and partly through sickness; but now the apostle thought it proper, he being recovered, to send him to them, who was one of their ministers. One of this name lived at Rome about this time, and was one of Nero's freemen<sup>f14</sup>, but not the same person here intended. This person has a very high character. The apostle calls him,



*my brother*; not in a natural relation, or as being his countryman, and so according to a way of speaking with the Jews, and himself, his brother and kinsman according to the flesh; for by his name and country he seems to be a Greek; but in a spiritual relation, being born again of the same Father, belonging to the same household and family, and also a brother in the ministry, as it follows:

*and companion in labour*; in the laborious work of preaching the Gospel. The ministry of the word is a work; it is called the work of the ministry; and it is a laborious one when diligently and faithfully performed: the apostle was a workman that needed not to be ashamed, a labourer in Christ's vineyard, and one that laboured more abundantly than others; and he was not alone, he had companions in his work, and this good man was one of them: he adds,

*and fellow soldier*; the life of every believer is a warfare; he is always engaged in a war with sin, and Satan, and the world; and is often called to fight the fight of faith, to contend earnestly against false teachers for the faith once delivered to the saints, to stand up for it, and fast in it; and is provided for with the whole armour of God, with weapons of warfare, which are not carnal, but spiritual and mighty, being enlisted as a volunteer under the great Captain of his salvation, Jesus Christ, under whose banner he fights, and is more than a conqueror through him: but though this is the common case and character of all the saints, it more especially belongs to ministers of the Gospel; who are set for the defence of it, and at the front of the battle, and are called to meet the enemy at the gate, and endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ; and such an one was the apostle; and he had other fellow soldiers, and this person among the rest, who were engaged in the same common cause with the same enemies, under the same Captain, and would enjoy the same crown:

*but your messenger*; or “apostle”; meaning either that he was the pastor of them, a preacher to them, a minister among them; for ordinary ministers of the word were sometimes called apostles, as well as extraordinary ones, (see [Romans 16:7](#)); or rather, that he was their messenger to him, to relieve, comfort, and assist him in his bonds; and such persons were called the messengers of the churches, ([2 Corinthians 8:23](#)), which sense is strengthened by what follows:

*and he that ministered to my wants*: to his personal wants in prison, and to the wants of the poor saints, which the apostle reckoned as his own, and

which he used to supply; but now not able; and to his ministerial wants, filling up his place in preaching the Gospel to the saints at Rome.

**Ver. 26.** *For he longed after you*, etc.] This verse and (~~scribes~~ Philippians 2:28) contain the reasons of the apostle's sending him; and the first is, because he had a very vehement and longing desire after all of them; to see them, as the Syriac and Ethiopic versions add, and as it is read in the Alexandrian and Claromontane copies, and in others: it was not the city of Philippi he longed to see, which might be his native place, nor his natural relations and family, but the church there; and not the officers of it only, the bishops and deacons, but all the members of it, rich and poor, high and low, strong and weak believers:

*and was full of heaviness*: almost pressed down, quite disheartened and dispirited, ready to sink and die away, not so much with his own disorder and illness, as with sorrow on account of the church at Philippi:

*because that ye had heard that he had been sick*: he understood that the news of his sickness had reached them, and he knew how distressing it would be to them, that it would cut them to the heart, and press them heavily, fearing they should never see his face, nor hear his voice more. We have here an instance of that mutual love, tender affection and sympathy; which were in the first churches, and what subsisted between ministers and people; see how they loved one another! but, alas! this first love is left.

**Ver. 27.** *For indeed he was sick nigh unto death*, etc.] It was not a mere rumour, or a false alarm, but was real matter of fact; and it was not a light disorder, a slight indisposition, but a very dangerous illness; though the sickness was not unto death, yet near it. Good men, such as Christ loves, as he did Lazarus, are sometimes sick; though their spiritual diseases are healed, and their sins forgiven, so that the inhabitants of Zion have no more reason to say that they are sick, since Christ has took their infirmities, and bore their sickness, yet they are not exempt from bodily disorders; and which are sometimes such as bring them to the brink of the grave, and, as it were, to the gates of death; and such was this good man's case:

*but God had mercy on him*: his disorder was such as was out of the reach of man; his recovery was not by man, but by God, and owing to his power, mercy, and goodness; and indeed, whenever means are made rise of, and they succeed to the restoration of health, it ought to be ascribed to the divine blessing on them. The raising up of this man is reckoned as an

instance of mercy to him; as it was the removing of a grievous affliction, a return of him to his delightful work of the ministry, and the continuation of an useful life for the good of others; and so a mercy to him, and to the churches of Christ, and to the apostle also: who adds,

*and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow*: one affliction added to another; the death of this brother of his to his bonds: moreover the sickness of this companion of his filled him with sorrow: and had he died, it would have greatly increased it, and which would have had a fresh addition by the loss this church would sustain, and the grief and trouble they would be overwhelmed with: grace, and the doctrine of grace, though they regulate the passions, and restrain them from immoderate sorrow, they do not destroy them, nor deny the proper use of them. Christianity does not countenance a stoical apathy, but requires and encourages a Christian sympathy, and directs us to weep with them that weep within due bounds.

**Ver. 28.** *I sent him therefore the more carefully*, etc.] Or in greater haste, and as soon as possible:

*that when ye see him again ye may rejoice*; for this must greatly increase their joy, to see him again after he had been so long from them, and under such a disorder, which had made them to fear they should never see him more. The Syriac version renders it, “that when ye see him ye may rejoice again”; as they had done heretofore in his conversation and ministry, when among them:

*and that I may be the less sorrowful*; when he should hear of his safe arrival among them, and of their joyful reception of him to their mutual satisfaction, which would be an alleviation of the apostle's sorrow in his present circumstances; for he did not expect to be wholly without sorrow while in this life.

**Ver. 29.** *Receive him therefore*, etc.] Not only into their houses, where such as bring the doctrine of Christ should be admitted, and not others; but into their bosoms, into their hearts and affections, as he had reason to believe they would, and into their fellowship and communion, and to the exercise of his office among them, as their minister: and that

*in the Lord*; or “for the Lord”, as the Arabic version renders it; for his sake, because he was one that was put into the ministry by him, was called unto it, and qualified for it, and sent forth to minister in it by him; or in the

name of the Lord, as an ambassador of his, as representing him, and as if he himself was present; for he that receives a minister of Christ, receives Christ himself; (see ~~<D1016>~~Luke 10:16 ~~<R0114>~~Galatians 4:14);

*with all gladness*; with sincere affection, undissembled joy, perfect pleasure, and with all demonstrations of respect unto him, and delight in him at his return to them.

*And hold such in reputation*: account such as he precious and valuable; highly esteem of them for their works' sake; reckon them worthy of double honour, and give it to them.

**Ver. 30.** *Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death*, etc.] Meaning either the work the church sent him about, and which he cheerfully undertook, and faithfully performed in carrying of a present to, and visiting the apostle in prison; which is called the work of Christ, because taken by Christ as if it was done to himself; and which, what with the long and fatiguing journey from Philippi to Rome, and the frequent visits he made to the apostle, and the much business besides that lay upon his hands, brought upon him a disorder which greatly threatened his life, and had almost issued in his death: or else the work of preaching the Gospel so frequently and constantly, and with so much zeal and vehemency at Rome; and which may be called the work of Christ, because it is what he calls unto, and qualifies for, and in which his glory is greatly concerned; and on which this good man was so intent, gladly spending himself, and being spent in it, that he was brought through it to the brink of the grave:

*not regarding his life*: he was careless of that, and of his health; he loved not his life, nor counted it dear to himself; he rather despised it, and made no account of it, being very willing to deliver it up, and sacrifice it in such a good work and cause:

*to supply your lack of service towards me*; to do that in their name, room, and stead, which they, through absence, could not do in person; signifying, that what was done to him, and for him, was but a piece of service and duty to him; and which this good man and faithful minister and messenger of theirs having done for them to the hazard of his life, he ought therefore to be received by them with great joy, and to be highly honoured and respected.