

CHAPTER 3

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 3

In this chapter the apostle cautions the Philippians against false teachers, whom he describes as evil men, and exhorts them to walk as they had him, and other faithful ministers for an example. And whereas these judaizing teachers were for drawing them off from Christ, and weakening their joy and glorying in him, he exhorts them in the first place to rejoice in Christ, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:1), and to beware of them, whom he describes as dogs, as evil workers, as the concision, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:2), and opposes to them the characters of real saints, who are truly what they vainly boasted of, really circumcised persons in a Gospel sense, spiritual worshippers of God, joyful believers in Christ, and such as placed no confidence in outward things, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:3), This the apostle illustrates in his own case, who had as much reason for trusting in such things as any man whatever, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:4), of which he gives an enumeration in several particulars, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:5,6), upon which he passes his judgment, and shows of what account, and in what esteem they were with him before, and now; that formerly they were reckoned gain, but now loss, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:7), and which he explains as referring to every thing short of Christ, and in comparison of the knowledge of him, and which he preferred to everything; and this he confirms by his willingness to suffer the loss of all things for him; his ends in which were, that he might win him, and be found in him, without his own righteousness, that legal one the false teachers extolled, and with the righteousness of God which faith receives, and is the only justifying one; and that he might know more of him, feel more of his power, have more fellowship with him, and conformity to him, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:8-10). His view in all which was, that he might attain to that glorious and happy state of the resurrection of the dead in Christ, (~~STRB~~Philippians 3:11), and to prevent mistakes, and anticipate an objection that might be made to him, as if he ascribed perfection to himself in the present state, he owns he had not arrived to it: all he meant was, that it was his desire to enjoy that which Christ had laid hold on him for; in order to which he buried in oblivion what was past, looking and pressing to things before him, even to Christ, and the glory he was called unto, which was

with him, (^{<SUB2>}Philippians 3:12-14). Next follow various exhortations, as to be of the same mind with the apostle in pressing after spiritual and heavenly things, to which he exhorts those that had a greater knowledge of them than others; and who, though otherwise minded, the apostle was persuaded would have, the same revealed to them, (^{<SUB5>}Philippians 3:15), and both he exhorts, according to their different attainments, to walk by the same rule and mind the same thing, (^{<SUB6>}Philippians 3:16), and to be followers of him, and of them that walked after his example, (^{<SUB7>}Philippians 3:17), giving this as a reason, because there were men who walked otherwise, to the grief of him, to the dishonour of Christ, and to their own shame and destruction, whom he describes as sensual and earthly minded men, (^{<SUB8>}Philippians 3:18,19), and to engage them to follow him, and others, and not such persons, he draws a character of them opposite unto them; that whereas the minds of those others were carnal and earthly, their minds were spiritual and heavenly; their conversation was in heaven, and they were waiting for Christ from hence, (^{<SUB20>}Philippians 3:20), and the blessedness they expect from him then, is the resurrection of their bodies, which is illustrated by the efficient cause of it, Christ; the subject of it, their vile bodies, as in this lifts, and in the grave; the exemplar and pattern of it, the glorious body of Christ; and the means by which it will be effected, the energy and power of Christ, who is omnipotent, (^{<SUB21>}Philippians 3:21).

Ver. 1. *Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord,* etc.] The Syriac version reads, “in our Lord”, i.e. Christ. The apostle seems as if he was about to conclude his epistle; and therefore, as if he was taking his farewell of this church, and giving his last advice to them, he exhorts them in a most affectionate manner, as his dear brethren in a spiritual relation, that they would make Christ their chief joy; that whatever sorrow they might have on account of his bonds, or the sickness of Epaphroditus, yet, he observes they had reason to rejoice in their Lord and Saviour; and however, it might be matter of rejoicing to them to hear of his hope of coming once more to them, and of the recovery of their minister and his return to them, yet Christ should be the principal object of their joy. A believer has always reason to rejoice in Christ; in the greatness of his person, he being in the form of God, and equal to him, and therefore able to save his to the uttermost by his obedience and death, and has interest enough in heaven to make his intercession prevalent and successful and power to keep safe all that are committed to him; and in the fitness of his person to be a Mediator, and daysman, to take care of things pertaining to the glory of

God, and to make reconciliation for sin; and in the fulness of his person, he having all grace in him for his people, which is all theirs, and with joy may they draw water out of the full wells of salvation in him; and in the beauty of his person which surpasses all others, a sight of which fills with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. They may, and should rejoice, as they sometimes do, in his salvation; in the contrivance of it by infinite wisdom; in the impetration of it by himself; and in the application of it by his spirit; and that because hereby justice is satisfied, the law is magnified and made honourable, sin is finished, and an everlasting righteousness brought in. Also they are called upon to rejoice in his resurrection, which is for their justification; in his ascension, seeing he then received gifts for men; and in his session at the right hand of God, which is in their nature; and in his intercession which is to their advantage; and in all the relations he stands in to them, as head, husband, father, brother, friend; and in everything that is his, and that belongs unto him, as his Gospel, ordinances, ways, and worship.

To write the same things to you. The apostle finding he had more time on his hands, or fresh thoughts occurred to him, writes on, and makes an apology for writing the same things, which he had either wrote to other churches, or which he had delivered when first among them, or which he had since wrote to them. For sometimes it is necessary to say and write the same things over and over again, partly that they may be the better understood, and partly that they may be more strongly fixed in the memory; as also, that the saints may be the more established in the present truth: and which he says,

to me indeed [is] not grievous; or troublesome; he found no backwardness to it, nor sluggishness in it; he was not loath to do it, nor was it wearisome to him; or made him slothful, as the Arabic renders it; nor was he afraid to repeat what he had wrote, or again to warn them against false teachers, of whom he stood in no fear:

but for you [it is] safe; or “necessary”, as the Vulgate Latin version reads, being a means of preserving them from the error of the wicked; for though the saints are safe in Christ, and can never finally and totally be deceived, yet the Gospel, and the frequent ministration of it, are a means of keeping them from the deception of evil men; for as the Syriac version renders it, “they make you more cautious”; when truth is repeated, and afresh

confirmed, it guards against falling in with damnable heresies. And so the Arabic version renders it, “is a guard”, or “garrison to you”.

Ver. 2. *Beware of dogs*, etc.] By whom are meant the “judaizing” teachers, who were for imposing the works and ceremonies of the law upon the Gentiles, as necessary to salvation; and they have the name retorted on them they used to give to the Gentiles; (see ⁴¹⁵⁵Matthew 15:26,27); nor should they think it too severe, since the Jews themselves say ^{f15},

“the face of that generation (in which the Messiah shall come) shall he, **bl kh ynpk**, “as the face of a dog”.”

The apostle calls them so, because they returned to Judaism, as the dog to its vomit, (⁶¹²²2 Peter 2:22); and because of the uncleanness in which many of them lived, and the impudence they were guilty of in transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ, and putting themselves upon an equal foot with them; as also for their calumny and detraction, their wrangling with the apostles, snarling at their doctrines, and biting them with the devouring words of reproach and scandal: likewise, they may be styled dogs for their covetousness, being such greedy ones as in (²⁸⁶⁰Isaiah 56:10), with feigned words making merchandise of men; and for their love of their bellies, which they served, and not Christ, and made a god of, (⁵¹⁸⁹Philippians 3:19). Moreover, because they were without, as dogs are, (⁴⁶²⁵Revelation 22:15); having gone out from the communion of the saints, because they were not of them; or if among them, yet not true members of Christ, nor of his mystical body; all which are so many arguments why the saints should beware of them, and why their persons, conversation, and doctrine should be avoided.

Beware of evil workers: meaning the same persons, who were deceitful workers, did the work of the Lord unfaithfully, walked in craftiness, and handled the word of God deceitfully, endeavoured to subvert the Gospel of Christ, and the faith of men in it; who worked from bad principles, and with evil views; and notwithstanding their large pretensions to good works, teaching that justification and salvation were by them, which notion the apostle tacitly refers to in this character; yet were of bad a character, and such as Christ will reject another day as workers of iniquity; a character they deservedly bear, if there was no other reason for it than their preaching the doctrine of salvation by men's own works of righteousness, and who, and their ministry, are by all means to be shunned.

Beware of the concision; the men of the circumcision, as the Arabic version renders it; they chose to be called so, but the apostle would not give them that name, but calls them the “concision”; or “the concision of the flesh”, as the Syriac version renders it; referring either to the cuttings in the flesh, forbidden (^{<RB>}Leviticus 21:5); or to the circumcision of the flesh rather, which they valued themselves upon, and were for introducing among the Gentiles, whereby they made sad divisions, and cutting work among the churches; and were some of them at least “cut” off, as the Ethiopic version renders it, from the churches; and who, as much as in them lay, cut themselves off from Christ, and rendered him unprofitable to them; (see ^{<RB>}Galatians 5:2,4).

Ver. 3. *For we are the circumcision*, etc.] And not they; they have the name, and we the thing, or that which legal circumcision was a shadow of, namely, circumcision of the heart; which lies in being pricked to the heart under a true sense of sin; in having the hardness of the heart removed, and the iniquity of it laid to open view; in pain and contrition of heart about it, joined with shame for it, and loathing of it, the consequence of which is, a putting off of the body of the sins of the flesh, (^{<SB>}Colossians 2:11), according to the former conversation; and also in a renouncing a man's own righteousness in point of justification before God, and acceptance with him. All which is the work of God, and not man, and is therefore called the circumcision made without hands, (^{<SB>}Colossians 2:11); it has God, and not man, for its author; and its praise is of God, and not of men; and its seat is in the heart and spirit, and not in the flesh; and such whose hearts are circumcised to love the Lord their God, and fear him, are the true circumcision:

which worship God in the spirit. The object of worship is “God”, and him only; not a creature animate or inanimate, stocks or stones, beasts, birds, men, or angels; only God, Father, Son, and Spirit: that the Father is to be worshipped, is not disputed, (see ^{<RB>}John 4:21,23); and the Son is to be worshipped with the same worship the Father is; since he is in the form of God, and equal to him, is the Creator of all the Lord of angels and men, and is to be, and is worshipped by both; prayer is made unto him, baptism is administered in his name, and trust and confidence are placed in him; and so is the Holy Ghost, he being equally God with the Father and the Son, and therefore the same homage is to be given to him as to them: and so some indeed read the words here, “which worship God the Spirit”; or the Spirit, who is God. “Worship” is either inward or outward; inward worship

lies in the exercise of grace on God, as of faith, hope, love, fear, etc. outward worship is the performance of certain external actions required by God, and both are to be performed: and it is also either private or public; private worship is in the closet, or in the family, and consists of praying, singing of praises, etc. public worship lies in tire observance of the outward ordinances of preaching, praying, hearing singing, etc. in the church of God; even all such ordinances as God has appointed, which are recorded in the Scriptures, and are confirmed by the authority of Christ. The manner in which worship is to be performed, is “in the Spirit”; either in and with the Spirit of God, without whose grace and assistance no part of it can be performed well. And the Alexandrian copy reads, “which worship in the Spirit of God”; and so the Complutensian edition, and several copies. Or in and with our own hearts and spirits, which should be engaged in every part of religious worship with much attention, diligence, and fervency; or in a spiritual manner, in opposition to the carnal worship of the Jews, and the bodily exercise of formal professors; and which lies in drawing nigh to God with true hearts, sincere and fervent ones, with grace in them, and that in exercise:

and rejoice in Christ Jesus; or “glory in” him, and make their boast of him; for a different word is here used from that in (^{310E}Philippians 3:1). Such who have a true sense of themselves, and a spiritual sight of Christ, will not glory in themselves, in their wisdom, strength, riches, or righteousness, but in Christ, in his wisdom and strength, in his riches and righteousness, and in his person and grace only:

and have no confidence in the flesh; in any carnal descent, or birth privilege, as to be of the seed of Abraham, of the of Israel, or of such a tribe, or family, or born of such a parent; nor in circumcision, or any of the carnal ordinances of the ceremonial law; nor in any civil, moral, legal, and external righteousness, for so to do is but to make flesh an arm; or indeed to trust in anything out of Christ, or short of him; and all this makes up the character and description of a true believer in Christ.

Ver. 4. *Though I might also have confidence in the flesh*, etc.] This he says, lest it should be objected to him, that the reason why he had no confidence in the flesh, and did not boast of it, was, because he could not; he had nothing to glory of, and put his confidence in, and therefore acted the common part of such persons, who despise what either they have not, or are ignorant of: but this was not the apostle's case, he had as much

reason, and as good a foundation for trust in himself, his privileges and attainments, as any man had, and more; and his meaning here is not, that he might lawfully have confidence in the flesh, for that is criminal in every one, but that he had as good pretensions to it; and were it lawful, might with greater appearance of truth do it than some other persons, or indeed any other:

if any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: the sense is, if there were any other person besides the false teachers he speaks of in (^{^{SIRB}Philippians 3:2); that were of the judaizing sect, or any whatever of the Jewish nation, be he who he will, who thought within himself he had, or seemed to others to have (for all such confidence, and the grounds of it, are only in show and appearance, and in imagination, not in reality), reasons for boasting and trusting in himself and in his carnal privileges and performances, the apostle had more, and which he enumerates in (^{^{SIRB}Philippians 3:5,6); not but that he might be exceeded by some in some one particular or another; as for instance, he was not of the tribe of Levi: nor of Judah; he was neither of the house of Aaron, nor of David; neither of the priestly line, nor of the blood royal; but taking all together, there was not a man in whom so many reasons met, for boasting and confidence in the flesh, as in himself.}}

Ver. 5. *Circumcised the eighth day*, etc.] Circumcision was an appointment of God to Abraham, and his male issue; to him and them God gave the covenant of circumcision: this to Abraham personally was a sign and seal, that the righteousness of faith, which he had while he was an uncircumcised person, should come upon the uncircumcised Gentiles in the times or the Messiah, when the Gospel should come among them; and it was a distinguishing character of the Jews from the Gentiles, until the coming of Christ; it was typical of the effusion of his blood to cleanse from all the impurity of original and actual sin, and represented the circumcision of the heart. The Jews valued themselves much upon it, and treated the Gentiles with contempt for the want of it; and would neither converse with them in a civil or religious way, because they were uncircumcised: but the apostle was no Gentile, or an uncircumcised person; he had this mark in his flesh to glory in as well as others, if it had been lawful to trust in it; he was the subject of this ordinance while it was a standing one, and before it was abolished by Christ; and it was performed on him at the precise time fixed in the original institution of it, which was not always observed; for not to take notice of Jewish proselytes; who were circumcised at any age, when

they became such, whether in youth, manhood, or old age; and which by the way shows, that the apostle was no proselyte, but a natural Jew; Gershom, the son of Moses, was not circumcised till some years after his birth; and all the while the children of Israel were in the wilderness this ordinance was neglected, till Joshua had led them into Canaan's land, and then he circumcised all that generation that was born in the wilderness, some of whom must be near forty years of age; and in after times it was usual with the Jews, for one reason or another, to put off circumcision to a longer time. Take the following story as an illustration of this ^{f16} :

“it is a tradition of R. Nathan; once, says he, I went to the cities of the sea, and a woman came to me who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third she brought to me; I saw him that he was red, I said unto her, my daughter, “wait a while” for him till his blood is swallowed up in him; she waited for him a while, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name. And again another time I went to the province of Cappadocia (the Jerusalem Talmud ^{f17} has it Caesarea of Cappadocia), a certain woman came to me, who had circumcised her first son, and he died; the second, and he died; the third, (the above Talmud adds, and he died, the fourth,) she brought to me, I saw that he was green, I inspected him, and the blood of the covenant was not in him, I said unto her, my daughter, **wnyt mh**, “tarry a while” for him; (the Jerusalem Talmud has it, **^mz rj al whwj ynh**, “let him alone to another time”;) till his blood fall in him, she waited for him, and circumcised him, and he lived; and they called him Nathan the Babylonian, after my name.”

The Jewish canon, with regard to the time of circumcision, runs thus ^{f18} :

“an infant may be circumcised at eight days, or at nine, or at ten, or at eleven, or at twelve, neither less nor more (not less than eight, nor more than twelve), how? according to its course at eight. If it is born between the two evenings, it is circumcised on the ninth day; if between the two evenings of the sabbath eve, it is circumcised on the tenth day; if on a feast day after the sabbath, it is circumcised on the eleventh; if on the two days of the beginning of the year, it is circumcised on the twelfth. An infant that is sick, they do not circumcise him until he is recovered.”

And in the last case, they reckon seven days from the time of the recovery of the child, as Maimonides^{f19} observes; with whom may be read other cases, in which circumcision was not always performed on the eighth day, but sometimes was deferred, and sometimes it was done the same day the child was born. But circumcision on the eighth day was reckoned most valid and authentic, and according to rule; and therefore it is not without reason, that the apostle mentions the time of his circumcision, and puts an emphasis upon it.

Of the stock of Israel; this is said to distinguish him from an Ishmaelite, or an Edomite, who were circumcised, and from the son of a proselyte, who might be circumcised on the eighth day; but he was a natural Israelite, to whom the various privileges belonged, mentioned in (~~<4000>~~Romans 9:4,5); and therefore had as much reason to trust in the flesh as any Israelite whatever.

[Of] the tribe of Benjamin; who was a genuine and legitimate son of Jacob, whom he had by his lawful and beloved wife Rachel. Of which tribe was the first king of Israel, whose name was Saul, (~~<4000>~~1 Samuel 9:1,2), and which was the apostle's first and Jewish name, and which perhaps was common in that tribe on that account. In this tribe stood the city of Jerusalem, and the temple of the Lord; this tribe retained the true worship of God with Judah, when the ten tribes revolted and worshipped the calves at Dan and Bethel, and returned with Judah from captivity, when the others did not. And the apostle was not only able to make himself appear to be of the stock Israel, but could name the tribe to which he belonged, which many of the Jews, that were of one, or rather of the ten tribes, were not able to do, and may be his chief reason for mentioning this circumstance.

An Hebrew of the Hebrews; not so called only because he could trace his pedigree from Abraham the Hebrew, or understood, and could speak the Hebrew language, which the Hellenistic Jews could not, or was an illustrious one among them, but because both his parents were Hebrews; he was an Hebrew by the father and mother's side both; he was a genuine Hebrew. The Arabians have the same way of speaking; and with them a genuine Arab is called an Arab of the Arabs^{f20} as here. Some there were whose mothers were Hebrews, and their fathers Gentiles; such an one was Timothy, (~~<4400>~~Acts 16:1); and there were others whose fathers were Hebrews, and their mothers Gentiles; and these are thought by some to be the same the Talmudists^{f21} call, *מלך ארץ*, “profane”: they not being

reckoned so holy as such whose fathers and mothers were both Hebrews; of which the latter gloried over the other.

As touching the law, a Pharisee: with respect to the interpretation and observance of the law, which was according to the traditions of the elders, and not the literal and genuine sense of it, he followed; and was of the sect of the Pharisees, which was strictest sect among the Jews, and in the greatest esteem among the people: and though they had put many false glosses on the Scripture, and held many erroneous principles, and were very tenacious of human traditions, yet they were preferable to the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection of the dead, and other things; and were more zealous in their devotion and religion, and more strict in their morals, and external holiness of life and conversation. They separated and distinguished themselves hereby from other people, and hence they had their name; (see Gill on “^{<4187>}Matthew 3:7”). Now the apostle was not only a Pharisee, but the son of one; he was always brought up in that strict sect and severe way, (^{<4236>}Acts 23:6).

Ver. 6. *Concerning zeal, persecuting the church,* etc.] The Vulgate Latin version adds, “of God”, as in (^{<4013>}Galatians 1:13). The apostle was very zealous of the traditions of the elders, and for the law of God, and towards God also; though his zeal was not according to knowledge, but blind, ignorant, and furious; which pushed him on to persecute the followers of Christ, and the church of Christ at Jerusalem more especially, in a very violent and outrageous manner; he held the clothes of those that stoned Stephen, (^{<4078>}Acts 7:58); he consented unto his death, (^{<4101>}Acts 8:1); he made havoc of the church at Jerusalem, haling men and women to prison, (^{<4183>}Acts 8:3); he continued breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ, (^{<4101>}Acts 9:1); gave his voice against them when put to death, punished them frequently in the synagogues by scourging them, (^{<4200>}Acts 26:10), and compelled them to blaspheme the name of Christ; was exceeding mad against them, pursued them to strange cities, (^{<4251>}Acts 26:11), and persecuted the church of God exceedingly, more than any one single person besides.

Touching the righteousness which is in, the law, blameless. This he mentions last, as including the whole of his righteousness, civil, ceremonial, and moral; and which he fancied was so perfect, that whatever righteousness was in the law, or required by it, he had it, and to such a degree, that he was blameless before God and men; that he was justified by

it in the sight of God, and could not justly be found fault with by any, or be charged with any defect in his obedience, either to the moral or ceremonial law; which must arise from great ignorance of the righteousness of God, and the strictness of his justice, and of the law of God, and the purity, spirituality, and extent of it, which reaches to the thoughts of the heart, and the first motions of sin; and of himself, the plague of his own heart, of the sin of lust, and of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, in every instance of it.

Ver. 7. *But what things were gain to me*, etc.] As circumcision, and the observance of the ceremonial law, which he thought were necessary to salvation; and his natural and lineal descent from Abraham, which he supposed entitled him to the favour of God, and eternal life, as well as to outward privileges; and his being of that strict sect of religion, a Pharisee, which he doubted not, being brought up and continued in, would secure to him everlasting happiness; and his zeal in persecuting the church of Christ, in which he thought he did God good service, and merited heaven for himself; and his legal righteousness, which he fancied was perfect, and so justified him in the sight of God, and rendered him acceptable to him: for the apostle's meaning is, not only that these things were judged by him, while in an unconverted state, good in themselves, and in some respects useful, but that they were really gainful, and meritorious of happiness in another world. But being converted, he saw all those things in a different light, and had a different opinion of them:

those I counted loss for Christ; circumcision he saw was now abolished, and was nothing, and that the circumcision of the heart was the main thing; and that the other was so far from being useful and necessary to salvation, that it was hurtful, was a yoke of bondage, bound men over to keep the whole law, and made Christ of none effect to them; and the same opinion he had of the whole ceremonial law: as for natural descent, which he once valued and trusted in, he now rejected it, well knowing it signified not whether a man was a Greek, or a Jew, a Barbarian, or Scythian, provided he was but a believer in Christ, (^{5181B}Colossians 3:11); and as for any outward form or sect of religion, he knew there was no salvation in it, nor in any other name but that of Christ, (⁴⁴¹²Acts 4:12); and he was so far from thinking, that on account of his zeal in persecuting the church he was deserving of heaven, that for that reason he was not worthy to be called an apostle of Christ; and as for his legal righteousness, he now saw it to be as filthy rags, (^{2541B}Isaiah 64:6); that many things in it were really evil in themselves, such as his observance of the traditions of the elders, whereby

the commands of God were transgressed, and his mad zeal in persecuting the followers of Christ; and other things, which had the appearance of good works, were not truly so, did not spring from love, were not done in faith, and with a view to the glory of God; and that the best of them were very imperfect, and exceeding blamable; yea, that if they had been perfect, they could not have been meritorious of eternal life, as he once thought them to be; he saw now they were of no use in justification and salvation; nay, that they were hurtful and pernicious, being trusted to, as keeping persons off from Christ, and his righteousness: wherefore, he gladly suffered the loss of all his legal righteousness, and renounced and disclaimed it, and all pretensions to justification and salvation by it, for the sake of Christ; of life and salvation by him, and in comparison of him; of the knowledge of him, and of his justifying righteousness, as the following verses show. Hence, what before he pleased himself much with, and promised himself much from, he could not now reflect upon with any pleasure and satisfaction of mind; which is the sense of this phrase with Jewish writers^{f22}: so it is observed of a drunken man, when he comes to himself; and it is told him what he did when in liquor, he grieves at it, *j wyr al w dsph l kh bcj yw*, “and counts all loss and not gain”; i.e. can take no pleasure in a reflection on it.

Ver. 8. *Yea, doubtless, and I count all things [but] loss*, etc.] Not only the things before mentioned, but anything, and everything else but Christ, or that stood in competition with him, or were short of him; as his natural and acquired parts; the whole compass of learning he had attained to; all that honour, credit, reputation, and popularity he was in for knowledge and devotion; all worldly substance, the comforts of life, and life itself; and all his righteousness since conversion, as well as before; of this no doubt could be made by those who knew him, his principles and his practices: and all this

for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: “by the knowledge of Christ” is not meant subjectively the knowledge that is in Christ, or which he has of others, either as God or man; but objectively, that knowledge which believers have of him, who know him not only in his person, as God over all, but as a Saviour and Redeemer, and as theirs; they know him in all his relations, and particularly as their Lord, not by creation only, but by redemption and grace, as the apostle did, putting an emphasis on these words, “my Lord”; thereby expressing his faith of interest in him,

his great affection for him, and cheerful subjection to him. And this knowledge is not general, but special, spiritual, and saving; it is a knowledge of approbation of Christ above all others; a fiducial one, which has faith in him joined with it, and is both experimental and, practical, and, at least at times, appropriating; and though imperfect, it is progressive and capable of being increased, and will at last be brought to perfection. It is attained to, not by the light of nature, nor by the help of carnal reason, nor by the law of Moses, but by the Gospel of the grace of God, as a means; and the efficient cause of it is Father, Son, and Spirit; the Father reveals Christ in his saints; the Son gives them an understanding to know him; and the Spirit is a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him; and this knowledge is very excellent: a spiritual knowledge of Christ is more excellent than a general and notional one, or than a knowledge of Christ after the flesh; and the knowledge of Christ under the Gospel dispensation, though the same in nature, is more excellent than that which was under the legal dispensation, by promises, prophecies, and the ceremonial law, in degree, extensiveness, and clearness; but the most excellent knowledge of Christ is that of the saints in heaven; yea, even there is an excellency in what the saints have here on earth, and a superior one to all other knowledge, if the author and original of it is considered: it is not of ourselves, nor by the assistance of men; it is not in the book of nature, nor in the schools of the philosophers; it is not of earth, nor earthly, but it comes from afar, from above, from heaven, from God the Father of lights; it is a free grace gift, a distinguishing one, and is very comprehensive, unspeakable, and unchangeable: and as to the object of it, it is Christ, the chiefest among ten thousands; who made the heavens, earth, and seas, and all that in them are, the sun, moon, and stars, men and beasts, birds and fishes, fossils, minerals, vegetables, and everything in nature; and therefore the knowledge of him must be superior to the knowledge of everything else; and, which adds to its excellency, it makes Christ precious, engages faith and confidence in him, influences the life and conversation, humbles the soul, and creates in it true pleasure and satisfaction; when all other knowledge fills with self-love, pride, and vanity, and increases sorrow; whereas this is not only useful in life, but supports, as under afflictions, so in the views of death and eternity; through it grace is received now, and by it glory hereafter; for it is the beginning, earnest, and pledge of eternal life. Well may the believer count all things but loss for it, as the apostle did; who adds, for further confirmation of what he had asserted,

for whom I have suffered the loss of all things; he dropped all confidence in his carnal privileges, and civil, ceremonial, and moral righteousness, for Christ and his righteousness; he parted with all for this pearl of great price; he lost his good name, credit, and reputation among men, and suffered afflictions and persecutions in various shapes; he lost the comforts of life, being often in cold and nakedness, in hunger and thirst, and was ready to suffer the loss of life itself for professing and preaching Christ:

and do count them [but] dung; or dog's meat; (see <sup>^{COR2>}Philippians 3:2); what is fit only to be cast to dogs, as the word signifies; and intends every thing that is base, mean, and worthless; as the faeces of men, the dregs and lees of liquor, the falling of fruit, chaff, stubble, the dross of metals, dung, and what not: so he esteemed his carnal descent; his form and sect of religion, and zeal in it; his ceremonial and moral righteousness before and after conversion; and everything of the creature, or what was his own, and but flesh; being of the same opinion with the church of old, who reckoned her righteousnesses, the best, and the whole of them, as “filthy rags”. The apostle next expresses his end and views in this,

that I may win Christ; not get an interest in him, for this he had already, and he knew he had, and that he should never lose it; and besides, an interest in Christ is not a thing that begins in time, but commenced from all eternity; and is not gotten at all, not by good works, nor repentance, nor faith; for these, if right and genuine, are the fruits and effects of an interest in Christ, but is what is freely given. The apostle's meaning is, either that he might gain or acquire a larger knowledge of Christ; and he cared not what pains he took, what expenses he was at, nor what loss he sustained for what he esteemed the most excellent, and for which he had already suffered the loss of all things; and if he had had more to lose, he could willingly part with it for more of this knowledge; compare (<sup>^{COR2>}Philippians 3:10); or his sense is, that he might gain by Christ, or that Christ might be gain to him, as he found him to be, and as he is to every believer; who by parting with all for Christ, gains much by him, as a justifying righteousness, acceptance with God, peace, pardon, life, grace, and glory.

Ver. 9. *And be found in him*, etc.] This is another end the apostle had in view, in counting all things loss and dung, and suffering the loss of all for Christ. Calvin, different from other interpreters, reads the words actively, “and may find in him”; and thinks the sense is, that the apostle renounced all things for Christ, that he might recover all in him: and true it is, that for

the loss of carnal privileges, he found in Christ spiritual blessings; and for the loss of his own righteousness, another, and a better, even the righteousness of God; and in lieu of external goods, or worldly substance he was stripped of, true and lasting riches; and in the room of outward credit, peace and plenty, true honour, real peace, and spiritual pasture; and instead of the comforts of life, and life itself, spiritual and eternal life; though it is best to read the words passively, “and be found in him”; that is, “be in him”, as the Ethiopic version renders it; so the word found is used in (~~Galatians~~ Galatians 2:17) (~~Philippians~~ Philippians 2:8); and he means not a nominal being in Christ, or a being in him by profession, but a real one; and watch is either secret or open: a secret being in Christ he had from everlasting, being chosen in him, given to him, loved by him, betrothed unto him, preserved in him, and represented by him; and an open one he had at conversion, when he became a new creature, and was created in Christ Jesus unto good works: and here he intends a more clear and evident manifestation of his being in Christ; and his desire is, that he might appear to be in him, in life and at death, and at the day of judgment, and in the following manner:

not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law; by which he means his obedience to the moral, as well as the ceremonial law; for the one was as much his own as the other, and more properly his righteousness: this he calls his “own”, because performed by him, and wrought out in his own strength; and which he had an high opinion of, as if it was perfect and blameless; and which he had before put his trust and confidence in; as also to distinguish it from another's righteousness, even that which he had in Christ: he moreover calls it, “the righteousness which is of the law”; which the law required, and he performed in obedience to it, seeking for justification by it; this character distinguishes it from the righteousness of God, which is revealed in the Gospel, and is manifested without the law: and this his own legal righteousness he did not desire to “have”, and to be found in; not but that he desired to live soberly and righteously, to have, and do works of righteousness, but not depend on them; he would not have, and account this his moral righteousness, as a justifying one; he knew it was imperfect, filthy, and unprofitable, and that by it he could not be justified and saved, therefore he desired to have another.

But that which is through the faith of Christ; not through that faith which Christ himself, as man, had and exercised on God, as his God; but that

which he is the author and finisher of, and which has him and his righteousness for its object; not through faith, as the cause of it; for the moving cause of justification is the free grace of God, and the efficient cause is God himself: and it appears from hence, that faith is not the matter of our justification, or is not our righteousness; for faith and righteousness are two distinct things, otherwise righteousness could not be said to be “through” faith. The righteousness of Christ is here meant, and which is the sole matter of justification, and comes to us through faith apprehending, receiving, and embracing it; and which shows, that it must be before faith, or it could not be through it; as water that runs through a bridge must be before and after that bridge through which it runs. This righteousness is further described, as

the righteousness which is of God by faith; that righteousness which Christ, who is the true God, is the author of, hence it is a pure and perfect one, infinite, and serves for many; which God the Father approves of, and is well pleased with, because his law is magnified, and made honourable by it; and what he graciously gives, and freely imputes without works, to his people: and this is “by faith”, which beholds the excellency of it, acknowledges its sufficiency, renounces its own righteousness, and submits to, and lays hold on this, and rejoices in it; and thus men are justified openly and manifestly by faith, receiving the justifying righteousness of Christ: or the words may be rendered “upon faith”. This righteousness is as a garment put upon faith, or put upon him by God, who has true faith in Christ; (see ^{<4182>}Romans 3:22). This last clause, “by faith”, is omitted in the Syriac and Ethiopic versions, and seems to be read by them as belonging to the beginning of (^{<5180>}Philippians 3:10). Now this righteousness the apostle desired to have, and be found in; and this he says not, as supposing that a person may be found in Christ, and yet not have his righteousness; nor as if he himself had not this righteousness, and an interest in it; but to show his value for it, and his desire to be continually exercising faith on it, and the trust and confidence he placed in it; well knowing that in this he was safe and secure from all condemnation; this would answer for him in a time to come; being found in this he should not be naked nor speechless, and should have a right and an admission into the kingdom and glory of Christ Jesus.

Ver. 10. *That I may know him*, etc.] The Ethiopic version reads “by faith”; and to the same sense the Syriac. The apostle did know Christ, and that years ago; he knew whom he had believed; he knew him for himself; he

knew his personal interest in him; nor did he know any but him in the business of salvation: but his knowledge of Christ, though it was very great, it was, imperfect; he knew but in part, and therefore desired to know more of Christ, of the mystery and glories of his person, of the unsearchable riches of his grace, of his great salvation, and the benefits of it, of his love, which passes perfect knowledge, and to have a renewed and enlarged experience of communion with him. The apostle here explains what he means by winning Christ, for the sake of which he suffered the loss of all things, and counted them but dung; it was, that he might attain to a greater knowledge of the person and grace of Christ:

and the power of his resurrection; not that power which was put forth by his Father, and by himself, in raising him from the dead; but the virtue which arises from it, and the influence it has on many things; as on the resurrection of the saints: it is the procuring cause of it, they shall rise by virtue of union to a risen Jesus; it is the firstfruits, which is the earnest and pledge of their resurrection, as sure as Christ is risen, so sure shall they rise; it is the exemplar and pattern of theirs, their bodies will be raised and fashioned like to the glorious body of Christ; and this the apostle desired to know, experience, and attain unto. Christ's resurrection has an influence also on the justification of his people; when Christ died he had the sins of them all upon him, and he died for them, and discharged as their public head and representative, and they in him: hence it is said of him, that "he was raised again for our justification", (~~400~~Romans 4:25). Now, though the apostle was acquainted with this virtue and influence of Christ's resurrection, he desired to know more of it, for the encouragement of his faith to live upon Christ, as the Lord his righteousness. Moreover, the regeneration of men is owing to the resurrection of Christ; as to the abundant mercy of God, as the moving cause, so to the resurrection of Christ, as the means or virtual cause; and therefore are said to be "begotten again by the resurrection of Christ from the dead", (~~400~~1 Peter 1:3). This power and virtue the apostle had had an experience of, yet he wanted to feel more of it, in exciting the graces of the spirit to a lively exercise, in raising his affections, and setting them on things above, and in engaging him to seek after them, and set light by things on earth, and in causing him to walk in newness of life, in likeness or imitation of Christ's resurrection, to all which that strongly animates and encourages; (see ~~500~~Colossians 3:1,2 ~~400~~Romans 6:4,5).

And the fellowship of his sufferings; either his personal sufferings, and so signifies a sharing in, and a participation of the benefits arising from them; such as reconciliation for sin, peace with God, pardon, righteousness, nearness to God, etc. or the sufferings of his members for him, and with him, and which Christ reckons his own: these the apostle was willing to take his part in, and lot of, knowing, that those that are partakers of his sufferings in this sense, shall reign with him, and be glorified together. What the Jews deprecated, the apostle was desirous of; namely, sharing in the sorrows and sufferings of the Messiah, and which they reckon the greatest happiness to be delivered from.

“The disciples of R. Eleazar ^{f23} asked him, what a man should do that he may be delivered *j yçm l ç wl bj m*, “from the sorrows of the Messiah?” he must study in the law, and in beneficence.”

And elsewhere they say ^{f24},

“he that keeps the three meals on the sabbath day shall be delivered from three punishments, *j yçm l ç wl bj m*, “from the sorrows of the Messiah”, and from the damnation of hell, and from the war of Gog and Magog.”

But our apostle rejoiced in his sufferings for Christ, and was desirous of filling up the afflictions of Christ in his flesh, for his body's sake, the church:

being made conformable unto his death; either in a spiritual sense dying daily unto sin, (^{<4651>}1 Corinthians 15:31), having the affections, with the lusts, crucified, (^{<4824>}Galatians 5:24), and the deeds of the body mortified, (^{<4813>}Romans 8:13), and so planted in the likeness of his death, (^{<4815>}Romans 6:5); or rather in a corporeal sense, bearing always in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, (^{<4910>}2 Corinthians 4:10), and being continually exposed to death for his sake, and ready to suffer it whenever called to it.

Ver. 11. *If by any means I, might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.*] Not in a figurative sense, the resurrection from the death of sin to a life of grace, of which Christ is the efficient cause, for this the apostle had attained to; unless the consummation of that spiritual life, in perfect holiness, should be intended, than which nothing was more desirable by him; nor in a representative sense, for this also he enjoyed in Christ his head, being risen with him, and in him, when he rose from the dead; but in

a literal sense and designs not the general resurrection of the just and unjust, which he believed; for he knew that everyone must, and will attain to this, even Pharaoh, Judas, and the worst of men; but the special and particular resurrection of the righteous, the better resurrection, which will be first, and upon the personal coming of Christ, and by virtue of union to him, and in a glorious manner, and to everlasting life and happiness: and when the apostle says, “if by any means” he might attain to this, it is not to be understood as if he doubted of it, which would be inconsistent with his firm persuasion, that nothing should separate him from the love of God, and with his full assurance of faith, as to interest in Jesus Christ; but it denotes the difficulty of attaining it, since through various afflictions and great tribulations a believer must pass, before he comes to it; and also the apostle's earnest desire of it, and strenuous endeavour for it; not caring what scenes of trouble, or sea of sorrow what fiery trials, severe sufferings, or cruel death he went through, so be it he obtained as he believed he should, the glorious and better resurrection; he counted not his life dear to himself, he loved it not unto death, having in view the blissful and happy state after it.

Ver. 12. *Not as though I had already attained*, etc.] Or “received”; he had received much grace out of the fulness of it in Christ; he had received the gift of righteousness, the forgiveness of his sins, and the adoption of children; he had attained to a lively hope of the incorruptible inheritance, and had received a right unto it, and had a meetness for it; but as yet he had not received the thing itself, nor was he come to the end of his race, and so had not received the crown of righteousness laid up for him; he had not yet attained to perfect knowledge, nor perfect holiness, nor perfect happiness: wherefore he adds,

either were already perfect; he was perfect in comparison of others, that were in a lower class of grace, experience, and knowledge, in which sense the word is used in (³⁰¹⁵Philippians 3:15), and in (⁴¹¹⁶1 Corinthians 2:6); he was so, as perfection intends sincerity, uprightness, and integrity; the root of the matter, the truth of grace was in him; his faith was unfeigned, his love was without dissimulation, his hope was without hypocrisy, his conversation in the world was in godly simplicity, and his preaching and his whole conduct in his ministry were of sincerity, and in the sight of God: he was perfect as a new creature with respect to parts, having Christ formed in him, and all the parts of the new man, though not as to degrees; this new man not being as yet grown up to a perfect man, or to its full growth, to

the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; he was perfect with respect to justification, being perfectly justified from all things, by the righteousness of Christ, but not with respect to sanctification; and though his sanctification was perfect in Christ, yet not in himself; his knowledge was imperfect, something was wanting in his faith, and sin dwelt in him, of which he sometimes grievously complained: now this he says, lest he should be thought to arrogate that to himself, which he had not:

but I follow after; Christ the forerunner, after perfect knowledge of him, perfect holiness from him, and perfect happiness with him: the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who pursue it with eagerness, press forward with all might and main, to get up to the mark, in order to receive the prize; accordingly the Syriac version renders it, *ana j hr*, “I run”, and so the Arabic: the apostle's sense is, that though he had not yet reached the mark, he pressed forward towards it, he had it in view, he stretched and exerted himself, and followed up very closely to it, in hope of enjoying the prize:

if that I may apprehend that for which also I am apprehended of Christ Jesus; he was apprehended of Christ, when he met him in his way to Damascus, stopped him in his journey, laid him prostrate on the ground, and laid hold on him as his own, challenged and claimed his interest in him, (^{40B}Acts 9:3-6 26:13-18), as one that the Father had given him, and he had purchased by his blood; he entered into him, and took possession of him, and took up his residence in him, having dispossessed the strong man armed, and ever since held him as his own; and he apprehended, or laid hold on him, to bring him as he had engaged to do, to a participation of grace here, and glory hereafter; that he might know him himself, and make him known to others; that he might be made like unto him, have communion with him, and everlastingly enjoy him: and these things the apostle pursued after with great vehemence, that he might apprehend them, and be in full possession of them; and which he did, in the way and manner hereafter described.

Ver. 13. *Brethren, I count not myself to have apprehended,* etc.] That for which he was apprehended of Christ: he had not attained to perfect knowledge, was not come to the mark, had not received the prize, or laid hold on eternal life; though he had received so much grace, and such gifts, as had qualified him for an apostle; and he had been so many years in that office, and had so great a knowledge in the mystery of the Gospel, and had

laboured in it more abundantly than others, and with great success; and even though he had been caught up into the third heaven, and had heard unspeakable words, not lawful to be uttered, (~~471D~~2 Corinthians 12:2-4), yet he had no such opinion of himself, as if he was perfect: by which way of speaking, he tacitly strikes at the arrogance and vain confidence of false teachers, that pretended to perfection; and in this way led the brethren to conclude, that they could never have arrived to it, since so great an apostle had not; some copies read not “yet”, and so the Ethiopic version:

but this one thing [I do]; which he was intent upon, constantly attended to, and earnestly pursued; it was the main and principal thing he was set upon, and which he employed himself in; and which engrossed all his thoughts, desires, affections, time, and labour; (see ~~4270A~~Psalm 27:4 ~~420E~~Luke 10:42). The Syriac version reads, “this one thing I know”; signifying that whatever he was ignorant of, and however imperfect his knowledge was in other things, this he was full well apprized of, and acquainted with. The Arabic version renders the whole thus, “I do not think that I have now obtained and received anything, but the one thing”; namely, what follows;

forgetting those things which are behind, meaning not the sins of his past life, which were indeed forgotten by God, and the guilt of which was removed from him, by the application of the blood of Christ, so that he had no more conscience of them; yet they were remembered and made mention of by him, partly for his own humiliation, and partly to magnify the grace of God: nor earthly and worldly things, which believers are too apt to have respect to, to look back upon, and hanker after, as the Israelites did after the fleshpots in Egypt, (~~4216B~~Exodus 16:3); though these were forgotten by the apostle, so as not anxiously to care for them, and seek after them, to set his affections on them, or trust in them: nor his fleshly privileges, and legal righteousness, which he pursued, valued, and trusted in before conversion, but now dropped, renounced, disregarded, and counted as loss and dung, (~~4107E~~Philippians 3:7,8); but rather his labours and works of righteousness since conversion, which though he times took notice of for the magnifying of the grace of God, for the defence of the Gospel, and to put a stop to the vain boasting of false teachers, yet he forgot them in point of dependence on them, and trust to them; and having put his hand to the plough, he did not look back, nor desist, but went on in his laborious way, not thinking of what he had done and gone through, nor discouraged at what was before him; as also he intends all his growth in grace, and proficiency in divine knowledge, which was very, great; and though he was

thankful for these things, and would observe them to the glory of the grace of God, yet he trusted not in them: nor did he sit down easy and satisfied with what he had attained unto, and therefore was

reaching forth unto those things which are before; to perfection of knowledge, holiness, and happiness, which were before him, and he as yet had not attained unto; but was desirous of, and pursued after with great vehemence and eagerness; the metaphor is taken from runners in a race, who did not stop to look behind them, and see what way they have run, and how far they are before others, but look and move forwards, and stretch themselves out to the uttermost, and run with all their might and main to the mark before them; and so the apostle did in a spiritual sense.

Ver. 14. *I press toward the mark*, etc.] The allusion is to the white line, or mark, which the runners in the Olympic games made up to, and to which he that came first received the prize; and by which the apostle intends the Lord Jesus Christ, who is σκοπος, “the scope”, or “mark”, of all the thoughts, purposes, and counsels of God, to which they all aim, and in which they all centre; and of the covenant of grace of which he is the sum and substance, the Mediator, surety, and messenger, in whom are all the blessings and promises of it; and of the Scriptures of truth, the writings of the Old and New Testament, which all testify of him, and agree in him; and of both law and Gospel, he is the end of the law, and the substance of the Gospel; and of all the graces of the Spirit, in the hearts of his people, faith looks at him, hope is concerned with him, and love has him for its object; and of all the duties believers are concerned in, they all point at him, they are done in his name and strength, through faith in him, and from a principle of love to him, and with a view to his glory; and so he is of their thoughts, affections, and desires: and to this mark they press, or “run”, as the Syriac version renders it; they look to Jesus, while they are running their Christian race; they keep him in their view, and follow after him, because he is their forerunner, (^{<3010>}Hebrews 6:20), and the Captain of their salvation, (^{<3020>}Hebrews 2:10); they set him before them as their guide to direct them, according to whom they steer their course, that so they may not lose their way, nor move out of it, to the right hand or the left; and from whom they take great encouragement to go on, and press through the difficulties they do; and besides, they know that there is no coming at the prize, but through the mark, for there is salvation in no other, (^{<4012>}Acts 4:12); and that whoever comes up to the mark, or believes in Christ, shall enjoy the prize of eternal life, which is next mentioned:

for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus: by which is meant, the incorruptible crown; the crown of life, righteousness, and glory, that fadeth not away, (^{<3012>}James 1:12 ^{<3018>}2 Timothy 4:8 ^{<1018>}1 Peter 5:4), styled “the prize of the calling of God”; because it is what God in the effectual calling calls his people to, even to a kingdom and glory, and to eternal glory and happiness; of which they have a sight, though but a glimmering view of it, and are blessed with hope in it; in which they rejoice, and see their right unto it, in the righteousness of Christ, and have a meetness for it: this is named “the high calling of God”, because God is on high, who calls them to it, in allusion to the judge in the Olympic games, who was placed in an exalted situation, near the mark, with the crown in his hand, which he gave to him that came first; and because the grace by which the saints are called is from above, as every good and perfect gift is, (^{<3017>}James 1:17); and because the prize they are called unto consists of things above, where Jesus is, and is the hope laid up in heaven, (^{<3005>}Colossians 1:5), and the inheritance reserved there, (^{<1004>}1 Peter 1:4); and expresses the great honour and dignity of called ones, who are called to a crown and kingdom, are raised from the dunghill, to sit among princes, and to inherit the throne of glory, and are made kings and priests unto God: and may also denote, that the calling to such high honour is from above, and not below; and is owing to the special grace and favour of God, and not to any merits of men; nor is the prize to which they are called, of him that willeth and runneth, but of God's grace and mercy, (^{<3016>}Romans 9:16): and moreover, this calling is said to be “in Christ Jesus”; for both the purpose and grace, according to which men are called, are in him; the grace by which they are called, and which is implanted in them when called, is all in and from Christ; the blessings of grace, which they then in person enjoy, are spiritual blessings in him; and even the glory they are called unto is in his hands; not only the promise of eternal life, but that itself; the gift of it is with him, and it comes through him; yea, they are called by him, and said to be the called of Christ Jesus; now the prize of this calling, which is what God has prepared from all eternity, which Christ has in his hands, and will give to all his, and which is of immense richness and eternal duration, and shall be bestowed on all Christian runners, or true believers, is what the apostle was pressing for, pursuing after, with much difficulty, through great toil and labour, diligent searching of the Scriptures, frequent wrestling with God in prayer, and constant attendance on the means of grace, and ordinances of the Gospel.

Ver. 15. *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect*, etc.] Not absolutely, but comparatively, with respect to other believers, in a lower class of knowledge and experience; and not with respect to degrees, but parts; and regards such who were not children, but of riper age in divine things, unless the words are spoken ironically:

be thus minded; as the apostle was, to count what were gain to him, loss for Christ; to reckon all things but loss and dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ; to be willing to suffer the loss of all things, to win him, (^{<518B>}Philippians 3:8); to desire to be found in him, and in his righteousness, and not a man's own, (^{<518D>}Philippians 3:9); to know more of him in his person, righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection from the dead, (^{<518C>}Philippians 3:10); and to attain to such a state, and yet to disclaim all perfection, and acknowledge their imperfection, (^{<518E>}Philippians 3:11,12); and to forget things behind, and reach to those before, (^{<518B>}Philippians 3:13); and press towards the mark, Christ, for the prize of eternal glory, (^{<518A>}Philippians 3:14):

and if in anything ye be otherwise minded; as to seek for justification by the works of the law, or partly by Christ and partly by the law, and to imagine and expect perfection in this life:

God shall reveal even this unto you; such errors will be made manifest sooner or later; the day will declare them, and such wood, hay, and stubble, will be burnt up by the fire, which will reveal every man's work, (^{<418E>}1 Corinthians 3:12,13).

Ver. 16. *Nevertheless, whereto we have already attained*, etc.] Whatever degree of knowledge of Christ, and the truths of his Gospel, is attained to, let it be retained, and not departed from:

let us walk by the same rule; either the doctrine of justification by Christ's righteousness in particular, which is a rule of judgment concerning other things; for so far as they agree or disagree with this, they are to be received or rejected; or the Scriptures of truth, which are the rule of faith and practice, and the standard and test, to which all are to be brought and tried:

let us mind the same thing; be of one heart and affection to each other, (^{<512D>}Romans 12:10), and of the same judgment in the doctrines of the Gospel, (^{<411D>}1 Corinthians 1:10), and pursue the same measures; particularly press towards the same mark, and for the same prize the

apostle did, (^{<3184>}Philippians 3:14), and be followers of him, as is exhorted to in (^{<3187>}Philippians 3:17).

Ver. 17. *Brethren, be followers together of me*, etc.] Not that the apostle set up himself as the head of a party, which is what he always blamed in others; he did not assume a dominion over the faith of men, or seek to lord it over God's heritage; nor did he desire any to be followers of him, any further than he was a follower of Christ; and in what he was, whether in doctrine or practice, he desires to be followed in: and here he has a particular regard to what went before, concerning reckoning what was gain loss; accounting all things but dung, in comparison of the knowledge of Christ, looking to his righteousness alone for justification, (^{<3189>}Philippians 3:9); disclaiming perfection, yet forgetting things behind; reaching towards things before, and pressing to the mark for the prize, (^{<3183>}Philippians 3:13); and walking according to the rule of God's word; in which things he had some that followed him, who were his spiritual children, and to whom he had been useful in conversion and edification; (see ^{<4045>}1 Corinthians 4:15,16 ^{<3106>}1 Thessalonians 1:6,7); and he would therefore have these Philippians followers of him, "together" with them; and which contains in it an encouraging reason, or argument, since others were followers of him; or together with one another, he was desirous, that one and all of them might follow him; that they might all go in the same way, profess the same truth, be found in the practice of the same things, worship the Lord with one consent, pursue the same ends, and draw all the same way; and so be as the church was, like a company of horses in Pharaoh's chariot, (^{<2109>}Song of Solomon 1:9);

and mark them which walk so; as the apostle did, and those that were followers of him; these he would have them mark, observe, attentively look to; not as others, who cause offences and divisions, and obey not the word, in order to shun, avoid, and keep no company with; but to imitate and follow, and next to Christ, the mark, to make use of them as inferior ones:

as ye have us for an ensample, or "type"; believers should be ensamples one to another, especially ministers of the word; pastors of churches are not to be lords over God's heritage, but to be ensamples to the flock, (^{<4188>}1 Peter 5:3), in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit; in faith, in purity, as the apostle exhorts Timothy, (^{<5012>}1 Timothy 4:12), and in these things they are to be followed by believers.

Ver. 18. *For many walk*, etc.] *tyaynrj a*, “otherwise”, as the Syriac version adds; and which truly explains the words, and gives the sense; they walked not as the apostle and his followers; they walked as men, as carnal men, (^{<408>}1 Corinthians 3:3), according to the course of the world, after their ungodly lusts, (^{<409>}Ephesians 2:2,3); or according to the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic dispensation, and not uprightly, and according to the truth of the Gospel: and there were many that walked so; the road both of profaneness and error is a broad one, and many walk therein, which makes it the more dangerous; the examples of many have great force, though a multitude is not to be followed to do evil; the conversation of a great part of professors is not to be imitated; the few names in Sardis that have not defiled their garments with error or immorality should be marked for ensamples, (^{<410>}Revelation 3:4), and the majority shunned:

of whom I have told you often; both when present among them by word of mouth, and when absent from them by writing; for the apostle was a faithful watchman and monitor to this church, and to all the churches, the care of which lay upon him; and diligent he was to warn them against false teachers, whose doctrines and practices he knew were of pernicious consequence:

and now tell you even weeping; partly on account of those evil men, whose state and condition, notwithstanding their profession, was very bad; and partly on account of the glory of God and Christ, and the honour of religion, which suffered much through them; and also on account of the Philippians, lest they should be drawn aside by them; and because they had taken so little notice of his frequent cautions and advice: and that they might the better know the men he spoke of, and avoid them, he describes them by the following characters,

[that they are] the enemies of the cross of Christ; not that, though they might be Jews, they were like the unbelieving Jews, who were open and implacable enemies of a crucified Christ, called Jesus accursed, and anathematized him and his followers, and to whom the preaching of Christ crucified was an offence and stumblingblock, (^{<412>}1 Corinthians 1:23); for these were professors of Christ, and pretended to preach Christ, and him crucified: nor were they such heretics that denied that Christ really assumed human nature, and was really crucified and died; and affirmed that all this was only in appearance, or that an image was hung upon the cross for him, or Simon the Cyrenian was crucified in his room, as some have

thought, which was the heresy of Simon Magus, and his disciple Basilides: nor is the sense that they were averse to the crucifixion of the affections with the lusts, though this seems to be their true character, since they were sensual, and minded earthly things; but the meaning is, that they disliked the cross of Christ; they were unwilling to take it up for his sake, and follow him; they studied all ways and means to shun it; they ingratiated themselves into the affections of the unbelieving Jews, by complying with the ceremonies of the law, and bearing hard upon the apostle and his ministry, that so they might not suffer persecution for the cross of Christ; and besides, by enjoining circumcision and an observance of the law as necessary to salvation, they, as much as in them lay, made void the efficacy of the cross and death of Christ, and made that and him unprofitable, and of no effect to the souls of men; and were both doctrinally and practically enemies of the cross of Christ: and so all such professors of Christ, who walk not according to the Gospel, though they are not open and direct enemies to the Gospel, which is the preaching of the cross, yet they are secret and indirect ones, and oftentimes do more mischief to it by their lives, than the keenest adversaries of it can by their pens.

Ver. 19. *Whose end [is] destruction*, etc.] Everlasting destruction, the destruction of both body and soul in hell, (^{<4008>}Matthew 10:28); and this is the end, the reward and issue of bad principles and practices; the broad roads of sin and error lead to destruction, (^{<4073>}Matthew 7:13); however pleasing such ways may be to men, the end of them is eternal death; destruction and misery are in all the ways of profaneness and heresy; not only immoralities, but heresies, such as strike at the efficacy of Christ's cross, his blood, righteousness, and sacrifice, are damnable ones, and bring upon men swift destruction, (^{<6001>}2 Peter 2:1); and how should it otherwise be, for there is no salvation but by the cross of Christ? and if men are enemies to that, and the efficacy of it, and the way of salvation by it, there is no more, nor any other sacrifice for sin, (^{<5806>}Hebrews 10:26), but a fearful looking for of judgment, and fiery indignation, (^{<5807>}Hebrews 10:27); and this will be the case of all barren and unfruitful professors, who are like the earth, that brings forth briars and thorns, and is nigh unto cursing, whose end is to be burned, (^{<5808>}Hebrews 6:8); for what will the hope of such an one, founded on his profession, though he may have got credit and reputation among men, avail, when God takes away his soul?

whose god [is their] belly; the belly was the god of the Cyclops, they sacrificed to none but to themselves, and to the greatest of the gods, their

own belly ^{f25}; as money is the covetous man's god, whom he loves, adores, and puts his confidence in, so the belly is the god of the sensualist, the epicure, and voluptuous person; he has more regard for the service of that, than for the service of God? and of this complexion were these professors; they were lovers of pleasure, more than lovers of God, (^{<5134>}2 Timothy 3:4); all their pretensions to religion, to Christ, and his Gospel, were only to serve themselves, their own bellies, and not the Lord Jesus Christ, and to do good to the souls of men: or their belly may be said to be their god, because they placed religion in the observance of meats and drinks, either allowed or forbidden in the law of Moses, which profited not those that were occupied therein, (^{<3090>}Hebrews 9:10); for the kingdom of God, the Gospel dispensation, internal religion, and the exercise of it, lies not in these things, but in righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, (^{<5447>}Romans 14:17):

and whose glory [is] in their shame; in their evil practices committed in secret, of which it was a shame to speak; in their hidden things of dishonesty, crafty walking, and deceitful handling of the word of God, which were vile and scandalous, (^{<4042>}2 Corinthians 4:2); in corrupting the Gospel, and the churches of Christ, with their false doctrine; in observing and urging the ceremonies of the law, which were dead, and ought to be buried; and particularly circumcision in the flesh, in that part of the body which causes shame, and in this was their glory, (^{<4813>}Galatians 6:13). The idol Baal Peor, and which is no other than the Priapus of the Heathens, is called by this name, (^{<2090>}Hosea 9:10); so the prophets of Baal are in the Septuagint on (^{<1189>}1 Kings 18:19,25) called the prophets, *της αἰσχυνης*, “of that shame”; it may be the apostle may have a regard to the secret debaucheries of these persons; or because they made their belly their god, he calls it their shame in which they gloried, and which was the name given to the idols of the Gentiles:

who mind earthly things. The Arabic version renders it, “who entertain earthly opinions”; and some by, “earthly things” understand the ceremonies of the law, called the elements and rudiments of the world, which these false teachers were fond of, and were very diligent to inculcate and urge the observance of; though rather worldly things, such as honour, glory, and popular applause, and wealth, and riches, are meant; for they sought their own things, and not the things of Christ; through covetousness, with feigned words, they made merchandise of men, and amassed to themselves great sums of money; and yet were greedy dogs, could never have enough,

everyone looking for his gain from his quarter, (^{<2861>}Isaiah 56:11): and now persons of such characters as these were by no means to be followed, but such who are hereafter described.

Ver. 20. *For our conversation is in heaven*, etc.] The Ethiopic version renders it, “we have our city in heaven”; and the words may be truly rendered, “our citizenship is in heaven”; that is, the city whereof we are freemen is heaven, and we behave ourselves here below, as citizens of that city above: heaven is the saints' city; here they have no continuing city, but they seek one to come, which is permanent and durable; a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, (^{<3810>}Hebrews 11:10): as yet they are not in it, though fellow citizens of the saints, and of the household of God; they are pilgrims, strangers, and sojourners on earth, (^{<0253>}Leviticus 25:23 ^{<3813>}Hebrews 11:13); but are seeking a better country, an heavenly one, and God has prepared for them a city, (^{<3816>}Hebrews 11:16); they have a right unto it through the grace of God, and righteousness of Christ, and a meetness for it in him; and their conversation is here beforehand, while their commoration, or temporary residence, is below; their thoughts are often employed about it; their affections are set upon it, (^{<3182>}Colossians 3:2); their hearts are where their treasure is, (^{<4021>}Matthew 6:21); the desires of their souls are towards it, and they are seeking things above, and long to be in their own city, and Father's house, where Christ is; and to be at home with him, and for ever with him. This is the work and business of their lives now, and what their hearts are engaged in. The Syriac version renders it, “our work is in heaven”; the business, the exercise of our lives, and of our graces, tend that way:

from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ; Christ is now in heaven, at the Father's right hand, (^{<4023>}Acts 2:33), appearing in the presence of God for his people, and making intercession for them, (^{<3025>}Hebrews 7:25); and so will remain, until the time of the restitution of all things; when he will descend from heaven, and be revealed from thence: and this the saints look for, and expect; they have good reason for it; from his own words, from the words of the angels at the time of his ascension, (^{<4011>}Acts 1:11), and from the writings of the apostles and they expect him not merely as a Judge, under which consideration he will be terrible to the ungodly, but as a Saviour; who as he has already saved their souls from sin, and the dreadful effects of it, from the bondage and curse of the law, from the captivity of Satan, and from eternal ruin and wrath to come, so he will

save and redeem their bodies from the grave, corruption, mortality, and death, as follows.

Ver. 21. *Who shall change our vile body*, etc.] Which is defiled with sin, attended with frailty, and is mortal; and being dead, is sown and laid in the grave in corruption, weakness, and dishonour: in the Greek text it is, “the body of our humility”; sin has subjected the body to weakness, mortality, and death; and death brings it into a very low estate indeed, which is very humbling and mortifying to the pride and vanity man: now this vile body, in the resurrection morn, shall be stripped of all its vileness, baseness, and meanness; and be changed, not as to its substance, nor as to its form and figure, which shall always remain same, as did the substance and form of our Lord's body after his resurrection; but as to its qualities, it shall be changed from corruption to incorruption, (~~4650~~ 1 Corinthians 15:42), from mortality to immortality, from weakness to power, from dishonour to glory, and be free from all sin: so the Jews say ^{f26}, that

“the evil imagination, or corruption of nature, goes along with man in the hour of death, but does not return with him when the dead arise:”

and this change will be made by the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, when he shall descend from heaven; who as he is the pledge, the first fruits, the exemplar, and meritorious cause, so he will be the efficient cause of the resurrection of the saints; who will be raised and changed by him, by his power, and by virtue of union to him:

that it might be fashioned like unto his glorious body; or “the body of his glory”, as it is now in heaven, and of which his transfiguration on the mount was an emblem and pledge; for glory, power, incorruption, and immortality, the bodies of the saints in the resurrection shall be like to Christ's, though not equal to it, and shall shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. The Jews ^{f27} have a notion, that

“the holy blessed God will beautify the bodies of the righteous in future time, like the beauty of the first Adam:”

but their beauty and glory will be greater than that, it will be like the glory of the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, whose image they shall then bear: and whereas this requires almighty power, of which Christ is possessed, it will be done

according to the working, the energy of his power and might; or as the Syriac version renders it, “according to his great power”; which was put forth in raising himself from the dead, and whereby he was declared to be the Son of God: and

whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself; not only sin, Satan, and the world, but death and the grave; and so consequently able to raise the dead bodies of his saints, and to change the qualities of them, and make them like unto his own: and now who would but follow such persons, who are citizens of heaven, have their conversation there, look for Christ the Saviour from thence, (~~318D~~Philippians 3:20), who when he comes will raise the dead in Christ first, put such a glory on their bodies as is on his own, (~~314E~~1 Thessalonians 4:16), and take them to himself, that where he is they may be also? see (~~614B~~John 14:3 ~~316D~~Hebrews 6:12).