

CHAPTER 8

INTRODUCTION TO ROMANS 8

As the former chapter shows that sanctified ones are not free from the being of sin in them, which is a ground of general complaint and uneasiness; this chapter shows, that justified ones are freed from the guilt of sin, and secure from punishment for it; and have the utmost reason to rejoice and be glad, and even to triumph in a plerophory and full assurance of faith, on account of the various privileges they enjoy, through the grace of the Father, of the Son, and of the Spirit; and which are distinctly, largely, and severally mentioned: it begins, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:1), with taking notice of a particular privilege saints have in Christ, and, by virtue of union to him, security from all condemnation; and which is inferred from their sure and certain deliverance from sin by Christ, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:25), the persons sharing in this privilege are described by their being in Christ, and by their walking after the Spirit of Christ, in consequence of it: a reason confirming this privilege is given, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:2), taken either from the Gospel, declaring the saints' freedom from the law; or from the power and efficacy of the Spirit, delivering them from the tyranny and dominion of sin; or rather from the holiness of Christ's human nature, as a branch of their justification: this privilege is made more fully to appear, and the saints' interest in it by the mission of Christ, to bring in everlasting righteousness for them, which is the foundation of it, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:3), the occasion of which was the weakness of the law, or rather the impotency of man, through the corruption of nature, to fulfil the law: the sender, or the efficient cause of this mission, is God the Father; the person sent, his own Son; the manner in which he was sent, in human nature, which had the appearance of being sinful; what God did in it, he condemned sin in it; which is a reason, why there is no condemnation to them, that are in him; and the end of all this, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:4), was, that the law of righteousness might be perfectly fulfilled by Christ for them, or by them in him; who are described in part, as in (~~ROM~~Romans 8:1), upon the repetition of which part of the description, the apostle proceeds to show the difference between unregenerate and regenerate persons, (~~ROM~~Romans 8:5), partly by their characters; the one being carnal, or after the flesh, the other being spiritual,

or after the Spirit; and by their different affections, the one minding the things of the flesh, the other the things of the Spirit; the different issue and effect of which, namely, a carnal and a spiritual mind are observed, (~~816~~Romans 8:6), death following upon the one, life and peace upon the other; the reasons of which, with respect to the former, are given, (~~817~~Romans 8:7), taken from the enmity of the carnal mind to God, and the non-subjection of it to the law of God, and the impossibility of its being subject to it; and therefore nothing but death can be expected; from whence this conclusion is made, (~~818~~Romans 8:8), that unregenerate men are not in a state, nor in a capacity to please God, or do what is acceptable to him, the above being the disposition and temper of their minds: and then in (~~819~~Romans 8:9), the apostle returns to the argument from whence he had digressed, and suggests, that though he had said the above things of unregenerate men, he had other thoughts of those to whom he writes; they were not in the flesh, nor minded the things of the flesh, and so were not liable to condemnation and death; and which he proves by the inhabitation of the Spirit of God in them; for such who have him not, have no proof nor evidence of their being Christ's, and so consequently have no proof of their security from condemnation; and partly by Christ's being in them, and which is the evidence of their being in Christ, and so of the above privilege, (~~820~~Romans 8:10), the consequence of which is, that though by reason of sin the body is mortal, and does die, yet the soul lives not only naturally, but spiritually, by faith in Christ now, and in glory hereafter, by virtue of Christ's righteousness imputed to it, and so is free from condemnation and death; besides, by virtue of the Spirit's dwelling in them, their mortal bodies will be quickened in the general resurrection, (~~821~~Romans 8:11), and from all these blessings of divine goodness, both in soul and body, the apostle infers, that the saints are under obligation, not to live in a carnal, but in a spiritual manner, (~~822~~Romans 8:12), and to which he exhorts, (~~823~~Romans 8:13), and presses by motives, taken from the different consequences of those things; death following by living after the flesh, and life through the mortification of sin, by the Spirit of God: and whereas the walking after the Spirit, by which he had described those that are safe from condemnation, is owing to their being led by him; and their being led by him, being an evidence of their divine sonship, (~~824~~Romans 8:14), from hence he passes to consider the privilege of adoption: and that these saints were interested in this privilege, he proves (~~825~~Romans 8:15), partly by their not having the spirit of bondage which belongs to servants; and partly by their having the spirit of adoption, who had made known this grace unto them, and their

interest in it: and that they had received him as a spirit of adoption, was evident by their calling God their Father under his influence; and also by the witness he bore to their spirits, that they were the children of God, (~~41816~~Romans 8:16), of which they were conscious: and from this privilege of adoption, the apostle concludes heirship, (~~41817~~Romans 8:17), and which is of such a nature, that there is none like it; both with respect to the subject of it, God himself; with respect to him with whom they are heirs, Christ Jesus; and the way in which they come to share the glorious inheritance with him, is through suffering with him, and for him; and this they need not grudge to do, since there is no comparison between their sufferings, and the glory they shall enjoy, (~~41818~~Romans 8:18), which both Jews and Gentiles were in the expectation of; the latter of which are described in (~~41819~~Romans 8:19-22), by their name, the creature, the whole creation; and by their present condition, the Gospel being come among them to the conversion of many, which raised an expectation of many sons and daughters being born to God among them, (~~41819~~Romans 8:19), and by their former state and condition, (~~41820~~Romans 8:20), which is mentioned, to illustrate the grace of God in the present blessing bestowed upon them, in sending the Gospel to them; which state was a subjection to vanity, through the god of this world, who led them captive at his will, (~~41821~~Romans 8:21), and then by the deliverance of them, they were in hope and expectation of, from bondage to liberty, (~~41821~~Romans 8:21), and this groaning and travailing: in birth in a spiritual sense, for the bringing forth of many sons to God among the Gentiles, the apostle, and other ministers of the word, who had preached the Gospel among them, were witnesses of, (~~41822~~Romans 8:22), yea, not only the Gentiles, but the Jews also, who are described as having the first fruits of the Spirit, (~~41823~~Romans 8:23), were waiting for the manifestation of the children of God among the Gentiles, with them to complete at last the mystical body, who shall share together the glory before spoken of, which their sonship and heirship entitle them to; and for which there is encouragement to wait with patience and in hope, from the connection of salvation with the grace of hope; and from, the nature of the thing hoped for, which is unseen, but certain, (~~41824~~Romans 8:24,25). From hence the apostle proceeds to consider another privilege which the saints have, who are in the Spirit, and walk after the Spirit, the Spirit helps their infirmities; particularly in prayer, the matter of which, in some cases, they are at a loss about, (~~41826~~Romans 8:26), and this he does, by making intercession for them; the manner in which this is done in them, is with unutterable groans; and the rule according to which it is made, is

the will of God, the mind of the Spirit being known by the searcher of hearts, (^{<B187>}Romans 8:27), in a word, such are the privileges of believers in Christ, that every thing in the whole world, in heaven, and in earth, in themselves and others, whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse, work together for their good, so that nothing can go wrong with them in the issue, (^{<B188>}Romans 8:28), who are described by their love to God, and by their effectual calling, according to his purpose; which being mentioned, leads the apostle to the source and spring of all these and other privileges, the everlasting love of God; signified by his foreknowledge of his people, (^{<B189>}Romans 8:29), which is the cause of their predestination to a conformity to the image of Christ, the firstborn among many brethren; with which predestination, calling, justification, and glorification, are inseparably connected, (^{<B190>}Romans 8:30), from all which blessings of grace it may be concluded, that God is on the side of such persons, who are interested in these favours; and nothing is to be feared, but every good thing is to be expected by them, (^{<B191>}Romans 8:31), which is confirmed by an argument from the greater to the lesser, that if God has given his Son for them, he will freely give all things to them, (^{<B192>}Romans 8:32), in a view of which, the apostle rises up in a triumph of faith, and challenges all the enemies of the saints, and denies that any charge can be brought against them of any avail, since God is the justifier of them, (^{<B193>}Romans 8:33), or that they shall ever enter into condemnation, being secured from it by the death of Christ; and which security is yet more strengthened by his resurrection, session at the right hand of God, and intercession for them, (^{<B194>}Romans 8:34), and then asks, since Christ has shown such love to them, by these instances of it, what can separate from it, (^{<B195>}Romans 8:35), and enumerates several things which befall the saints in this life, which, however mean and abject they may render them in the esteem of men, do not at all abate the love of Christ to them: that such is their case, that they are exposed to afflictions and sufferings, and even death itself, for the sake of Christ, is proved (^{<B196>}Romans 8:36), by a testimony out of (^{<B197>}Psalms 44:22), and then an answer is returned to the above question in the negative, that none of the things mentioned could separate them from the love of Christ; so far from it, that by virtue of Christ who had loved them, they were conquerors, and more than conquerors in all these things, and over all their enemies, (^{<B198>}Romans 8:37), and the chapter is concluded in (^{<B199>}Romans 8:38,39), with the full and firm persuasion of the apostle, that nothing in the whole universe, in the whole compass of created beings, be they what they will, good or bad, or which are or shall be, an enumeration

of many of which is made, should ever separate him, or any of the people of God from his love, which is in Christ Jesus: so that upon the whole, notwithstanding indwelling sin, notwithstanding the various afflictions which attend them in this world, yet in consideration of the many privileges they enjoy, and the glory they are heirs of, they have great reason to rejoice, and look upon themselves to be in the most safe and happy condition.

Ver. 1. *There is therefore now, no condemnation,* etc..] The apostle having discoursed largely in the preceding chapter, concerning the struggle and combat believers feel within themselves, and opened the true causes and reasons of the saints' grievances and complaints, and what gives them the greatest uneasiness in this life, proceeds in this to take notice of the solid ground and foundation they have of spiritual peace and joy; which arise from their justification and adoption, the purposes and decrees of God, and particularly the everlasting and unchangeable love of God in Christ, the source, spring, and security, of all the blessings of grace. The chapter begins with a most comfortable account of the safety of believers in Christ; the apostle does not say there is nothing condemnable in them, for sin is in them and is condemnable, and condemned by them; and is hurtful to their spiritual joy and comfort, though it cannot bring them into condemnation, because of their being in Christ Jesus: he says there is *ουδεν κατακριμα*, “not one condemnation” to them, or one sentence of condemnation against them; which must be understood not of illegal ones, for they are liable to many condemnations from their hearts, from the world and the devil; but of legal, justifiable ones, and there are none such, neither from God the Father, for he justifies; nor from the Son, for by his righteousness they are justified; nor from the Holy Spirit, who bears witness to their spirits, that they are in a state of justification: there is not one condemnation lies against them, with respect to their numerous sins, original and actual, though every sin deserves one; not one from the law of God, of which sin is a transgression, for though that is a condemning law, yet it is only so to them that are under it; not to them that are Christ's, whom he has redeemed from it: moreover, the apostle says, that there is no condemnation now to the saints; which “now” must not be considered, as if it supposes that there was formerly condemnation to them; it is true indeed they were under a sentence of condemnation, as considered in Adam, and under a covenant of works with him, and in their own apprehensions when convicted; but as considered in Christ, as the elect of God always were, and who was their

surety, and so their security from all eternity, they never were in a state of condemnation: nor does this suppose, that there may be condemnation to them hereafter, though not now; for sin, the cause of condemnation, is removed; Christ has bore the condemnation their sins deserved in himself; their justification is from all sin, past, present, and to come; their union to Christ is indissoluble, and neither the love of Christ, nor the justice of God, will admit of their condemnation; for this “now”, is not an “adverb” of time, but a “note of illation”; the apostle inferring this privilege, either from the grace of God, which issues in eternal life, (~~4173~~ Romans 6:23); or from that certain deliverance believers shall have from sin, for which he gives thanks, (~~4174~~ Romans 7:24,25); The privilege itself here mentioned is, “no condemnation”: condemnation is sometimes put for the cause of it, which is sin, original and actual; now though God's elect are sinners, both by nature and practice, and after conversion have sin in them, their sanctification being imperfect, yet there is none in them with respect to justification; all is transferred to Christ, and he has removed all away; he has procured the pardon of all by his blood, he has abolished all by his sacrifice, he justifies from all by his righteousness, and saves his people from all their sins: condemnation may also be considered with respect to guilt; all mankind are guilty of Adam's sin, and are guilty creatures, as they are actual transgressors of the law; and when convinced by the Spirit of God, acknowledge themselves to be so; and upon the repetition of sin, contract fresh guilt on their consciences; but an heart sprinkled with the blood of Christ, is clear of guilt; for all the guilt of sin is removed to Christ, and he has took it away; hence there is no obligation to punishment on them, for whom Christ died: again, condemnation may design the sentence of it: now though the law's sentence passed upon all in Adam, and so upon God's elect, as considered in him; yet as this sentence has been executed on Christ, as their surety, in their room and stead, there is none lies against them: once more, condemnation may mean actual damnation, or eternal death, the wages of sin, which those who are in Christ shall never die; they are ordained to eternal life, and are redeemed from this death; they are made alive by Christ, and have eternal life secured to them in him, and which they shall certainly enjoy: the persons interested in this privilege are described, as such

which are in Christ Jesus; not as mere professors are in Christ, who may be lost and damned: but this being in Christ, respects either that union and interest which the elect of God have in Christ, from everlasting: being

loved by him with an everlasting love; betrothed to him in a conjugal relation; chosen in him before the foundation of the world; united to him as members to an head; considered in him in the covenant of grace, when he engaged for them as their surety; and so they were preserved in him, notwithstanding their fall in Adam; in time he took upon him their nature, and represented them in it; they were reckoned in him when he hung upon the cross, was buried, rose again, and sat down in heavenly places; in consequence of which union to Christ, and being in him, they are secure from all condemnation: or this may respect an open and manifestative being in Christ at conversion, when they become new creatures, pass from death to life, and so shall never enter into condemnation: hence they stand further described, as such

who walk not after the flesh; by which is meant, not the ceremonial law, but the corruption of nature, or the corrupt nature of man, called “flesh”; because propagated by carnal generation, has for its object fleshly things, discovers itself mostly in the flesh, and makes persons carnal and fleshly; the apostle does not say, there is no condemnation to them that have no flesh in them, for this regenerate persons have; nor to them that are in the flesh, that is, the body; but who walk not after the flesh, that is, corrupt nature; and it denotes such, who do not follow the dictates of it, do not make it their guide, or go on and persist in a continued series of sinning:

but after the spirit, by which is meant, not spiritual worship, in opposition to carnal ordinances; but rather, either a principle of grace, in opposition to corrupt nature, called “Spirit”, from the author, subject, and nature of it; or the Holy Spirit of God, the efficient cause of all grace: to walk after him, is to make him our guide, to follow his dictates, influences, and directions; as such do, who walk by faith on Christ, and in imitation of him, in the ways of righteousness and holiness; and such persons walk pleasantly, cheerfully, and safely: now let it be observed, that this walk and conversation of the saints, is not the cause of there being no condemnation to them; but is descriptive of the persons interested in such a privilege; and is evidential of their right unto it, as well as of their being in Christ: and it may be further observed, that there must be union to Christ, or a being in him, before there can be walking after the Spirit. The phrase, “but after the Spirit”, is left out in the Alexandrian copy, and in the Vulgate Latin, and Syriac versions; and the whole description of the persons in some copies, and in the Ethiopic version.

Ver. 2. *For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus*, etc..] These words are of difficult interpretation. They may be understood of the Gospel revealing and declaring deliverance from the law of Moses; wherefore there can be “no condemnation”, (~~EXX~~Romans 8:1), by it. The Gospel may be designed by “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus”; which may be called a law, not as succeeding the law of works, by which that is abrogated; nor as requiring conditions to be performed, or as enjoining duties to be observed, or as delivering out threatenings in case of disobedience; but as it is a doctrine, order, and chain of truths, as the Hebrew word **hrwt** signifies, and which is sometimes used for the Gospel, (~~2MB~~Isaiah 2:3 42:4) as **νομος** is, (~~EXX~~Romans 3:27). It may be called the law, or doctrine “of the Spirit”, because the Spirit is the author of it, and makes it powerful and effectual to the good of souls; by it the Spirit of God is conveyed into the heart; and the substance of it are spiritual things: and the “law of the Spirit of life”, because it discovers the way of life and salvation by Christ; is the means of quickening dead sinners; of working faith in them, by which they live on Christ, and of reviving drooping saints; and also it affords spiritual food, for the support of life: and this may be said to be “in Christ”, or by him, inasmuch as it comes from, and is concerning him; he is the sum, the substance, and subject matter of it:

the law of sin and death may intend the law of Moses, called “the law of sin”; not as if it was sinful, or commanded or encouraged sin, for it severely prohibits it; but because by it, through the corruption of man's nature, sin is irritated, and made to abound; it is the strength of sin, and by it is the knowledge of it: and it may be called “the law of death”, because it threatened with death, in case of disobedience; it sentences and adjudges transgressors to death; and when it is attended with power, it strikes dead all a man's hopes of life, by obedience to it; it leaves persons dead as it finds them, and gives no life, nor hopes of it; by it none can live, or be justified: now, though Christ is the author of deliverance from it, yet the Gospel is the means of revealing and declaring this deliverance; which designs not an exemption from obedience to it, but freedom from the curse and condemnation of it; and this sense well agrees with (~~EXX~~Romans 8:1); likewise the words are capable of being understood of the power and efficacy of the Spirit of God, in delivering regenerate persons from the dominion and tyranny of sin; and which may be considered as a reason why they “walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit”, (~~EXX~~Romans 8:1): “life” may well be ascribed to the Spirit of God, or be called the Spirit of life,

because he has life in himself as the Father and Son have; and is the author of life to others, of natural life to all men as creatures, and of spiritual life to the people of God in regeneration; and is a quickening spirit to them afterwards, as he will be to the dead bodies of the saints in the resurrection: by “the law” of the Spirit may be meant, the energy and power of the Spirit in conversion; which work requires power, and a man has no power of himself to effect it; but there is a power in the Spirit, which works irresistibly, though not by any force or compulsion to the will, but it moves upon it sweetly, powerfully, and effectually: and all this may be said to be “in Christ”: the life which the Spirit is the author and giver of, is in Christ as the head of his people, the proper repository of all grace, and the fountain of life; the Spirit himself is in him, both as God and as man, and as Mediator, hence the saints receive him and his gifts and graces from him; and the law of the Spirit, or his power and efficacy in working, is “in” or “by” Christ, through his sufferings and death, and in consequence of his mediation: now this powerful and quickening efficacy of the Spirit delivers regenerate persons from the force and tyranny of sin, called here “the law of sin and death”; a “law of sin”, because it has power and dominion over unregenerate persons, its throne is in the heart of man, and its laws are many and powerful; and “the law of death”, because its reign is tyrannical, barbarous and cruel, it is unto death: and from its governing influence, and tyrannical power, does the Spirit of God free his people in regeneration; not from the being of sin; nor from the rage of it, and disturbance it gives; nor from such power of it, but that they may fall into sin; but so as that sin does not properly reign over them, nor legally, nor universally, or so as to bring a death on their graces, and their persons into condemnation. Once more, those words may be understood of the holiness of Christ's human nature, as a branch of our justification, and freedom from the guilt of sin, and condemnation by it: for as “the law of sin and death” may design inherent corruption, and the force and power of it in the saints; so the opposite to it, “the law of the Spirit of life in Christ”, may mean the purity and holiness of his human nature. That Christ's human nature is pure and holy is certain, from express texts of Scripture, from its union to the Son of God, from the ends and purposes of its assumption, from the inefficacy of Satan's temptations, and from the whole course of his life and conversation; for though he was in the likeness of sinful flesh, was reckoned a sinner by men, was attended with infirmities, the effects of sin, though not sinful, had all the sins of his people imputed to him, and endured afflictions, and at last death; yet his nature was pure and untainted:

for he did not descend from Adam by ordinary generation; and though made of a woman, yet the flesh he took of her was sanctified by the Holy Ghost; his body was prepared by God, and curiously wrought by the Spirit, from whom his whole human nature received a fulness of habitual holiness: and this may be called “the Spirit of life” in him, because he is a quickening Spirit in regeneration, justification, and the resurrection from the dead; “the law” of it, because the holiness of his nature lies in, arises from, and is conformable to a law that is within him, written on his heart; and because, together with his obedience and death, it has a force, power, and authority, to free from condemnation; for this is not a mere necessary qualification of him to be the Mediator, or what renders his obedience, sacrifice, and intercession, efficacious and valuable, or is merely exemplary to us, but is what is imputed to us, as a part of our justification. The law requires a holy nature of us, we have not one, Christ assumed one for us, and so is the end of the law, or answers the requirement of the law in this respect, as well as in all others: and hence, though sanctification begun in us, does not free us from the being of sin, and all its force and power, yet perfect sanctification in Christ frees from all condemnation by it.

Ver. 3. *For what the law could not do*, etc..] This is not to be understood of “the law of the mind”, in opposition to “the law of sin”, which indeed is very feeble and impotent; man had a power originally of obeying the divine commands, but through sin he has lost his strength and power; and even a renewed mind cannot perform what it would, which is owing to the flesh, or corrupt nature; it has strong desires after holiness, and keeping all the commandments of God; but these desires cannot be fulfilled by it, and indeed without Christ it can do no good thing: nor is the ceremonial law intended, though this is weak, and there are many things it could not do; it could not expiate and atone for sin; nor remove the guilt of it, nor cleanse from the filth of it: But the moral law is here designed; this, though it can, and does accuse of sin, can convince of it, can curse, condemn, and condemn to death for it; yet it could not condemn sin itself, which is only abolished by Christ; it cannot restrain from sin, nor change a sinful nature, nor sanctify an impure heart; nor free from the guilt of sin, nor comfort a distressed mind under a sense of it, it cannot subject persons, or bring them to before God, or give life, or save from death; the reason is,

in that, or because

it was weak through the flesh. The weakness of the law is total and universal, it has no strength at all; though not original and natural, but accidental; it is owing to the flesh, or the corrupt nature of man: or rather the weakness is in sinful men, and not in the law; and the sense is this, that human nature is so weakened by sin, that it is incapable of fulfilling the law; the weakness of the law is not from itself, but from man: to this agrees what the Jewish writers^{f139} say,

“there is not a word in the law “weak”, or broken; wherefore when thou considerest and observest it, that thou dost not find it strong, as an hammer that breaks the rocks, *awh Ænym açl j yaw*, “but if weak, it is of thyself”.”

To which may be added that usual saying of theirs, *hrwt hl a zw[^ya*, “there is no strength but the law”^{f140}; unless the apostle can be thought to oppose this notion of theirs. Wherefore because of the weakness of the law, or of human nature to fulfil it,

God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh. The person sending is God, who gave the law weakened by the flesh, against whom we have sinned: and who is righteous, pure, and holy: which considerations enhance his grace and goodness, in the mission of Christ. This must be understood of God the Father, who is here manifestly distinguished from the Son; and who is God, but not solely, or to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; and who sent Christ, though not singly, for the “Lord God and his Spirit sent” him, (²³⁸¹⁶Isaiah 48:16); though as it is most agreeable for a father to send his son, this is generally ascribed to him; and he being the first person in the Godhead, is the first in order of working, and so in redemption. The person sent is his own Son; not by creation, as angels and men are; nor by adoption, as saints are; nor is he called so, on account of his incarnation, resurrection, or mediatorship, for he was the Son of God antecedent to either of them; but his own proper Son, and not in any metaphorical sense; a Son of the same nature with him, begotten of him, and his Son in that nature in which he is God. The act of sending, does not suppose inequality of nature; for though he that is sent is not greater, yet as great as he that sends; two equals, by agreement, may send each other; a divine person may assume an office, and under that consideration be sent, without supposing inferiority of nature, as in the case of the Holy Spirit; and an inferiority as to office, is allowed in the case of the Son; God sent his Son under the

character of a servant, to do work: nor does this act imply change of place; there is indeed a “terminus a quo”, from whence he was sent, from heaven, from his Father there; and there is a “terminus ad quem”, to which he was sent into this world; but then this coming of his from heaven to earth, was not by local motion, but by assumption of nature; nor was it out of any disrespect to his Son, but out of love to us, that he sent him; nor was he sent against his will; he showed no reluctance at the proposal to him in the council of peace, but the utmost willingness; nor any at his coming into the world: nor at the work itself, which he entered upon, and went through with the greatest eagerness and cheerfulness: nor does it suppose him whilst sent, and here on earth, to be in a state of absence and separation from his Father; he was still in his bosom, yet in heaven, and his Father always with him: but it supposes that he existed before he was sent; that he was a person, and distinct from the Father, or he could not be sent by him; that he had authority from him, considered in his office capacity: in a word, this sending of the Son, designs the manifestation of him in human nature; as appears from the form and manner in which he was sent, “in the likeness of sinful flesh”; which expresses the reality of his incarnation, of his having a true real human nature; for flesh is not to be taken strictly for a part of the body, nor for the whole body only, but for the whole human nature, soul and body; which though it looked like a sinful nature, yet was not sinful: the likeness of it denotes the outward appearance of Christ in it; who was born of a sinful woman; was subject to the infirmities of human nature, which though not sinful, are the effects of sin; was reckoned among transgressors, was traduced as one himself by men, and treated as such by the justice of God; he having all the sins of his people on him, for which he was answerable: “and” hence God, “for sin, condemned sin in the flesh”; not the law, which was weak through the flesh; nor sinners, who broke the law; but sin itself, the transgression of the law, all kind of sin, and all that is in it the act of condemning it, does not design God's disapproving of it, and judging it to be evil; this he could not but do, as being contrary to his nature, an act of hostility against him, a breach of his law, and what brings ruin upon his creatures; and this he would have done, if Christ had never suffered in the flesh; and he has taken other methods, both among his own people and the world, to show his dislike of sin: nor does this act intend the destruction of the power and dominion of sin, in regeneration; this is the work of the Spirit, and is done in our flesh, and not in the flesh of Christ; but it is to be understood of the condemnation and punishment of sin, in the person of Christ: sin was laid on him by the Father, and he voluntarily

took it upon himself; justice finding it there, charges him with it, demands satisfaction, and condemns him for it; and hereby sin was expiated, the pardon of it procured, and it was, entirely done away: now this is said to be done “for sin”; some join the phrase with the former part of the text, either with the word “sending”, and take the sense to be, that God sent his Son for, or on the account of sin, to take it away, and save his people from it; or “with sinful flesh”, which was taken from a sinful person; but it stands best as it does in our version, and may be rendered “of sin”; for God condemned sin of sin in Christ, that is, by the vengeance he took of it, in the strictness of his justice, through the sufferings of his Son, he showed sin to be exceeding sinful indeed; or rather “by sin”; that is, by an offering for sin, so the word is used in (³¹⁰⁶Hebrews 10:6,8); and answers to **hajj** , in (³⁴⁰⁶Psalm 40:6), by being made which, sin was condemned “in the flesh” of Christ, who was put to death in the flesh, “for” the sins of his people, and bore all the punishment due unto them: from hence we learn the evil of sin, the strictness of justice, and the grace of the Redeemer.

Ver. 4. *That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us*, etc..] By the righteousness of the law, is not meant the righteousness of the ceremonial law, though that was fulfilled by Christ; but of the moral law, which requires holiness of nature, righteousness of life, and death in case of disobedience; active righteousness, or obedience to the precepts of the law, is designed here. This is what the law requires; obedience to the commands of it is properly righteousness; and by Christ's obedience to it we are made righteous, and this gives the title to eternal life: now this is said to be “fulfilled in us”; this is not fulfilled by us in our own persons, nor can it be; could it, where would be the weakness of the law? man might then be justified by it, and so the grace of God, and the righteousness of Christ, must be set aside: there never was any mere man that could fulfil it; for obedience to it must not only be performed perfectly, but with intenseness of mind and spirit; a man must be sinless in thought, word, and deed; and this would be to put man upon a level with Adam in a state of innocence, and the angels in heaven: nor is this to be understood of any righteousness inherent in man; internal holiness is never called the righteousness of the law; and could it be thought to be righteousness, yet it can never be reckoned the whole righteousness of the law: and though it is a fruit of Christ's death, it is the work of the Spirit, and is neither the whole, nor any part of our justification: but this is to be understood of the righteousness of the law fulfilled by Christ, and imputed to us; Christ has fulfilled the whole

righteousness of the law, all the requirements of it; this he has done in the room and stead of his people; and is imputed to them, by virtue of a federal union between him and them, he being the head, and they his members; and the law being fulfilled by him, it is reckoned all one as it was fulfilled in, or if by them; and hence they are personally, perfectly, and legally justified; and this is the end of Christ's being sent, of sin being laid on him, and condemned in him. The descriptive character of the persons, who appear to be interested in this blessing, is the same with that in (~~Exo~~Romans 8:1),

who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit: (see Gill on “~~Exo~~Romans 8:1”).

Ver. 5. *For they that are after the flesh,* etc..] By flesh is meant the corruption of nature; and they may be said to be “after” it, not all that have flesh in them, for the best of saints have it in them; regenerating grace does not remove it from them; there is a difference between being in and after the flesh, and flesh being in us; but such who are as they were born, who have nothing but flesh, or corrupt nature in them, in whom that is the governing principle, whose minds are carnal, and whose whole walk and conversation is, such, are here meant: and these persons

do mind the things of the flesh: not merely things corporeal, belonging to the welfare of the body; or things natural for the improvement of the mind; or things civil, as riches, etc.. which may be minded and sought after in a lawful way; but things sinful, the lusts, works, and sins of the flesh: which they may be said to “mind”, since they judge them to be good; the bent and application of their minds are to them; their affections are set upon them; they are solicitously careful to provide for them, and savour and relish them: nor is it to be wondered at, since these are natural to them; they are opposite to God and so agreeable to them; they have no mind, thought, affection, or relish, for anything else; and it is entirely owing to mighty grace, that any mind the things of the Spirit:

but they that are after the Spirit; not such who follow the dictates of their own spirits; or are outwardly reformed; nor all that have spiritual gifts; or profess themselves to have the grace and Spirit of God; but such who are born again, are renewed in the spirit of their minds, in whom grace is the governing principle: the work of the Spirit is begun in them, though not perfected: the Spirit himself dwells in them, and they walk after him; their minds and conversations are spiritual, though there may be a great deal of

carnality in their hearts, thoughts, words, and actions, which is matter of grief unto them: these mind

the things of the Spirit; the graces of the Spirit; spiritual blessings; the doctrines of the Gospel; spiritual sacrifices and services: these have some understanding of, can discern the difference between them and carnal things, judge and approve of them as right; have a great esteem and affection for them, and taste a sweetness in them. They have no mind naturally to these things; nor is the bias of their minds altered by themselves, nor could it; this is wholly the work of the Spirit of God; and these things are minded only because, and as they are agreeable to the spiritual part, the inward man.

Ver. 6. *For to be carnally minded is death*, etc..] The phrase the apostle here uses, includes the best part of corrupt man; the mind, the understanding, the judgment, the will, the affections, the thoughts, the reason, and reasonings of man; and may be rendered, “the wisdom”, or “prudence of the flesh”; so called, to distinguish it from that wisdom which is from above; from that natural and civil wisdom, which is laudable; and it shows that the wisest part of man is but carnal: all sorts of persons destitute of the grace of God are concerned herein; or this is applicable to them all, as the sensualist, the worldling, the proud Pharisee, and the wise disputer of this world. This wisdom of the flesh, or carnal mindedness, “is death”; not that it is conversant about death; or that such persons are thoughtful of it, endeavour to make it familiar to them; or are desirous of it, and esteem it as a privilege; this only spiritually minded men do: but the sense is, that this issues in death; death is not the object, but the end of carnal mindedness; carnal mindedness, so far as it prevails in the saints, brings a death upon them. It is true, indeed, they cannot die a spiritual, or an eternal death; yet sometimes they are very dead and lifeless in their frames, in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; which is frequently owing to their carnality: and the effect of this must needs be death in carnal men; since it alienates from God; it renders them transgressors of the law, and obnoxious to its curse; it sets the soul against, and diverts it from Christ the way of life; and if grace prevent not, must be the cause of, and issue in eternal death; because it is sin and sinful, it is enmity to God, it disqualifies for life, and makes persons fit companions for the heirs of wrath:

but to be spiritually minded, is life and peace; spiritually minded men are the only living persons in a spiritual sense, for all that are in and after the flesh are dead; and so far as carnal mindedness prevails in professors, there is a deadness in them as to all spiritual exercises; and oftentimes as to outward appearance, there is no difference between them and dead men: but spiritually minded men are evidently living persons; they have a spiritual discerning of spiritual things; they breathe after them, savour and relish them; they talk of spiritual things, and walk in a spiritual manner; they are not only alive, but lively in the exercise of grace and discharge of duty; and are the means of enlivening others; and their end will be everlasting life; which is certain from the declared will and promise of God, and from the grace of life and Spirit of life which are in them. “Peace” also is another effect of spiritual mindedness; such enjoy peace of conscience: this is a fruit of the Spirit; a part of the kingdom of grace they are possessed of; and the things their minds are conversant with are productive of it; which is the gift of God, passes all understanding, and is of more worth than all the world: such men are also of peaceable dispositions in commonwealths, in neighbourhoods, in families, and churches; induced thereunto by the noblest arguments; and their end will be peace, which will be perfect and eternal.

Ver. 7. *Because the carnal mind is enmity against God*, etc..] These words contain a reason why the issue of carnal mindedness is death; because the carnal mind, the wisdom of the flesh, is not only an enemy, but enmity itself against God: against his being; it reasons against it; it wishes he was not; it forms unworthy notions of him; thinks him such an one as itself; and endeavours to bury him in forgetfulness, and erase out of its mind all memorials of him: it is at enmity against his perfections; either denying his omniscience; or arraigning his justice and faithfulness; or despising his goodness, and abusing his grace and mercy: it finds fault with, and abhors his decrees and purposes; quarrels with his providences; it is implacable against his word and Gospel; especially the particular doctrines of grace, the Father's grace in election, the Son's in redemption, and the Spirit's in regeneration; and has in the utmost contempt the ordinances and people of Christ. This enmity is universal, it is in all men in unregeneracy, either direct or indirect, hidden or more open; it is undeserved; it is natural and deeply rooted in the mind, and irreconcilable without the power and grace of God. It shows itself in an estrangedness from God; in holding friendship with the world, in harbouring the professed enemies of God, in

living under the government of sin and Satan; in hating what God loves, and in loving what God hates; in omitting what God commands, and committing what he forbids; it manifests itself in their language, and throughout the whole of their conversations.

For it is not subject to the law of God; carnal men are subject to the law's sentence of condemnation, but not to its precepts, by obedience to them; there may be an external, and which is a servile obedience to it, but not a free, voluntary, internal one, and still less a perfect one: the carnal mind is so far from an obedient subjection to the law, that it is far off from the law, and the law from that; it hates and despises it, thwarts and contradicts it in every instance, and, as much as in it lies, makes it void; which fully proves the enmity of the carnal mind against God; for hereby his being is tacitly denied, his sovereignty disputed, his image defaced, his government withdrawn from, and these persons are declared, and declare themselves enemies to him:

neither indeed can be; without regenerating grace, without the power and Spirit of God, unless it is written upon the heart by the finger of God; for carnal men are dead in sin, and so without strength to obey the law; and besides, the carnal mind, and the law of God, are directly contrary one to another. Where is man's power and free will? no wonder the carnal mind do not stoop to the Gospel of Christ, when it is not, and cannot be subject to the law of God. Hence we see the necessity of almighty power, and efficacious grace in conversion. It is Christ's work to subject men to the law, and which is done when he justifies by his righteousness: agreeably to which the Targum on (²⁵¹¹Isaiah 53:11); paraphrases it thus:

“in his wisdom he shall justify the righteous, that **atyraw ʿyaygs adb[çl]**, “he may subject many to the law”.”

And in (²⁵¹¹Isaiah 53:11), the transgressors he hath subjected to the law.

Ver. 8. *So then they that are in the flesh*, etc..] They that are in the flesh are the same who are said to be after it, (⁴⁸⁸⁵Romans 8:5), and are there described. Such

cannot please God; men, whilst unregenerate, and as such, cannot please God; for though the persons of God's elect are wellpleasing to him always, as considered in Christ, in whom they are loved with an everlasting love, and were chosen in him, and all provisions grace and glory made for them

in him; yet as considered in themselves, and whilst in the flesh, do not please him; for they are straying from him, are alienated from his life, are destitute of all grace, and particularly faith, without which it is impossible to please him; are filthy and unclean, and hence, whilst such have no enjoyment of him, or communion with him; wherefore he sends his Spirit to work in them that which is wellpleasing in his sight: but this is not to be understood so much of persons, and their non-acceptableness to God, as of the inability of unregenerate men to obtain the good will of God, or make their peace with him; which they have no inclination to, being enmity against him; and were they inclined to it, know not how to go about it; nor can they draw nigh to God to treat with him about terms of peace; nor can they do that which can procure peace; Christ is the only person that can, make peace, and has done it: or rather, of the impotency of natural men to do anything which pleasing in the sight of God. There are many things which are pleasing to him, such as prayer, praise, giving of alms, keeping his commandments, and walking in his ways; but these unregenerate men cannot do in any acceptable manner to God; for they are without the Spirit, without Christ, without faith; and in all they do have no view to the glory of God: they have neither grace, nor strength, nor right principles, nor right ends.

Ver. 9. *But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit*, etc..] That is, ye are not carnal, but spiritual men; or ye are not in a state of unregeneracy, but in a state of grace: the reason proving this is,

if so be, or “seeing”

that the Spirit of God dwell in you; the inhabitation of the Spirit is a distinguishing character of a regenerate man; which is to be understood not of his omnipresence, nor of a participation of his gifts, whether ordinary or extraordinary: nor does the Spirit of God only dwell in his people by his graces, but in person as in office, and in a way of special favour; as a spirit of illumination, regeneration, sanctification, and faith, as a comforter, a spirit of adoption, an intercessor, and as a pledge and seal of happiness: which inhabitation is personal; is not peculiar to him to the exclusion of the Father and of the Son; is expressive of property and dominion; is not confined to the souls of men, for he also dwells in their bodies; it is operative, powerful, and perpetual; it is the security of the saints' perseverance, and the pledge of their resurrection and future glory. This is owing not to any goodness in them, or to any fitness and preparations of

theirs to receive him; but to a federal union to Christ and relation to him, to our Lord's ascension and intercession, and to the love and grace of the Father; and this proves a man to be a regenerate man, to be in the Spirit, and not in the flesh; for the Spirit of God is never in this sense in an unregenerate man, nor is he in any such sense without his grace; so that the indwelling of the Spirit is the grand evidence of relation to God, of an interest in Christ and union to him, and of a man's state and condition Godward;

now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. By “the Spirit of Christ”, is not meant the human soul of Christ; nor his divine nature; nor his Gospel, which is the Spirit that gives life; but the Holy Ghost, the third person in the Trinity, the same which is called the Spirit before; and proves Christ to be God, he proceeds from him as from the Father, is sent by him, and with which Christ's human nature was fitted and filled. The Jews^{f141} often speak of *j yçmh j wr*, or *j yçmd aj wr* “the spirit of the Messiah”. Now to have him is not barely to partake of his gifts, but of his graces; to be possessed of him as one's own; to have communion with him, and to have him dwelling in us. There are some who have him not, nor never will have him, being none of Christ's; and God's elect, whilst in an unregenerate state, are without him; and whilst such, though they are his chosen and adopted ones, they are his by his Father's gift and his own purchase, they are his pardoned ones through his blood, and his justified ones through his righteousness; yet they are not his regenerated, called, and sanctified ones; nor can they claim any interest in him; nor are they known to be his by themselves or others; nor have they any communion with him, or enjoyment of him.

Ver. 10. *And if Christ be in you*, etc..] Not as he is in the whole world, and in all his creatures, or circumscriptively, and to the exclusion of himself elsewhere; for his person is above in heaven, his blood is within the vail, his righteousness is upon his people, and his Spirit and grace are in them; and so he comes to be in them, he is formed in their hearts by the Spirit of God in regeneration, when the Father reveals him not only to them, but in them; and he himself enters and takes possession of them as his own, manifests himself to them, communicates his grace, and grants them communion with him. This being their case,

the body is dead because of sin: by which is meant, not the body of sin, though this is called a body, and a body of death, yet is not dead, much less

is it so by reason of sin; but this fleshly body, because liable to afflictions, which are called deaths, has the seeds of mortality in it, and shall in a little time die, notwithstanding the gift of it to Christ, though it is redeemed by his blood, and united to him; the reason of it is not merely the decree of God, nor does it arise from the original constitution of the body, but sin is the true reason of it, sin original and actual, indwelling sin, but not by way of punishment for it, for Christ has bore that, death is one of the saints' privileges, it is for their good, and therefore desired by them; but that they might be rid of it, and free from all those troubles which are the consequences of it:

but the spirit is life, because of righteousness; not the Spirit of God, who lives in himself, is the author of life to others, of natural and spiritual life, continues as a principle of life in the saints, is the pledge of everlasting life, and is so to them because of the righteousness of Christ nor grace, or the new creature, which is sometimes called Spirit, and may be said to be life, it lives unto righteousness, and is owing to and supported by the righteousness of the Son of God; but the soul of man is here meant, in opposition to the body, which is of a spiritual nature, immaterial and immortal; and this may be said in believers to be life or live, for it not only lives naturally, but spiritually; it lives a life of holiness from Christ, a life of faith upon him, and a life of justification by him, and will live eternally; first in a separate state from the body after death, till the resurrection morn, it does not die with the body, nor sleep with it in the grave, nor is it in any "limbus" or state of purgatory, but in paradise, in heaven, in the arms and presence of Christ, where it is not inactive, but employed in the best of service: and after the resurrection it will live with the body in glory for evermore; and this is owing to righteousness, not to the righteousness of man, but the imputed righteousness of Christ; for as it was sin, and loss of righteousness thereby which brought death on man, the righteousness of Christ is that on which believers live now, and is their right and title to eternal life hereafter.

Ver. 11. *But if the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead*, etc..] These words are not to be understood as they are by some, of the continued work of sanctification in the heart by the Spirit of God; for regeneration, and not sanctification, is signified by quickening, which quickening occurs when the Spirit of God first takes up his dwelling in the soul; besides, the apostle had spoke of the life of the spirit or soul before; and they are mortal bodies, and not its mortal souls, which are said to be

quickened, for these cannot mean the body of sin, or the remains of corruption, as they are said to be, and which are never quickened, nor never can be. To understand the words in such a sense, is not so agreeable to the resurrection of Christ here mentioned; whereas Christ's resurrection is often used as an argument of ours, which is designed here, where the apostle argues from the one to the other. The Spirit

dwells in the saints as his temples: the Spirit that dwells in them is, “the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead”; by whom is meant God the Father, to whom the resurrection of Christ from the dead is here and elsewhere ascribed. This “periphrasis” of him is used, to express the power, justice, and grace of God in the resurrection of his Son; to show that the Spirit of God was concerned in it; and the greatness of the person of the Spirit that dwells in the saints; and what reason they have to believe the sanctification of their souls, and the redemption of their bodies, since such a divine Spirit dwells in them; wherefore,

he that raised up Christ from the dead, which is the Father,

shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you; not the souls of the saints, for these die not: but their “bodies”, called “mortal”, because appointed to death, are under the sentence of it, and in which it already works; “your” bodies and not others; mortal ones, and not airy, celestial, immortal ones; the very same they carry about with them here, and in which the Spirit of God had dwelt. These shall be quickened. The Jews frequently express the resurrection by *pytmh tyj t*, “the quickening of the dead” some distinguish^{f142} between *hmqwt* “the resurrection” of the dead, which is common to the wicked, and *tyj t*, “the quickening” of them, peculiar to the righteous: though, it is observed, this distinction does not always hold: however, this act of quickening seems here designed to express the peculiar blessing, of the saints; for though the wicked shall be raised from the dead, yet they will not rise with the saints, nor by virtue of union to Christ, nor to an eternal life of joy and happiness; in this sense the saints only will be quickened, “by the Spirit”; not as an instrument, but as a coefficient cause with the Father and Son: or “because of the Spirit that dwelleth in you”, the bodies of the saints are the temples of the Holy Ghost, they are sanctified by him, where he continues to dwell by virtue of union to Christ, and in consequence of it will quicken them at the last day; so the Jews say, that the Holy Ghost brings to the resurrection of the dead^{f143}.

Ver. 12. *Therefore, brethren, we are debtors,* etc..] The appellation, “brethren”, is not used, because they were so by nation or by blood, though many in the church at Rome were Jews; nor merely in a free familiar way of speaking; but rather on account of church membership, and especially because they were in the same spiritual relation to God and Christ: and the use of it by the apostle, shows his great humility and condescension, and his love and affection for them, and is designed to engage their attention and regard to what he was about to say, to them and of them; as that they were “debtors”; which is to be understood of them not as sinners, who as such had been greatly in debt, and had nothing to pay, and were liable to the prison of hell; for no mere creature could ever have paid off their debts; but Christ has done it for them, and in this sense they were not debtors: but they were so as saints, as men freed from condemnation and death; which doctrine of Christian liberty is no licentious one; it does not exempt from obedience, but the more and greater the favours are which such men enjoy, the more obliged they are to be grateful and obey; they are debtors, or trader obligation,

not to the flesh, to corrupt nature,

to live after the flesh, the dictates of that; nor should they be, both on God's account, since that is enmity to him, and is not subject to his law; and on their own account, because it is an enemy to them, brings reproach on them, and exposes them to death; but though it is not expressed, it is understood, that they are debtors to God; to God the Father, both as the God of nature, and of grace, as their covenant God and Father in Christ, who has blessed them with all spiritual blessings in him; to Christ himself, who has redeemed them by his blood: and to the Spirit of God who is in them, and for what he has been, is, and will be to them.

Ver. 13. *For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die,* etc..] Such persons are dead, whilst they live, and shall die a second or an eternal death, if grace prevent not. It may be asked, whether one that has received the grace of God in truth, can live after the flesh; flesh, or corrupt nature, though still in such a person, has not the dominion over him: to live in sin, or in a continued course of sinning, is contrary to the grace of God; but flesh may prevail and greatly influence the life and conversation, for a while; how long this may be the case of a true believer, under backslidings, through the power of corruptions and temptations, cannot be known; but certain it is, that it shall not be always thus with him. It may be further inquired,

whether such an one may be so left to live after the flesh, as to die and perish eternally; Christ expressly says, such shall not die that live and believe in him; grace, which is implanted in their souls, is an incorruptible and never dying seed; grace and glory are inseparably connected together; but then such persons may die with respect to their frames, their comforts and the lively exercise of grace, which seems to be here intended; as appears from the next clause,

but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live.

This is not to be understood of the mortification of the body itself; nor does it design any maceration or afflicting of it by any severities of life; nor of the destruction of the body of sin by Christ: or of the being and principles of sin in the saints by the Spirit of Christ; which is contrary to Scripture, to the experience of the saints, who find it in them, alive in them, and to their expectations, whilst in this world: nor is this mortification to be considered as a part of regeneration, which by some divines is made to consist in a sense of sin, grief for it, and hatred of it, in avoiding it, and in an expulsion of vicious habits and inclinations; but it should be observed, that the apostle is writing to persons that were already regenerate; nor does he ever exhort persons to regenerate themselves, which he would do here, if this was the sense; regeneration is a work of the Spirit of God, in which men are passive, whereas in the mortification here spoken of the saints are active, under the influence of the Spirit of God; besides, regeneration is done at once, and does not admit of degrees; and in and by that, sin, as to its being and principle, is so far from being destroyed, that it seems rather to revive in the sense and apprehension of regenerated persons: but it is a mortification of the outward actings of sin in the conversation, called, “the deeds of the body”: and in the Claromontane exemplar, and in the Vulgate Latin version, “the deeds of the flesh”: or as the Syriac version renders it, *ykpwh*, “the conversations”, or manners of it, and so the Ethiopic version; that is, its outward course of life: and it signifies a subduing and weakening the vigour and power of sin in the lives and conversations of the saints, to which the grace and assistance of the Spirit are absolutely necessary; and such who are enabled to do so, “shall live” comfortably; they shall have communion with Christ here, and shall live a life of glory with him hereafter. Such a way of speaking as this is used by the Jews; say they ^{f144},

“what shall a man do that he may live? it is replied, *wmx* [*tymy*, “he shall mortify himself”;

which the gloss explains by “he shall humble himself”; walk humbly before God and men, in his life and conversation.

Ver. 14. *For as many as are led by the Spirit of God*, etc..] Not by the spirit of the world, or of the devil, or by their own spirits: the act of leading ascribed to the Spirit is either in allusion to the leading of blind persons, or such who are in the dark; or rather to the leading of children and teaching them to go; which supposes life in those that are led, and some degree of strength, though a good deal of weakness; and is a display of powerful and efficacious grace, and is always for their good: the Spirit of God leads them from sin, and from a dependence on their own righteousness, in paths they formerly knew not, and in which they should go, in the paths of faith and truth, of righteousness and holiness, and in a right, though sometimes a rough way; he leads them to the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, and to the fulness of grace in him; into the presence of God, to the house and ordinances of God; into the truths of the Gospel, from one degree of grace to another, and at last to glory; which he does gradually, by little and little he leads them to see the iniquity of their hearts and natures, to lay hold on Christ and salvation by him, into the doctrines of grace, and the love and favour of God, and proportionally to the strength he gives: now such persons,

they are the sons of God: not in so high a sense as Christ is; nor in so low a sense as Adam was, and angels are; much less in such sense as wicked magistrates be; nor merely as professors of religion in common; but by adoption, not national, such as that of the Jews, but special; and which has some agreement with civil adoption, it being of persons to an inheritance, which they have no legal right unto, and it is done freely: though there is a difference between the one and the other; for in divine adoption there is no need on the adopter's side; nor no worth on the side of the adopted; proper qualifications are conveyed to them for the enjoyment of the inheritance, and which is enjoyed, the father and firstborn being living, and is an inheritance which vastly exceeds all others: now this blessing of being the sons of God, is owing not to ourselves, nor to our earthly parents, but to God; to the Father, who predestinated to it, and fixed it in the covenant of grace; to Christ, it is by him, as the Son of God, it is through him, as the Mediator, and it is for him, it is for his glory; and also to the Spirit of God, who manifests it, works faith to receive it, witnesses to it, and seals up to the full enjoyment of it. This favour is an instance of surprising grace, exceeds other blessings, makes the saints honourable, is attended with

many privileges, and lasts for ever: such who are in this relation to God, ought to ascribe it to his grace, to require him with thankfulness, and a becoming conversation, to be followers of him, and to love, honour, and obey him.

Ver. 15. *For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear,* etc..] By “the spirit of bondage” is meant, not the Spirit of God: for this is just the reverse of his character, who is a “free Spirit”, or *hbydn j wr*, “a Spirit of liberty”; and is contrary to his work and office, which is to show a soul its state of bondage by nature, and to deliver out of it; and though fear may arise from the convictions of sin, yet this he removes by discoveries of love; moreover, his work is to make application of grace and righteousness to sensible sinners, and to administer comfort to distressed minds, and make them meet for glory; and it is also contrary to the character of the persons in whom he dwells, who are the sons of God; besides, the Spirit of God, as a spirit of adoption, is in the text itself manifestly opposed to this spirit: but by it is intended a man's own spirit whilst in a state of unregeneracy, and particularly whilst under a work of the law; and it refers to that “pharisaical” spirit which prevailed among the Jews. Men in a state of nature are under a spirit of bondage to the lusts of the flesh; by these they are captivated and enslaved, and the consequence of it is a fearful apprehension, when convicted, of death, judgment, and wrath to come. They are in slavery to the god of this world, who leads them captive, and by injecting into them fears of death, are subject to bondage. The Jews in particular were in bondage to the law, ceremonial and moral; to the ceremonial law, as circumcision, observation of days, and multitudes of sacrifices. This law was an handwriting of ordinances against them; it obliged them to keep the whole moral law; the sacrifices of it could not take away sin; the breach of it, being punishable with death, must unavoidably induce a “spirit of bondage unto fear”: they were in bondage to the moral law, which naturally genders to it, as it demands perfect obedience, but gives no strength to perform; as it shows a man his sin and misery, but not his remedy, as it accuses charges with sin, and curses and condemns for moreover, a spirit of bondage is brought upon persons through it, when they seek for justification and salvation by the works of it, for such obey it with mercenary views, not from love, but fear; and their comforts rise and fall according to their obedience: now these believers, though they had formerly been under such a spirit of bondage, were now delivered from it; nor should they return to it again:

but ye have received the spirit of adoption, by which is designed not a spirit of charity, or love, or inherent grace: adoption is not owing to inherent grace, or is any part of it: regeneration and adoption differ; adoption makes men the children of God, regeneration makes them appear to be so by giving them the nature of children; adoption is not a work of grace in us, but an act of grace without us, having its complete being in the mind of God; it is antecedent to a work of grace, inherent grace is a consequence of it, though no man knows, or has the comfort of his adoption, until he believes: rather a filial child like spirit, such a spirit as becomes the children of God is here meant; a spirit of freedom with God, of reverence of him, and of love of him, and of obedience to him; springing from filial affection and without mercenary views; a meek, harmless, and inoffensive spirit. Though it seems best of all to understand by it the Holy Spirit of God, who is distinguished from the spirit of believers, (~~81816~~ Romans 8:16), and is called “the Spirit of his Son” in a parallel place, (~~80416~~ Galatians 4:6), and stands opposed here to a spirit of bondage, and may be so called because as a spirit of grace he flows from adoption; and is the discoverer, applier, witness, and ratifier of the blessing of adoption; and is the pledge, earnest, or seal of the future adoption or eternal inheritance: now the Spirit is received as such from the Father and the Son into the hearts of believers, by the means of the Gospel, in order to make known their adoption to them, which is an instance of grace, and ought to be acknowledged; for

we cry Abba, Father: by the help of the spirit of adoption; we, the saints under the Gospel dispensation, in opposition to the legal one, under which they had not that freedom; “cry” which denotes an internal vehemency and affection of soul, and an outward calling upon God, as a Father, with confidence; “Abba, Father, Father” is the explanation of the word “Abba”, and which is added for explanation sake, and to express the vehemency of the affection, and the freedom and liberty which belongs to children: the words in the original are, the one a Syriac word in use with the Jews, the other a Greek one, and denotes that there is but one Father of Jews and Gentiles. The word “Abba” signifies “my Father”, and is expressive of interest and of faith in it; and read backwards is the same as forwards, God is the Father of his people in adversity as well as prosperity; it is the word used by Christ himself in prayer, and which he directs his people to; to say no more, it is a word which the Jews did not allow servants, only freemen to make use of, and to be called by;

“it is a tradition; (say they^{f145}),) that servants and handmaids, they do not use to call *tynwl p amyaw ynwll p aba*, “father such-a-one, or mother such-a-one”;

in allusion to which the apostle suggests, that only freemen, such as have the spirit of adoption, and not servants or bondsmen, can make use of this word “Abba”, or call God their Father.

Ver. 16. *The Spirit itself beareth witness*, etc..] The thing which the Spirit of God witnesses to is,

that we are the sons of God; which supposes the case in some sense doubtful and uncertain, at least that it is called in question; not by others, though it sometimes is, as by Satan, which need not seem strange, since he called in question the sonship of Christ himself, and by the world who know them not, and by good men, till better informed: but the testimony of the Spirit is not the satisfaction of others, but the saints themselves; who are ready to doubt of it at times, because of the greatness of the favour, and their own sinfulness and unworthiness; especially after backslidings; through the temptations of the devil, and because of their many trials and afflictions. Now this witness of the Spirit is to establish and confirm it; not to make the thing itself surer, for that stands on the sure foundation of predestination, on the unalterable covenant of grace, on union to Christ; redemption by him, the gift of Christ, and continuance of the Spirit; but to assure them of it, and of their interest in it; for the testimony is given “to our spirits”; so the words are read by the Syriac, Arabic, and Ethiopic versions, and by the Vulgate Latin; which reading seems better than

with our spirits; for our own spirits are no witnesses to ourselves: the Father and Son are co-witnesses of the Spirit, but not our own spirits; the spirits of the saints are they which receive the witness of the Spirit of God, to which it is made; not to their ears, for it is not an audible testimony; but to their hearts, it is internal; to their renewed souls, where faith is wrought to receive it; to their understandings, that they may know and be assured of it; to their spirits, which are apt to faint and doubt about it. Now it is “the Spirit itself” that bears this witness, and not others, or by others, but he himself in person; who is a divine witness, whose testimony therefore must be greater than others, and a faithful one, who will never deceive; for he witnesses what he knows, and what is sure and certain: his very being and habitation in the saints are witnesses and proofs of their adoption; his

powerful operations and divine landings persuade to a belief of the truth of it; and by shedding abroad the Father's love in the heart, and by the application of Gospel promises, he causes and encourages them to “cry Abba”, Father; which is a wonderful instance of his condescension and grace.

Ver. 17. *And if children, then heirs*, etc..] Children, whether natural or adopted, are heirs to their parents, and according to the Roman laws, which some think the apostle here respects, whether male or female; but according to the Jewish laws ^{f146}, females did not inherit only in case of want of male issue; for though Job's daughters inherited with his sons, this was a peculiar case; and the Jewish writers say ^{f147}, it was *ִּיְפִיּוֹתָם וְיָפְיָם* *Æwtm*, “on account of their worth and beauty”; yet adopted children among them, whether male or female, were equal to natural children in possessing the inheritance; however, the apostle includes both here, who are all one in Christ Jesus, and are all the children of God by faith in him, and so

heirs of God: either efficiently, he makes them heirs; they are not so by nature, nor do they become such by the works of the law; but God his rich grace adopts them into his family, begets them again, and freely bestows the inheritance on them: or subjectively, they are heirs of himself; he not only makes them his heirs, but he himself is their inheritance and portion; they are heirs of all things which are his; they share in his love, grace, and mercy; and his wisdom, power, truth, and faithfulness, and indeed, every perfection of his are engaged on their side, and in their favour; all things are theirs who have God to be their God and Father; the Gospel and the ministers of it are theirs; the world and the things of it, life and death, things present and things to come; heaven and happiness, which go by the names of glory, riches of glory, kingdom, eternal life and salvation, are all represented as things to be inherited by the saints. The Jews speak of God's inheriting of man, as the highest pitch of greatness man can arrive unto; thus explaining and paraphrasing on the names of the places from which the Israelites journeyed, (~~Q218~~ Numbers 21:18,19), say ^{f148},

“when a man makes himself as a wilderness, which is common to all, the law is given to him by gift, as it is said, “and from the wilderness to Mattanah”: and when it is given to him by gift, *l a wl hn*, “God inherits him”, as it is said, “and from Mattanah to

Nahaliel”; the gloss upon it is, the law becomes to him *hl j n wmk*, “as an inheritance”; and when *l a wl j nç*, “God inherits him”, he ascends to his greatness, i.e. to the highest pitch of it, as it is said, from “Nahaliel to Bamot”;

for when a man is worthy of this, as one of their commentators^{f149} on this place observes, he is called, “the inheritance of God”, according to (⁽⁴⁵³⁾Deuteronomy 32:9); but our apostle speaks not of the saints as God's inheritance, which to be sure they are, but of God as theirs; and not of their inheriting the law, but God himself, which is certainly the highest pitch of honour and greatness that men can possibly enjoy. It is added,

and joint heirs with Christ: it is through him they are heirs of God and of glory; and with him will they partake of and enjoy the inheritance, which is secured to them by their being co-heirs with him: nor does this at all derogate from the honour of Christ, as heir of all things, since he is the firstborn among many brethren, and in this, as in all things, he has the pre-eminence. But before the saints enjoy the inheritance with Christ they must expect to suffer with him and for him; though in the issue they may be assured of this, that they shall be glorified together; their sufferings lie in the way to glory, and glory is and will be the end of their sufferings:

if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together: Christ and his people being one, he the head, and they the members, suffer together; when he suffered, they suffered with him and in him, as their head and representative; and they partake of the virtue and efficacy of his sufferings; and they also suffer afflictions, many of them at least of the same kind with Christ, only with these differences; his were penal evils, theirs not; his were attended with a vast sense of wrath and terror, theirs oftentimes with, joy and comfort; his were meritorious, not so theirs. Moreover, many of their sufferings are for the sake of Christ and his Gospel; on the other hand, by reason of that union which is between Christ and believers, he suffers with them, he reckons their afflictions his, and sympathizes with them; and the consideration of this greatly animates and encourages them in their sufferings, and especially when they observe that they shall be “glorified together”; not with his essential glory, nor with his mediatorial glory, but with that glory which his Father has given him for them. There is a glorification of the saints in Christ, and a glorification of them by Christ, and a glorification of them with Christ, which will consist in likeness to him, and in the everlasting vision and enjoyment of him.

Ver. 18. *For I reckon, that the sufferings of this present time,* etc..] By “this present time” may be meant, the then present age, in which the apostle lived; which was an age in which the people of God suffered much, as was foretold by Christ, and which was necessary for the confirmation of the Gospel; for grace and strength answerable to their trials were given them; and the power of God was visibly to be seen in the supporting of them; though this was not the only suffering age: wherefore by the present time may be understood, the present time of life here on earth; which is a time of suffering, and which cannot well be otherwise, considering the world in which we are, and the nature of it, the state and condition of our souls, and the constitution of our bodies, and the many enemies we have about us; but then this present time of life is the only suffering time to the saints, for no sooner are they removed from hence, but they are in heaven, where neither wicked men nor devils can reach them, where their souls are freed from sin and unbelief, from doubts and fears, and everything that is distressing; and after the resurrection there will be no more diseases nor death in their bodies; and this present time is but a short time, a little while, and all sufferings will be at an end; wherefore they

are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us. The future happiness of the saints is expressed by glory, of which the glory of this world is but a faint resemblance; a glory which is already given to Christ, and he is entered into the possession of; it is already, but as yet it is unseen, but will be “revealed” hereafter, when Christ himself shall appear in it; and it will not only be revealed to the saints, as the glory of Christ, as Mediator; and it will not only be visible upon them, upon their bodies, which will be made like to the glorious body of Christ; but it will be revealed in them, and greatly lie in the perfection of knowledge and holiness in their souls: now between the sufferings of the saints in the present state of things and their future happiness, is no comparison, either with respect to quality or quantity. Their afflictions are “light” in comparison of the due desert of sin, the sufferings of Christ, and the torments of the damned in hell, and when under divine supports; but glory is heavy, it is a “weight of glory”. The sufferings of the saints are but for a time, but their glory is eternal; nor is there any comparison to be made between them by way of merit, for there is no manner of proportion between the one and the other, nor can the one have any causal influence upon the other. This is the judgment of things the apostle made, “I reckon” or “I think” which is said, not as his bare opinion, or as in the least

doubting the truth of what he said; but having deliberately weighed things in his mind, and reasoned upon them, came to this conclusion, that so it must be. The allusion is either to logicians, who having settled the premises draw the conclusion; or to arithmeticians, who, having cast up the account, give the sum total. Though, after all, the “glory” here spoken of may mean the glorious Gospel of Christ, which was more and more to be revealed in the Gentile world, “in” or “by us” the apostles, in comparison of which all their sufferings were as nothing.

Ver. 19. *For the earnest expectation of the creature*, etc..] Some by the creature understand the universe, all created beings animate and inanimate, which having suffered much by the sin of man, are introduced by a rhetorical figure, as waiting for deliverance and a restoration to their paradisiacal estate; but some part of the world is manifestly distinguished from them, (^{<41823>}Romans 8:23), others think that angels are here meant, who being obliged to minister to sinful men, are represented as groaning and longing for the time when all the children of God shall be brought in, that they may be dismissed from their service; but what is said of subjection to vanity, of the bondage of corruption, and of their groaning and travailing in pain, can never agree with such happy spirits: others suppose that men in general are designed, being by sin brought into a state of bondage and corruption, subjected to vanity, attended with troubles, and liable to death, and so groan under their present miseries for deliverance; but to desire anything of a spiritual nature cannot be ascribed to men in general; and besides, as before observed, some persons are distinguished from them, (^{<41823>}Romans 8:23), others have been of opinion, that the new creature, or renewed persons, are here intended, who being burdened with indwelling sin, groan under it, long for deliverance from it, and are waiting for the heavenly glory; but these cannot be said to be in a state of bondage to corruption, for they are freed from the dominion of sin, and are become the servants of righteousness. It is best of all by “the creature” to understand the Gentile world. “The creature” here, and “the whole creation”, (^{<41822>}Romans 8:22), must be the same; now the phrase *πᾶσα κτίσις*, “the whole creation”, or “every creature”, as it may be rendered, signifies the nations of the world, in distinction to the Jews; (see ^{<41165>}Mark 16:15 ^{<50123>}Colossians 1:23); compared with (^{<41819>}Matthew 28:19) and answers to *twyrb*, “the creatures”; by which name the Jews often in their writings call the Gentiles, to distinguish them from the Israelites. Take two or three instances, as follow,

“let your commerce (say they ^{f150}), etc.. be in a peaceable manner, **twyrbh** **μ**], “with the creatures”; what do “the creatures” say concerning him? such an one, blessed be his father who taught him the law, blessed be his master who taught him the law; woe **twyrbh** **μhl** , “to the creatures”, because they learn not the law; such an one who hath learned the law, they observe how beautiful are his ways, and how well ordered his works; of him it is written, saying, “and said unto me, thou art my servant, O Israel, in whom I will be glorified”, (~~2308~~ Isaiah 49:3);”

where the creatures and the Israelites are evidently distinguished from one another: again ^{f151},

“woe **twyrbh** **μhl** , “to the creatures”, who know not, nor have they any regard for the service of their Creator; for it is a tradition, (says R. Isaac,) that “Bath Kol”, or a voice, goes out every day from Mount Horeb, and says, woe **twyrbh** **μhl** , “to the creatures”, because of the service of their Creator.”

And a little after,

“if **twyrbh**, “the creatures”, knew the love with which the holy blessed God loves Israel, they would roar like young lions to follow after him.”

Once more ^{f152}, “all the prayer **twyrbh** **l** **ç**, “of the creatures”, is only for the earth; Lord let the earth be fruitful, Lord let the earth prosper; all the prayer **larçy** **l** **ç**, “of the Israelites”, is only for the house of the Lord, Lord let the house of the sanctuary be built.”

Now what “the creature”, the Gentile world, is represented as earnestly waiting, and wistly looking out for, is

the manifestation of the sons of God; which is made first at their conversion, and afterwards openly and more fully at the appearance of Christ in the resurrection morn. There is a manifestation of the sons of God, at conversion. They that are the sons of God, are his sons before by divine predestination, and through the covenant of grace; as such they were given to Christ; and under this character, and as standing in this relation, he assumed their nature, and died for them, in order to gather them together; and indeed, this previous relation is the ground and foundation of the Spirit of Christ being sent down into their hearts, to manifest their adoption to

them; for before conversion, it is not manifested, neither to themselves nor others, but then it is in some measure made known. This may in a particular manner be applied to the Gentiles, and God's elect among them. They were the sons of God before they were manifested as such; they are spoken of in prophecy as in that relation; (see ^{<351>}Isaiah 45:11); and seemed to be designed chiefly, if not altogether, by “the children of God scattered abroad”, in (^{<615>}John 11:51,52). These were not known, nor looked upon by the Jews, to be the children of God; but when the Gospel came in among them, as the power of God, it manifested them to be such: so that where it was formerly said, “ye are not my people”, there it is said, “ye are the sons of the living God”, (^{<3010>}Hosea 1:10). But the full manifestation of the sons of God will be in their glorification at Christ's second coming; when they shall be openly taken into God's family, and shall be owned by Christ in this relation, before angels and men; they will appear in themselves otherwise than now they do; they will be put into the possession of the inheritance they are adopted to, and will have that honour and dignity which belong to their character actually conferred on them; so that they shall appear, not only to themselves, but to all the world, to be what they are: now this, in the whole compass of it, the Gentiles might be said to be in earnest expectation of, and waiting for. They may be said, in some sense, to expect and wait for the manifestation of the Son of God himself, the Messiah, who is called “the desire of all nations”, (^{<3007>}Haggai 2:7): for it was promised, that “to him should the gathering”, (^{<0490>}Genesis 49:10), or, as some read it, “the expectation of the people”, or “nations be”: they also waited for his law, his doctrine, the everlasting Gospel, (^{<2304>}Isaiah 42:4), and when that was come among them, and became the power of God to the salvation of many of them, this raised in them an earnest expectation of many, of multitudes of the sons of God being manifested among them, according to several prophecies of the Old Testament, which largely speak of this matter; and they continue to wait for the bringing in of the fulness of them in the latter day, and for the ultimate glory, which all the sons of God, whether Jews or Gentiles, shall enjoy together.

Ver. 20. *For the creature was made subject to vanity*, etc..] This designs the vanity and emptiness of the minds of the Gentiles, who were without God and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, without the law and Gospel, and grace of God; also the vain conceits they had of themselves, of their wisdom, knowledge, learning, and eloquence; likewise their vain

philosophy, particularly their gross idolatry, their polytheism, or worshipping of many gods; together with their divers lusts and vices, to which they were addicted, to such a degree, that they might be truly said to be made subject thereunto, being under the government of these things, slaves unto them, and in such subjection, as that they could not deliver themselves from it; though it is said,

not willingly, but by reason of him who hath subjected the same in hope. Though they were willingly vain, yet they were not willingly made subject to vanity; they willingly went into idolatrous and other evil practices, but the devil made them subject, or slaves unto them; he led them captive at his will, and powerfully worked in them, by divine permission, so that they became vassals to him, and to their lusts; for he seems to be designed, “by him who hath subjected the same”, and not Adam, by whom sin entered into the world.

Ver. 21. *Because the creature itself also,* etc.] The phrase in hope, which stands in our version, at the end of the preceding verse, should be placed in the beginning of this, and be read in connection with (~~GENES~~ Romans 8:19,20) being a parenthesis, thus: “the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God, in hope that the creature itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption”; and so it is placed in some copies, and in the Syriac version: that is, “the Gentiles” earnestly wait and expect a larger number of converts among them, in hopes that ere long the whole Gentile world will be freed from

the bondage of corruption, under which it at present groaned; by which is meant, the bondage they were in, not only to their sinful lusts, but to Satan the god of this world; and particularly to their idols, by which they corrupted themselves, and to which they were enslaved: they hope for a deliverance from hence,

into the glorious liberty of the children of God; which designs either the liberty of grace the children of God have here; and which consists in a freedom from the dominion of sin and Satan, from the law and bondage of it, in the free use of Gospel ordinances, in liberty of access to God, and a freedom from the fear of death, and a glorious liberty it is; or the liberty of glory the saints shall enjoy in the other world, which will lie in a freedom from the prison of the flesh, from the body of sin and death, from all sorrows and afflictions, from all reproaches and persecutions, from the

temptations of Satan, from doubts, fears, and unbelief, and in the full vision of God through Christ, and in a free conversation with angels and saints.

Ver. 22. *For we know that the whole creation groaneth*, etc..] As a woman with child, ready to bring forth: for it is added,

and travaileth in pain together until now; regeneration is owing to the grace of God, which is compared to “seed”, of which men are born again; the means of conveying it is the Gospel, and ministers are the instruments of begetting souls to Christ, and who travail in birth till Christ be formed in them: now the Gospel being carried by the apostles into the Gentile world, and being succeeded there, it was like a woman big with child, ready to bring forth many sons to God; for as it was prophesied, so it came to pass, that “more are the children of the desolate, than the children of the married wife”, (⁽⁻²⁵⁴⁾ Isaiah 54:1); and these births were attended with pain. The apostles preached the word with much contention, and the Gentiles received it in much affliction, though with the joy of the Holy Ghost; as a woman rejoices when a man child is brought forth, though the birth has been attended with pain and labour. This was an united groan, and travail of all the converted Gentiles in the several parts of the world, together with the ministers of the Gospel, earnestly desiring more instances of conversion among them; and this vehement desire had appeared “until now”, from the first time of the preaching of the Gospel among the Gentiles, to the writing of this epistle; and supposes, that though there were many spiritual births, there were more to come; as there has been, and will be more abundantly, in the latter day: and moreover, this painful labour, and these united groans for spiritual births, the apostles were well acquainted with, and therefore could say, “we know”, etc.. by their preaching among them, in whom they could easily observe, and do in their writings take notice, how eagerly desirous they were of having the Gospel preached unto them.

Ver. 23. *And not only they, but ourselves also*, etc..] Not only they Gentiles, but we Jews likewise:

which have the firstfruits of the Spirit: meaning either the apostles, who were all Jews, and who most of them received the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit on the day of “Pentecost”, which was the day of the firstfruits, (⁽⁻⁰³³⁵⁾ Numbers 28:26); and to which there seems to be an allusion here; or else the Jewish converts in general: to the Jews the promises of the Messiah were made; to them he first came; the Gospel was first preached unto them, and some of them first believed in Christ; they had the grace of

God communicated to them in conversion, which they received as the firstfruits, with respect to an after increase; or in regard to glory, like the firstfruits, grace is of the same kind with glory, and is a pledge and earnest of it; saints judge by grace the firstfruits, what glory is, and therefore long after it; now of these persons thus described it is said,

even we ourselves groan within ourselves; their groans were inward from their hearts, not hypocritical or were among themselves, common to them all; and that not merely on their own account, the corruptions of their hearts, the sufferings they endured for the sake of the Gospel, and in a longing expectation for the heavenly glory, but also for the conversion of the Gentiles, for which they incessantly laboured, and prayed night and day;

waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body. Adoption is explained by the redemption of the body; and by the one may be known what the other means: by “the redemption of our body” is not meant the redemption of God's elect, body and soul, by the blood and death of Christ, which was already finished; and which the saints, who had received the firstfruits, were partakers of in themselves, and therefore could not be said to be waiting for it: but it designs either the redemption of the natural body, by the resurrection from the dead; when the bodies of the saints will be delivered from that mortality, corruption, weakness, and dishonour, under which they lie in the grave; when they will be refined and spiritualized, and freed from everything which makes them an incumbrance, and an uneasiness to their souls or spirits now; or else the redemption of the mystical body the church, of which the Gentiles make a considerable part, and is to be understood of a deliverance of the church, from the distresses and persecutions it then laboured under; or rather of a making up of the body, the church, by a redemption or deliverance of that part of it, which lay among the Gentiles, from that vanity and bondage of corruption, to which it was subject, into the manifestation and glorious liberty of the sons of God: and then by “adoption” is meant, the special grace of adoption, manifested to the Gentiles in their effectual calling; which the Jews who had received the firstfruits of the Spirit were waiting for, and had good reason to expect, from many prophecies in the writings of the Old Testament; and to which they were the more encouraged, by many appearances of the grace and power of God, attending the ministry of the Gospel among them; and which adoption will be more fully manifested in the resurrection morn; wherefore also the inheritance, which the whole

mystical body the church will then enter upon the possession of, may well be called “the adoption”, because the saints are adopted to it; adoption gives them the title to it, none but adopted ones will enjoy it; and their enjoyment of it will be the full manifestation and completion of the grace of adoption; this saints are waiting for, both for themselves and others, and it is worth waiting for; for it is “an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, which fades not away, reserved in the heavens”, (~~1~~ 1 Peter 1:4): and there is good ground to wait for it; it is a bequest of their heavenly Father, who has adopted them; it is a gift of his free grace; it is already in the hands of Christ, with whom they are co-heirs; and they have already the Spirit, as the earnest of it.

Ver. 24. *For we are saved by hope*, etc..] We who have received the firstfruits, who were in a lost perishing condition, and by nature no better than others, than the Gentiles, are saved by sin and wrath to come by Christ, with a spiritual and everlasting salvation. They were already saved in the preparations and purposes of God; in the covenant of grace; in the arms and hands of Christ, through his purchase; and as considered in him; and with respect to the inchoation and application of salvation, in effectual calling, and their right unto it by the righteousness of Christ; and with regard to the certainty of it, in faith and hope: the manner in which they are said to be saved, is “by”, or “in hope”; not that hope is the cause of salvation, but the means by which souls are brought to the enjoyment of it; salvation, or glory, is the object of it:

but hope that is seen, is not hope; for what a man seeth why doth he yet hope for? in the former clause, “hope” signifies the grace itself, but here the object of it; which is represented as unseen, not yet fully enjoyed, something future, and to be hoped for; as the resurrection of the dead, which is the object of hope, and is unseen, and even incredible to carnal reason, and is to come, and good foundation there is in divine revelation, to hope for it; and the hope of it is of great use to the saints, whilst in this world of trouble: eternal glory and happiness is also the object of the hope of believers; it is said to be the hope of their calling, which they are called by grace to; the hope of righteousness, which the righteousness of Christ is the ground and foundation of; and that blessed hope, the sum of their happiness; and hope laid up for them in heaven, where it is safe and secure; all which is unseen, and yet to come; but good reason there is to hope for it, since the Scriptures of truth so clearly express it; and the person, blood, and righteousness of Christ, lay such a solid foundation for hope of it: the

Alexandrian copy reads, “why doth he yet wait for?” and so the Ethiopic version, with which agrees the Syriac version, reading the whole, “for [if] we see it, why should we wait for it?”

Ver. 25. *But if we hope for that we see not*, etc..] Whether it be the hour of death, or the second coming of Christ, or the resurrection of the dead, and eternal glory; all which are unseen by us, and to be hoped for:

then do we with patience wait for it; as that which is certain and real, as something valuable, which will be satisfying, and be received with the utmost joy. This supposes, that the persons who wait for it believe it, and their interest in it, at least hope they have one; that they have a valuable esteem and affection for it; that they are not in a state of perfection and happiness; and that they sit loose by the things of this world, and are ready to part with the one, and grasp the other: the manner of their waiting is “with patience”; a grace, of which God is the efficient, Christ is the exemplar, and the word the means; and which is of great use under afflictions from the hand of God, under the reproaches and persecutions of men, under desertions and want of answers in prayer, under the temptations of Satan, and in the expectation of the heavenly glory.

Ver. 26. *Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities*, etc..] The Spirit of God which dwells in us, by whom we are led, who is the spirit of adoption to us, who has witnessed to our spirits, that we are the children of God, whose firstfruits we have received, over and above, and besides what he has done for us, “also helpeth our infirmities”; whilst we are groaning within ourselves, both for ourselves and for others, and are waiting patiently for what we are hoping for. The people of God, all of them, more or less, have their infirmities in this life. They are not indeed weak and infirm, in such sense as unregenerate persons are, who have no spiritual strength, are ignorant of their weakness, do not go to Christ for strength, nor derive any from him, and hence can perform nothing that is spiritually good: nor are they all alike infirm; some are weaker in faith, knowledge, and experience, than others; some are of more weak and scrupulous consciences than others be: some are more easily drawn aside through corruption and temptation than others are; some have weaker gifts, particularly in prayer, than others have, yet all have their infirmities; not only bodily afflictions, persecutions of men, and temptations of Satan, but internal corruptions, and weakness to oppose them, and to discharge their duty to God and man; and also have their infirmities in the exercise of

grace, and in the performance of the work of prayer; though they are not left to sink under them, but are helped by “the Spirit”: by whom is meant, not any tutelar angel, or the human soul, or the gift of the Spirit in prayer, but the Holy Spirit of God himself; who, as the word here used signifies, “helps together”, with hope and patience, graces which he has implanted, and which he invigorates and draws forth into act and exercise; or with the saints labouring under their burdens; or with the Father and the Son, who also are helpers of the saints: and this helping of them implies, that their infirmities and burdens are such as they must sink under, unless they are helped; and which is done by the Spirit, by bringing to remembrance, and applying the precious promises of the Gospel, by shedding abroad the love of God in their hearts, by acting the part of a comforter to them, by putting strength into them, and by assisting them in prayer to God:

for we know not what we should pray for as we ought. The children of God are not ignorant of the object of prayer, that it is God, and not a creature, God, as the God of nature, providence, and grace, God in the persons of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Spirit, and with a view to his glorious perfections: nor of the way of coming to God in prayer, through Christ; nor of the manner of performing it in faith, with fervency, sincerity, reverence, humility, and submission; nor who they should pray for, for themselves, for all men, even enemies, particularly for the saints, and ministers of the Gospel; nor of many other things respecting prayer, as that it is both their duty and privilege; their own inability, and the need of the assistance of the Spirit in it; but what they are ignorant of is chiefly the matter of prayer: indeed the whole Bible is an instruction in general to this work, so is the prayer Christ taught his disciples, and the several prayers of saints recorded in the Scriptures; the promises of God, and their own wants and necessities, may, and do, greatly direct them; as for instance, when under a sense of sin, to pray for a discovery of pardoning grace; when under darkness and desertions, for the light of God's countenance; when under a sense of weakness of grace, and the strength of corruptions, for fresh supplies of grace and strength, for communion with God in ordinances, for more grace here, and glory hereafter; but what of all things they seem to be, at least at some times, at a loss about, is what to pray for with respect to things temporal, such as riches, honour, friends, etc.. to have present afflictions removed, or temptations cease; and too often it is, that they pray with greater importunity for lesser things, than for things of

more importance; and more from an intemperate zeal, and with a view to self, than for the glory of God:

but the Spirit itself maketh intercession, for us, with groanings which cannot be uttered; not the spirit of a man; or the gift of the Spirit in man; or a man endued with an extraordinary gift of the Spirit; but the Holy Ghost himself, who makes intercession for the saints: not in such sense as Christ does; for he intercedes not with the Father, but with them, with their spirits; not in heaven, but in their hearts; and not for sinners, but for saints: nor in the manner as Christ does, not by vocal prayer, as he when on earth; nor by being the medium, or way of access to God; nor by presenting the prayers of saints, and the blood and sacrifice of Christ to God, as Christ does in heaven; nor as the saints make intercession for one another, and for other persons: but he intercedes for them, by making them to intercede; he indites their prayers for them, not in a book, but in their hearts; he shows them their need, what their wants are; he stirs them up to prayer, he supplies them with arguments, puts words into their mouths, enlarges their hearts, gives strength of faith in prayer, and all the ardour and fervency of it; he enables them to come to God as their Father; and gives them liberty and boldness in his presence, which requires an heart sprinkled from an evil conscience, faith in the blood and righteousness of Christ, and a view of God, as a God of peace, grace, and mercy: and this intercession he makes, “with groanings which, cannot be uttered”; not that the Spirit of God groans, but he stirs up groans in the saints; which suppose a burden on them, and their sense of it: and these are said to be “unutterable”; saints, under his influence, praying silently, without a voice, as Moses and Hannah did, (^{<0013>}1 Samuel 1:13), and yet most ardently and fervently; or as not being able to express fully what they conceive in their minds, how great their burdens are, and their sense of their wants.

Ver. 27. *And he that searcheth the hearts*, etc.] This is peculiar to God, and a “periphrasis” of him; angels, neither good nor bad, can search into the hearts of men; one man cannot know the heart of another, nor any man fully know his own; this is the prerogative of God: and

he knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit; not the spirit of men, but of God: that affectionate desire and meaning of the Spirit of God, in the unalterable groans of the saints; he knows the wise meaning there is in them, for so *φρονημα* may signify, and is opposed to the carnal mind, or wisdom of the flesh, which desires foolish things. The searcher of hearts

knows this, not barely by his omniscience, but he regards it, approves of it, attends, and gives an answer to it; which is no small encouragement to pray, though it be but with sighs and groans unutterable; since the omniscient God understands, and respects such kind of prayer: and the reason is,

because he, the Spirit of God,

maketh intercession for the saints, according to the will of God; the persons for whom he intercedes are saints: to whom Christ is made sanctification; who are called to be saints; are sanctified by the Spirit of God, and walk after him: now such are the objects of God's delight, they are chosen by him, preserved in Christ, and have his righteousness imputed to them; to these he has made known his Gospel, has given his grace, and will at last the inheritance; so that intercession made for such will certainly be regarded: it may be rendered, "he maketh intercession for holy things according to God"; for spiritual blessings, divine favours, things that belong to God; or divine things, which are agreeably to his nature and will: and since it is the Holy Spirit that makes intercession, and the persons are holy for whom he makes it, and this is made for holy things, and all according to the will of God, which the Spirit of God must fully know, saints may be confident of the prevalence and success of such intercession.

Ver. 28. *And we know that all things work together for good*, etc..] There is a temporal good, and a spiritual good, and an eternal one. Temporal good is what the men of the world are seeking after, and generally have the greatest share of, and the saints the least; and yet they have as much as is needful for them, and what they have, they have with a blessing; and even sometimes afflictions work for the temporal good of God's children: spiritual good lies in a lively exercise of grace and a conformity of the soul to God; and is what the men of the world least regard, and the saints most; and sometimes afflictions issue in this sort of good, as they do also in eternal good, for they work for us an exceeding weight of glory: by "all things" may be meant, all beings good and bad: all good beings eternal or created: eternal, as Jehovah the Father, all his perfections, purposes, promises, provisions, and performances; Jehovah the Son, as the mighty God, and as Mediator, all that he is in himself, all that he has in himself, all that he has done, or is doing, all his titles, characters, and relations; Jehovah the Spirit, in his person, offices, and operations; these all have worked together in the council of peace, in the covenant of grace, and in

redemption; and they do work together in sanctification, and so they will in glorification, and that for the good of the saints: all created ones, as good angels, good magistrates, good ministers of the Gospel: all evil beings, as devils, persecuting magistrates, heretics, and false teachers: all things, good and bad: all good things, outward peace and prosperity, external gifts, the ministry of the word, the administration of ordinances, church censures, admonitions, and excommunications; all evil things, sin the evil of evils: original sin, or the fall of Adam, which contains all other sins in it, was attended with aggravating circumstances, and followed with dismal consequences, yet has been overruled for good; hereby a Saviour became necessary, who was sent, came, and wrought out salvation; has brought in a better righteousness than Adam lost; entitled his people to a better life than his was, and makes them partakers of the riches both of grace and glory: actual sin, inward or outward; indwelling sin; which is made use of, when discovered, to abate pride, to lead to an entire dependence on Christ, to teach saints to be less censorious, to depend on the power and grace of God to keep them, and to wean them from this world, and to make them desirous of another, where they shall be free from it; outward sins, of others, or their own; the sins of others, of wicked men, which observed, raise an indignation in the saints against sin, and a concern for God's glory, and to look into their own hearts and ways, and admire the grace of God to them, that this is not their case; of good men, which are recorded, and may be observed, not for example and encouragement in sin, but for admonition, and to encourage faith and hope under a sense of it; of their own, for humiliation, which issues in weakening the power of sin in themselves, and the strengthening of the graces of others: but from all this it does not follow, that God is the author of sin, only that he overrules it to wise and gracious purposes; nor should any take encouragement to sin, to do evil that good may come; nor is sin itself a real good; nor is it to be said that it does no hurt; for though it cannot hinder the everlasting salvation of God's people, it does a great deal of hurt to their peace and comfort; and that it is made to work in any form or shape for good, is not owing to its own nature and influence, which is malignant enough, but to the unbounded power and unsearchable wisdom of God: all evils or afflictions, spiritual and temporal, work together for good; all spiritual ones, such as the temptations of Satan, which are made useful for humiliation, for the trial of grace, to show us our weakness, our need of Christ, and to conform us to him, and also to excite to prayer and watchfulness; the hidings of God's face, which make his presence the more prized when enjoyed, and

the more desirable. Temporal afflictions, afflictions in body, name, or estate, nay even death itself, all work together for the good of God's people. The Jews tell us of one Nahum, the man Gamzu, who, they say, was ^{f153} so called, because of everything that happened to him he used to say, *hbwj l wz μg*, “Gam zu letobah”, “this is also for good”: and they give instances of several misfortunes which befell him, upon which account he used these words, and how they proved in the issue to his advantage: agreeably to this is the advice given by them,

“for ever (say they ^{f154}) let a man be used to say, all that the Lord does, *dyb[bj l* , “he does for good”.”

Now that all things do work together for good, the saints “know”, and are firmly persuaded of; both from the word and promises of God, and from the instances of Jacob, Joseph, Job, and others, and also from their own experience: and it is to be observed, that it is not said that all things “have” worked together, and so they may again, or that they “shall” work together, but all things work together for good; they “now” work together, they are always working together, whether it can be observed or not: prosperity and adversity, whether in things temporal or spiritual, work “together”, and make an intricate woven work in providence and grace; which will be viewed with admiration another day: one copy reads, “God works together”, or “causes all things to work together for good”; and so the Ethiopic version, “we know that God helps them that love him, to every good thing”: and to this agrees the Syriac version, “we know that to them that love God, he in everything helps them to good”; and certain it is, that God is the efficient cause, that makes all things work together for his people's good. The persons to whom all things work together for good, are described as such

that love God; a character, which does not agree with all the sons and daughters of Adam: love to God is not naturally in men; it is wrought in the soul in regeneration, and is an evidence of it; it grows up with faith, which works by it; without it, a profession of religion is vain; and where it is once wrought, it lasts for ever; it ought to be superlative and universal, constant, warm and ardent, hearty and sincere: such who have it, show it by a desire to be like to God, and therefore imitate him, by making his glory the supreme end of their actions; by being careful not to offend him; by delighting in his presence, in his people, word, ordinances, ways, and worship; and by undervaluing the world, and all things in it, in comparison

of him; who is to be loved for the perfections of his being, the characters and relations he stands in and bears to his people, and on account of the love with which he has loved them, and which is indeed the spring and source of theirs. They are further described, as such

who are the called according to his purpose. The called of God and of Jesus Christ; not to any office, or by the external ministry of the word only, but by special grace; from darkness to light, from bondage to liberty, from the company of sinful men to fellowship with Christ, from a trust in their own righteousness to a dependence on his, to grace here, and glory hereafter; which is done according to the purpose of God: the persons called are fixed upon by God; none are called but whom God purposed to call; those who are called can assign no other reason of it than the will of God; and no other reason but that can be given why others are not called; the time when, the place where, the means whereby persons are called, are all settled and determined by the will, and according to the purpose of God.

Ver. 29. *For whom he did foreknow*, etc..] The foreknowledge of God here, does not intend his prescience of all things future; by which he foreknows and foretells things to come, and which distinguishes him from all other gods; and is so called, not with respect to himself, with whom all things are present, but with respect to us, and which is eternal, universal, certain, and infallible; for in this sense he foreknows all men, and if this was the meaning here, then all men would be predestinated, conformed to the image of Christ, called by grace, justified and glorified; whereas they are a special people, whom God has foreknown: nor is this foreknowledge to be understood of any provision or foresight of the good works, holiness, faith, and perseverance of men therein, upon which God predestinates them to happiness; since this would make something out of God, and not his good pleasure, the cause of predestination; which was done before, and without any consideration of good or evil, and is entirely owing to the free grace of God, and is the ground and foundation of good works, faith, holiness, and perseverance in them: but this regards the everlasting love of God to his own people, his delight in them, and approbation of them; in this sense he knew them, he foreknew them from everlasting, affectionately loved them, and took infinite delight and pleasure in them; and this is the foundation of their predestination and election, of their conformity to Christ, of their calling, justification, and glorification: for these

he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son; having perfect, distinct, special knowledge of them, joined with love to them, he predetermined, or fore-appointed them in his eternal mind, in his everlasting and unchangeable purposes and decrees to this end, conformity to the image of Christ; which is not to be understood of the Spirit of Christ: God's elect indeed are chosen to be holy, and through sanctification of the Spirit, but are never said to be conformed, made like to the Spirit, nor is the Spirit ever called the image of Christ; but this designs either likeness to Christ as the Son of God, or conformity to him in his human nature. There is indeed a great disparity between the sonship of Christ, and of the saints; he is the eternal and natural Son of God, he is the one and only begotten Son, they are adopted ones, yet in some things there is a likeness; as he is the Son of God, so are they the sons of God, though not in the same sense; as he is a beloved Son, so are they; as he is the firstborn with respect them, they are the firstborn with respect to angels; as he has an inheritance, so have they; moreover, he has a very great concern in their sonship; the predestination of them to it is by him; the blessing itself is founded on union to him, on their conjugal relation to him, and his assumption of their nature; it comes to them through his redemption, and is actually bestowed on them by him; and this conformity to Christ as sons, will mere fully appear hereafter, when they shall be like him, and see him as he is: or this may be understood of the saints' conformity to Christ in his human nature, both here and hereafter: here in holiness; the image of God was in in his first creation, this is defaced by sin; and in regeneration, the image of Christ is stamped, his grace is wrought in them, his Spirit is put into them, to enable them to walk in him, and after him: this will be complete hereafter, and will consist in perfect holiness, being freed from the very being, as well as the power and guilt of sin; in perfect knowledge of everything that will tend to their happiness; and in glory like to Christ, both in soul and body:

that he might be the firstborn among many brethren; the persons among whom Christ is the firstborn are described by their relation, "brethren"; to one another, being related to the same Father, regenerated by the same grace, taken into the same family, and heirs of the same glory; and to Christ, which relation, as brethren to him, is not merely founded on his incarnation, but in their adoption; and which is evidenced by their regeneration, and doing the will of his Father; an which relation he owns, and is not ashamed of: they are also described by their number, "many"; for

though they are but few, when compared with the world; yet they are many, a large number, considered by themselves; and among these, Christ is the “firstborn”; he is the firstborn of God, the begotten of the Father, he is the first begotten, and as such he is the only begotten; he is the firstborn of Mary, she had none before him, and he is the only one that ever was born in the manner he was; he is the first begotten from the dead, his resurrection is called a begetting, and he was the first in time that rose from the dead by his own power, and to an immortal life, and the first in causality and dignity. Christ is the firstborn with respect to all creatures in general; he was begotten of the Father before all creatures were; he is the first cause of them all, the governor, basis, and support of them: and he is the firstborn with respect to the saints; who are of the same nature with him, are made partakers of the divine nature, are sons in the same family, though not in the same class of sonship: moreover, this character may regard not so much birth as privilege which belongs to Christ as Mediator; who, as the firstborn had, has the blessing, the government, the priesthood, and the inheritance; all which is owing to, and is one end of divine predestination. The Cabalistic^{f155} writers among the Jews give the name of “firstborn” to the second Sefhira, number, or person, “Wisdom”, which answers to the Son of God.

Ver. 30. *Moreover, whom he did predestinate*, etc..] Not to sufferings, which are not expressed nor designed, but to grace and glory after mentioned. This predestination is of particular persons, who, in consequence of it, are called, justified, and glorified; it is the effect of divine grace, and entirely owing to it; it is the source of all the other blessings of grace, and is therefore placed at the head of them, and secures them all:

them he also called; not to afflictions: many may be called to afflictions, and endure them, who are neither justified nor glorified; besides, the people of God, though they meet with many afflictions, between their call to eternal glory, and their enjoyment of it, yet they are not so much called to afflictions, as to patience under them: their call is of grace, by special grace, to peculiar blessings of grace, and to a kingdom and glory; and this their calling is secured by predestination, and connected with glorification: and whom he called,

them he also justified; the meaning of which is, not that he approved of them as sincere and faithful, on account of their faith and patience in

sufferings; for neither of their sufferings, nor of their faith and patience in them, is there the least mention in the passage; nor can any instance be produced of the use of the word “justified” in this epistle, or elsewhere in this sense: but the meaning is, that such persons whom God predestinates and calls, he makes them righteous by the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them; which is unto all, and upon all them that believe; by which they are justified before God, and in their own consciences, from all sin, and so secured from all wrath and condemnation; wherefore glorification stands inseparably connected with it:

and whom he justified, them he also glorified; which is not meant of being made glorious under sufferings; nor of being made glorious by the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; for the word is never used in this sense, nor is God ever said to glorify his people in this way; and the apostle is speaking of the saints in general, and not of particular ones: if this was the sense, none would be predestinated, called, and justified, but such who have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit; and none would have the extraordinary gifts of the Spirit, but such persons; whereas many have had these, and yet no interest in the grace of God, and everlasting happiness: but eternal glory is here meant, which is what the apostle had been speaking of in the context; is what the elect are predestinated and called unto; and which their justification gives them a right and title to; and will consist in a likeness to Christ, in communion with him, in an everlasting vision of him, and in a freedom from all that is evil, and in an enjoyment of all that is good; and so the great end of predestinating grace will be answered in them mentioned in the foregoing verse: now this glorification may be said to be already done, with respect to that part of God's elect, who are in heaven, inheriting the promises; and is in some sense true also of that part of them which is on earth, who are called and justified; being made glorious within by the grace of Christ, and arrayed and adorned with the glorious robe of his righteousness; by the one they have a meetness, and by the other a right to eternal glory; of which this grace they have received is the beginning, pledge, and earnest: besides, they are already glorified in Christ, their head and representative, and in the view of God, and with respect to the certainty of it, it being prepared and made ready for them, is in the hands of Christ for them, and is insured to their faith and hope. It is an observation of a Jewish writer^{f156},

“that a thing *twyhl rzgnç*, “which is decreed to be”, is spoken of in the past tense:”

this is the Scripture style concerning things decreed, and such is the glorification of all God's elect.

Ver. 31. *What shall we then say to these things? etc.*, Either to these afflictions, shall we murmur and repine at them? no, since they work together for our good, and are not to be compared with our future glory, which is certain; for if we suffer with, and for Christ, we shall be glorified together: or to these blessings just now mentioned, as the foreknowledge of God, divine predestination, effectual calling, free justification, and eternal glorification, what can be said to these? nothing can be added to them, they are a complete set of blessings, wanting nothing; nor can the greatness of them be fully expressed, or the freeness of God's grace displayed in them, sufficiently declared: what remains for us to do, but to be thankful for them, and glory in them? or what can be said "against" them? nothing at all, they cannot be contradicted or gainsaid; they are true and faithful sayings; they can never be made void, and of no effect, by hell or earth; nor ought our unbelieving hearts to have anything to say against interest in them: or what is to be said, or inferred "from" them? why, the free, sovereign, unchangeable, and everlasting love of God, in providing and bestowing such benefits; and the certainty of salvation, which is infallibly secured hereby:

if God be for us; or, "seeing he is for us", has an affection for us, which appears from the gift of himself, Son, and Spirit, and all the blessings of grace and glory; and is on our side: as that he is on the side of his people, is evident from his preservation of them from the evils of the world and their own corruptions; from the supports he gives them under afflictions and temptations; from his carrying on the work of grace upon them, notwithstanding all the opposition made unto it; and from their safety and security they enjoy by him, notwithstanding the power of their enemies; he is so for them, and on their side, as that he will certainly save them. This he has determined to do, he has sent his Son to obtain salvation for them, his Spirit to apply it to them, and keeps them by his power to the full enjoyment of it: and since this is the case,

who can be against us? none can be against them. There are some that cannot possibly be against them; if Jehovah the Father is not against them, the Son cannot be against them, nor the Spirit; good angels cannot be against them, so far from it, that they rejoice at their good, minister to them, and are a guard about them; the law cannot be against them, because

it is fulfilled in them; nor justice, because it is satisfied, and all its demands answered: and though there may be some who may be against them, and oppose themselves to them, yet their opposition is to no purpose; they will never prevail over them to their ruin and destruction; as neither sin, nor Satan, nor the world, nor death itself.

Ver. 32. *He that spared not his own Son*, etc..] It is said that God spared not the angels that sinned, nor the old world, which was full of violence, nor Sodom and Gomorrah, whose wickedness was great, nor the Egyptians and their firstborn, refusing to let Israel go, nor the Israelites themselves, when they transgressed his laws, nor wicked men hardened in sin; all which is not to be wondered at; but that he should not spare “his own Son”, his proper Son, of the same nature with him, and equal to him, the Son of his love, and who never sinned against him, is very amazing: he spares many of the sons of men in a providential way, and in a way of grace, but he did not spare his own Son, or abate him anything in any respect, what was agreed upon between them, with regard to the salvation of his people; as appears by his assuming human nature, with all its weaknesses and infirmities; by his having laid on him all the iniquities of his people, and all the punishment due unto them he inflicted on him, without the least abatement; and by his sufferings not being deferred at all, beyond the appointed time; when full satisfaction for all their sins were demanded, the whole payment of their debts to the uttermost farthing insisted on, and all done according to the utmost strictness of divine justice: and which was not out of any disaffection to him; nor because he himself deserved such treatment; but because of the counsel, purpose, and promise of God, that his law and justice might be fully satisfied, and his people completely saved: moreover, the sense of the phrase may be learnt from the use of it in the Septuagint version of (⁽¹⁰²¹²⁾Genesis 22:12), “thou hast not withheld thy Son, thine only Son from me”, which that renders **οὐκ ἐφείσο**, “thou hast not spared thy beloved Son for me”: so God did not spare his Son, because he did not withhold him:

but delivered him up for us all. That is, God the Father delivered him, according to his determinate counsel and foreknowledge, into the hands of wicked men; into the hands of justice, and to death itself; not for all men, for to all men he does not give Christ, and all things freely with him, nor are all delivered from condemnation and death by him; wherefore if he was delivered up for all men, he must be delivered up in vain for some; but for “us all”, or “all us”, whom he foreknew, predestinated, called, justified, and

glorified; and not merely as a martyr, or by way of example only, and for their good, but as their surety and substitute, in their room and stead: wherefore

how shall he not with him freely give us all things? Christ is God's free gift to his elect; he is given to be a covenant to them, an head over them, a Saviour of them, and as the bread of life for them to live upon: he is freely given; God could never have been compelled to have given him; Christ could never have been merited by them; nothing that they could give or do could have laid him under obligation to have bestowed him on them; yea, such were the persons, and such their characters, for whom he delivered him up, that he might have justly stirred up all his wrath against them; and yet such was his grace, that he has given his own Son unto them; and not him alone, but "all things" with him: all temporal good things, needful and convenient; all spiritual blessings, a justifying righteousness, pardon of sin, sanctifying grace, adoption, and eternal life: and all "freely", in a sovereign way, according to his own good will and pleasure, without any obligation or compulsion; not grudgingly nor niggardly, but cheerfully and bountifully, absolutely, and without any conditions; for he is not moved thereunto by anything in them, or performed by them.

Ver. 33. *Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?* etc..] The elect of God are a certain select number of persons, whom he has so loved, as of his sovereign good will and pleasure, to choose in Christ before the foundation of the world, unto eternal life and salvation, by certain ways and means of his own appointing, as sanctification and faith, so that they are peculiarly his: but are these persons chargeable with nothing criminal? yes, with Adam's sin; with a want of original righteousness; with multitudes of sins before conversion, some of them with very great ones; and all, even after conversion, with frequent infirmities and backslidings: and will none rise up and exhibit charges of this nature against them? yes, even now, they very often bring charges against themselves; they are very apt to charge one another; Satan, the accuser of the brethren, lays many things to their charge very frequently, and so do the men of the world; but all these charges avail nothing, since none of the divine persons, Father, Son, and Spirit, lay anything against them: not God the Father, for

it is God that justifieth; he against whom sin is committed, who is the lawgiver, and the righteous judge, justifies them from every charge; not by teaching them the way of justification, nor by infusing righteousness into

them, or on account of any works of righteousness done by them, but by pronouncing them righteous through the imputation of the righteousness of his Son unto them: observe, that “God's elect”, as such, are the objects of justification; which proves the eternity of it; the speciality of it as belonging to particular persons, and the everlasting security and continuance of it.

Ver. 34. *Who is he that condemneth*, etc..] That is, the elect of God: all mankind are deserving of condemnation, and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam; some are foreordained to condemnation; all in final impenitence and unbelief, are condemned already; and the whole world of the ungodly will be condemned at the last day; but none of God's elect are, or shall be condemned: for they are loved with an everlasting love; they are chosen unto salvation; they are in Christ, where there is no condemnation; they are brought to believe in him, and by him are justified from all sin, and so are secure from condemnation. They are indeed deserving of it as others, considered in themselves; and are under the sentence of it, as in Adam, with the rest of mankind; and in their own apprehensions, when convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment. And are there none that will condemn them? yes, their own hearts often condemn them; they are very forward to condemn one another; the world condemns them, and so does the god of it: but neither Father, Son, nor Spirit, will condemn them; not the Father, for he justifies; nor the Son, for

it is Christ that died: that he died is certain; the death he died was the death of the cross; the persons he died for were God's elect; the reason of his dying for them was to make atonement for their sins; this came to pass through his substitution in their room and stead; this death of his was but once, yet of an eternal efficacy, and so a full security of them from all condemnation: for sin, the cause of condemnation, was removed by it; the condemnation itself was bore by Christ in their stead; the law and justice of God were satisfied by it; pardon of sin was procured by his blood; and complete justification obtained by his active and passive obedience; all which is confirmed by his resurrection, session at God's right hand, and intercession: wherefore it is added,

yea, rather that is risen again. As the death, so the resurrection of Christ, is the security of God's elect from condemnation; inasmuch as Christ rose again, as a conqueror over death, and over sin, the sting of death, and over Satan, who had the power of death; and also as a surety, having given satisfaction to law and justice: he engaged as a surety for his people; God

in justice, and according to his righteous law, dealt with him, and by him as such; he satisfied both, and therefore was set free by them; hence neither law nor justice can condemn; besides he rose again as a common person, head and representative of his people, and for their justification: he first stood charged with all their sins, which by his Father, and with his own consent, were imputed to him; he was condemned and suffered death for them; when he rose from the dead, he was justified and acquitted from them all; and all his people were justified in him, and with him: yea, the resurrection of Christ is rather a greater security from condemnation, than his death; Christ's death expiated sin, but his resurrection brought in the everlasting righteousness; notwithstanding Christ's death, had he not risen again, we should have been in our sins, and so liable to condemnation; Christ's dying showed that he was arrested and condemned, but his resurrection shows that he is discharged, and we in him:

who is even at the right hand of God. The ascension of Christ, his entrance into heaven, and session at the right hand of God, are also a very considerable security of God's elect from condemnation; for when he ascended from earth to heaven in human nature, accompanied by angels, of which they and his disciples were witnesses, he led captivity captive, or triumphed over those that led his people captive, as sin, Satan, the law, death, and every other enemy of theirs; he entered into heaven to prepare it for them, to take possession of it in their name, to appear in the presence of God for them, and as having obtained the eternal redemption of them, where he was received with a welcome, as the surety and head of the chosen ones, and then sat down at the right hand of God; which shows that he had done his work, and to satisfaction, is advanced above all, power is given to him, all things are put under him, and he is head over all things to the church: and since he is at the right hand of God, as an advocate and intercessor for his people, it will be to no purpose, and of no avail, that Satan, or any other enemy, is at their right hand to resist them:

who also maketh intercession for us; which is done, not by vocal prayer, as in the days of his flesh on earth; or as supplicating an angry judge; or as controverting: a point in the court of heaven; but by the appearance of his person for us, by the presentation of his sacrifice, by offering up the prayers and praises of his people, by declaring it as his will, that such and such blessings be bestowed upon them, and by seeing to it, that the benefits of his death are applied to those, for whom they were designed; which intercession of Christ proceeds upon the foot of a satisfaction made; it

always continues, and is ever prevalent, and so has a considerable influence to secure from condemnation. The apostle, in this verse, seems to have in view a passage in (~~181B~~ Job 34:29); which the Septuagint render, “and he gives peace, and who is he that condemneth?”

Ver. 35. *Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?* etc..] By “the love of Christ” is not meant the saints' love to Christ, but his love to them; he is indeed the object of their love, and so strong is their love to him, that it can never be destroyed; for though there may be an abatement in the fervour of it, it can never be lost; yet this is never called the love of Christ: besides, the apostle is speaking not of their love to Christ, but of the love of God and Christ to them, throughout the context; and his design is, to strengthen the faith of God's people, and comfort their souls, under their various afflictions: now nothing more effectually serves such purposes, than the love of Christ; and the things here instanced in are such, as are apt to inject doubts and fears, about interest in the love of Christ, and of the love of God in Christ, as it is interpreted in some following verses: moreover, the separation here interrogated is not of Christ from us, but of us from him; whereas was it our love to Christ, which is here meant, it should rather have been put, who shall separate him from us, and not us from the love of Christ? That Christ does love the elect of God, who are the persons here spoken of, is evident from his undertaking for them, espousing their persons, assuming their nature, dying in their room and stead, paying off their debts, and redeeming their persons, by going to prepare a place for them, by interceding for them, by supplying them with all grace, and using them in the most free and familiar manner; which love of his is wonderful, matchless, and inconceivable, special and peculiar, free and undeserved, exceeding affectionate, unchangeable, durable, and for ever. This is the bond of union to Christ; and the union which is made by it is exceeding near and close; it is real; perfect, and indissoluble, nothing can separate from it: not

tribulation; or “affliction”, which springs from his love, and is the fruit of it; and notwithstanding that, he rests in his love; this is not taken away, but is often sensibly enjoyed, in the midst of afflictions:

or distress; whether of body or mind; straitness in the affairs and circumstances of life, or straitness of mind, in the exercise of grace, and discharge of duty; for “though we believe not, yet he abides faithful”, (~~181B~~ 2 Timothy 2:13), to his covenant and promises:

or persecution: from the world; for this is rather an evidence that Christ has loved them chosen and called them, because the world hates them:

or famine: want of the necessaries of life, as food and drink; being exposed to great hunger and thirst, which has sometimes been the lot of the dear children of God:

or nakedness; want of proper clothing, or the use of common apparel; wandering about in sheep skins and goat skins, which has been the case of some, of whom the world was not worthy, and so no proof of separation from the love of Christ:

or peril; dangers from different quarters, by different persons and ways; such as the Apostle Paul had trial of, who was highly in the love of Christ, (^{<4126>}1 Corinthians 11:26);

or sword; that is, death by the sword; which death James the brother of John died, (^{<4126>}Acts 12:13): now, though this may separate the head from the body, and separate soul and body, yet cannot separate from the love of Christ.

Ver 36. *As it is written, for thy sake we are killed*, etc..] This passage is a citation out of (^{<3942>}Psalm 44:22); and the meaning is, that for the sake of God, and his pure worship, Old Testament saints were frequently put to death, or exposed to the persecutions of men, which often issued in death; as New Testament saints have been, for the sake of Christ and his Gospel, even

all the day long; that is, they were liable to death all the day long; or every day, one or other of them was put to death:

we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter; they were reckoned as fit for nothing else, and were continually exposed unto it; were used as sheep are, as if they were made for no other use and service, but to be slaughtered; hence they are called, “the flock of slaughter”, (^{<3910>}Zechariah 11:7); and as this expresses the brutality of their persecutors, so their harmlessness, meekness, humility, and patience in sufferings, being under them like lambs or sheep. This testimony is produced, to show that suffering death has been the common lot of the saints in all ages: and is designed to animate the people of God under the Gospel dispensation, to suffer with cheerfulness; the allusion may be to the lambs and sheep daily slain for sacrifice; either to the lambs of the sacrifice slain morning and evening; or to others that were

slain in any part of the day from morning to night, for other sacrifices, in the court of the tabernacle and temple.

Ver. 37. *Nay, in all these things*, etc..] The former words being inserted in a parenthesis, these are an answer to the question in (~~685~~ Romans 8:35), “what shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation?” etc.. “nay”, it shall not, nor any of the other things mentioned: “in all these things”; afflictions, distresses, persecutions, famine, nakedness, sword, or any other thing of the same kind:

we are more than conquerors; not only over sin and Satan, but the world, the reproaches, afflictions, and persecutions of it; which they cheerfully and courageously undergo, insomuch that they are not only conquerors, but “more than conquerors”: they have above overcome, they have exceedingly the better of it; for they not only patiently bear afflictions and persecutions, but they glory in them; their experience, faith, and joy, are often increased by them; they have sometime solicited, and even wearied their persecutors; they have got the victory with ease, over Satan and his hellish emissaries, by the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony: but this is not owing to themselves, or through their own strength, but

through him that loved us; meaning either God the Father, whose love is mentioned in the following verses, or rather the Lord Jesus Christ; and so some copies express it, “through Christ that loved us”: “through him”, who has got the victory over all his and his people's enemies, and makes them sharers in his conquests; “through him”, who is able to help them, and has strength sufficient to carry them through, and brings them off more than conquerors; who has loved them, still loves them, and whose love engages his power to stand by them and protect them against all their enemies.

Ver. 38. *For I am persuaded*, etc..] These words with the following, express the strong persuasion, and full assurance of faith the apostle had, that nothing whatever could separate him and the rest of God's people, from his love towards them in Christ Jesus. This persuasion not only regards himself, but others; and is not conjectural, but certain; and which did not arise from any special and extraordinary revelation, but is founded upon the nature of the love of God itself, the security of it in Christ, and of the persons of God's elect in him; upon eternal predestination, and the unalterable purposes of God; upon the promise and oath of God; upon adoption, and the gracious witnessings, assistances, and inhabitation of the Spirit; and is greatly increased by the consideration of the death,

resurrection, and intercession of Christ. The things enumerated, which are not able to separate from the love of God, are as follow:

death; death separates men from the world, their worldly habitations and substance; it separates the soul from the body, and one friend from another; and in process of time, may take off all thoughts and affections for departed friends, but it is not able to separate from the love of God; it is so far from it, that it lets the soul into the fullest enjoyment of it: and as corporeal death, so no other kind of death can do it; for if the death of the body cannot, the death of afflictions never can; and as for a moral or spiritual death, and an eternal one, these shall never befall the children of God:

nor life; this natural and temporal life, which is frail and mortal; the love of God is better than this life, and this itself is the effect of divine favour; wherefore this can never separate from the love of God, nor anything in it: the life of believers is indeed filled up with troubles and exercises, and attended with much imperfection and sin; but nothing does, or can alienate the affections of God from his children; for though he exercises them with the trials of life, and chastises them for their sins, yet his loving kindness be does not take away from them:

nor angels; by whom are meant evil angels, the devils; for as for good angels, they never attempt to separate God and his people; they rejoice at their good, minister to them, are their guardians whilst here, at death they carry their souls to heaven, and at the last day will gather all the elect together; but evil angels do endeavour it, by temptations to sin, and accusations for it; by stirring up heresies and persecutions, in order to destroy them, but cannot succeed; for the saints are upon God's heart, are in Christ's hands, and on him the rock; and the Spirit of God is in them, who is greater than he that is in the world:

nor principalities: civil magistrates; who though they may separate them from their company, and cast them out as evil; may separate them in prisons one from another; and separate soul and body, by killing the latter, which is all they can do; yet they cannot separate neither soul nor body from the love of God: the Jews often say, that if all the nations of the world were gathered together, they could not extinguish ^{f157} or cause to cease ^{f158}, or take away the love which is between God and his people Israel ^{f159}:

nor powers; either the same with the former; or false teachers who had the power of working miracles in confirmation of their doctrines, by which they deceived many; and if it had been possible, would have deceived the elect of God, but that was impossible:

nor things present; present evils, the afflictions of the present life; God does not cease to love when he afflicts his people; yea, afflictions spring from his love, and in them he afresh manifests his love to them; they are overruled for their good, and issue in eternal glory. Present temptations also may be meant. The best of saints have been exposed unto them; Christ himself was not exempted from them; these do not, nor cannot separate from the love of God; which is manifest from the regard which God and Christ have to tempted ones, by sympathizing with them, supporting and succouring of them, rebuking the tempter, and delivering from them. Present desertions, or the hidings of God's face, which often is the case of his dear children, can have no such effect; their relation to God still continues; they have great nearness unto him, are engraven on the palms of his hands, are set as a seal on his heart, and he bears a strong affection to them; though, for wise reasons, he is pleased for a moment to hide himself from them: yea, the present body of sin and death saints carry about with them in this life, cannot separate them; sin has separated the angels from God, who rebelled against him; it drove Adam out of the garden of Eden, and will exclude the wicked from the divine presence to all eternity; and it often separates between God and his own people, with respect to communion, but never with respect to union to him, or interest in him; for he knew what they would be when he set his love upon them; his love broke through all the corruptions of nature and sins of life in their conversion; and appears to continue the same from the strong expressions of his grace to them, notwithstanding all their backslidings; could sin separate in this sense, no one would remain the object of his love. Now this does not suppose that God loves sin, nor does it give any encouragement to it; for though it cannot separate from interest in God, yet it does from the enjoyment of him. Again, present good things may be designed, the good things of this life, temporal enjoyments; these are given in love; and though they may be but few, they are in mercy, and with a blessing; and the great mercy of all is, that these are not their all, nor do they take off their value and esteem for the love of God, which is better to them than all the things of life; and though “the prosperity of fools shall destroy them”, (²⁰¹³Proverbs 1:32), the prosperity of the saints shall never be their ruin:

nor things to come; whether good or bad, prosperous or adverse; more afflictions, fresh difficulties with the body of sin; an hour of temptation, and time of distress that is to come upon all the earth; or the evil days of old age; God will never leave, nor forsake his people, or cause his loving kindness to depart from them, in whatsoever state or condition they may come into: the Vulgate Latin version adds, “nor fortitude”; and the Ethiopic version, “nor powers”; and one copy adds it in the beginning of (~~the~~ Romans 8:39), “nor power”.

Ver. 39. *Nor height, nor depth*, etc..] Neither heaven, earth, nor hell, nor any of the inhabitants of either, or anything in either; no high or low place, to be cast down from the one, or into the other; nor the height of honour and prosperity, or the depth of meanness and adversity; nor the height of power, or depth of policy in men or devils;

nor any other creature. This takes in the whole compass of created beings in heaven, earth, and sea; and most strongly expresses the inseparableness of the saints from the love of God, by anything or creature whatever; nothing in the whole universe

shall be able to separate us the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord: by “the love of God”, is not meant the saints' love to God; for though this is sometimes called the love of God, it is from him, as the author of it, and to him, as the object of it, and may be said to be in Christ, or by him, and can never be lost; yet the apostle would not have expressed such a strong confidence and full persuasion about this, and would rather have said, had this been his meaning, that nothing shall be able to separate our love from God, or God from our love, and not us from the love of God; besides, he is speaking of that love by which we are more than conquerors, and manifestly intends the love with which God loves his people, particularly the love of God the Father: and this is “in Christ Jesus our Lord”; he has expressed it in and through Christ, in choosing and blessing them in him, and in sending him to die for them; and it still continues in him, and is in him as their Lord, head, husband, and Redeemer; and is a reason why nothing can separate them from it: which is to be understood, not of the effects of love, and the application of it, which may be suspended for a time; nor of the manifestation and sense of it, which believers may be without for a while; nor of any sort of separation from God, for saints themselves may be separated from him, with respect to intimate sensible communion and fellowship; but the sense of this

passage is, that they can never be separated from the love of God, so as that that union which is made by it between God and them can ever be dissolved, or they cease to have any share or interest in his love. This the apostle was persuaded could never be.