CALVIN'S COMMENTARIES

COMMENTARY ON HEBREWS AND THE CATHOLIC EPISTLES

JAMES • 1 & 2 PETER • 1 JOHN • JUDE



JOHN CALVIN

SOLI DEO GLORIA

Commentary on

Hebrews

and the Catholic Epistles

James · 1 & 2 Peter · 1 John · Jude

John Calvin

Translated and edited by the Rev. John Owen

Monergism Books

Commentary on Hebrews and the Catholic Epistles: James, 1 & 2 Peter, 1 John, and Jude

John Calvin

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Translator's Preface to Hebrews

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

No doubt the Epistle next in importance to that to the Romans is this to the Hebrews. The truths explained in it might, indeed, have been deduced from other portions of Scripture; but it is a vast advantage and a great satisfaction to find them expressly set forth, and distinctly stated by an inspired Apostle.

In condescension to our ignorance, it has pleased God, not only to give us what might have been deemed sufficient for our information, but also to add "line upon line," so that there might be every help given to those who have a desire to know the truth, and every reasonable accuse taken away from such as resolve to oppose it, and to follow the guidance of selfwill, and the delusions of their own proud minds and depraved hearts. It might then, seem strange to us that defect, insufficiency, and obscurity have been ascribed to the Scriptures, did we not know that these have been made by such as wish Revelation to be otherwise than it is; they having imbibed errors and adopted superstitions to which it yields no countenance, but which it condemns in terms so plain, that they must be represented as defective or obscure in order to be evaded.

There are especially two parties who find this Epistle in no way favorable to them — the Papists and the Socinians. The Sole Priesthood of Christ, and his Sole Sufficient Sacrifice, are here so distinctly stated, that the former cannot resist the evidence except by the subtle arts of the most consummate sophistry; and the latter find it a very difficult task to neutralize the strong and clear testimony here given as to the Divinity of our Savior and his Atonement. Though these parties are wholly opposed to one another, yet, like Herod and Pilate, they unite in degrading the Savior — the one indirectly, by substituting others in his place; and the other in open manner, by denying his dignity and the character and efficacy of his death. But by both the Savior is equally dishonored.

There have been more disputes about this Epistle than any other portion of Scripture; but many of the questions which have been raised have been of a very trifling character, as though learned men were idle and had nothing else to do; and this has been the case, especially with the divines of the German school, not only with regard to this Epistle, but with respect to many other subjects.

Disquisitions called learned, have been written as to the character of this Epistle, whether it be properly an Epistle, or something that ought to be

called by some other name! [1] Then it has been a subject learnedly discussed, to whom in particular the Epistle was sent, whether to the dispersed Jews, or to those in Palestine — whether to a particular Congregation, or to the Hebrews in general? [2] Such questions are comparatively of very little importance; and to spend time and talent in discussing them, is a work frivolous and useless; and not only so, but also mischievous, calculated to serve the purposes of Popery and Infidelity; for to render thus apparently important what is not so, and on which no degree of certainty can be obtained, is to involve men in a mist which may lead them astray.

Another subject has been much discussed, which is of no great consequence, as the inspiration of the Epistle is not thereby endangered, and that is the language in which the Epistle was originally written. An opinion prevailed among some of the Early Fathers that it was written in Hebrew, or rather in SyroChaldee language, and that it was translated into Greek by Luke, Clement, or Barnabas. It was stated as an *opinion*, confirmed by no authority, and founded mainly on two circumstances — that it was written to Hebrews, and that its style is different from that of Paul in his other Epistles. Almost all modern divines regard this opinion as not well founded. The Greek language was in Paul's time well known throughout Palestine; the "General Epistles," intended for the Jews as well as the Gentiles, were written in Greek; and *there is no record of any copy of this Epistle in Hebrew.* As to the style, it differs not more from that of the other Epistles than what may be observed in writers in all ages, or what might be expected in Paul when advanced in years, compared with what he wrote in his younger days. It may be further added, that the Epistle itself contains things which seem to show that it was written in Greek: Hebrew words are interpreted, Hebrews 7:2; the passages quoted are mostly from the *Septuagint*, and not from the Hebrew; and there is the use of a word, rendered "Testament," in Hebrews 9:17, in the sense of a Will, which the Hebrew word never means.

There are only two questions of real importance — the canonicity of the Epistle, and its Author.

As to the first, it has never been doubted except by some of the strange heretics in the first ages. There is quite as much external testimony in its favor as most portions of the New Testament. It was from the first received by the Churches, Eastern and Western, as a portion of the Inspired Volume. It is found in the very first versions of the New Testament, the *Syriac* and the

[1] To say that it has not the unusual introductory form of an Epistle, is no valid objection; for we find the case to be the same with regard to the First Epistle of John. It begins in a way very similar to this, while in the two following the usual mode is adopted.

[2] The following account seems sufficiently satisfactory on this point: — "Clement of Alexandria, Jerome, Euthalius [Epiphanius?], Chrysostom, Theodoret, Theophylact and others, were of opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was sent to the Jews living in Judea, who in the Apostle's time were called Hebrews to distinguish them from the jews in the Gentile countries, who were called Hellenists or Grecians, Acts 6:1; 9:29; 11:20. In that opinion these ancient authors were well founded, because as Lardner observes, this letter appears to have been written to persons dwelling in one place, Hebrews 13:19, 23, 24, namely, to the inhabitants of Judea, and to those of them especially who lived in Jerusalem." — Macknight

Italic. These versions were made as early as the end of the second century, about 140 years after the date of this Epistle. [3] The testimony of the Fathers from the earliest time is uniformly the same in this respect. The Epistle is acknowledged by them all as a portion of Holy Writ.

But with regard to the Author there has been a diversity of opinion, though, when all things are duly weighed, without reason. From the *earliest times*, the Eastern Church acknowledge Paul as the Author. Some in the Western Church, in the third and the fourth century, did not regard Paul as the Author, but Luke, or Clement, or Barnabas. Jerome and Augustine in the fifth century, a more enlightened age than the two preceding centuries, ascribed to Paul the authorship; and since their time the same opinion has prevailed in the Western, as it did from the beginning in the Eastern Church. How to account for a different opinion in the Western Church during the third and the fourth century, is difficult. Some think it was owing to the Novalien Heresy, which some parts of this Epistle were supposed to favor, though without any good reason.

As far then as the testimony of history goes, almost the whole weight of evidence is in favor of Paul being the Author.

With regard to modern times, the prevailing opinion has been that it is the Epistle of Paul. Luther, indeed, ascribed it to Apollos — a mere conjecture. Calvin, as we find, supposed that either Luke or Clement was the author; for which there are no satisfactory reasons. Beza differed from his illustrious predecessor, and regarded Paul as the writer; and such has been the opinion entertained by most of the successors of the Reformers, both in this country and on the Continent, as proved by their confessions of Faith.

About the middle of the seventeenth century there seems to have been a revival of the controversy; for in the year 1658 the younger Spanheim wrote an elaborate treatise on the subject, in which he canvasses the whole evidence, both historical and internal, and affords the strongest ground for the conclusion that Paul was the writer of this Epistle. Since that time, till late years, his arguments were regarded by most as conclusive. But some of the German divines, who seem to have a taste for exploded opinions, have again revived the question, produced afresh the old arguments, and added some new ones to them. But a second Spanheim has appeared in the person of Professor Stuart, of America, who has published a learned Commentary on this Epistle, and prefixed to it a long Introduction, in which he has fully entered into the subject, and more fully than his predecessor. The labor and toil which this Introduction must have cost its author, were no doubt very great; for every argument, however frivolous, (and some of the arguments are *very* frivolous indeed,) is noticed, and everything plausible is most clearly exposed.

The evidence both external and internal is so satisfactory, that an im-

[3] It is indeed thought, as stated by Horne in his Introduction, that the Syriac version was made at the end of the first, or at the beginning of the second century. In that case, it was made less than 40 years after the Epistle was written.

pression is left on the mind, that Paul was the author of this Epistle, nearly equal to what his very name prefixed to it would have produced. Indeed the writer can truly say, that he now entertains no more doubt on the subject than if it had the Apostle's own superscription. [4]

As to the date of this Epistle, it is commonly supposed to have been written late in 62 or early in 63, about the time that Paul was released from his first imprisonment at Rome.

There seem to be especially two reasons why Paul did not commence this Epistle in his usual manner: first, because he was not specifically an Apostle to the Jews, but to the Gentiles; and secondly, because the contents of the Epistle are such that it was not necessary for him to assume his Apostolic character; for the arguments are founded on testimonies found in the Old Testament, and not on his authority as a commissioned Apostle. His main object appears to have been to show and prove that the Gospel is but a fulfillment of the ancient Scriptures, which the Jews themselves received as divine. His arguments and his examples are throughout borrowed from the Old Testament. This is a fact that is too often overlooked, to which Macknight, in an especial manner, very justly refers.

The Epistle begins by indicating a connection between the Old and the New Testament: both are revelations from the same God; He who spoke by the Prophets in the Old, speaks by His Son in the New. Then the obvious and inevitable conclusion is, that the New is but the Old completed. It is on this ground that the whole argument of the Epistle proceeds.

Having thus clearly intimated the connection between the two Testaments, the Apostle immediately enters on his great subject — the superiority of Him who introduced the perfected dispensation over all connected with the previous incomplete, elementary, and, in a great measure, symbolical dispensation, even over angels and Moses and the Levitical highpriest. And this subject occupies the largest portion of the Epistle, extending from the *first* chapter to the 19th verse of the *tenth* chapter. From that verse to the end of the Epistle, we have exhortations, warnings, examples of faith and patience, admonitions, directions, and salutations.

Then the Epistle divides itself into two main parts: —

1. The didactic, including the *ten* first chapters, with the exception of the latter part of the tenth.

2. The parainetic or hortative, from the 19th verse of the tenth chapter to the end of the Epistle.

The first part may be thus divided, —

1. Christ's superiority over angels — warnings objections answered, ch. 1 and 2.

[4]The arguments in favor of Paul being the author of this Epistle are briefly found in Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study of the Scriptures; but those who wish to see the subject fully handled, and that with great discrimination and judgment, must read Stuart's Introduction to his Commentary on this epistle. Dr. Bloomfield uses no exaggerated language when he says, that is "very elaborate and invaluable."

2. Christ's superiority over Moses — warnings as to faith and the promised rest, ch. 3 and 4:13.

3. Christ's superiority over the Levitical highpriest, as to his appointment, the perpetuity of his office, his covenant, and the efficacy of his atonement, ch. 4:14, to 10:19.

The second part admits of these divisions, —

1. Exhortation to *persevere*, derived from the free access in a new way to God; from the awful fate of apostates; and from their own past example, ch. 10:1937.

2. Exhortation to *faith* and *patience*, derived from the example of the ancient saints, ch. 10:38, to the end of ch. 11.

3. Exhortation to encounter *trials* and *afflictions*, derived from the example of Christ; and from the love of God, as manifested by afflictions, ch. 12:113.

4. Exhortation to *peace* and *holiness*, derived from our superior privileges, and the aggravated guilt of no electing Him who speaks to us from heaven, ch. 12:1429.

5. Various directions and cautions, requests and salutations, ch. 13.

The former part, the didactic, has many digressions, and hence the difficulty sometimes of tracing the course of the Apostle's reasoning. But it was his practice as appears from his other epistles, to apply, as it were, the subject, as he proceeds. Having in the *first* chapter proved the superiority of Christ over angels, he points out at the beginning of the *second* the great danger of disregarding his doctrine, and of neglecting his salvation, an inference drawn from what had been previously proved. He then proceeds with the same subject, Christ's superiority over angels, answers an objection derived from his human nature, and shows the necessity there was that he should become man; as he could not otherwise have sympathized with lost creatures, nor have atoned for their Sins. Here he first refers to him in express terms as a priest.

Then in ch. 3 he proceeds to show Christ's superiority over Moses; and having done so, he goes on in verse 7 to warn the Hebrews against following the example of their forefathers, who, through unbelief, lost the land of promise; and he pursues this subject to the end of the 13th verse of ch. 4.

The last section of the didactic part commences at ch. 4 and extends to verse 19 of the tenth chapter; it occupies nearly *six* chapters, and contains several episodes, so that it is sometimes no easy matter to trace the connection.

He begins this portion by calling attention to Christ as a highpriest, whom he had before represented as such at the end of ch. 2; where he mentions *two* things respecting him — that he became man, in order that he might atone for sin, and in order that he might be capable of sympathizing with his people. But here he refers mainly to the *last*, to his sufferings; and in order to anticipate an objection from the fact that he was a suffering Savior,

he mentions his appointment, which, according to the testimony of David in the Book of Psalms, was to be according to the order of Melchisedec. Without going on with this subject, he makes a digression, and evidently for the purpose of making them more attentive to the explanation he was going to give of Melchisedec as a type of Christ in his priesthood.

This digression contains several particulars. To arouse their attention and stimulate them, he blames them for their ignorance, mentions the danger of continuing satisfied with the knowledge of first principles, and the impossibility of restoration in case of apostasy; he gives an illustration of this from unproductive land after culture and rain; reminds them of their past commendable conduct, and encourages them to activity and zeal by an assurance respecting the certainty of Gods promises, ch. 5:12, to the end of ch. 6.

In chap. 7 he proceeds with Melchisedec as the type of Christ in his priestly office. Christ is a priest according to his order, not according to that of Aaron; then Aaron *must* have been superseded. According to the testimony of David, Christ's priesthood excelled that of Aaron in two things — it was established by an *oath*, and it was to he perpetuated "forever," ch. 7 to the end of the 25th verse.

He now goes on to the other part of this subject, to speak of Christ as making an atonement for sin, ch. 7:26, having before spoken of him as a sympathizing priest from the circumstance of having been a sufferer. While speaking of his expiation, he refers to the covenant of which he was the Mediator, for expiations depended on the covenant. Respecting the new covenant, he quotes the express words of Jeremiah; and it included the remission of sins, and remission of sins necessarily implies an expiation. Then in the *ninth* chapter he refers to the old covenant, the tabernacle, and its services, and proves the insufficiency of these services, they being only typical of what was to come. From the *tenth* chapter to the 19th verse he pursues the same subject, and shows that the sacrifices under the Law were insufficient for the remission of sins, and that this could only be obtained through the Mediator of the new covenant promised by God through his prophet Jeremiah, chapter. 7:26, to chapter.10:19. [5]

Here the Apostle completes the *first* part, having stated at large in the last portion of it the claims of Christ as a highpriest, and these claims are fully confirmed by the testimonies of the ancient Scriptures. His arguments are such that it is impossible really to understand and believe the Old Testament and to deny the New; the latter being most evidently the fulfillment of the

[5] There is an elaborate analysis of the subject from chapter 4:14, to chapter 10:19, by Stuart at the commencement of his notes on Chapter 5; but it is not satisfactory. He seems to have overlooked that there are two sections to this part, the one referring mainly to the appointment of Christ as a priest, which stands connected with this sufferings, and His capability of sympathy, chapter 4:14 to 7:25; and the other referring to the expiation he made as Mediator of the new covenant, chapter 7:26 to chapter 10:9. The text which is the ground of the first section is Psalm 110:4; the passage on which the second section is built is Jeremiah 31:31-34, in connection with Psalm 40:6.

former. The Old Testament distinctly speaks of another priesthood different from that of Aaron, and of another covenant different from that made with the children of Israel, and of one which would confer the remission of sins, which the other could not do. Now these are the testimonies not of the New but of the Old Testament; and the New exhibits a priest and a covenant exactly answerable to the priest and the covenant which the Old Testament refers to and describes. Nothing can be more plain and more conclusive than the Apostle's arguments on this subject.

The parainetic or hortative portion of the Epistle, extending from chap. 10:19 to the end, requires no further explanation.

We especially learn from this Epistle that the distinctive character of the old dispensation was symbolical, and of the new spiritual. The old abounded in forms, rituals, and ceremonies; the new exhibits what these things signified and typified. To have recourse again to symbols and rituals, is to prefer darkness to light, to reverse the order of things, and to disregard a favor which kings and prophets in ancient times desired to enjoy. This is not only an evidence of fatuity, but it is also ingratitude and sin, and it ought never to be deemed as innocent or harmless. Having the glorious light of the Gospel, let us walk in the light, and never regard "beggarly elements" as things to be perpetuated and admired.

This Commentary was translated into English by Clement Cotton, from the French Version, and was published in 1605 under the following title: — "A Commentarie on the whole Epistle to the Hebrews. By Iohn Calvin. Translated ovt of French. *The Lawe was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Iesus Christ* John 1:17. Imprinted at London by Felix Kingston, for *Arthur Iohnson*, and are to be sold at his shop neere the great North doors of Pauls, at the signs of the white Horse. 1605." Like his translation of Isaiah, that of the Commentary on the Hebrews, "though not altogether suitable to modern taste, is faithful, vigorous, idiomatic, and not inelegant."

The "Epistle Dedicatorie" to Cotton's patron, Robert Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, and his Address "to the Reader," have been reprinted as a specimen of the style of such performances at that period.

J. O.

Thrussington, August 1853

Clement Cotton's Dedicatory to the First English Edition of 1605

TO THE RIGHT HONOVRABLE
ROBERT EARLE OF SALISBVRIE, VICOVNT
Cranbourne, Baron of Essendon, Principall Secretarie to
the Kings most excellent Maiestie, Master of the
Court of Wardes and Liueries, and one of
his Highnesse most Honourable
Priuie Counsell.
Grace and peace be multiplied

Right Honorable, such has been the singular care and fatherly providence of God over his church in these last times: that according to his own most gracious promise (through the means of preaching and writing) knowledge has overflowed in all places, as the waters that cover the sea. Hence it is come to pass, that even this nation also, albeit utterly unworthy to receive so much as the least sprinklings of this knowledge, has not withstanding been replenished and filled therewith, almost from corner to corner. Many chosen and worthy instruments has the Lord raised up here and there for this purpose. But amongst the rest, none for whom there is greater cause of thankfulness, than for that rare and excellent light of this age, *Mr. Calvin*: whether in respect of the large and many volumes, which with unwearable pains he has written, or the exceeding fruits which the Churches have thereby gained. So that all of sound judgment will acknowledge, that God had poured out upon him a principal portion and measure of his spirit to profit with all, 1 Corinthians 12:7. Whereof, as his whole works give sufficient proofs, so his Commentaries especially. For besides his sincerity and faithfulness in delivering the true and natural sense of the holy Scriptures; he has this as peculiar to himself, that with his faithfulness and sincerity he always matches an exceeding plainness and gravity: whereby his Reader may obtain that he seeks, both with great ease, and with very little loss of time.

Divers of these his Commentaries, Right Honorable, have been already translated to the great benefit of this nation: others yet remain untranslated, which doubtless would be no less beneficial. The which, as I have earnestly desired; so, had gifts and means been in any measure answerable, it had been performed ere this. For the present, I have been bold to give your Honor a small taste thereof in these my poor first fruits: wherein although my pains are no way sufficient to commend the same unto your Honor, yet I doubt not

but the matter itself will be found worthy of your H. patronage. For where are the natures and offices of Christ so largely described; the doctrine of the free remission of sins in Christ's blood better established, or faith with her effects more highly commended, than in this Epistle to the Hebrews?

Now as touching the reasons, Right Honorable, that have moved me hereunto, they are briefly these; First, I was not ignorant what singular love and affection your Honor bare to the author of this Commentary for his work's sake, whereof many also are witnesses. Unto which, if your Honor should be pleased to add a second favor in Patronizing these his labors, I thought it would be a special means to revive his memory again, now almost decayed amongst us.

Secondly, I was persuaded that if your Lordship, whom it has pleased the Almighty so highly to advance, being also a favorer and defender of the truth, and of all good causes; would permit this works to pass under your Honors protection: that it would be both better esteemed, and the more acceptably received of all.

Lastly, my good Lord. As I cannot conceal that deep and inward affection of love and duties which I owe unto your Honor, in regard of the near employments which sometimes a dear friend of mine had about your Lordship in your young years: so by this dedication it was my desire to testify part of a thankful mind, in respect that you have not suffered neither length of time, nor your H. weighty affairs in matters of state, to wear the same out of your Honorable remembrance: as by the great favors your H. has lately showed in that behalf, does plainly appear.

Thus in most humble manner craving pardon for my great boldness, I humbly end; beseeching the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth, to pour out the abundance of all blessings both upon you and yours in this life, and to crown your H. and them with immortal blessedness in his kingdom of Gloria, through Christ.

Your Honours in all humble and dutifull affection
ever to bee commanded,

Clement Cotton

Clement Cotton's Foreword to the Reader

TO THE READER

Dear Christian Reader, among the many helps wherewith God has furnished thee for the furtherance of thy godly Meditations and spiritual growth in Christ, I pray thee accept of this amongst the rest; of which (if I may so speak) thou has been too long unfurnished. Diverse good and godly men have labored, some by their own writings, and some again by translating the works of others, to store thee with Sermons and Expositions in English, upon all the books of the New Testament, this Epistle to the Hebrews lonely excepted: which lack, rather than it should be unsupplied, has caused me (the unfittest I confess at many thousands) to undertake the translation of the Commentary ensuing: which being finished, I have been bold (for thy benefit Christian Reader) now to publish. Hoping therefore of thy friendly allowance and acceptance of these my poor endeavors: I beseech thee, if thou reap that benefit thereby, which I heartily with thou may, to give God the praise, and to help me with thy prayers. Thus commending thee and thy studies to the grace of God, I bid thee farewell.

Thine ever in Christ,
C.C.

Translator's Preface to the Catholic Epistles

TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE Dedication to King Edward the Sixth is remarkably interesting, as it refers to the character of Popery at that day, and to its manoeuvres with regard to a General Council. The language is strong, and perhaps rougher than what would be at present used, but still true according to all we gather from history as to the state of things in those days. The main principles of Popery are still the same, and similar are its proceedings, though they may be more disguised, and its spirit is equally intolerant and persecuting. Like Mahomedanism, it is exclusive, and ever injurious to the harmony and peace of society.

The order in which the Epistles are arranged is not the same as in our version. There has not been a uniformity in this respect among the ancients. The reason for the arrangement here adopted was probably this, that the First Epistle of Peter, and the First of John, had, from the beginning, been universally acknowledged as genuine, while the Epistle of James, the Second of Peter, and that of Jude, had not from the first been universally received as canonical, though they were eventually so received. The Second and the Third Epistle of John were evidently not deemed by Calvin as "catholic;" and for this reason, as it seems, he omitted them.

The word "Catholic," or General, as applied to the Epistles here explained, has been differently understood. Some have thought that they have been thus called, because they contain catholic truths; but other Epistles might, for this reason, be also called catholic. Others have supposed that catholic is synonymous with canonical; but in this case also there is no more reason for applying the word to these Epistles than to any other Epistles. But the more probable opinion is, that they were called Catholic, or General, because they were not written to any particular Church, but to Jewish or to Gentile Christians generally. Moreover, the term was not given them at first, but in subsequent ages.

The most probable *dates* of the *five* Epistles here explained are the following: —

BOOK	DATE
The Epistle of James,	A.D. 61
The First Epistle of Peter,	A.D. 65

The Second Epistle of Peter,
A.D. 65
The Epistle of Jude,
A.D. 66
The First, Epistle of John
A.D. 68

This is the order according to the dates most approved by the learned. There is, for the most part, a unanimity as to the dates of the three first Epistles; but with regard to the Epistle of Jude, and the First Epistle of John, there is not the same agreement. There are many who fix later dates: to Jude, 90, and to John, 91 or 92. But this is a matter of no great consequence.

No doubt can be justly entertained but that James, called the Less, was the author of the Epistle. He was the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas, and of Mary, probably a cousin, not a sister, of Mary the mother of our Lord. Hence he is called our Lord's brother, (Galatians 1:19;) that is, a near relative, as the Word brother is often taken in Scripture. He took a leading part in the council held at Jerusalem, mentioned in Acts 15; and, according to *Jerome,* he resided there thirty years, and presided over the Church. He was put to death, as Hegesippus relates, who flourished in the second century, by a tumultuous mob, excited by Jewish zealots, in the year 62.

The canonicity of James's Epistle has been a subject of dispute, though almost universally allowed in the present day. The facts respecting it, according to *Basnage,* are these, — During the three first centuries it was not extensively known; in the fourth century its authenticity was by *some* disputed; but in the fifth century it was universally acknowledged as genuine; and it has ever since been so acknowledged, with a very few exceptions. What seems to be a sufficient evidence in its favor is the fact, that it is found as a part of Holy Scripture in the first Syriac Version, which was made early in the second century.

The occasion of writing the Epistle appears to have been the abuse made of the doctrine of free grace by professing Christians, — a subject referred to also by Paul in Romans vi., and in his other Epistles. Abounding grace is at one time despised and rejected; at another time it is turned into licentiousness: these are evils which have ever prevailed in the Church. The Pharisee is too proud to receive grace; the Antinomian pretends to receive and magnify grace, that he may gratify the inclinations of his sinful nature. It was against the Antinomian that James wrote his Epistle.

According to *Lardner* and *Macknight,* the Epistle was addressed to the whole Jewish nation, at home and abroad, believers and unbelievers; according to *Grotius* and *Wall,* to the Jews dispersed abroad indiscriminately, believing and unbelieving; according to *Michaelis,* to the believing Jews, while the unbelieving were not overlooked; but according to *Beza* and *Scott,* to the scattered Jews who professed the Christian faith. And this last opinion has

the strongest reasons and evidence in its favor. [6]

With regard to the *First* Epistle of Peter, there has never been a doubt respecting its genuineness. This Apostle took a prominent part at first in the cause of Christianity, but of his labors after the council at Jerusalem, in the year 49, recorded in Acts 15, we have no account in Scripture. Mention is indeed made, in Galatians 2:11, of his being afterwards at Antioch. It has been justly concluded from the superscription of this Epistle that he exercised his ministry in those parts which are here mentioned.

It was thought by *Beza* and *Grotius* that the Epistle was addressed to converted Jews; but by *Doddridge, Macknight,* and *Scott,* to Christians in general, both Jews and Gentiles. The latter opinion is the most probable. The arguments assigned by *Horne,* in his Introduction, in favor of the former opinion, are by no means satisfactory.

With regard to the *Second* Epistle of Peter, doubts have been entertained by some as to its authenticity. It appears that it was not at first so widely known as his First Epistle; and this was probably the reason why there were some during the first three centuries who did not regard it as genuine. But it has been quoted as a part of Scripture by some of the earliest Fathers, and fully acknowledged as authentic by those of the fourth and succeeding centuries.

The *First* Epistle of John has from the beginning been uniformly received as a portion of Divine Revelation. Some difference has existed as to the persons for whom it was especially intended, — a matter of no great importance. Some have supposed it to have been written for the Jewish Christians in Judea; but others, with more probability, for Christians generally, both Jewish and Gentile.

Though there is no name attached to it, yet there has been universal consent from the beginning that John was its author; and indeed the style of it throughout is sufficient to shew that he was the writer of it; for his Gospel and the Book of Revelation are in this respect exactly alike; and it is a style peculiarly his own.

Jude, or Judas, was, as he says, the brother of James, and therefore the son of Alphaeus or Cleopas. Though he does not call himself an apostle, yet he proved himself to be so by saying that he was the brother of James. He is called, as James was, the brother of our Lord, Matthew 13:55. We have in Scripture no account of his ministry after the day of Pentecost.

His Epistle was not at first universally received as canonical. This is acknowledged by *Origen, Eusebius,* and *Jerome;* at the same time, they themselves so regarded it; and Jerome says that in his day it was by most received as genuine; and it has been quoted as a part of Scripture by *Clement* of Alexandria, *Tertullian, Cyril* of Jerusalem, *Athanasius, Ambrose,* and *Augustine.* [7]

[6] See Horne's Introduction, vol. 4, part 2, chap. 4, sect. 3.

[7] See Wolfius' Prolegomena to this Epistle.

That some of the Epistles were not universally received as authentic at first is no matter of wonder, when we consider the scattered condition of the Church, and the scanty means of communication. The fact, that *some* had doubts respecting them does not in the least degree invalidate their genuineness; on the contrary, it has conduced to strengthen the evidence in their favor; for the doubts of some must have occasioned a more minute inquiry as to their authenticity. And it was not long before all the Epistles, about which there had been some doubts, had attained the universal approbation of the Church; and what *Lardner* states is worthy of special attention, — That no writings, received by the primitive Church as genuine, have been since proved to be spurious; and that no writings, regarded by it as spurious, have been since proved to be genuine.

The Editor must mention here, what perhaps he ought to have mentioned before, — that in his translations he has not always retained what is called the historical present tense, which is often used by *Calvin,* according to the practice of Latin and Greek writers, and also of the Prophets and the Evangelists. This mode of writing does not accord with the usage of the present day.

Our translators have not been uniform in this respect either in the New or the Old Testament; for they sometimes departed from the original as to this tense, though, for the most part, they retained it. As, for instance, in John 11:39-40, the historical present is *not* retained in the 39th, while it is retained in the 40th verse. The anomalies as to the tenses often met with, especially in the Psalms, have arisen from overlooking this peculiarity. The future in Hebrew is very often used for the present; and this is the historical present, and ought to be rendered in our language in the past tense.

J.O.

ThrussIngton, Sept. 29, 1855.

Calvin's Dedication to the Catholic Epistles

DEDICATION

TO HIS MOST SERENE HIGHNESS,

EDWARD THE SIXTH

THE KING OF ENGLAND, THE LORD OF IRELAND, AND A MOST CHRISTIAN PRINCE,

JOHN CALVIN.

Behold, I return to you again, most excellent King. For though I did not expect that the Commentaries on Isaiah, which I lately dedicated to your Majesty, were a worthy gift, yet it was offered with my hearty good wishes. I have, therefore, thought of adding the Catholic Epistles, as they are commonly called, as a supplement to make up a full measure, so that both might come to your hands at the same time. And doubtless, since they were written either to Gentiles far distant, or to such as inhabited various countries far asunder, it is nothing new to them to pass over the sea, and to make a long circuit in coming to your Majesty. At the same time I thus as a private individual offer to you, most illustrious King, my labors, that being published under your name, they may profit all.

And truly, if there has ever been a time when the truth of God ought to have been freely and boldly maintained, it has never been more necessary than in the present day, as all must see. Not to mention the atrocious cruelty exercised towards its professors, to omit also all those machinations by which Satan fights against it, sometimes covertly and sometimes openly, there are places in which the pure doctrine of Religion lately prevailed, but where now the satellites of the Roman Antichrist, by their spurious deformations so mock Christ as though they gave a reed in his hand instead of a scepter, and laid a crown of thorns on his head. When these crafty corrupters of the purity of the Gospel hope by their arts gradually to extinguish it, with what cowardice do they connive at these mockeries offered to Christ, who ought to have hazarded their life a hundred times rather than to redeem it for a very short time by their perfidious silence?

In the meantime, the Pope himself, to complete the last tragedy of crucifying the Son of God, is said to have summoned again his own masked council. Though he marches with his savage soldiery to obliterate the name of Christ and to destroy his Church, yet every kind of council is to him as a sacred sword, to make slaughter as it were a solemn rite. Thus Paulus the Third, when he had resolved to kill and destroy all by whom the defense of truth was preferred to their own life, made a show at Trent of that odious spectre,

though disguised in fine colors, that he might put an end to the Gospel as it were by its thunders. But all that preparation, when the good fathers had begun, through some gleams emitted at the sessions, to dazzle the eyes of the simple, was put an end to by a secret and sudden blast from the holy seat, and vanished into smoke, except that for the purpose of continuing the terror, a little cloud rested for a time on Bononia.

Hence Julius, his successor, who had performed his part previously at Trent, is said to be preparing himself now for this stratagem, as though this only remained as means to obliterate the Gospel from the memory of men, that is, to fulminate against us with the horrible and terrific decrees of council; though many think that he only makes a pretense. But it signifies but little whether he pretends or really means to call a council. It is indeed a thing clear and well proved, that since the Papacy began to decline through the efforts of Luther, whoever occupied that citadel of tyranny, though they might hope to obtain some support from a council, they yet have shunned this kind of remedy in way similar to a sick man, who, being all over full of ulcers, dreads even the touch of the most tender physician. Therefore common even among children is the saying, that the Papacy cannot otherwise be assisted by a council than by cauterizing or amputation.

But I see no cause why the Popes dread councils so much, except that fear is an inseparable companion of a bad conscience. For what, I pray, was the late rabble at Trent, (to which yet they gave the name of a holy, general, and ecumenical synod,) but a sort of empty apparition, which no more disturbed the pleasures of the Pope than the clangor of trumpets, or the sound of drums, with which he daily amuses himself? Were, indeed, a synod from all parts really assembled, here might be some cause of fear, lest a disturbance, arising in so great a multitude, should occasion a greater tumult. But by such fictitious councils as that of Trent, who can believe that a Pope could be terrified any more than by children's rattles, but that on the contrary he would sweetly slumber as through the blandishments of a quieter sleep? For example, two or three cardinals shall be chosen by the Pope, being his bosom friends, who shall wield all the authority. The same tyrant will hire from his courtiers some greedy fellow for a few ducats a month, who, being clothed in the mask of a patriarch, will servilely declare as his own opinion what had been dictated to him. Such was that blind Robert at Trent, whom I saw some time ago at Ratisbon, busying himself, not less foolishly than wickedly, in behalf of the Pope, when by his inveiglements he tried to draw me to a conference with Contarenus. There will fly together from all Italy the three-halfpenny bishops, of whom there will be a vast abundance. There will come also from France and Spain some of the light-headed and fatuitous, and others infamous for the vices of their former life; who afterwards returning home will boast that they had rendered a good and faithful service to the Catholic Church. Moreover, there will come forth from the caves of monks a great conflux of frogs into that marsh, who by their eager croaking will

banish far away every truth. What! do I imagine here a new thing, or do I not, on the contrary, correctly describe the assembly which was lately seen at Trent?

Why then is it that the Pope dreads these guardians of his own tribunal, who are all, in the *first* place, his own servile creatures; and who, in the *second* place, seek no other thing than to gain by any means his favor?

Our Julius especially, who is a veteran in matters of this kind, can in mockery, whenever he pleases, compose such a council as this, so as, in the meantime, to leave as usual the thing undone. And, indeed, as he has given to many of the Dominicans the red cap, it seems to be no obscure prelude of such an event. This order, as they say, has ever been in favor with him; but such profusion arises from a higher cause. He, indeed, knows well, that none are more shameless than these beggarly fellows, as he has often employed at his nod their illiberal and sordid services. When he raised them again to this dignity, he knew that whatever he might bid them to do, none would be more audacious or more cruel than they. Besides, he is not ignorant that most of these hungry dogs, feeding on the same rewards, would rush into any contentions he wishes. I do not, however, say that they are mistaken who declare that he does not desire a council. But when he has arranged his own theater, some sudden storm will be raised with no great trouble, which will disturb the whole proceeding. Hence, at the very beginning, if his own advantage so require it, he will fold up the curtains. A council, however, though an empty phantom, he thinks to be to him like Hercules's club, to lay Christ prostrate, and to break in pieces the remnant of the Church.

When this prince of impiety so wickedly tramples upon the glory of our God and the salvation of men, does it become us by silence to betray the sacred cause? nay, we ought to undergo hundred deaths, were that possible, rather than to suffer so unworthy, wicked, and barbarous oppression of sound doctrine to continue unknown through our sloth.

But let us grant what is hardly credible, that the Pope with his band does seriously intend to call a council. In that case Christ will not, at the first view, be so grossly mocked; yet in this way a wicked conspiracy would be formed against him: nay, the greater the fame of the gravity and splendor of the Papal council, the more injurious would it be to the Church, and a more dreadful pest would it prove. For it cannot possibly be hoped, that an assembly gathered under the authority of Antichrist, should be governed by the Spirit, or that the slaves of Satan should exercise any moderation. In the first place, the Pope, the professed and sworn enemy of Christ, would occupy there the chief place of authority. Though he would especially pretend to ask the opinions of the Fathers sitting there, yet being terrified by his presence, they would all follow what would please him. But in an assembly fully agreeing in every impiety, what need would there be of dissimulation? Such, I have no doubt, is every one of the cardinals. In that very college, which pretends to be a holier senate, there prevails, it is evident, an Epicurean

contempt of God, a savage hatred of truth, a rabid fury against all the pious. Then the order of bishops, does it not consist nearly of the same monsters? except that many among them are slothful asses, who neither openly despise God, nor hostilely oppose sound doctrine; yet they are so enamoured with their own depraved state, that they cannot endure any reformation. Add to this, that authority will reside almost wholly with the few, who, being indeed altogether destitute of any concern for true religion, will shew themselves the most fierce supporters of the Roman See: others will make up the number. As every one of these will speak the most atrocious things against us, there will be many not only of those who may only give their votes, but also of the princes, who will subscribe either willingly and gladly according to their own inclinations, or from ambition, or from fear.

I am not however, so unjust as not to concede that some of these have a sounder judgment and are not otherwise ill disposed; but they do not possess so much courage, that they will dare to resist the wickedness of the whole body. There will be perhaps, amidst a thousand, two or three who may dare to give a half-uttered word for Christ, (as Peter Paul Vergerius at Trent) but the holy council of the Fathers will have a remedy at hand, so that such may not create any further trouble; for being cast into prison, they will be presently driven to a recantation, or they will have to pay the penalty of death for too much freedom of speech, or they will have to drink the cup of perpetual silence.

But such is the equity with which we are treated, that we are untameable and hopelessly perverse heretics, except we seek from the holy council the rule for the necessary reformation, except we acquiesce without any demur in its decrees, whatever they may be. We, indeed, do not shun the authority of a legitimate council, (if such could be had,) as we have already made sufficiently evident by clear proofs. But when they require that we are to bow to the judgment of the chief adversary of Christ without any appeal, and indeed on this condition, that religion is to be defined at their will and pleasure, and not by the Word of God, what reason have we for submission, except we are prepared willingly and knowingly to deny Christ? There is no reason for any one to object and say, that we distrust before the time. Let them give us a council in which there will be a free liberty given to defend the cause of truth: if to that we refuse to come, and to give a reason for all that we have done, then they will justly charge us with contumacy. But so far will a permission be given us freely to speak, that there is no doubt but that we shall be prevented from making even a suitable defense. For how can they listen to the clear-sounding thunders of truth, who can by no means bear warnings however bland and conveyed in soft whispers? But this they publicly do — They invite us; is it that they may grant us some place on the lowest seats? Nay, they declare that it is not lawful to admit any one to their sittings except the anointed and the mitred. Then let them sit, provided we are heard, declaring the truth while standing. They answer, that they freely

promise a hearing; that is, that having presented a suppliant petition, being ordered immediately to depart, after the turbulent clamours of some days, we shall be recalled for the purpose of being condemned. I say clamours, not that any altercation of dissidents is to be in that assembly, but that the sacred ears of bishops having been so irreverently offended by us, the indignity will appear to them intolerable. It is not unknown how tumultuous is their violence. Surely, when they ought to determine the cause with reason, this can never be obtained from them, when not even a slight hearing can be hoped for.

We shall endeavor to restore God's worship to its purity, purged from the innumerable superstitions by which it has been corrupted. Here the profane orators will chatter about nothing but the institutes, the old rites and ceremonies of the Fathers, as though the Church taught by the celestial ministry of the prophets and of Christ knew no other way of worshipping God than by adopting, in brutal stupidity, the dregs of Romulus, made fascinating by the anile dotages of Numa Pompilius. But where is that simplicity of obedience which the Lord everywhere makes so much of and so distinctly requires?

If the controversy be concerning the depravity of human nature, the miserable and lost state of mankind, the grace and power of Christ, or the freeness of our salvation, they will immediately bring forward and dogmatically allege the putrid axioms of the schools, as things that ought to be received without dispute. The Holy Spirit teaches us in Scripture, that our mind is smitten with so much blindness, that the affections of our heart are so depraved and perverted, that our whole nature is so vitiated, that we can do nothing but sin, until he forms a new will within us. He constrains us, condemned to eternal death, to renounce all confidence in our own works, and to flee to our only asylum, the mercy of God, and to trust in it for all our righteousness. He also, inviting us to God, testifies that God is reconciled to us only through the blood of Christ, and bids us to rely on Christ's merits, and to come boldly to the heavenly tribunal. That none of these things may be heard, those endless decrees are adduced, to violate which is deemed more unlawful than to disbelieve God and all his angels.

Of the sacraments they will not permit a word to be said, differing from the notions entertained of them. And what else is this but to preclude the possibility of any reformation? But it is easy to show how preposterous is the administration of the sacraments under the Papacy, so that hardly anything bears an affinity to the genuine doctrine of Christ. What spurious corruptions have crept in, nay, what disgraceful sacrileges have entered! It is not lawful to move a question on this subject. Hence it is a common saying with theologians, which they have published everywhere in their books: That the Church may remain safe, care must especially be taken that the council should not admit a doubt respecting the chief controversies of the present day. Come forth also has lately, in the Italian language, the insipid book of one

Mutius, witlessly breathing nothing but carnage, in which he dwells profusely on this point, that nothing else is to be done by the reverend Fathers, when they meet in council, but to pronounce what already appears to them right on the whole subject, and to compel us to subscribe to their sanguinary edicts. I should not indeed have thought it necessary to mention the hoarse chatterings of this unlucky owl, had not Pope Julius recommended the work. Hence readers may judge what sort of council Mutius recommends, and is to be expected from Julius his approver.

As then we see that these antichrists rush on with desperate pertinacity in order to destroy sound doctrine, and with equal insolence boldly exult that they will set up a masked council for no other purpose than that, having put to flight the gospel, they may celebrate their own victory; let us also in our turn gather courage to follow the banner of our leader, having put on the armor of truth. Were only the pure and simple doctrine of Scripture to shine forth as it ought, every one, who refuses not to open his eyes, would acknowledge the Papacy to be a savage and an execrable monster, made up, through Satan's arts, of innumerable masses of errors. For we make it evident by the most solid proofs, that the glory of God is so distributed by a sacrilegious rending among fictitious idols, that hardly a hundredth portion of his right remains to him. And further, when they reserve for him some portion of worship, we can show that no part of it is sincere, inasmuch as all things are full of the superstitious inventions of men; the law of God is also loaded with similar devices, for miserable consciences are held bound under the yoke of men, rather than ruled by God's commandments; and they groan and toil under the unjust burden of so many traditions, nay, they are oppressed with a cruel tyranny. We declare that, prevaricating obedience can avail nothing except to lead men to a deeper labyrinth. We shew clearly from Scripture, that Christ's power under the Papacy is almost abolished, that his grace is in a great measure made void, that unhappy souls removed from him, are inflated with a fatal confidence in their own power and works. We prove that prayer to God, such as is prescribed by his word, (which yet is the only true asylum of salvation) is wholly subverted. We plainly shew that the sacraments are adulterated by extraneous inventions, and are also transferred to a foreign purpose; for the power of the Spirit is impiously tied to them, and what is peculiar to Christ is ascribed to them. Then we disown the number *seven,* which they have presumptuously adopted. The mass also, which they imagine to be a sacrifice, we prove to be a disgraceful denial of the sacrifice of Christ. There are many other sacrilegious things of which we make it evident that they are guilty.

Doubtless, were only the Scripture allowed its own authority, there are none of these things respecting which our adversaries would not be constrained to be mute. And this is what they by no means dissemble, when they contend that owing to the ambiguous meaning of Scripture, we ought to stand solely on the judgment of the Church. Who, I pray, does not see,

that by laying aside the word of God, the whole right of defining things is thus transferred to them? Though they may kiss the closed copies of the Scripture as a kind of worship, when yet they charge it with being obscure and ambiguous, they allow it no more authority than if no part of it existed in writing. Let them assume specious titles as they please, that they may not appear to allege anything besides the dictates of the Spirit, (as they are wont to boast,) yet it is a settled and fixed thing with them, that all reasons being laid aside, their will alone ought to be believed ({αὐτόπιστος}.)

Then, lest the faithful should be carried about by every wind of imposture, lest they should be exposed to the crafty cavils of the ungodly, being taught by the sure experiment of faith, let them know that nothing is more firm or certain than the teaching of Scripture, and on that support let them confidently recumb. And since we see that it is shamefully deformed by the false comments of the Sophists, and that at this day the hired rabble of the Pope are bent on this artifice, in order that by their smoke they may obscure the light, it behoves us to be more intent on the restoration of its brightness.

I, indeed, have in an especial manner resolved to devote myself to this work, as long as I live, whenever time and opportunity shall be afforded me. In the first place, the Church to which I belong shall thus receive the fruit of this labor, so that it may hereafter continue the longer; for though a small portion of time remains to me from the duties of my office, yet that, how small soever it may be, I have determined to devote to this kind of writing.

But to return to you, most, illustrious King, here you have a small pledge, my Commentaries on the Catholic Epistles, where many things have been deemed obscure and recondite, which I have endeavored so to explain, that an easy access to the true meaning might be open to a reader not altogether slothful. And as interpreters of Scripture, according to their opportunity, are to supply weapons to fight against Antichrist, so also you must bear in mind that it is a duty which belongs to your Majesty, to vindicate from unworthy calumnies the true and genuine interpretation of Scripture, so that pure religion may flourish. It was not without reason that God commanded by Moses, that as soon as a king was appointed over his people, he should take care to have a copy of the Law written out for himself. Why so, if he had, as a private individual, already exercised himself diligently in this work, but that he might know that kings have themselves need of this remarkable doctrine, and are especially enjoined to defend and maintain it; the Lord has assigned to his Law a sacred habitation in their palaces. Moreover, since the heroic greatness of your mind far surpasses the measure of your age, there is no reason why I should add more words to stimulate you.

Farewell, most noble King. May the Lord protect your Majesty as he has already done, govern you and your counsellors with the spirit of wisdom and fortitude, and keep your whole kingdom in safety and peace.

Geneva, Jan. 24, 1551.

Hebrews

Hebrews: Calvin's Epistle Dedicatory

EPISTLE DEDICATORY

JOHN CALVIN

TO THE MOST MIGHTY AND MOST SERENE PRINCE,

SIGISMUND AUGUSTUS,

by the Grace of God, the King of Poland,

Great Duke of Lithuania, Russia, Prussia,

and Lord and Heir of Muscovy, etc.

There are at this day many foolish men, who everywhere, through a vain desire for writing, engage the minds of ignorant and thoughtless readers with their trifles. And to this evil, most illustrious King, is added another indignity — that while they inscribe to kings and princes their silly things, to disguise, or at least to cover them by borrowed splendor, they not only profane sacred names, but also impart to them some measure of their own disgrace. Since the unreasonable temerity of such men makes it necessary for serious and sober writers to frame an excuse, when they publicly dedicate their labors to great men, while yet there is nothing in them but what corresponds with the greatness of those to whom they are offered, it was necessary to make this remark, lest I should seem to be of the number of those who allow themselves, through the example of others, to render public anything they please, however foolish it may be. But it has not escaped me how much it has the appearance of foolish confidence, that I, (not to speak of other things,) who am an unknown and obscure man, should not hesitate to address your royal Majesty. Let my reasons be heard, and if you, O King, approve of what I do, what others may judge will cause me no great anxiety.

First, then, though I am not forgetful of mine insignificance, nor ignorant of the reverence due to your Majesty, yet the fame of your piety, which has extended almost to all who are zealous for the sincere doctrine of Christ, is alone sufficient to remorse any fear; for I bring with me a present which that piety will not allow you to reject. Since the Epistle inscribed to the Hebrews contains a full discussion respecting the eternal divinity of Christ, his government, and only priesthood, (which are the main points of celestial wisdom,) and as these things are so explained in it, that the whole power and work of Christ are set forth in the most graphic manner, it deservedly ought to obtain in the Church the place and the honor of an invaluable treasure. By you also, who desire that the Son of God should reign alone and be glorified, I doubt not but that it will be valued.

In the interpretation which I have undertaken, I say not that I have suc-

ceeded; but I feel confident that when you have read it you will approve at least of my fidelity and diligence. And as I claim not the praise of great knowledge or of erudition, so what has been given me by the Lord for the purpose of understanding the Scripture, (since this is to glory in him,) I am not ashamed to profess; and if in this respect I have any capacity to assist the Church of God, I have endeavored to give an evident proof of it in these my labors. I therefore hope that the present (as I have said) which I offer will not only avail, O King, as an excuse to your Majesty, but also procure for me no small favor.

This may possibly be also a new encouragement to your Majesty, who is already engaged in the work of restoring the kingdom of Christ, and to many who live under your government to further the same work. Your kingdom is extensive and renowned, and abounds in many excellences; but its happiness will then only be solid, when it adopts Christ as its chief ruler and governor, so that it may be defended by his safeguard and protection; for to submit your scepter to him, is not inconsistent with that elevation in which you are placed; but it would be far more glorious than all the triumphs of the world. For since among men gratitude is deemed the proper virtue of a great and exalted mind, what in kings can be more unbecoming than to be ungrateful to the Son, by whom they have been raised to the highest degree of honor? It is, therefore, not only an honorable, but more than a royal service, which raises us to the rank of angels, when the throne of Christ is erected among us, so that his celestial voice becomes the only rule for living and dying both to the highest and to the lowest. For though at this day to obey the authority of Christ is the common profession, made almost by all, yet there are very few who render this obedience of which they boast.

Now this obedience cannot be rendered, except the whole of religion be formed according to the infallible rule of his holy truth. But on this point strange conflicts arise, while men, not only inflated with pride, but also bewitched by monstrous madness, pay less regard to the unchangeable oracles of our heavenly Master than to their own vain fictions; for whatever pretenses they may set up, who oppose us and strive to assist the Roman Antichrist, the very fountain of all the contentions, by which the Church for these thirty years has been so sorely disturbed, will be found to be, that they who seek to be deemed first among Christ's disciples, cannot bear to submit to his truth. Ambition as well as audacity has so far prevailed, that the truth of God lies buried under innumerable lies, that all his institutions are polluted by the basest corruptions; his worship is in every part vitiated, the doctrine of faith is wholly subverted, the sacraments are adulterated, the government of the Church is turned into barbarous tyranny, the abominable sale of sacred things has been set up, the power of Christ has been abused for the purpose of sustaining the tyranny of the ungodly, and in the place of Christianity is substituted a dreadful profanation, full of the grossest mummeries of every kind. When for these so many and so atrocious evils we bring

this one remedy — to hear the Son of God speaking from heaven, we are instantly opposed by these Atlases, not those who support the Church on their shoulders, but who elevate on high by vain boastings of empty titles an idol devised and formed by themselves. They also adduce this as a pretext for their fierce recriminations, that we by our appeals disturb the peace of the Church. When we come to know things aright, we see that these subtle artifices devise for themselves a Church wholly different from that of Christ! And what else is this but a wicked and sacrilegious attempt to separate the body from its head? It hence appears how frivolous is the boasting of many as to Christianity; for the greatest part suffer themselves to be governed by nothing less than by the pure teaching of the Gospel.

But what you acknowledge, O King, that in order that Christ may take an entire possession of his own kingdom, it is necessary to clear away all superstitions, is a proof of singular wisdom; and to undertake and attempt what you judge to be thus necessary, is an evidence of rare virtue. That you are indeed like another Hezekiah or Josiah, destined by God to restore shortly to the kingdom of Poland a purer teaching of that gospel, which has been throughout the world vitiated by the craft of Satan and perfidy of men, there are many things which give almost a certain hope to all good men. For, to omit other superior qualities, which even foreigners proclaim and men of your own kingdom observe with great advantage, there has ever appeared in you a wonderful concern for religion, and religion itself appears eminent in you in the present day. But the chief thing is, that Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, has so irradiated your mind with the light of his Gospel, that you understand that the true way of governing the Church is no other than what is to be derived from him, and that you at the same time know the difference between that genuine form of religion which he has instituted, and that fictions and degenerate form which was afterwards introduced; for you wholly understand that God's worship has been corrupted and deformed, as innumerable superstitions have crept in, that the grace of Christ has been unworthily involved in great darkness, that the virtue of his death has been annihilated, that he himself has been almost lacerated and torn in pieces, that assurance of salvation has been plucked up by the roots, that consciences have been miserably and even horribly vexed and tormented, that wretched men have been led away from the sincere and right worship of God into various and perplexed labyrinths, that the Church has been cruelly and tyrannically oppressed; and, in short, that no real Christianity has been left.

It is not to be believed, O most noble King, that you have been in vain endowed by God with this knowledge; doubtless he has chosen you as his minister for some great purposes. And it has hitherto happened through God's wonderful Providence that no innocent blood has been shed in the renowned kingdom of Poland — no, not a drop, which by calling for vengeance might retard so great a benefit. It was through the clemency and gentleness of

King Sigismund, of happy memory, the father of your Majesty, that this did not take place; for, while the contagion of cruelty was spreading through the whole of the Christian world, he kept his hands pure. But now your Majesty and some of the most eminent of your princes not only receive Christ willingly when offered to them, but anxiously desire him. I also see John a Lasco, born of a noble family, carrying the torch to other nations.

The presumption of Eckius is by no means to be endured, who dedicated to King Sigismund, the father of your Majesty, his book on The Sacrifice of the Mass; for he thus, as far as he could, affixed a base blot to your illustrious kingdom! At the same time, it was nothing strange in that *Silenus*, who, being the prince of drunkards, was wont to vomit at the altar as well as at the dunghill. Now, by dedicating this my labor to your Majesty, I shall at least effect this, that I shall wash away from the name of Poland the base filth of *Eckius*, so that it may not stick where it has been so unworthily fixed. And by doing so I shall not, as it seems to me, attain a small object; and no book of Scripture could hardly be chosen so suitable for such a purpose. For here our Apostle shows in an especial manner, that the sacrifice which *Eckius* advocates is manifestly inconsistent with the priesthood of Christ. There is here, indeed, no mention of the mass, which Satan had not then vomited out of hell. But by bidding the Church to be satisfied with the one only true sacrifice which Christ offered on the cross, that all rites of sacrificing might cease forever, he doubtless closes the door against all their new glosses. The Apostle cries aloud that Christ was sacrificed on the cross once for all, while *Eckius* feigns that this sacrifice is daily renewed! The Apostle declares that the only Son of God was the fit priest to offer himself to the Father, and hence he was constituted by an oath; but *Eckius* denies that he alone is the priest, and transfers that function to hired sacrificers! At the same time, I am not ignorant of the evasions by which they elude these and similar arguments; but there is no fear that he will deceive any but those who are blind or who shun the light. He was at the same time so inebriated with Thrasonic haughtiness that he labored more in insolent boasting than in subtle demonstration. That I may not, however, seem to triumph over a dead dog, I will add nothing more at present than that my Commentary may serve to wipe off the filthy stain which that unprincipled and Scottish man attempted to fix on the name of Poland; and there is no fear that they who will read will be taken by his baits.

Moreover, as I wish not in offering this my labor to your Majesty, only to show privately a regard for you, O King, but especially to make it known to the whole world, it remains now for me humbly to implore your Majesty not to repudiate what I do. If indeed a stimulus be thereby given to encourage your pious endeavors, I shall think it an ample remuneration. Undertake, then, I pray, O magnanimous King, under the auspicious banner of Christ, a work so worthy of your royal elevation, as well as of your heroic virtue, so that the eternal truth of God, by which his own glory and the salvation of men

are promoted, may, wherever thy kingdom spreads, recover its own authority, which has been taken away by the fraudulent dealings of Antichrist. It is truly an arduous work, and of such magnitude as is sufficient to fill even the wisest with solicitude and fear.

But first, there is no danger which we ought not cheerfully to undergo, no difficulty which we ought not resolutely to undertake, no conflicts in which we ought not boldly to engage, in a cause so necessary. Secondly, as it is the peculiar work of God, we ought not in this case to regard so much the extent of human powers as the glory due to his power; so that, relying on that not only to help us, but also to guide us, we may venture on things far beyond our own strength; for the work of restoring and establishing the church is not without reason everywhere assigned in Scripture to God. Besides, the work itself is altogether divine; and as soon as any beginning is made, whatever arts of injury Satan possesses, he employs them all either to stop or to delay a further progress. And we know that the prince of this world has innumerable agents who are ever ready to oppose the kingdom of Christ. Some are instigated by ambition, others by gain. These contests try us in some degree in our humble condition; but your majesty will have, no doubt, to experience far greater difficulties. Therefore, all those who undertake to promote the doctrine of salvation and the wellbeing of the Church must be armed with invincible firmness. But as this business is above our strength, aid from heaven will be granted to us.

It is in the meantime our duty to have all these promises which everywhere occur in Scripture inscribed on our hearts. The Lord who has himself as it were by his own hand laid the foundations of the Church, will not suffer it to remain in a decayed state, for he is represented as solicitous to restore it and to repair its ruins; for, by speaking thus, he in effect promises that he will never fail us when engaged in this work. As he would not have us to sit down as idle spectators of his power, so the presence of his aid in sustaining the hands which labor, clearly proves that he himself is the chief architect. What, therefore, he so often repeats and inculcates, and not without reason, is, that we are not to grow weary, however often we may have to contend with enemies, who continually break forth into hostility; for they are, as we have said, almost infinite in number, and in kinds various. But this one thing is abundantly sufficient, that we have such an invincible Leader, that the more he is assailed the greater will be the victories and triumphs gained by his power.

Farewell, invincible King. May the Lord Jesus rule you by the spirit of wisdom, sustain you by the spirit of valor, bestow on you all kinds of blessings, long preserve your Majesty in health and prosperity, and protect your kingdom. Amen.

Geneva, May 23, 1549

Hebrews: The Argument

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

THE ARGUMENT

ON THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Not only various opinions were formerly entertained as to the author of this Epistle, but it was only at a late period that it was received by the Latin Churches. They suspected that it favored Novatus in denying pardon to the fallen; [8] but that this was a groundless opinion will be shown by various passages. I, indeed, without hesitation, class it among apostolical writings; nor do I doubt but that it has been through the craft of Satan that any have been led to dispute its authority. There is, indeed, no book in the Holy Scriptures which speaks so clearly of the priesthood of Christ, so highly exalts the virtue and dignity of that only true sacrifice which he offered by his death, so abundantly treats of the use of ceremonies as well as of their abrogation, and, in a word, so fully explains that Christ is the end of the Law. Let us not therefore suffer the Church of God nor ourselves to be deprived of so great a benefit, but firmly defend the possession of it.

Moreover, as to its author, we need not be very solicitous. Some think the author to have been Paul, others Luke, others Barnabas, and others Clement, as Jerome relates; yet Eusebius, in his sixth book of his Church History, mentions only Luke and Clement. I well know that in the time of Chrysostom it was everywhere classed by the Greeks among the Pauline Epistles; but the Latins thought otherwise, even those who were nearest to the times of the Apostles.

I indeed, can adduce no reason to show that Paul was its author; for they who say that he designedly suppressed his name because it was hateful to the Jews, bring nothing to the purpose; for why, then, did he mention the name of Timothy as by this he betrayed himself. But the manner it of teaching, and the style, sufficiently show that Paul was not the author; and the writer

[8] Novatus was a priest in Carthage about the middle of the third century, and came to Rome as an advocate on Novation, who was the leader in this opinion. What gave the first occasion to this sentiment was the case of some who fell away from the faith during the Decian persecution. Novatian resisted their restoration, and afterwards extended the same denied repentance to all such, and regarded them as forever unfit to be received into the Church. He opposed the election of Cornelius to the see of Rome, who differed from his jurisdiction, and formed a sect of his own. He was consequently excommunicated, together with his party, (of which Novatus seems to have been one,) by a council assembled by Cornelius in the year 251. He was then made a bishop by his own party, and was followed by many; and his sect continued to flourish till the fifth century. But Novation, a Roman priest, rather than Novatus, a priest from Carthage, was its founder. — See Mosheim's Eccl. Hist., volume. 1 page 249. — Ed.

himself confesses in the second chapter that he was one of the disciples of the Apostles, which is wholly different from the way in which Paul spoke of himself. Besides, what is said of the practice of catechizing in the sixth chapter, does not well suit the time or age of Paul. There are other things which we shall notice in their proper places.

What excuse is usually made as to the style I well know that is, that no opinion can be hence formed, because the Greek is a translation made from the Hebrew by Luke or someone else. But this conjecture can be easily refuted: to pass by other places quoted from Scripture, on the supposition that the Epistle was written in Hebrew, there would have been no allusion to the word Testament, on which the writer so much dwells; what he says of a Testament, in the ninth chapter, could not have been drawn from any other fountain than from the Greek word; for {διαθήκη} has two meanings in Greek, while |berit| in Hebrew means only a covenant. This reason alone is enough to convince men of sound judgment that the epistle was written in the Greek languages. Now, what is objected on the other hand, that it is more probable that the Apostle wrote to the Jews in their own language, has no weight in it; for how few then understood their ancient language? Each had learned the language of the country where he dwelt. Besides, the Greek was then more widely known than all other languages. We shall proceed now to the Argument.

The object at the beginning is not to show to the Jews that Jesus, the son of Mary, was the Christ, the Redeemer promised to them, for he wrote to those who had already made a profession of Christ; that point, then, is taken as granted. But the design of the writer was to prove what the office of Christ is. And it hence appears evident, that by his coming an end was put to ceremonies. It is necessary to draw this distinction; for as it would have been a superfluous labor for the Apostle to prove to those who were already convinced that he was the Christ who had appeared, so it was necessary for him to show what he was, for they did not as yet clearly understand the end, the effect, and the advantages of his coming; but being taken up with a false view of the Law, they laid hold on the shadow instead of the substance. Our business with the Papists is similar in the present day; for they confess with us that Christ is the Son of God, the redeemer who had been promised to the world: but when we come to the reality, we find that they rob him of more than onehalf of his power.

Now, the beginning is respecting the dignity of Christ; for it seemed strange to the Jews that the Gospel should be preferred to the Law. And first indeed he settles that point which was in dispute, that the doctrine brought by Christ had the preeminence, for it was the fulfillment of all the prophecies. But as the reverence in which they held Moses might have been a hindrance to them, he shows that Christ was far superior to all others. And after having briefly referred to those things in which he excelled others, he mentions by name the angels, that with them he might reduce all to their proper rank. Thus he advanced prudently in his course; for if he had begun with Moses, his comparison would have been more disliked. But when it appears from Scripture that ce-

lestial powers are subordinated to Christ, there is no reason why Moses or any mortal being should refuse to be classed with them, so that the Son of God may appear eminent above angels as well as men.

After having thus brought the angels under the power and dominion of Christ, the Apostle having, as it were, gained confidence, declares that Moses was so much inferior to him as a servant is to his master.

By thus setting Christ in the three first chapters in a supreme state of power, he intimates, that when he speaks all ought to be silent, and that nothing should prevent us from seriously attending to his doctrine. At the same time he sets him forth in the second chapter as our brother in our flesh; and thus he allures us to devote ourselves more willingly to him; and he also blends exhortations and threatening in order to lead those to obedience who are tardy or perversely resist; and he continues in this strain nearly to the end of the fourth chapter.

At the end of the fourth chapter he begins to explain the priesthood of Christ, which abolishes all the ceremonies of the Law. But after having briefly showed how welcome that priesthood ought to be to us, and how gladly we ought to acquiesce in it, he shortly turns aside to reprove the Jews, because they stopped at the first elements of religion like children; and he also terrifies them with a grievous and severe denunciation, that there was danger lest they, if slothful to make progress, should at length be rejected by the Lord. But he presently softens this asperity by saying, that he hoped better things of them, in order that he might encourage them, whom he had depressed, to make progress.

Then [in the seventh chapter] he returns to the priesthood; and first shows that it differed from the ancient priesthood under the Law; secondly, that it was more excellent, because it succeeded it, and was sanctioned by an oath, --- because it is eternal, and remains for ever efficacious, --- because he who performs its duties is superior in honor and dignity to Aaron and all the rest of the Levitical tribe; and he shows that the type which shadowed forth all things was found in the person of Melchisedec.

And in order to prove more fully that the ceremonies of the Law were abrogated he mentions that the ceremonies were appointed, and also the tabernacle, for a particular end, even that they might get forth the heavenly prototype. Hence it follows, that they were not to be rested in unless we wish to stop in the middle of our course, having no regard to the goal. On this subject he quotes a passage from Jeremiah, in which a new covenant is promised, which was nothing else than an improvement on the old. It hence follows, that the old was weak and fading.

Having spoken of the likeness and similitude between the shadows and the reality exhibited in Christ, he then concludes that all the rituals appointed by Moses have been abrogated by the one only true sacrifice of Christ, because the efficacy of this sacrifice is perpetual, and that not only the sanction of the New Testament is made by it complete, but that it is also a true and a spiritual accomplishment of that external priesthood which was in force under the Law.

To this doctrine he again connects exhortation like a goad, that putting aside

all impediments they might receive Christ with due reverence.

As to the many examples he mentions in the eleventh chapter concerning the fathers, they seem to me to have been brought forward for this purpose, --- that the Jews might understand, that if they were led from Moses to Christ, they would be so far from departing from the fathers, that they would thus be especially connected with them. For if the chief thing in them was faith, and the root of all other virtues, it follows that this is especially that by which they should be counted the children of Abraham and the Prophets; and that on the other hand all are bastards who follow not the faith of the fathers. And this is no small commendation of the Gospel, that by it we have union and fellowship with the universal Church, which has been from the beginning of the world.

The two last chapters contain various precepts as to the way in which we ought to live: they speak of hope, of bearing the cross, of perseverance, of gratitude towards God, of obedience, of mercy, of the duties of love, of chastity, and of such like things. And lastly, he concludes with prayer, and at the same time gives them a hope of his coming to see them.

Chapter 1

COMMENTARIES
ON THE
EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS
CHAPTER 1

Heb 1:1-2

Hebrews 1:1-2

1. God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets,

1. Deus olim multifariam multisque modis loquutus patribus per prophetas,

2. Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

2. Extremis hisce diebus loquutus est nobis per Filium, quem constituit haeredem omnium, per quem etiam secula condidit.

God formerly, etc. This beginning is for the purpose of commending the doctrine taught by Christ; for it shows that we ought not only reverently to receive it, but also to be satisfied with it alone. That we may understand this more clearly, we must observe the contrast between each of the clauses. First, the Son of God is set in opposition to the prophets; then we to the fathers; and, thirdly, the various and manifold modes of speaking which God had adopted as to the fathers, to the last revelation brought to us by Christ. But in this diversity he still sets before us but one God, that no one might think that the Law militates against the Gospel, or that the author of one is not the author of the other. That you may, therefore, understand the full import of this passage, the following arrangement shall be given, ---

God spake
Formerly by the Prophets
Now by the Son;
Then to the Fathers
But now to us;
Then at various times
Now as at the end of the times.

This foundation being laid, the agreement between the Law and the Gospel is established; for God, who is ever like himself, and whose word is the same, and whose truth is unchangeable, has spoken as to both in common.

But we must notice the difference between us and the fathers; for God formerly addressed them in a way different from that which he adopts towards

us now. And first indeed as to them he employed the prophets, but he has appointed his Son to be an ambassador to us. [9] Our condition, then, in this respect, is superior to that of the fathers. Even Moses is to be also classed among the prophets, as he is one of the number of those who are inferior to the Son. In the manner also in which revelation was made, we have an advantage over them. For the diversity as to visions and other means adopted under the Old Testament, was an indication that it was not yet a fixed state of things, as when matters are put completely in order. Hence he says, multifariously and in many ways''. God would have indeed followed the same mode perpetually to the end, had the mode been perfect and complete. It hence follows, that this variety was an evidence of imperfection.

The two words I thus understand: I refer multifariously to a diversity as to times; for the Greek word {πολυμερῶς} which we may render, ``in many parts,'' as the case usually is, when we intend to speak more fully hereafter; but {πολυτροπῶς} points out a diversity, as I think, in the very manner itself. [10] And when he speaks of the last times, he intimates that there is no longer any reason to expect any new revelation; for it was not a word in part that Christ brought, but the final conclusion. It is in this sense that the Apostles take the last times and the last days. And Paul means the same when he says, ``Upon whom the ends of the world are come.'' (1 Corinthians 10:11.) If God then has spoken now for the last time, it is right to advance thus far; so also when you come to Christ, you ought not to go farther: and these two things it is very needful for us to know. For it was a great hindrance to the Jews that they did not consider that God had deferred a fuller revelation to another time; hence, being satisfied with their own Law, they did not hasten forward to the goal. But since Christ has appeared, an opposite evil began to prevail in the world; for men wished to advance beyond Christ. What else indeed is the whole system of Popery but the overleaping of the boundary which the Apostle has fixed? As, then, the Spirit of God in this passage invites all to come as far as Christ, so he forbids them to go beyond the last time which he mentions. In short, the limit of our wisdom is made here to be the Gospel. [11]

[9] The absence of the definite article before {ὑιῷ} is not unusual in the New Testament, it being often omitted before all sorts of nouns. In many instances it is Hebrewism, and so here; for Chrysostom in his comment supplies it, and mentions that {ἐν} here is {διὰ}, which is another Hebrewism. --- Ed.

[10] Some of the fathers, such as Chrysostom, regarded the two words as meaning the same thing; but there is no reason for this. On the contrary, each word has a distinct meaning; one expresses a variety as to parts or portions, and the other variety as to the mode or manner. The “parts” clearly refer to the different portions of revelation communicated to “holy men” in different ages of the world. Hence the meaning, though not the literal rendering, is given in our version, “at sundry time;” or “often”, as by Stuart; or “at many times”, as by Doddridge. A more literal version is given by Macknight, “in sundry parts”. Most agree as to the second word, that it designates the various modes of communication, — by visions, dreams, interposition of angels, and speaking face to face, as the case was with Moses; see Numbers 12:6-8. And there was another variety in the manner, sometimes in plain language, and at another time in similitudes and parables. — Ed.

[11] It is said that the MSS, are in favor of {ἐσχάτου} ``in the last of these days.'' Were it not for ``these'', this might be allowed, as the literal rendering of these Hebrew words often used, {{המים ,באחרית} ``at the extremity of the days'', (see Isaiah ;2:2 Hosea ,3:5 etc.) but the sentence, as changed by Griesbach and others, makes no sense, and is inconsistent with the words as elsewhere used by Paul; see 2 Timothy .3:1 A mere

2. Whom he has appointed, heir, etc. He honors Christ with high commendations, in order to lead us to show him reverence; for since the Father has subjected all things to him, we are all under his authority. He also intimates that no good can be found apart from him, as he is the heir of all things. It hence follows that we must be very miserable and destitute of all good things except he supplies us with his treasures. He further adds that this honor of possessing all things belongs by right to the Son, because by him have all things been created. At the same time, these two things [12] are ascribed to Christ for different reasons.

The world was created by him, as he is the eternal wisdom of God, which is said to have been the director of all his works from the beginning; and hence is proved the eternity of Christ, for he must have existed before the world was created by him. If, then, the duration of his time be inquired of, it will be found that it has no beginning. Nor is it any derogation to his power that he is said to have created the world, as though he did not by himself create it. According to the most usual mode of speaking in Scripture, the Father is called the Creator; and it is added in some places that the world was created by wisdom, by the word, by the Son, as though wisdom itself had been the creator, [or the word, or the Son.] But still we must observe that there is a difference of persons between the Father and the Son, not only with regard to men, but with regard to God himself. But the unity of essence requires that whatever is peculiar to Deity should belong to the Son as well as to the Father, and also that whatever is applied to God only should belong to both; and yet there is nothing in this to prevent each from his own peculiar properties.

But the word heir is ascribed to Christ as manifested in the flesh; for being made man, he put on our nature, and as such received this heirship, and that for this purpose, that he might restore to us what we had lost in Adam. For God had at the beginning constituted man, as his Son, the heir of all good things; but through sin the first man became alienated from God, and deprived himself and his posterity of all good things, as well as of the favor of God. We hence only then begin to enjoy by right the good things of God, when Christ, the universal heir, admits to a union with himself; for he is an heir that he may endow us with his riches. But the Apostle now adorns him with this title, that we may know that without him we are destitute of all good things.

If you take all in the masculine gender, the meaning is, that we ought all to be subject to Christ, because we have been given to him by the Father. But I prefer reading it in the neuter gender; then it means that we are driven from the legitimate possession of all things, both in heaven and on earth, except we be united to Christ.

majority of MSS, is no sufficient authority for a reading. --- Ed.

[12] That is, heirship and creation.

Heb 1:3

Hebrews 1:3

3. Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

3. Qui quum sit splendor gloriae et character substantiae ejus, portetque omnia verbo suo potenti, peccatorum nostrorum purgatione per seipsum facta, considit in dextera magnificentiae in excelsis.

3. Who being the brightness of his glory, etc. These things are said of Christ partly as to his divine essence, and partly as a partaker of our flesh. When he is called the brightness of his glory and the impress of his substance, his divinity is referred to; the other things appertain in a measure to his human nature. The whole, however, is stated in order to set forth the dignity of Christ.

But it is for the same reason that the Son is said to be ``the brightness of his glory'', and ``the impress of his substance:'' they are words borrowed from nature. For nothing can be said of things so great and so profound, but by similitudes taken from created things. There is therefore no need refinedly to discuss the question how the Son, who has the same essence with the Father, is a brightness emanating from his light. We must allow that there is a degree of impropriety in the language when what is borrowed from created things is transferred to the hidden majesty of God. But still the things which are indent to our senses are fitly applied to God, and for this end, that we may know what is to be found in Christ, and what benefits he brings to us.

It ought also to be observed that frivolous speculations are not here taught, but an important doctrine of faith. We ought therefore to apply these high titles given to Christ for our own benefit, for they bear a relation to us. When, therefore, thou hear that the Son is the brightness of the Father's glory, think thus with thyself, that the glory of the Father is invisible until it shines forth in Christ, and that he is called the impress of his substance, because the majesty of the Father is hidden until it shows itself impressed as it were on his image. They who overlook this connection and carry their philosophy higher, weary themselves to no purpose, for they do not understand the design of the Apostle; for it was not his object to show what likeness the Father bears to the Son; but, as I have said, his purpose was really to build up our faith, so that we may learn that God is made known to us in no other way than in Christ: [13] for as to the essence of God, so immense is the brightness that it dazzles our eyes, except it shines on us in Christ. It hence follows, that we are blind as to the

[13] The fathers and some modern divines have held that these words express the eternal relation between the Father and the Son. But Calvin, with others, such as Beza, Dr. Owen, Scott and Stuart, have regarded the words as referring to Christ as the Messiah, as the Son of God in human nature, or as Mediator, consistently with such passages as these, — "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." John 14:9; "He that hath seen me hath seen him that sent me." (John 12:45). By this view we avoid altogether the difficulty that arises from the expressions, "the impress of his substance," or essence, he being so, not as to his eternal divinity, but as a Mediator. — Ed.

light of God, until in Christ it beams on us. It is indeed a profitable philosophy to learn Christ by the real understanding of faith and experience. The same view, as I have said is to be taken of ``the impress;'' for as God is in himself to us incomprehensible, his form appears to us only in his Son. [14]

The word {ἀπαύγασμα} means here nothing else but visible light or refulgence, such as our eyes can bear; and {χαρακτὴρ} is the vivid form of a hidden substance. By the first word we are reminded that without Christ there is no light, but only darkness; for as God is the only true light by which it behoves us all to be illuminated, this light sheds itself upon us, so to speak, only by irradiation. By the second word we are reminded that God is truly and really known in Christ; for he is not his obscure or shadowy image, but his impress which resembles him, as money the impress of the die with which it is stamped. But the Apostle indeed says what is more than this, even that the substance of the Father is in a manner engraven on the Son. [15]

The word {ὕποστάσις} which, by following others, I have rendered substance, denotes not, as I think, the being or essence of the Father, but his person; for it would be strange to say that the essence of God is impressed on Christ, as the essence of both is simply the same. But it may truly and fitly be said that whatever peculiarly belongs to the Father is exhibited in Christ, so that he who knows him knows what is in the Father. And in this sense do the orthodox fathers take this term, hypostasis, considering it to be threefold in God, while the essence ({οὐσία}) is simply one. Hilary everywhere takes the Latin word substance for person. But though it be not the Apostle's object in this place to speak of what Christ is in himself, but of what he is really to us, yet he sufficiently confutes the Asians and Sabellians; for he claims for Christ what belongs to God alone, and also refers to two distinct persons, as to the Father and the Son. For we hence learn that the Son is one God with the Father, and that he is yet in a sense distinct from him, so that a subsistence or person belongs to both.

And upholding (or bearing) all things, etc. To uphold or to bear here means to preserve or to continue all that is created in its own state; for he intimates that all things would instantly come to nothing, were they not sustained by his power. Though the pronoun his may be referred to the Father as well as to the Son, as it may be rendered ``his own,'' yet as the other exposition is more commonly received, and well suits the context, I am disposed to embrace it. Literally it is, ``by the word of his power;'' but the genitive, after the Hebrew manner, is used instead of an adjective; for the perverted explanation of some,

[14] The remarkable wisdom of the preceding remarks must be approved by every enlightened Christian. There is an “Excursus” in Professor Stuart’s Commentary on this Epistle, on the same subject, which is very valuable, distinguished for caution, acuteness, and sound judgment. Well would it be were all divines to show the same humility on a subject so remote from human comprehension. The bold and unhallowed speculations of some of the fathers, and of the schoolmen, and divines after them, have produced infinite mischief, having occasioned hindrances to the reception of the truth respecting our Savior’s divinity, which would have otherwise never existed. — Ed.

[15] See Appendix A.

that Christ sustains all things by the word of the Father, that is, by himself who is the word, has nothing in its favor: besides, there is no need of such forced explanation; for Christ is not wont to be called {ῥῆμα}, saying, but {λόγος}, word. [16] Hence the ``word'' here means simply a nod; and the sense is, that Christ who preserves the whole world by a nod only, did not yet refuse the office of effecting our purgation.

Now this is the second part of the doctrine handled in this Epistle; for a statement of the whole question is to be found in these two chapters, and that is, that Christ, endued with supreme authority, ought to be head above all others, and that as he has reconciled us to his Father by his own death, he has put an end to the ancient sacrifices. And so the first point, though a general proposition, is yet a twofold clause.

When he further says, by himself, there is to be understood here a contrast, that he had not been aided in this by the shadows of the Mosaic Law. He shows besides a difference between him and the Levitical priests; for they also were said to expiate sins, but they derived this power from another. In short, he intended to exclude all other means or helps by stating that the price and the power of purgation were found only in Christ. [17]

Sat down on the right hand, etc.; as though he had said, that having in the world procured salvation for men, he was received into celestial glory, in order that he might govern all things. And he added this in order to show that it was not a temporary salvation he has obtained for us; for we should otherwise be too apt to measure his power by what now appears to us. He then reminds us that Christ is not to be less esteemed because he is not seen by our eyes; but, on the contrary, that this was the height of his glory, that he has been taken and conveyed to the highest seat of his empire. The right hand is by a similitude applied to God, though he is not confined to any place, and has not a right side nor left. The session then of Christ means nothing else but the kingdom given

[16] Stuart following Chrysostom, renders the words {φέραν}, ``controlling'' or governing, and so does Schleusner; but the sense of ``upholding'' or sustaining, or supporting, is more suitable to the words which follow --- ``by the word of his power,'' or by his powerful word. Had it been ``by the word of his wisdom,'' then controlling or governing would be compatible; but as it is ``power'', doubtless sustension or preservation is the most congruous idea. Besides, this is the most obvious and common meaning of the word, and so rendered by most expositors; among others by Beza, Doddridge, Macknight and Bloomfield. Doddridge gives this paraphrase, --- ``Upholding the universe which he hath made by the efficacious word of his Father's power, which is ever resident in him as his own, by virtue of that intimate but incomparable union which renders them one.'' This view is consistent with the whole passage: ``his substance'' and ``his power'' corresponds; and it is said, ``by whom he made the world,'' so it is suitable to say that he sustains the world by the Father's power. --- Ed

[17] The word here used means properly “purification,” but is used for expiation by the Sept.; see Exodus 30:10. The same truth is meant as when in chapter 10:12, that Christ, “after he had offered on sacrifice for sins, for ever sat down on the right hand of God.” The reference here cannot be to the actual purification of his people; for what was done by Christ when he died is what is spoken of, even when he “put away sin” as it is said in chapter 9:26, “by the sacrifice for himself.” The word then, may be forgiveness proceeds from the atonement: see 1 John 1:9. Dr. Owen gives three reasons for considering the word in the sense of expiation or atonement, — It is so rendered in some instances by the Septuagint; the act spoken is past, while cleansing or purification is what is effected now; and “himself” shows that it is not properly sanctification as that is effected by means of the word, (Ephesians 5:26,) and by the regenerating Spirit. (Titus 3:5) The version of Stuart is, “made expiation for our sins,” which is no doubt the meaning. — Ed.

to him by the Father, and that authority which Paul mentions, when he says that in his name every knee should bow. (Philippians 2:10) Hence to sit at the right hand of the Father is no other thing than to govern in the place of the Father, as deputies of princes are wont to do to whom a full power over all things is granted. And the word majesty is added, and also on high, and for this purpose, to intimate that Christ is seated on the supreme throne whence the majesty of God shines forth. As, then, he ought to be loved on account of his redemption, so he ought to be adored on account of his royal magnificence. [18]

Heb 1:4-6

Hebrews 1:4-6

4. Being made so much better than the angels, as he hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

4. Tanto praestantior angelis factus, quanto excellentius prae ipsis sortitus est nomen.

5. For unto which of the angels said he at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?

5. Cui enim inquam angelorum dixit, Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te? Et rursus, ego illi in Patrem, et ipse erit mihi in Filium.

6. And again, when he bringeth in the first begotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

6. Rursus autem quum introducit filium in orbem dicit, Et adorent eum omnes angeli Dei.

4. Being made so much better, etc. After having raised Christ above Moses and all others, he now amplifies His glory by a comparison with angels. It was a common notion among the Jews, that the Law was given by angels; they attentively considered the honorable things spoken of them everywhere in Scripture; and as the world is strangely inclined to superstition, they obscured the glory of God by extolling angels too much. It was therefore necessary to reduce them to their own rank, that they might not overshadow the brightness of Christ. And first he proves from his name, that Christ far excelled them, for he is called the Son of God; [19] and that he was distinguished by this title he shows by two testimonies from Scripture, both of which must be examined by us; and then we shall sum up their full import.

5. Thou art my Son, etc. It cannot be denied but that this was spoken of David, that is, as he sustained the person of Christ. Then the things found in this Psalm must have been shadowed forth in David, but were fully accom-

[18] It has been observed by some that in these verses the three offices of Christ are to be found: the Father spoke by him as a prophet; he made expiation for our sins as a priest; and he sits at God's right hand as a king. — Ed.

[19] Some by "name" understand dignity, but not correctly, as it appears from what follows; for the name, by which he is proved here to be superior to angels, was that of a Son, as Calvin here states. — Ed.

plished in Christ. For that he by subduing many enemies around him, enlarged the borders of his kingdom, it was some foreshadowing of the promise, ``I will give thee the heathen for thine inheritance.'' But how little was this in comparison with the amplitude of Christ's kingdom, which extends from the east to the west? For the same reason David was called the son of God, having been especially chosen to perform great things; but his glory was hardly a spark, even the smallest, to that glory which shone forth in Christ, on whom the Father has imprinted his own image. So the name of Son belongs by a peculiar privilege to Christ alone, and cannot in this sense be applied to any other without profanation, for him and no other has the Father sealed.

But still the argument of the Apostle seems not to be well-grounded; for how does he maintain that Christ is superior to angels except on this ground, that he has the name of a Son? As though indeed he had not this in common with princes and those high in power, of whom it is written, ``Ye are gods and the sons of the most'', (Psalm 50:6;) and as though Jeremiah had not spoken as honorably of all Israel, when he called them the firstborn of God. (Jeremiah 31:9.) They are indeed everywhere called children or sons. Besides, David calls angels the sons of God;

``Who,'' he says, ``is like to Jehovah among the sons of God?'' (Psalm 89:6.)

The answer to all this is in no way difficult. Princes are called by this name on account of a particular circumstance; as to Israel, the common grace of election is thus denoted; angels are called the sons of God as having a certain resemblance to him, because they are celestial spirits and possess some portion of divinity in their blessed immortality. But when David without any addition calls himself as the type of Christ the Son of God, he denotes something peculiar and more excellent than the honor given to angels or to princes, or even to all Israel. Otherwise it would have been an improper and absurd expression, if he was by way of excellence called the son of God, and yet had nothing more than others; for he is thus separated from all other beings. When it is said so exclusively of Christ, ``Thou art my Son,'' it follows that this honor does not belong to any of the angels. [20]

If any one again objects and says, that David was thus raised above the angels; to this I answer, that it is nothing strange for him to be elevated above angels while bearing the image of Christ; for in like manner there was no wrong done to angels when the highpriest, who made an atonement for sins, was called a mediator. They did not indeed obtain that title as by right their own; but as they represented the kingdom of Christ, they derived also the name from him. Moreover, the sacraments, though in themselves lifeless, are yet honored with titles which angels cannot claim without being guilty of sacrilege. It is hence

[20] "If it be objected," says Stuart, "that angels are also called sons, and men too, the answered is easy: No one individual, except Jesus, is ever called by way of eminence, the Son of God, i.e., the Messiah or the King of Israel," John 1:49. By "The Son of God" is to be understood here His kingly office: He was a Son as one endowed with superior power and authority; and angels are not sons in this respect. — Ed.

evident that the argument derived from the term Son, is well grounded. [21]

As to his being begotten, we must briefly observe, that it is to be understood relatively here: for the subtle reasoning of Augustine is frivolous, when he imagines that today means perpetuity or eternity. Christ doubtless is the eternal Son of God, for he is wisdom, born before time; but this has no connection with this passage, in which respect is had to men, by whom Christ was acknowledged to be the Son of God after the Father had manifested him. Hence that declaration or manifestation which Paul mentions in Romans 1:4, was, so to speak, a sort of an external begetting; for the hidden and internal which had preceded, was unknown to men; nor could there have been any account taken of it, had not the Father given proof of it by a visible manifestation. [22]

I will be to him a Father, etc. As to this second testimony the former observation holds good. Solomon is here referred to, and though he was inferior to the angels, yet when God promised to be his Father, he was separated from the common rank of all others; for he was not to be to him a Father as to one of the princes, but as to one who was more eminent than all the rest. By the same privilege he was made a Son; all others were excluded from the like honor. But that this was not said of Solomon otherwise than as a type of Christ, is evident from the context; for the empire of the whole world is destined for the Son mentioned there, and perpetuity is also ascribed to his empire: on the other hand, it appears that the kingdom of Solomon has confined within narrow bounds, and was so far from being perpetual, that immediately after his death it was divided, and some time afterwards it fell altogether. Again, in that Psalm the sun and moon are summoned as witnesses, and the Lord swears that as long as they shall shine in the heavens, that kingdom shall remain safe: and on the other hand, the kingdom of David in a short time fell into decay, and at length utterly perished. And further, we may easily gather from many passages in the Prophets, that that promise was never understood otherwise than of Christ; so that no one can evade by saying that this is a new comment; for hence also has commonly prevailed among the Jews the practice of calling Christ the Son of David.

6. And again, when he bringeth or introduceth [23] , etc. He now proves

[21] The foregoing is a sufficient answer to Doddridge, Stuart, and others, who hold that the texts quoted must refer exclusively to Christ, else the argument of the Apostle would be inconclusive. David is no doubt called a son in the 2nd Psalm, but as a king, and in that capacity as a type of Christ; and what is said of him as a king, and what is promised to him, partly refers to himself and to his successors, and partly to Christ whom he represented. How to distinguish these things is now easy, as the character of Christ is fully developed in the New Testament. We now see the reason why David was called a son, and why Solomon, as in the next quotation, was called a son; they as kings of Israel, that is, of God's people, were representatives of him who is alone really or in a peculiar sense the Son of God, the true king of Israel, an honor never allotted to angels. (See Appendix B) — Ed.

[22] Many have interpreted to-day as meaning eternity; but there is nothing to countenance such a view. As to the type, David, his "to-day" was his exaltation to the throne; the "to-day" of Christ, the antitype, is something of a corresponding character; it was his resurrection and exaltation to God's right hand, where he sits, as it were, on the throne of David. See Acts 2:30; 5:30, 31; 13:33. — Ed.

[23] See Appendix C.

by another argument that Christ is above the angels, and that is because the angels are bidden to worship him. (Psalm 97:7.) It hence follows that he is their head and Prince. But it may seem unreasonable to apply that to Christ which is spoken of God only. Were we to answer that Christ is the eternal God, and therefore what belongs to God may justly be applied to him, it would not perhaps be satisfactory to all; for it would avail but little in proving a doubtful point, to argue in this case from the common attributes of God.

The subject is Christ manifested in the flesh, and the Apostle expressly says, that the Spirit thus spoke when Christ was introduced into the world; but this would not have been said consistently with truth except the manifestation of Christ be really spoken of in the Psalm. And so the case indeed is; for the Psalm commences with an exhortation to rejoice; nor did David address the Jews, but the whole earth, including the islands, that is, countries beyond the sea. The reason for this joy is given, because the Lord would reign. Further, if you read the whole Psalm, you will find nothing else but the kingdom of Christ, which began when the Gospel was published; nor is the whole Psalm anything else but a solemn decree, as it were, by which Christ was sent to take possession of His kingdom. Besides, what joy could arise from His kingdom, except it brought salvation to the whole world, to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews? Aptly then does the Apostle say here, that he was introduced into the world, because in that Psalm what is described is his coming to men.

The Hebrew word, rendered angels, is Elohim --- gods; but there is no doubt but that the Prophet speaks of angels; for the meaning is, that there is no power so high but must be in subjection to the authority of this king, whose advent was to cause joy to the whole world.

Heb 1:7-9

Hebrews 1:7-9

7. And of the angels he saith, Who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire.

7. Et ad angelos quidem dicit, Qui facit angelos suos spiritus et ministros suos flamman ignis.

8. But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom.

8. Ad Filium vero, Thronus tuus, O Deus, in seculum seculi; virga directionis, virga regni tui:

9. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness above thy fellows.

9. Dilexisti justitiam et odisti iniquitatem; propterea unxit te Deus tuus oleo laetitiae prae consortibus tuis.

7. And to the angels, etc. To the angels means of the angels. But the passage quoted seems to have been turned to another meaning from what it appears to have; for as David is there describing the manner in which we see the world

to be governed, nothing is more certain than the winds are mentioned, which he says are made messengers by the Lord, for he employs them as his runners; so also, when he purifies the air by lightnings, he shows what quick and swift ministers he has to obey his orders. But this has nothing to do with angels. Some have had recourse to an allegory, as though the Apostle explained the plain, and as they say, the literal sense allegorically of angels. But it seems preferable to me to consider this testimony is brought forward for this purpose, that it might by a similitude be applied to angels, and in this way David compares winds to angels, because they perform offices in this world similar to what the angels do in heaven; for the winds are, as it were, visible spirits. And, doubtless, as Moses, describing the creation of the world, mentioned only those things which are subject to our senses, and yet intended that higher things should be understood; so David in describing the world and nature, represented to us on a tablet what ought to be understood respecting the celestial orders. Hence I think that the argument is one of likeness or similarity, when the Apostle transfers to angels what properly applies to the winds. [24]

8. But to the Son, etc. It must indeed be allowed, that this Psalm was composed as a marriage song for Solomon; for here is celebrated his marriage with the daughter of the king of Egypt; [25] but it cannot yet be denied but that what is here related, is much too high to be applied to Solomon. The Jews, that they may not be forced to own Christ to be called God, make an evasion by saying, it at the throne of God is spoken of, or that the verb ``established'' is to be understood. So that, according to the first exposition, the word Elohim, God, is to be in construction with throne, ``the throne of God;'' and that according to the second, it is supposed to be a defective sentence. But these are mere evasions. Whosoever will read the verse, who is of a sound mind and free from the spirit of contention, cannot doubt but that the Messiah is called God. Nor is there any reason to object, that the word Elohim is sometimes given to angels and to judges; for it is never found to be given simply to one person, except to God alone. [26]

Farther, that I may not contend about a word, whose throne can be said to be established forever, except that of God only? Hence the perpetuity of his

[24] Many have been the explanations of this sentence; but this is the most suitable to the passage as it occurs in Psalm 104:4, and to the design of the Apostle; it is the one adopted by Doddridge, Stuart, and Bloomfield. The meaning would be thus more apparent, — "Who maketh like his angels the winds, and like his ministers the flaming fire," that is, the winds are subject to him as the angels are, and also the flaming fire as his ministers or attendants. The particle {{ב is sometimes omitted in Hebrew. --- Ed.

[25] It is generally admitted to be a kind of epithalamium, but not on the occasion here specified, as there was nothing in that marriage that in any degree correspond with the contents of the Psalm. Such was the opinion of Beza, Dr. Owen, Scott, and Horsley. — Ed.

[26] The Hebrew will admit of no other construction than that given in our version and by Calvin. The Greek version, the Sept., which the Apostle adopts, seems at first view to be different, as "God" is in the nominative case, {ὁ} {Θεὸς}; but the Sept. used in commonly instead of the vocative case. We meet with two instances in the seventh Psalm, verses 1 and 3, and in connection with ``Lord,'' {κύριε} in the vocative case. See also Psalm 10:12; 41:1, etc. The Vulgate, following literally the Sept., without regarding the preceding peculiarity, has rendered ``God'' in the nominative, ``Deus,'' and not ``O Deus.'' --- Ed.

kingdom is an evidence of his divinity.

The scepter of Christ's kingdom is afterwards called the scepter of righteousness; of this there were some, though obscure, lineaments in Solomon; he exhibited them as far as he acted as a just king and zealous for what was right. But righteousness in the kingdom of Christ has a wider meaning; for he by his gospel, which is his spiritual scepter, renews us after the righteousness of God. The same thing must be also understood of his love of righteousness; for he causes it to reign in his own people, because he loves it.

9. Wherefore God has appointed him, etc. This was indeed truly said of Solomon, who was made a king, because God had preferred him to his brethren, who were otherwise his equals, being the sons of the king. But this applies more suitably to Christ, who has adopted us as his joint heirs, though not so in our own right. But he was anointed above us all, as it was beyond measure, while we, each of us, according to a limited portion, as he has divided to each of us. Besides, he was anointed for our sake, in order that we may all draw out of his fatness. Hence he is the Christ, we are Christians proceeding from him, as rivulet from a fountain. But as Christ received this unction when in the flesh, he is said to have been anointed by his God; for it would be inconsistent to suppose him inferior to God, except in his human nature. [27]

Heb 1:10-14

Hebrews 1:10-14

10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

10. Et tu ab initio, Domine, terram fundasti; et opera manuum tuarum sunt coeli:

11. They shall perish; but thou remainest; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

11. Ipsi peribunt, tu autem permanes; et omnes quasi vestimentum veterascent;

12. And as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

12. Et tanquam amictum involves eos, et mutabuntur: tu autem idem es, et anni tui non deficient.

13. But to which of the angels said he at any time, Sit on my right hand, until

[27] He is evidently throughout spoken of in his mediatorial character. To keep this in view will enable us more fully to understand the chapter. It is more agreeable to this passage, to regard "the anointing," not that of consecration, but that of refreshment to guests according to a prevailing custom, see Luke 7:46. The word "gladness" favors this, and also the previous words of the passage; Christ is addressed as already on his throne, and his administration is referred to; and it is on account of his just administration, that he is said to have been anointed with the perfuming oil of gladness, see Acts 10:38. The words, "above thy fellows," are rendered by Calvin, "above thy partners," and by Doddridge and Macknight, "above thine associates." Christ is spoken of as king, and his associates are those in the same office; but he is so much above them that he is the "king of kings;" and yet his superior excellencies are here represented as entitling him to higher honors. — Ed.

I make thine enemies thy footstool?

13. Ad quem vero angelorum dixit inquam, Sede a dextris meis, donec ponam inimicos tuos scabellum pedum tuorum?

14. Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?

14. Annon omnes sunt administratorii spiritus, qui in ministerium emittuntur propter eos qui haereditatem capiunt salutis?

10. And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning, etc. This testimony at first sight may seem to be unfitly applied to Christ, especially in a doubtful matter, such as is here handled; for the subject in dispute is not concerning the glory of God, but what may be fitly applied to Christ. Now, there is not in this passage any mention made of Christ, but the majesty of God alone is set forth. I indeed allow that Christ is not named in any part of the Psalm; but it is yet plain that he is so pointed out, that no one can doubt but that his kingdom is there avowedly recommended to us. Hence all the things which are found there, are to be applied to his person; for in none have they been fulfilled but in Christ, such as the following, --- ``Thou shalt arise and have mercy on Sion, that the heathens may fear the name, and all the kings of the earth thy glory.'' Again, --- ``When the nations shall be gathered together, and the kingdoms, to serve the Lord.'' Doubtless, in vain shall we seek to find this God through whom the whole world have united in one faith and worship of God, except in Christ.

All the other parts of the Psalm exactly suit the person of Christ, such as the following, that he is the eternal God, the creator of heaven and earth, that perpetuity belongs to him without any change, by which his majesty is raised to the highest elevation, and he himself is removed from the rank of all created beings.

What David says about the heavens perishing, some explain by adding, ``Were such a thing to happen,'' as though nothing was affirmed. But what need is there of such a strained explanation, since we know that all creatures are subjected to vanity? For to what purpose is that renovation promised, which even the heavens wait for with the strong desire as of those in travail, except that they are now verging towards destruction?

But the perpetuity of Christ which is here mentioned, brings no common comfort to the godly; as the Psalm at last teaches us, they shall be partakers of it, inasmuch as Christ communicates himself and what he possesses to his own body. [28]

13. But to whom of the angels, etc. He again by another testimony extols the excellency of Christ, that it might hence be evident how much he is above the angels. The passage is taken from Psalms 110:1, and it cannot be explained of any but of Christ. For as it was not lawful for kings to touch the priesthood, as is testified by the leprosy of Uzziah; and as it appears that neither David, nor any other of his successors in the kingdom, was ordained a priest, it follows, that a new kingdom as well as a new priesthood is here introduced, since the

[28] See Appendix D.

same person is made a king and a priest. Besides, the eternity of the priesthood is suitable to Christ alone.

Now, in the beginning of the Psalm he is set at God's right hand. This form of expression, as I have already said, means the same, as though it was said, that the second place was given him by the Father; for it is a metaphor which signifies that he is the Father's vicegerent and his chief minister in exercising authority, so that the Father rules through him. No one of the angels bears so honorable an office; hence Christ far excels all.

Until I make, etc. As there are never wanting enemies to oppose Christ's kingdom, it seems not to be beyond the reach of danger, especially as they who attempt to overthrow it possess great power, have recourse to various artifices, and also make all their attacks with furious violence. Doubtless, were we to regard things as they appear, the kingdom of Christ would seem often to be on the verge of ruin. But the promise, that Christ shall never be thrust from his seat, takes away from us every fear; for he will lay prostrate all his enemies. These two things, then, ought to be borne in mind, --- that the kingdom of Christ shall never in this world be at rest, but that there will be many enemies by whom it will be disturbed; and secondly, that whatever its enemies may do, they shall never prevail, for the session of Christ at God's right hand will not be for a time, but to the end of the world, and that on this account all who will not submit to his authority shall be laid prostrate and trodden under his feet

If any one asks, whether Christ's kingdom shall come to an end, when all his enemies shall be subdued; I give this answer, --- that his kingdom shall be perpetual, and yet in such a way as Paul intimates in 1 Corinthians 15:25; for we are to take this view, --- that God who is not known to us in Christ, will then appear to us as he is in himself. And yet Christ will never cease to be the head of men and of angels; nor will there be any diminution of his honor. But the solution of this question must be sought from that passage.

14. Are they not all, etc. That the comparison might appear more clearly, he now mentions what the condition of angels is. For calling them spirits, he denotes their eminence; for in this respect they are superior to corporal creatures. But the office ({λειτουργία}) which he immediately mentions reduces them to their own rank, as it is that which is the reverse of dominion; and this he still more distinctly states, when he says, that they are sent to minister. The first word means the same, as though he had said, that they were officials; but to minister imports what is more humble and abject. [29] The service which God allots to angels is indeed honorable; but the very fact that they serve, shows that they are far inferior to Christ, who is the Lord of all.

If any one objects and says, that Christ is also called in many places both

[29] There is no doubt a distinction between the two words here used, but not exactly that which is intimated; the first, {λειτουργικὰ} refers to an official appointment; and the other, {διακονίαν}, to the work which was to be done. Angels are said to be officially appointed, and they are thus appointed for the purpose of doing service to the heirs of salvation; ``Are they not all ministrant (or ministerial) spirits, sent forth for service, on account {διὰ} of those who are to inherit salvation?'' Then they are spirits, having a special office allotted them, being sent forth to do service in behalf of those who are heirs of salvation. It hence appears that they have a special appointment for this purpose See Acts 5:19, and 12:7. --- Ed.

a servant and a minister, not only to God, but also to men, the reply may be readily given; his being a servant was not owing to his nature, but to a voluntary humility, as Paul testifies, (Philippians 2:7;) and at the same time his sovereignty remained to his nature; but angels, on the other hand, were created for this end, --- that they might serve, and to minister is what belongs to their condition. The difference then is great; for what is natural to them is, as it were, adventitious or accidental to Christ, because he took our flesh; and what necessarily belongs to them, he of his own accord undertook. Besides, Christ is a minister in such a way, that though he is in our flesh nothing is diminished from the majesty of his dominion. [30]

From this passage the faithful receive no small consolation; for they hear that celestial hosts are assigned to them as ministers, in order to secure their salvation. It is indeed no common pledge of God's love towards us, that they are continually engaged in our behalf. Hence also proceeds a singular confirmation to our faith, that our salvation being defended by such guardians, is beyond the reach of danger. Well then has God provided for our infirmities by giving us such assistants to oppose Satan, and to put forth their power in every way to defend us!

But this benefit he grants especially to his chosen people; hence that angels may minister to us, we must be the members of Christ. Yet some testimonies of Scripture may on the other hand be adduced, to show that angels are sometimes sent forth for the sake of the reprobate; for mention is made by Daniel of the angels of the Persians and the Greeks. (Daniel 10:20.) But to this I answer, that they were in such a way assisted by angels, that the Lord might thus promote the salvation of his own people; for their success and their victories had always a reference to the benefit of the Church. This is certain, that as we have been banished by sin from God's kingdom, we can have no communion with angels except through the reconciliation made by Christ; and this we may see by the ladder shown in a vision to the patriarch Jacob.

[30] See Appendix E.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

Heb 2:1-4

Hebrews 2:1-4

1. Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

1. Quamobrem opertet nos magis attendere iis quae audimus, ne quando diffluamus.

2. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

2. Si enim quo per angelos enunciatus erat, sermo, firmus fuit, et omnis transgressio et inobedientia justam acceptit repensionem mercedis;

3. How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

3. Quomodo nos effugiemus tanta neglecta salute? quae quum initio coepisset enarrari per Dominum, ab iis qui audierant, erga nos confirmata fuit;

4. God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost, according to his own will?

4. Simul attestante Deo signis et prodigiis, et virtutibus variis, et distributionibus Spiritus Sancti secundum ejus voluntatem.

1. Therefore we ought, etc. He now declares what he had before in view, by comparing Christ with angels, even to secure the highest authority to his doctrine. For if the Law given through angels could not have been received with contempt, and if its transgression was visited with severe punishment, what is to happen, he asks, to the despisers of that gospel, which has the Son of God as its author, and was confirmed by so many miracles? The import of the whole is this, that the higher the dignity of Christ is than that of angels, the more reverence is due to the Gospel than to the Law. Thus he commends the doctrine by mentioning its author.

But should it seem strange to any one, that as the doctrine both of the Law and of the Gospel is from God, one should be preferred to the other; inasmuch as by having the Law lowered the majesty of God would be degraded; the evident answer would be this, --- that he ought indeed always to be heard with equal attention whenever he may speak, and yet that the fuller he reveals himself to us, it is but right that our reverence and attention to obedience should increase in proportion to the extent of his revelations; not that God is in himself less at

one time than at another; but his greatness is not at all times equally made known to us.

Here also another question arises. Was not the Law also given by Christ? If so, the argument of the Apostle seems not to be well grounded. To this I reply, that in this comparison regard is had to a veiled revelation on one side, and to that which is manifest on the other. Now, as Christ in bringing the Law showed himself but obscurely or darkly, and as it were under coverings, it is nothing strange that the Law should be said to have been brought by angels without any mention being made of his name; for in that transaction he never appeared openly; but in the promulgation of the Gospel his glory was so conspicuous, that he may justly be deemed its author.

Lest at any time we should let them slip, or, ``lest we should at any time flow abroad,'' or, if you prefer, ``let dip,'' though in reality there is not much difference. The true sense is to be gathered from the contrast; for to give heed, or to attend and to let slip, are opposites; the first means to hold a thing, and the other to let off like a sieve, or a perforated vessel, whatever may be poured into it. I do not indeed approve of the opinion of those who take it in the sense of dying, according to what we find in 2 Samuel 15:14, ``We all die and slide away like water.'' On the contrary, we ought, as I have said, to regard the contrast between attention and flowing out; an attentive mind is like a vessel capable of holding water; but that which is roving and indolent is like a vessel with holes. [31]

2. Steadfast, or ``firm,'' or sure, etc.; that is, it was the word of authority, for God required it to be believed; and that it was authoritative, was made more evident by its sanctions; for no one despised the law with impunity. Then firmness means authority; and what is added respecting punishment ought to be understood as explanatory; for it is evident the doctrine of which God shows himself to be the avenger, is by no means unprofitable or unimportant.

3. If we neglect so great a salvation, etc. Not only the rejection of the Gospel, but also its neglect, deserves the heaviest punishment, and that on account of the greatness of the grace which it offers; hence he says, so great a salvation. God would indeed leave his gifts valued by us according to their worth. Then the more precious they are, the baser is our ingratitude when we do not value them. In a word, in proportion to the greatness of Christ will be the severity of God's vengeance on all the despisers of his Gospel. [32]

And observe that the word salvation is transferred here metonymically to the doctrine of salvation; for as the Lord would not have men otherwise saved than by the Gospel, so when that is neglected the whole salvation of God is rejected; for it is God's power unto salvation to those who believe. (Romans 1:16.) Hence he who seeks salvation in any other way, seeks to attain it by another power than that of God; which is an evidence of extreme madness. But this encomium

[31] See Appendix F.

[32] To “neglect,” is literally, not to care for; not to care for our salvation is to neglect it. It is rendered, to “make light of,” in Matthew 22:5; and “not to regard,” in chapter 8:9. — Ed.

is not only a commendation of the Gospel, but is also a wonderful support to our faith; for it is a testimony that the word is by no means unprofitable, but that a sure salvation is conveyed by it. [33]

Which at first began, etc. Here he sets the Son of God, the first herald of the Gospel, in opposition to angels, and also anticipates what was necessary to remove a doubt which might have crept into the minds of many; for they had not been taught by the mouth of Christ himself, whom the greatest part had never seen. If then they regarded only the man by whose ministry they had been led to the faith, they might have made less of what they had learnt from him; hence the Apostle reminded them, that the doctrine which had been delivered them by others, yet proceeded from Christ; for he says that those who had faithfully declared what had been committed to them by Christ, had been his disciples. He therefore uses the word, was confirmed, as though he had said, that it was not a random report, without any author, or from witnesses of doubtful credit, but a report which was confirmed by men of weight and authority.

Moreover, this passage indicates that this epistle was not written by Paul; for he did not usually speak so humbly of himself, as to confess that he was one of the Apostles' disciples, nor did he thus speak from ambition, but because wicked men under a pretense of this kind attempted to detract from the authority of his doctrine. It then appears evident that it was not Paul who wrote that he had the Gospel by hearing and not by revelation. [34]

4. God also bearing them witness, etc. In addition to the fact, that the Apostles had what they preached from the Son of God, the Lord also proved his approbation of their preaching by miracles, as by a solemn subscription. Then they who do not reverently receive the Gospel recommended by such testimonies, disregard not only the word of God, but also his works.

He designates miracles, for the sake of amplifying their importance, by three names. They are called signs because they rouse men's minds, that they may think of something higher that what appears; and wonders, because they present what is rare and unusual; and miracles, because the Lord shows in them a singular and an extraordinary evidence of his power. [35]

[33] So great, observes Dr. Owen is this salvation, that is a deliverance from Satan, from sin, and from eternal sin, and from eternal death. The means also by which it has been procured, and is now effected, and its endless results, prove in a wonderful manner its greatness. — Ed.

[34] The same objection has been advanced by Grotius and others, but it has no weight in it; for the Apostle here distinctly refers to the facts in connection with the twelve Apostles, as this alone was necessary for his purpose here; and the same reason for concealing his name accounts for no reference being made here to his own ministry. And “we” and “us” as employed by the Apostle, often refer to things which belong to all in common as Christians. See chapter 4:1, 11; 11:40, etc. And he uses them sometimes when he himself personally is not included. See 1 Corinthians 15:51. — Ed.

[35] These three words occur twice together in other places, Acts 2:22, and 2 Thessalonians 2:9; only they are found in Acts in a different order — miracles wonders and signs. Signs and wonders are often found together both in the Old Testament, and in this order except in three places, Acts 2:19, 43; and 7:36. The same things, as Calvin says, are no doubt meant by three words under different views. They are called “signs” or as tokens as evidence of a divine interposition; “wonders” or prodigies, as being not natural, but supernatural, and as having the effect of filling men with terror, Acts 2:43; and “miracles” or powers, as being the

As to the word, bearing witness, or attesting, it points out the right use of miracles, even that they serve to establish the Gospel. For almost all the miracles done in all ages were performed as we find for this end, that they might be the seals of Gods word. The more strange then is the superstition of the Papists, who employ their own fictitious miracles for the purpose of overthrowing the truth of God.

The conjunction {συν}, together with, has this meaning, that we are confirmed in the faith of the Gospel by the joint testimony of God and men; for God's miracles were testimonies concurring with the voice of men.

He adds, by the gifts or distributions of the Holy Spirit, by which also the doctrine of the Gospel was adorned, of which they were the appendages. [36] For why did God distribute the gifts of his Spirit, except in part that they might be helps in promulgating it, and in part that their might move through admiration the minds of men to obey it? Hence Paul says, that tongues were a sign to unbelievers. The words, according to his will, remind us, that the miracles mentioned could not be ascribed to any except to God alone, and that they were not wrought undesignedly, but, for the distinct purpose of sealing the truth of the Gospel.

Heb 2:5-9

Hebrews 2:5-9

5. For unto the angels hath he not put in subjection the world to come, whereof we speak.

5. Non enim angelis subjecit orbem futurum de quo loquimur:

6. But one in a certain place testified, saying, What is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

6. Testatus est autem quidam alicubi, dicens, Quid est homo quod memor es ejus? aut filius hominis quod visitas eum?

7. Thou madest him a little lower than the angels; thou crownedst him with glory and honor, and didst set him over the works of thy hands:

7. Minuisti eum paululum ab angelis; gloria et onore coronasti eum, et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum:

8. Thou hast put all things in subjection under his feet. For in that he put all in subjection under him, he left nothing that is not put under him. But now we see not yet all things put under him.

effects of a divine power. So that “signs” betoken their intention; “wonders” their characters; and “miracles” their origin, or the power which produces them. — Ed.

[36] By referring to 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, we shall be able to see the meaning of “distributions of the Spirit,” which seems to have been different from signs and wonders, for in that passage there are several gifts mentioned distinct from signs and wonders, such as the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, the gift of prophecy, and the discerning of spirits. These were the distributions, or the portions, which the Spirit divined to every one “according to his will;” for the “will” here, as in 1 Corinthians 12:11, is the will of the Spirit. The most suitable rendering of the last clause would be “and by the gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his will.” There is an evident metonymy in the word “distributions;” it is used abstractly for things distributed or divided. — Ed.

8. Omnia subjecisti sub pedibus ejus: subjiciendo certe illi omnia, nihil reliquit non subjectum: atqui nonc nondum videmus illi omnia subjecta:

9. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man.

9. Iesum autem qui paululum imminuatus fuit ab angelis intuimur propter passionem mortis gloria et honore coronatum; ut gratia Dei pro omnibus gustaret mortem.

5. For unto the angels, etc. He again proves by another argument that Christ ought to be obeyed; for the Father has conferred on him the sovereignty of the whole world, while the angels are wholly destitute of such an honor. It hence follows that none of the angels should stand in the way of his preeminence who alone possesses supremacy.

But first, the Psalm which he quotes must be examined, for it seems to be unfitly applied to Christ. David there mentions the benefits which God bestows on mankind; for after having contemplated God's power as manifested in heaven and the stars, he comes to man, among whom the wonderful goodness of God appears in a peculiar manner. He does not, then, speak of any particular person, but of all mankind. To this I answer, that all this affords no reason why the words should not be applied to the person of Christ. I indeed allow that man was at first put in possession of the world, that he might rule over all the works of God; but by his own defection he deserved the loss of his dominion, for it was a just punishment for ingratitude as to one thus favored, that the Lord, whom he refused to acknowledge and faithfully to worship, should have deprived him of a right previously granted to him. As soon, then, as Adam alienated himself from God through sin, he was justly deprived of the good things which he had received; not that he was denied the use of them, but that he would have had no right to them after he had forsaken God. And in the very use of them God intended that there should be some tokens of this loss of right, such as these, --- the wild beasts ferociously attack us, those who ought to be awed by our presence are dreaded by us, some never obey us, others can hardly be trained to submit, and they do us harm in various ways; the earth answers not our expectations in cultivating it; the sky, the air, the sea, and other things are often adverse to us. But were all creatures to continue in subjection, yet whatever the sons of Adam possessed would be deemed a robbery; for what can they call their own when they themselves are not God's?

This foundation being laid, it is evident that God's bounty belongs not to us until the right lost in Adam be restored by Christ. For this reason Paul teaches us that food is sanctified to us by faith, (1 Timothy 4:5;) and in another place he declares that to the unbelieving nothing is clean, for they have a polluted conscience. (Titus 1:16.)

We found at the beginning of this epistle that Christ has been appointed by the Father the heir of all things. Doubtless, as he ascribes the whole inheritance to one, he excludes all others as aliens, and justly too, for we are all become

exiles from God's kingdom. What food, then, God has destined for his own family, we leave no right to take. But Christ, by whom we are admitted into this family, at the same time admits us into a participation of this right, so that we may enjoy the whole world, together with the favor of God. Hence Paul teaches us that Abraham was by faith made an heir of the world, that is, because he was united to the body of Christ. (Romans 4:13) If men, then, are precluded from all God's bounty until they receive a right to it through Christ, it follows that the dominion mentioned in the Psalm was lost to us in Adam, and that on this account it must again be restored as a donation. Now, the restoration begins with Christ as the head. There is, then, no doubt but that we are to look to him whenever the dominion of man over all creatures is spoken of.

To this the reference is made when the Apostle mentions the world to come, or the future world, for he understands by it the renovated world. To make the thing clearer, let us suppose two worlds, --- the first the old, corrupted by Adam's sin; the other, later in time, as renewed by Christ. The state of the first creation has become wholly decayed, and with man has fallen as far as man himself is concerned. Until, then, a new restitution be made by Christ, this Psalm will not be fulfilled. It hence now appears that here the world to come is not that which we hope for after the resurrection, but that which began at the beginning of Christ's kingdom; but it will no doubt have its full accomplishment in our final redemption.

But why he suppressed the name of David does not appear to me. Doubtless he says one, or some one, not in contempt, but for honor's sake, designating him as one of the prophets or a renowned writer.

7. Thou madest him, etc. A new difficulty now arises as to the explanation of the words. I have already shown that the passage is fitly applicable to the Son of God; but the Apostle seems now to turn the words from that meaning in which David understood them; for a little, {βραχύ} {τι} seems to refer to time, as it means a little while, and designates the abasement of Christ's humiliation; and he confines the glory to the day of resurrection, while David extends it generally to the whole life of man.

To this I answer, that it was not the Apostle's design to give an exact explanation of the words. For there is nothing improperly done, when verbal allusions are made to embellish a subject in hand, as Paul does in quoting a passage in Romans 10:6, from Moses, ``Who shall ascend into heaven,'' etc., he does not join the words ``heaven and hell'' for the purpose of explanation, but as ornaments. The meaning of David is this, --- ``O Lord, thou hast raised man to such a dignity, that it differs but little from divine or angelic honor; for he is set a ruler over the whole world.'' This meaning the Apostle did not intend to overthrow, nor to turn to something else; but he only bids us to consider the abasement of Christ, which appeared for a short time, and then the glory with which he is perpetually crowned; and this he does more by alluding to expressions than by explaining what David understood. [37]

[37] See Appendix G.

To be mindful and to visit mean the same thing, except that the second is somewhat fuller, for it sets forth the presence of God by the effect.

8. For in that he put all in subjection under him; or, doubtless in subjecting all things to him, etc. One might think the argument to be this, --- ``To the man whom David speaks all things are subjected, but to mankind all things are not made subject; then he does not speak of any individual man.'' But this reasoning cannot stand, for the minor proposition is true also of Christ; for all things are not as yet made subject to him, as Paul shows in 1 Corinthians 15:28. There is therefore another sentence; for after having laid down this truth, that Christ has universal dominion over all creatures, he adds, as an objection, ``But all things do not as yet obey the authority of Christ.'' To meet this objection he teaches us that yet now is seen completed in Christ what he immediately adds respecting glory and honor, as if he had said, ``Though universal subjection does not as yet appear to us, let us be satisfied that he has passed through death, and has been exalted to the highest state of honor; for that which is as yet wanting, will in its time be completed.''

But first, this offends some, that the Apostle concludes with too much refinement, that there is nothing not made subject to Christ, as David includes all things generally; for the various kinds of things which he enumerates afterwards prove no such thing, such as beasts of the field, fishes of the sea, and birds of the air. To this I reply, that a general declaration ought not to be confined to these species, for David meant no other thing than to give some instances of his power over things the most conspicuous, or indeed to extend it to things even the lowest, that we may know that nothing is ours except through the bounty of God and our union with Christ. We may, therefore, explain the passage thus, --- ``Thou hast made subject to him all things, not only things needful for eternal blessedness, but also such inferior things as serve to supply the wants of the body.'' However this may be, the inferior dominion over animals depends on the higher.

It is again asked, ``Why does he say that we see not all things made subject to Christ?'' The solution of this question you will find in that passage already quoted from Paul; and in the first chapter of this Epistle we said a few things on the subject. As Christ carries on war continually with various enemies, it is doubtless evident that he has no quiet possession of his kingdom. He is not, however, under the necessity of waging war; but it happens through his will that his enemies are not to be subdued till the last day, in order that we may be tried and proved by fresh exercises.

9. But we see Jesus, etc. As the meaning of the words, {βραχύ} {τι} ``a little'' is ambiguous, [38] he looks to the thing itself, as exhibited in the person

[38] There is no doubt but that the expression is capable of being understood as "little" in degree, or as "little" in time; but in the Psalm the former is evidently the meaning, and there is no reason for a different meaning here: Christ, in becoming man, assumed a nature inferior to that of angels. Many of the fathers, indeed, and some moderns, have thought that time is what is intended "for a little while;" but this is not true, for Christ continues in the nature which has assumed, though it be now refined and perfected. The inferiority of nature is admitted, but that inferiority is as it were compensated by a superiority of honor

of Christ, rather then to the exact meaning of the words, as I have already said; and he presents to our meditation the glory after the resurrection, which David extends to all the gifts by which man is adorned by God's bounty; but in this embellishment, which leaves the literal sense entire, there is nothing unsuitable or improper.

For the suffering of death, etc. It is the same as though it was said that Christ, having passed through death, was exalted into the glory which he has obtained, according to what Paul teaches us in Philippians 2:8-10; not that Christ obtained anything for himself individually, as sophists say, who have devised the notion that he first earned eternal life for himself and then for us; for the way or means, so to speak, of obtaining glory, is only indicated here. Besides, Christ is crowned with glory for this end, that every knee should bow to him. (Philippians 2:10.) We may therefore reason from the final cause that all things are delivered into his hand.

That he by the grace of God, [39] etc. He refers to the cause and the fruit of Christ's death, lest he should be thought to detract anything from his dignity. For when we hear that so much good has been obtained for us, there is no place left for contempt, for admiration of the divine goodness fills the whole mind. By saying for every man, he means not only that he might be ample to others, as Chrysostom says, who brings the example of a physician tasting first a bitter draught, that the patient might not refuse to drink it; but he means that Christ died for us, and that by taking upon him what was due to us, he redeemed us from the curse of death. And it is added, that this was done through the grace of God, for the cause of redemption was the infinite love of God towards us, through which it was that he spared not even his own Son. What Chrysostom says of tasting of death, as though he touched it with his lips, because Christ emerged from death a conqueror, I will not refute nor condemn, though I know not whether the Apostle meant to speak in a manner so refined. [40]

Heb 2:10-13

Hebrews 2:10-13

10. For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.

10. Decebat enim eum propter quem omnia, et per quem omnia, quum multos filios in gloriam adduceret, ducem salutis eorum per passiones consecrare.

and glory. Our version is the Vulgate, which Doddridge has also adopted, and also Stuart and Bloomfield. — Ed.

[39] See Appendix H.

[40] There is no doubt but that is a fanciful refinement. To taste food, according to the language of Scripture, is to eat it. See Acts 10:11; 20:11; 23:14. To taste death is to die, to undergo death, and nothing else. See Matthew 16:28; Luke 9:27. Stuart observes that the word for taste in Hebrew is taken in the same sense, and also in classic Greek authors. “For every man,” {ὑπὲρ} {πάντος}, that is ``man,'' mentioned in verse 6; and the ``man'' there means all the faithful, to whom God in Noah restored the dominion lost in Adam; but this dominion was not renewed to man as a fallen being, but as made righteous by faith. --- Ed.

11. For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren,

11. Nam qui sanctificat et qui sanctificantur, ex uno omnes; propter quam causam non erubescit fratres ipsos vocare;

12. Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee.

12. Dicens, Nuntiabo nomen tuum fratribus meis; in medio Ecclesiae canam te;

13. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

13. Et rursum, Ego ero fidens in ipso; et rursum, Ecce ego et pueri quos mihi dedit Deus.

10. For it became him, etc. His object is, to make Christ's humiliation to appear glorious to the godly; for when he is said to have been clothed with our flesh, he seems to be classed with the common order of men; and the cross brought him lower than all men. We must therefore take heed, lest Christ should be less esteemed, because he willingly humbled himself for us; and this is what is here spoken of. For the Apostle shows that this very thing ought to be deemed honorable to the Son of God, that he was by these means consecrated the Captain of our salvation.

He first assumes it as granted, that we ought to be satisfied with God's decree; for as all things are sustained by his power, so all things ought to serve to his glory. No betters cause, then, can be found out than the good pleasure of God. Such is the purport of the circumlocution which he employs, for whom, and by whom, are all things. He might by one word have named God; but his purpose was to remind us, that what is to be deemed best is that which he appoints, whose will and glory is the right end of all things. [41]

It does not, however, appear as yet what he intends by saying, that it became Christ to be thus consecrated. But this depends on the ordinary way which God adopts in dealing with his own people; for his will is to exercise them with various trials, so that they may spend their whole life under the cross. It was hence necessary that Christ, as the firstbegotten, should by the cross be inaugurated into his supremacy, since that is the common lot and condition of all. This is the conforming of the head with the members, of which Paul speaks in Romans 8:29.

It is indeed a singular consolation, calculated to mitigate the bitterness of the cross, when the faithful hear, that by sorrows and tribulations they are sanctified for glory as Christ himself was; and hence they see a sufficient reason why they should lovingly kiss the cross rather than dread it. And when this is the

[41] Having vindicated Christ's superiority over angels, he being "crowned with glory and honor," notwithstanding his assumption of human nature, and for his sufferings, the Apostle now, as it were, goes back, and proves the necessity of what has been done; showing how needful it was for him to become man, and to suffer as he did; and we find he states two especial reasons — that he might reconcile us to God and be able to sympathize with his people. — Ed.

case, then doubtless the reproach of the cross of Christ immediately disappears, and its glory shines forth; for who can despise what is sacred, nay, what God sanctifies? Who can deem that ignominious, by which we are prepared for glory? And yet both these things are said here of the death of Christ.

By whom are all things, etc. When creation is spoken of, it is ascribed to the Son as his own world, for by him were all things created; but here the Apostle means no other thing than that all creatures continue or are preserved by the power of God. What we have rendered consecrated, others have rendered made perfect. But as the word, {τελειῶσαι} which he uses, is of a doubtful meaning, I think it clear that the word I leave adopted is more suitable to the context. [42] For what is meant is the settled and regular way or method by which the sons of God are initiated, so that they may obtain their own honor, and be thus separated from the rest of the world; and then immediately sanctification is mentioned.

11. For both he that sanctifieth, etc. He proves that it was necessary that what he had said should be fulfilled in the person of Christ on account of his connection with his members; and he also teaches that it was a remarkable evidence of the divine goodness that he put on our flesh. hence he says, that they are all of one, that is, that the author of holiness and we are made partakers of it, are all of one nature, as I understated the expression. It is commonly understood of one Adam; and some refer it to God, and not without reasons; but I rather think that one nature is meant, and one I consider to be in the neuter gender, as though he had said, that they are made out of the same mass. [43]

It avails not, indeed, a little to increase our confidence, that we are united to the Son of God by a bond so close, that we can find in our nature that holiness of which we are in want; for he not only as God sanctifies us, but there is also

[42] Our version seems more intelligible — "to make perfect." As it appears afterwards his perfection consisted in his having made an atonement for sin, and in being capable of sympathy with his people. God made him perfectly qualified to be the Captain or leader in our salvation, that is, in the work of saving us, even through sufferings, as thereby he procured our salvation and became experimentally acquainted with the temptations and trials of humanity. The sense given by Stuart and some others, borrowed from the use of the word in the classics, which is that of crowning or rewarding the victor at the games is not suitable here; for what follows clearly shows that its meaning is what has been stated. Both Scott and Stuart connect "the bringing many sons unto glory" with "the captain of their salvation." One thing is indeed thus gained, the cases seem to suit better; but then the sense is violated. When the sentence is thus rendered, there is no antecedent to "their" connected with "salvation;" and the faithful are not called the "sons" of Christ, but his brethren. As to the case of the participle for "bringing," an accusative for a dative, it is an anomaly, says Bloomfield, that sometimes occurs in Paul's writings and also in the classics. — Ed.

[43] Though many, ancient and modern, such as Chrysostom, Beza, Grotius and Bloomfield, regard "God" as meant here by "one", yet the context is in favor of the view taken by Calvin, which is also adopted by Dr. Owen and Stuart. The 14th verse seems to decide the question. The word to sanctify {ἁγιάζω}, means --- 1. To consecrate, to set apart to a holy use or to an office, Matthew 23:19; John 17:19; --- 2. To purify from pollution, either ceremonially, Hebrew 9:13, or morally and spiritually, 1 Thessalonians 5:23; --- 3. To purify from the guilt of sin by a free remission, Hebrews 10:10, compared with verses 14 and 18. Now, which of these meanings are we to take here? Calvin takes the second, that is to purify from pollution, or to make spiritually holy; others, such as Stuart and Bloomfield, take the last meaning, and the latter gives the rendering, ``the expiator and the expiated,'' This is more consistent with the general tenor of the passage. The subject is not sanctification properly so called, but expiation or atonement. See verses 9 and 17. --- Ed.

the power of sanctifying in his human nature, not that it has it from itself, but that God had poured upon it a perfect fullness of holiness, so that from it we may all draw. And to this point this sentence refers, ``For their sakes I sanctify myself.'' (John 17:19.) If, then we are sinful and unclean, we have not to go far to seek a remedy; for it is offered to us in our own flesh. If any one prefers to regard as intended here that spiritual unity which the godly have with the Son of God, and which differs much from that which men commonly have among themselves, I offer no objection, though I am disposed to follow what is more commonly received, as it is not inconsistent with reason.

He is not ashamed to call them brethren. This passage is taken from Psalm 22:22. That Christ is the speaker there, or David in his name, the evangelists do especially testify, for they quote from it many verses, such as the following, --- ``They parted my garments,'' --- ``They gave gall for my meat,'' --- ``My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'' And further, the other parts of the chapter prove the same; for we may see in the history of the passion a delineation of what is there related. The end of the Psalm, which speaks of the calling of the Gentiles, can be applied to none but to Christ alone, ``Turn to the Lord shall all the ends of the world; adore before him shall all the families of the nations,'' --- ``The Lord's is the kingdom, and he will reign over the nations.'' These things are found accomplished only in Christ, who enlarged the kingdom of God not over a small space, as David did, but extended it over the whole world; it was before confined as it were within narrow limits. There is, then, no doubt but that his voice is what is referred to in this passage; and appropriately and suitably does he say that he is not ashamed; for how great is the distance between us and him? Much, then, does he let down himself, when he dignifies us with the name of brethren; for we are unworthy that he should deem us his servants. And this so great an honor conferred on us is amplified by this circumstance --- Christ does not speak here as a mortal man while in the form of a servant, but when elevated after the resurrection into immortal glory. Hence this title is the same, as though he had raised us into heaven with himself. And let us remember, whenever we hear that we are called brethren by Christ, that he has clothed us, so to speak, with this honor, that together with this fraternal name we may lay hold on eternal life and every celestial blessing. [44]

We must further notice the office which Christ assumes, which is that of proclaiming the name of God; and this began to be done when the gospel was first promulgated and is now done daily by the ministry of pastors. We hence learn, that the gospel has been presented to us for this end, that we may be brought to the knowledge of God, in order that his goodness may be celebrated by us, and that Christ is the author of the gospel in whatever manner it may be offered to us. And this is what Paul says, for he declares that he and others

[44] "If Christ was merely a man and nothing more, where (we may ask with Abresch) would be either the great condescension, or particular kindness manifested in calling men his brethren? If however, he possessed a higher nature, if {ἑαυτὸν} {ἐκένωσεν} {μορφὴν} {δούλου} {λαβών}, Philippians 2:7, if {ἐκένωσε} {ἑαυτὸν} {μορφὴν} {δούλου} {λαβὼν}, Philippians 2:8; then was it an act of particular kindness and condescension in him to call men his brethren?'' --- Stuart

were ambassadors for Christ; and he exhorted men as it were in the name of Christ. (2 Corinthians 5:20.) And this ought to add no small reverence to the gospel, since we ought not so much to consider men as speaking to us, as Christ by his own mouth; for at the time when he promised to publish God's name to men, he had ceased to be in the world; it was not however to no purpose that he claimed this office as his own; for he really performs it by his disciples.

12. In the midst of the Church. [45] It hence appears plainly, that the proclamation of God's praises is always promoted by the teaching of the gospel; for as soon as God becomes known to us, his boundless praises sound in our hearts and in our ears; and at the same time Christ encourages us by his own example publicly to celebrate them, so that they may be heard by as many as possible. For it would not be sufficient for each one of us to thank God himself for benefits received, except we testify openly our gratitude, and thus mutually stimulate one another. And it is a truth, which may serve as a most powerful stimulant, and may lead us most fervently to praise God, when we hear that Christ leads our songs, and is the chief composer of our hymns.

13. I will put my trust in him, or, I will confide in him. As this sentence is found in Psalm 18:2, it was probably taken from that place; [46] and Paul, in Romans 15:9, applies another verse to Christ respecting the calling of the Gentiles. In addition to this, it may be said that the general contents of that Psalm show clearly that David spoke in the person of another. There indeed appeared in David but a faint shadow of the greatness which is there set forth in terms so magnificent. He boasts that he was made the head of the heathens, and that even aliens and people unknown willingly surrendered themselves to him at the report of his name. David subdued a few neighboring and wellknown nations by the force of arms, and made them tributaries. But what was this to the extensive dominions of many other kings? And further, where was voluntary submission? Where were the people that were so remote that he knew them not? In short, where was the solemn proclamation of God's glory among the nations mentioned at the end of the Psalm? Christ then is he who is made head over many nations, to whom strangers from the utmost borders of the earth submit, and roused by hearing of him only; for they are not forced by arms to undertake his yoke, but being subdued by his doctrine, they spontaneously obey him.

There is also seen in the Church that feigned and false profession of religion, which is there referred to; for many daily profess the name of Christ, but not from the heart.

[45] This quotation is made from Psalm 22:22, and from the Sept., except that the Apostle changes {διηγήσομαι} into {ἀπαγγελῶ}. The words are often used synonymously, only the latter includes the idea of a message, as it literally means to declare something from another. --- Ed.

[46] The words are found literally, according to the Sept., in 2 Samuel 22:3; which chapter is materially the same with Psalm 18, and also in Isaiah 8:17. The words are somewhat different in Psalm 18:2, though the Hebrew is the same as in 2 Samuel 22:3, {{בו} ,{אחסה `` I will trust in him.'' The words in Hebrew are wholly different in Isaiah ,8:17 rendered literally, from Isaiah, because they see nothing in the 18th Psalm respecting the Messiah; but the whole Psalm is respecting him who was eminently a type of the Messiah; and in that sense no doubt the Messiah is found there. As God was to David his trust in all trials, so he was to the Son of David. See chapter .5:7 --- Ed.

There is then no doubt but that the Psalm is rightly applied to Christ. But what has this to do with the present subject? For it seems not to follow that we and Christ are of one, in order that he might especially put his trust in God. To this I answer, that the argument is valid, because he would have no need of such trust, had he not been a man exposed to human necessities and wants. As then he depended on God's aid, his lot is the same with ours. It is surely not in vain or for nothing that we trust in God; for were we destitute of his grace, we should be miserable and lost. The trust then which we put in God, is an evidence of our helplessness. At the same time we differ from Christ in this --- the weakness which necessarily and naturally belongs to us he willingly undertook. But it ought not a little to encourage us to trust in God, that we have Christ as our leader and instructor; for who would fear to go astray while following in his steps? Nay, there is no danger that our trust should be useless when we have it in common with Christ; who, we know, cannot be mistaken.

Behold, I and the children, etc. It is indeed certain that Isaiah was speaking of himself; for when he gave hope of deliverance to the people, and the promise met with no credit, lest being broken down by the perverse unbelief of the people he should despond, the Lord bade him to seal the doctrine he had announced among a few of the faithful; as though he had said, that though it was rejected by the multitude, there would yet be a few who would receive it. Relying on this answer, Isaiah took courage, and declared that he and the disciples given to him would be ever ready to follow God. (Isaiah 8:18.)

Let us now see why the Apostle applied this sentence to Christ. First, what is found in the same place, that the Lord would become a rock of stumbling and a stone of offense to the kingdom of Israel and of Judas, will not be denied by any one of a sound mind, to have been fulfilled in Christ. And doubtless as the restoration from the Babylonian exile was a sort of prelude to the great redemption obtained by Christ for us and the fathers; so also the fact that so few among the Jews availed themselves of that kindness of God, that a small remnant only were saved, was a presage of their future blindness, through which it happened that they rejected Christ, and that they in turn were rejected by God, and perished. For we must observe that the promises extant in the Prophets respecting the restoration of the Church from the time the Jews returned from exile, extend to the kingdom of Christ, as the Lord had this end in view in restoring the people, that his Church might continue to the coming of his Son, by whom it was at length to be really established.

Since it was so, God not only addressed Isaiah, when he bade him to seal the law and the testimony, but also in his person all his ministers, who would have to contend with the unbelief of the people, and hence Christ above all, whom the Jews resisted with greater contumacy than all the former Prophets. And we see now that they who have been substituted for Israel, not only repudiate his Gospel, but also furiously assail him. But how much soever the doctrine of the Gospel may be a stone of stumbling to the household of the Church, it is not yet God's will that it should wholly fail; on the contrary, he bids it to be sealed

among his disciples: and Christ, in the name of all his teachers as the head of them, yea, as the only true Teacher, who rules us by their ministry, declares that amidst this deplorable ingratitude of the world, there shall still be some always who shall be obedient to God. [47]

See then how this passage may be fitly applied to Christ: the Apostle concludes, that we are one with him, because he unites us to himself, when he presents himself and us together to God the Father: for they form but one body who obey God under the same rule of faith. What could have been said more suitably to commend faith, than that we are by it the companions of the Son of God, who by his example encourages us and shows us the way? If then we follow the Word of God, we know of a certainty that we have Christ as our leader; but they belong not at all to Christ, who turn aside from his word. What, I pray, can be more desired than to agree with the Son of God? But this agreement or consent is in faith. Then by unbelief we disagree with him, than which nothing is a greater evil. The word ``children'', which in many places is taken for servants, means here disciples.

Which God hath given me. Here is pointed out the primary cause of obedience, even that God has adopted us. Christ brings none to the Father, but those given him by the Father; and this donation, we know, depends on eternal election; for those whom the Father has destined to life, he delivers to the keeping of his Son, that he may defend them. This is what he says by John, ``All that the Father has given me, will come to me.'' (John 6:37.) That we then submit to God by the obedience of faith, let us learn to ascribe this altogether to his mercy; for otherwise we shall never be led to him by the hand of Christ. Besides, this doctrine supplies us with strong ground of confidence; for who can tremble under the guidance and protection of Christ? Who, while relying on such a keeper and guardian, would not boldly disregard all dangers? And doubtless, while Christ says, ``Behold, I and the children,'' he really fulfills what he elsewhere promises, that he will not suffer any of those to perish whom he has received from the Father. (John 10:28.) [48]

[47] Stuart suggests that these texts are applicable to Christ as the antitype of those to whom they most immediately refer. “As the type,” he says, “put his confidence in God, so did the antitype: as the type had children who were pledges for the deliverance of Judah, so has the antitype ‘many sons and daughters,’ the pledges of his powerful grace, and sureties that his promises in regard to future blessings will be accomplished.” Christ was promised as the Son of David in his office as king: he was therefore to be like David: and the trials and support of David as a king were typical of his trials and support. Hence the Apostle applies to him the language of David. Christ was also promised as a Prophet; and is applied to the antitype. This must have been admitted as a valid reasoning by the Jews who regarded the Messiah both as king and as a prophet. — Ed.

[48] Be it observed that throughout the whole of this passage, from 5 to 14 inclusive, the representation is, that God had a people prior to the coming of Christ, first called “man,” afterwards “sons” and “children,” and Christ’s “brethren,” — that those were promised “dominion,” glory and honor,” — and that the Son of God assumed their nature became lower than the angels, in order to obtain for them this dominion, glory and honor. This statement bears a similarity to what the Apostle says in the 4th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, and in the 3rd and 4th to the Galatians: only he seems to go back here to Noah, to whom was restored the dominion and the glory lost in Adam, while in the chapters referred to, he begins with Abraham: and there seems to have been a reason for this; for the posterity of Noah soon departed from the faith; and Abraham became alone the father of the faithful,

We must observe lastly, that though the world with mad stubbornness reject the Gospel, yet the sheep ever recognize the voice of their shepherd. Let not therefore the impiety of almost all ranks, ages, and nations, disturb us, provided Christ gathers together his own, who have been committed to his protection. If the reprobate rush headlong to death by their impiety, in this way the plants which God has not planted are rooted up. (Matthew 15:13.) Let us at the same time know that his own are known to him, and that the salvation of them all is sealed by him, so that not one of them shall be lost. (2 Timothy 2:19.) Let us be satisfied with this seal.

Heb 2:14-15

Hebrews 2:14-15

14. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil;

14. Quando igitur pueri carni et sanguini communicant, ipse quoque similiter eorundem fuit particeps, ut per mortem aboleret eum qui habebat mortis imperium, hoc est, diabolum;

15. And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.

15. Et redimeret quicunque metu mortis per totam vitam obnoxii erant servituti.

14. Forasmuch then as the children, etc., or, since then the children, etc. This is an inference from the foregoing; and at the same time a fuller reason is given than what has been hitherto stated, why it behooved the Son of God to put on our flesh, even that he might partake of the same nature with us, and that by undergoing death he might redeem us from it.

The passage deserves especial notice, for it not only confirms the reality of the human nature of Christ, but also shows the benefit which thence flows to us. ``The Son of God,'' he says, ``became man, that he might partake of the same condition and nature with us.'' What could be said more fitted to confirm our faith? Here his infinite love towards us appears; but its overflowing appears in this --- that he put on our nature that he might thus make himself capable of dying, for as God he could not undergo death. And though he refers but briefly to the benefits of his death, yet there is in this brevity of words a singularly striking and powerful representation, and that is, that he has so delivered us from the tyranny of the devil, that we are rendered safe, and that he has so redeemed us from death, that it is no longer to be dreaded.

But as all the words are important, they must be examined a little more carefully. First, the destruction of the devil, of which he speaks, imports this --- that he cannot prevail against us. For though the devil still lives, and constantly

and through faith “the heir of the world,” and had the land of Canaan as a special pledge of a “better country.” And the Apostle here also comes to Abraham, verse 16. — Ed.

attempts our ruin, yet all his power to hurt us is destroyed or restrained. It is a great consolation to know that we have to do with an enemy who cannot prevail against us. That what is here said has been said with regard to us, we may gather from the next clause, that he might destroy him that had the power of death; for the apostle intimates that the devil was so far destroyed as he has power to reign to our ruin; for ``the power of death'' is ascribed to him from the effect, because it is destructive and brings death. He then teaches us not only that the tyranny of Satan was abolished by Christ's death, but also that he himself was so laid prostrate, that no more account is to be made of him than as though he were not. He speaks of the devil according to the usual practice of Scripture, in the singular number, not because there is but one, but because they all form one community which cannot be supposed to be without a head. [49]

15. And deliver them who, etc. This passage expresses in a striking manner how miserable is the life of those who fear death, as they must feel it to be dreadful, because they look on it apart from Christ; for then nothing but a curse appears in it: for whence is death but from God's wrath against sin? Hence is that bondage throughout life, even perpetual anxiety, by which unhappy souls are tormented; for through a consciousness of sin the judgment of God is ever presented to the view. From this fear Christ has delivered us, who by undergoing our curse has taken away what is dreadful in death. For though we are not now freed from death, yet in life and in death we have peace and safety, when we have Christ going before us. [50]

But it any one cannot pacify his mind by disregarding death, let him know that he has made as yet but very little proficiency in the faith of Christ; for as extreme fear is owing to ignorance as to the grace of Christ, so it is a certain evidence of unbelief.

Death here does not only mean the separation of the soul from the body, but also the punishment which is inflicted on us by an angry God, so that it includes eternal ruin; for where there is guilt before God, there immediately hell shows itself.

Heb 2:16-18

Hebrews Chapter 2:16-18

16. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

16. Nusquam enim angelos assumit; sed semen Abrahae assumit.

17. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people.

[49] See Appendix I

[50] The same seem to be meant here as before, — “the sons, the children.” Before Christ came, though heirs, yet they were in a state of bondage; so the Apostle represents them in Galatians 4:1-3. See Romans 8:15. — Ed.

17. Unde fratribus debuit per omnia esse similis, ut misericors esset et fidelis pontifex in iis quae sunt erga Deum, ut peccata expiet populi.

18. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.

18. Ex quo enim ipsi contigit tentari, potest et iis qui tentantur, succurrere.

16. For verily, or, For nowhere, etc. By this comparison he enhances the benefit and the honor with which Christ has favored us, by putting on our flesh; for he never did so much for angels. As then it was necessary that there should be a remarkable remedy for man's dreadful ruin, it was the design of the Son of God that there should be some incomparable pledge of his love towards us which angels had not in common with us. That he preferred us to angels was not owing to our excellency, but to our misery. There is therefore no reason for us to glory as though we were superior to angels, except that our heavenly Father has manifested toward us that ampler mercy which we needed, so that the angels themselves might from on high behold so great a bounty poured on the earth. The present tense of the verb is to be understood with reference to the testimonies of Scripture, as though he set before us what had been before testified by the Prophets.

But this one passage is abundantly sufficient to lay prostrate such men as Marcion and Manicheus, and fanatical men of similar character, who denied Christ to have been a real man, begotten of human seed. For if he bore only the appearance of man, as he had before appeared in the form of an angel, there could have been no difference; but as it could not have been said that Christ became really an angel, clothed with angelic nature, it is hence said that he took upon him man's nature and not that of angels.

And the Apostle speaks of nature, and intimates that Christ, clothed with flesh, was real man, so that there was unity of person in two natures. For this passage does not favor Nestorius, who imagined a twofold Christ, as though the Son of God was not a real man but only dwelt in man's flesh. But we see that the Apostle's meaning was very different, for his object was to teach us that we find in the Son of God a brother, being a partaker of our common nature. Being not therefore satisfied with calling him man, he says that he was begotten of human seed; and he names expressly the seed of Abraham, in order that what he said might have more credit, as being taken from Scripture. [51]

17. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, or, to be like his brethren, etc. In Christ's human nature there are two things to be considered, the real flesh and the affections or feelings. The Apostle then teaches us, that he had not only put on the real flesh of man, but also all those feelings which belong to man, and he also shows the benefit that hence proceeds; and it is the true teaching of faith when we in our case find the reason why the Son of God undertook our infirmities; for all knowledge without feeling the need of this benefit is cold and lifeless. But he teaches us that Christ was made subject to human affections, that he might be a merciful

[51] See Appendix K

and faithful high priest; which words I thus explain, ``that he might be a merciful, and therefore a faithful high priest.'' [52]

For in a priest, whose office it is to appease God's wrath, to help the miserable, to raise up the fallen, to relieve the oppressed, mercy is especially required, and it is what experience produces in us; for it is a rare thing, for those who are always happy to sympathize with the sorrows of others. The following saying of Virgil was no doubt derived from daily examples found among men:

``Not ignorant of evil, I learn to aid the miserable.'' [53]

The Son of God had no need of experience that he might know the emotions of mercy; but we could not be persuaded that he is merciful and ready to help us, had he not become acquainted by experience with our miseries; but this, as other things, has been as a favor given to us. Therefore whenever any evils pass over us, let it ever occur to us, that nothing happens to us but what the Son of God has himself experienced in order that he might sympathize with us; nor let us doubt but that he is at present with us as though he suffered with us. [54]

Faithful means one true and upright, for it is one opposite to a dissembler; and to him who fulfils not his engagements. An acquaintance with our sorrows and miseries so inclines Christ to compassion, that he is constant in imploring God's aid for us. What besides? Having purposed to make atonement for sins, he put on our nature that we might have in our own flesh the price of our redemption; in a word, that by the right of a common nature he might introduce us, together with himself, into the sanctuary of God. By the words, in things pertaining to God, he means such things as are necessary to reconcile men to God; and as the first access to God is by faith, there is need of a Mediator to remove all doubting.

18. For in that he himself has suffered, etc. Having been tried by our evils, he is ready, he says, to bring us help. The word temptation here means no other

[52] Here is, as I conceive, an instance of an arrangement similar to what is often found in the prophets, and to what occurs in verse 9; this would be seen were a part of this verse and the following verse put in lines, — That compassionate he might be And a faithful high priest in the things of God To make an atonement for the sins of the people; For as he suffered, being himself tempted, he can help the tempted. The first and last line correspond, and the second and the third. He is compassionate, because he can sympathize with the tempted, having been himself tempted; and he is a true and faithful high priest, because he really expiated the sins of the people: and that he might be all this, he became like his brethren that is, by taking their nature. — Ed.

[53] Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco.

[54] This paragraph, which begins at verse 5, commences with what belongs to the kingly office — dominion, and what accompanies it, glory and honor; but it ends with the priestly office; and it is shown that it was necessary for the Savior to be a priest in order that he might be a king, and might make his people kings as well as priests to God. The dominion and glory promised to the faithful from the beginning intimated even in the first promise made to fallen man, and more fully developed afterwards, was what they had no power to attain of themselves: Hence it became necessary for the Son of God to become the son of man, that he might obtain for his people the dominion and glory. This seems to be the view presented to us in this passage. The children of God, before Christ came into the world, were like heirs under age, though lords of all. He came, took their flesh and effected whatever was necessary to put them in full possession of the privileges promised them. See Galatians 4:1-6. — Ed.

thing than experience or probation; and to be able, is to be fit, or inclined, or suitable.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

Heb 3:1-6

Hebrews Chapter 3:1-6

1. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus;

1. Unde fratres sancti vocationis coelestis participes, considerate Apostolum et sacerdotem confessionis nostrae, Christum Iesum;

2. Who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house.

2. Qui fidelis est ei qui constituit eum, quemadmodum et Moses in Tota domo ejus.

3. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath builded the house hath more honor than the house.

3. Majore quippe gloria hic dignus habitus est quam Moses, quanto majorem habet honorem architectus domus quam ipsa.

4. For every house is builded by some man; but he that built all things is God.

4. Omnis enim domus construitur ab aliquo, qui autem omnia construxit Deus est.

5. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after;

5. Et Moses quidem fidelis in tota domo ejus tanquam minister in testimonium eorum quae post dicenda erant;

6. But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

6. Christus autem tanquam filius supra domum ipsius; cujus nos domus sumus, si fiduciam et gloriationem spei ad finem usque firmam tenuerimus.

1. Wherefore, holy brethren, etc. He concludes the preceding doctrine with a necessary exhortation, that the Jews should attentively consider what sort of being and how great Christ is. As he had before, by naming him a teacher and a priest, briefly compared him with Moses and Aaron, so he now includes both clauses; for he adorns him with two titles, as he sustains a twofold character in the Church of God. Moses was a prophet and a teacher, and Aaron was a priest; but the two offices belong to Christ. If then we seek rightly to know him, we must inquire what sort of being he is; yea, he must be clothed with his

own power, lest we lay hold on an empty shadow and not on him. [55]

First, the word consider, is important, for it intimates that singular attention is required, as he cannot be disregarded with impunity, and that at the same time the true knowledge of Christ is sufficient to dissipate the darkness of all errors. And to encourage them the more to pursue this study, he reminds them of their calling; as though he had said, ``God favored you with no common grace when He called you into his kingdom; [56] it now remains that you have your eyes fixed on Christ as your leader in the way.'' [57] For the calling of the godly cannot be otherwise confirmed than by a thorough surrender of themselves to Christ. We ought not therefore to regard this as said only to the Jews, but that it is a general truth addressed to all who desire to come into the kingdom of God; they ought sedulously to attend to Christ, for he is the sole instructor of our faith, and has confirmed it by the sacrifice of himself; for confession, or profession, is to be taken here for faith, as thought he had said, that the faith we profess is vain and of no avail, unless Christ be its object. [58]

2. Who was, or is faithful, etc. This is a commendation of the apostleship of Christ, in order that the faithful may securely acquiesce in him; and he commends it on two grounds, because the Father has set him to be over us as our teacher, and because Christ himself has faithfully performed the office committed to him. These two things are always necessary to secure authority to a doctrine; for God alone ought to be attended to, as the whole Scripture testifies; hence Christ declares, that the doctrine which he delivered was not his own, but the Father's, (John 7:16;) and in another place he says, ``He who received me, receiveth him who has sent me.'' (Luke 9:48.) For we say of Christ, that as he is clothed with our flesh, he is the Father's minister to execute his commands. To the calling of God is added the faithful and upright performance of duty on the part of Christ; and this is required in true ministers, in order that they may obtain credence in the Church. Since these two things are found in

[55] He calls them “holy brethren.” Stuart takes holy as meaning “consecrated, devoted, i.e. to Christ, set apart as Christians.” The people of Israel were called holy in the same sense, not because they were spiritually holy, but because they were set apart and adopted as God’s people. The word saints, at the commencement of Paul’s Epistles, means the same thing. — Ed.

[56] The word heavenly, may also mean a call from heaven. See chapter 12:25. It is no doubt both, it is a call to the enjoyment of heavenly things, as well as a call that comes from heaven. — Ed.

[57] This is the only place in which Christ is called an Apostle, the design no doubt was to institute a comparison between him and Moses, who is often said to have been sent by God, as Christ is said to have been sent by the Father: they might both therefore be rightly called Apostles, i.e., messengers sent by God. And then he adds, high priest, that he might afterwards make a comparison between him and Aaron. He had before exalted Christ as a teacher above all the prophets, including no doubt Moses among the rest; but here refers to Moses as the leader of the people, as one sent especially by God to conduct them from Egypt through the wilderness to the land of Canaan. But as our call is from heaven and to heaven, Christ is sent as a messenger to lead us to the heavenly country. We hence see that in this connection the “heavenly calling” is to be taken most suitably as a call to heaven. — Ed.

[58] The simpler meaning of this phrase is to view it as sort of Hebraism, when a noun is put for an adjective or a participle; and it is so rendered by Schleusner and Stuart, “professed by us,” or, “whom we profess.” See similar instances in chapter 10:23, and in 2 Corinthians 9:13. — Ed.

Christ, doubtless he cannot be disregarded without despising God in him.

As also Moses, etc. Omitting for a while the priesthood, he speaks here of his apostleship. For as there are two parts in God's covenant, the promulgation of the truth, and so to speak, its real confirmation, the full perfection of the covenant would not appear in Christ, were not both parts found in him. Hence the writer of the epistle, after having mentioned both, roused attention by a brief exhortation. But he now enters on a longer discussion, and begins with the office of a teacher: he therefore now compares Christ only with Moses. The words, in all his house, may be applied to Moses; but I prefer to apply them to Christ, as he may be said to be faithful to his Father in ruling his whole house. It hence follows, that none belong to the Church of God except those who acknowledge Christ. [59]

3. For this man (or, he) was counted worthy, etc. Lest he might appear to make Moses equal to Christ, he reminds us of his superior excellency; and this he proves by two arguments, Moses so ruled the Church, that he was still a part and member of it; but Christ being the builder, is superior to the whole building, --- Moses while ruling others, was ruled also himself, as he was a servant; but Christ being a Son possesses supreme power.

It is a frequent and wellknown metaphor used in Scripture to call the Church the house of God. (1 Timothy 3:15.) And as it is composed of the faithful, each of them is called a living stone. (1 Peter 2:5.) They are also sometimes called the vessels with which the house is furnished. (2 Timothy 2:20.) There is then no one so eminent that he is not a member, and included in the universal body. God being the builder, alone is to be set above his own work; but God dwells in Christ, so that whatever is said of God is applicable to him.

If any one objects and says that Christ is also a part of the building because he is the foundation, because he is our brother, because he has a union with us and then that he is not the masterbuilder because he himself was formed by God: in reply to these things we say that our faith is so founded on him that he still rules over us that he is in such a way our brother that he is yet our Lord, that he was so formed by God as man that he nevertheless by his Spirit revives and restores all things as the eternal God. The Scripture employs us various metaphors to set forth Christ s grace towards us; but there is no one which derogates from his honor mentioned here by the Apostle; for what is stated here is that all ought to be brought down to their own state because they ought to be in subjection to the head and that Christ alone is exempt from this submission, because he is the head.

If it be again objected and said that Moses was no less a masterbuilder than Paul who gloried in this title: to this I reply that this name is applied to prophets

[59] This testimony as to Moses is found in Numbers 12:7. God says there “in all mine house;” we ought therefore to consider “his” here as referring to God or to Christ, and not to Moses. “For this man,” {οὗτος}; it is better to render it here he, as it is sometimes rendered, and is so rendered in this place by Doddridge, Macknight and Stuart. The connection is with ``consider,'' in the first verse; ``for,'' a reason is given for the exhortation; ``for he,'' i.e., the apostle and high priest before mentioned, etc. --- Ed.

and teachers but not with strict correctness; for they are only the instruments and indeed dead instruments, except the Lord from heaven gives efficacy to what they do; and then they so labor in building the Church, that they themselves form a part of the structure; but the case is wholly different as to Christ, for he ever builds up the Church by the power of his own Spirit. Besides, he stands far above the rest, for he is in such a way the true temple of God, that he is at the same time the God who inhabits it.

4. He that built, etc. Though these words may be extended to the creation of the whole world, yet I confine them to the present subject. We are then to understand that nothing is done in the Church which ought not to he ascribed to Gods power; for he alone has founded it by his own hand, (Psalm 87:5;) and Paul says of Christ that he is the head, from whom the whole body, joined together and connected by every subservient juncture, makes an increase according to what is done proportionally by every member. (Ephesians 4:16.) Hence he often declares that the success of his ministry was God's work. In a word, if we take a right view of things, it will appear that how much soever God may use the labors of men in building his Church, yet he himself performs everything --- the instrument derogates nothing from the workman. [60]

5. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, etc. The second difference is, that to Moses was committed a doctrine to which he, in common with others, was to submit; but Christ, though he put on the form of a servant, is yet Master and Lord, to whom all ought to be subject; for, as we found in chap. 1:2, he is constituted heir of all things.

For a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after, or which were afterwards to be said or declared. I explain this simply in this way, --- that Moses, while a herald of that doctrine which was to be published for a time to the ancient people, did at the same time render a testimony to the Gospel, the publication of which was not as yet to be made; for it is doubtless evident, that the end and completion of the Law is that perfection of wisdom contained in the Gospel. This exposition seems to comport with the future tense of the participle. The meaning indeed is, that Moses faithfully delivered to the people what the Lord had committed to him, but that limits were prescribed to him which it was not lawful for him to pass. God formerly spoke at different times and in various ways by the prophets, but he deferred to the fullness of time the complete revelation of the Gospel.

6. Whose house are we, etc. As Paul in his Epistle to the Romans, after having prefaced that he was appointed to be the Apostle of the Gentiles, adds, for the sake of gaining credit among them, that they were of that number; so now the author of this epistle exhorts the Jews who had already made a profession of Christ to persevere in the faith, that they might be deemed as being in Gods household. He had said before that God's house was subject to the authority of Christ. Suitably to this declaration is added the admonition that they would then have a place in God's family when they obeyed Christ. But

[60] See Appendix L

as they had already embraced the gospel, he mentions their condition if they persevered in the faith. For the word hope I take for faith; and indeed hope is nothing else but the constancy of faith. He mentions confidence and rejoicing, or glorying, in order to express more fully the power of faith. [61] And we hence conclude that those who assent to the Gospel doubtfully and like those who vacillate, do not truly and really believe; for faith cannot be without a settled peace of mind, from which proceeds the bold confidence of rejoicing. And so these two things, confidence and rejoicing, are ever the effects of faith, as we stated in explaining Romans the 5th chapter, and Ephesians the 3rd chapter

But to these things the whole teaching of the Papists is opposed; and this very fact, were there nothing else, sufficiently proves that they pull down the Church of God rather than build it. For the certainty by which alone we are made, as the Apostle teaches us, holy temples to God, they not only darken by their glosses, but also condemn as presumption. Besides, what firmness of confidence can there be when men know not what they ought to believe? And yet that monstrous thing, implicit faith, which they have invented, is nothing else than a license to entertain errors. This passage reminds us that we are always to make progress even unto death; for our whole life is as it were a race.

Heb 3:7-13

Hebrews Chapter 3:7-13

7. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice,

7. Quare (sicut dicit Spiritus Sanctus, Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis,

8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:

8. Ne obduretis corda vestra, sicut in exacerbatione, in die tentationis in deserto;

9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

9. Ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri, probaverunt me, et viderunt opera mea

10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

10. Quadraginta annis: quamobrem infensus fui generationi illi, et dixi, semper errant corde; ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas;

[61] It is better for “hope” here to be retained in its proper meaning; for in verse 12 the defect of it is traced to unbelief. Were the words “confidence” and “rejoicing” rendered adjectivally, the meaning would be more evident, — “If we hold firm our confident and joyful hope to the end.” So we may render a similar form of expression in verse 13, “through deceitful sin,” as “newness of life” in Romans 6:4, means “new life.” The most common practice is to render the genitive in such instances as an adjective, but this is not always the case. Hope is “confident” or assured, while it rests on the word of God, and is “joyful” while it anticipates the glory and happiness of the heavenly kingdom. But Beza and Doddridge take words apart, “freedom of profession and boasting of hope,” or according to Beza, “the hope of which we boast.” Macknight renders them “the boldness and the glorifying of the hope.” The secondary meaning of the word {παρρησία} is confidence, and of {καύχημα}, joy or rejoicing, and the most suitable here, as it comports better with holding fast, or firm. --- Ed.

11. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

11. Sicut juravi in ira mea, Si ingressuri sint in requiem meam.)

12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

12. Videte fratres, ne quando sit in ullo vestrum cor pravum incredulitatis (vel, pravum et incredulum,) deficiendo a Deo vivente:

13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

13. Sed exhortamini vos ipsos quotidie, quandiu vocatur dies hodiernus; nequis ex vobis induretur deceptione peccati.

He proceeds in his exhortation, that they were to obey Christ speaking to them; and that he might add more weight to it, he confirms it by the testimony of David; for since they were to be sharply goaded, it was better, for the sake of avoiding offense, to bring forward another person. Had he simply reproached them for the unbelief of the fathers, they would have less favorably attended to him; but when he brought forward David, it was less offensive. Now, the import of the whole is, --- As God from the beginning would his voice obeyed, and could not endure perverseness without punishing it severely, so at this day he will not lightly punish our stubbornness, unless we become teachable. But the discourse is suspended until we come to the words, ``Take heed, brethren, lest there be at any time in any of you,'' etc. That the passage, then, may flow better, it would be proper to include the rest in a parenthesis. [62] Let us now consider the words in order.

7. As the Holy Ghost saith, etc. This availed much more to touch their hearts than if he had quoted David by name. And it is useful for us to familiarize ourselves with such expressions, so that we may remember that the words adduced from the books of the prophets are those of God and not of men.

But as this sentence, Today, if ye will hear his voice, is a part of a former verse, some have not unsuitably rendered it thus, ``Would to God you would this day hear his voice.'' It is indeed certain that when David called the Jews God's people, he immediately drew this conclusion, that the voice of God ought to have been heard by them; for as to those whom he there invited to sing praises to God and to celebrate his goodness, he reminded them at the same time that obedience was the chief worship which he required, and that it was better than all sacrifices. The chief thing, then, was to obey the word of God.

8. Then follows, Harden not your hearts By which words is intimated that our rebellion against God flows from no other fountain than willful wickedness, by which we obstruct the entrance of his grace, We have indeed by nature a heart of stone, and there is in all an innate hardness from the womb, which God alone can mollify and amend. That we, however, reject the voice of God, it happens through a spontaneous obstinacy, not through an external impulse, a fact of which every one is a witness to himself. Rightly, then, does the Spirit

[62] There is the same parenthesis in our version; but Beza, Doddridge, Macknight, and Stuart, do not use it, but connect “therefore” or wherefore with “harden not,” which seems more suitable. — Ed.

accuse all the unbelieving that they resist God, and that they are the teachers and authors of their own perverseness, so that they can throw the blame on none else. It is hence, however, absurdly concluded that we have, on the other hand, a free power to form the heart for God's service; nay rather, it must ever be the case with men, that they harden their heart until another be given them from heaven; for as we are bent towards wickedness, we shall never cease to resist God until we shall be tamed and subdued by his hand.

As in the provocation, etc. It was for two reasons necessary for them to be reminded of the disobedience of their fathers; for as they were foolishly inflated on account of the glory of their race, they often imitated the vices of their fathers as though they were virtues, and defended themselves by their examples; and further, when they heard that their fathers were so disobedient to God, they were thus more fully taught that this admonition was not superfluous. As both these reasons existed even in the Apostle's time, he readily accommodated to his own purpose what had been formerly said by David, in order that those whom he addressed might not imitate their fathers too much.

And hence may be learnt a general truth, that we are not to defer too much to the authority of the fathers lest it should draw us away from God; for if any fathers have ever been worthy of honor, no doubt the Jews possessed that preeminence; and yet David distinctly commanded their children to beware of being like them.

And I have no doubt but that he referred to the history recorded in Exodus 17: for David uses here the two names which Moses relates were given to a certain place, {מרבה{ Meribah, which means strife or provocation, and {מסה{ Massah, which means temptation. They tempted God by denying that he was in the midst of them, because they were distressed for want of water; and they also provoked him by contending with Moses. Though indeed they gave many examples of unbelief, yet David selected this in an especial manner, because it was more memorable then any other, and also, because in order of time it followed for the most part the rest, as it evidently appears from the fourth book of Moses, where from chap. 10 to 20 a series of many temptations is described; but this narrative is given in the twentieth chapter. This circumstance increased not a little the atrocity of their wickedness; for they had often experienced the power of God, and yet they perversely contended with him, and renounced all confidence in him: how great was their ingratitude! He then mentioned one particular instance instead of many.

9. Tempted, etc. This word is to be taken in a bad sense; it means to provoke in a proud and insulting manner, which we express in French by saying, defier comme en depitant For though God had often brought them help, yet they forgot all, and scornfully asked, where was his power. Proved, etc. This clause is to be thus explained, ``When yet they had proved me and seen my works''. For it enhanced the guilt of their impiety, that having been taught by so many evidences of divine power, they had made so bad a progress. For it was a marvelous supineness and stupidity to esteem God's power as nothing, which

had been so fully proved. [63]

Forty years. These are connected by David with what follows. But we know that the Apostles in quoting passages attend more to the general meaning than to the words. And no doubt God complained that the people had been vexatious to him for forty years, because so many benefits had availed nothing for the purpose of teaching them; for though God did good continually to them who were wholly unworthy, they yet never ceased to rise up against him. Hence arose his continual indignation, as though he had said ``Not once or for a short time have they provoked me, but by their incessant wickedness for forty years.'' Generation means race, or men of one age.

10. And I said, etc. This was God's sentence, by which he declared that they were destitute of a sound mind, and he adds the reason, For they have not known my ways. In short, he regarded them as past hope, for they were without sense and reason. And here he assumed the character of man, who at length after long trials declares that he has discovered obstinate madness, for he says that they always went astray, and no hope of repentance appeared.

11. So I sware, etc. It was the punishment of their madness, that they were deprived of the rest promised them. Moreover, the Lord calls the land, where they might have had their dwelling, his rest. For they had been sojourners in Egypt and wanderers in the wilderness; but the land of Canaan was to be, according to the promise, their perpetual inheritance; and it was in reference to this promise that God called it his rest: for nowhere can we have a settled dwelling, except where we are fixed by his hand. But their right to a sure possession was founded on what God said to Abraham,

``To thy seed will I give this land.'' (Genesis 12:7.)

By God swearing, If they shall enter, etc., the atrocity of their evil conduct is made more evident and is more forcibly set forth, for it is an evidence of wrath greatly inflamed. ``If they shall enter,'' is in the form of an oath, in which something is to be understood, as an imprecation, or some such thing, when men speak; but when God speaks, it is the same as though he said, ``Let me not be deemed true,'', or, ``Let me not be hereafter believed, if such a thing shall not be so.'' However, this defective mode of speaking recommends fear and reverence to us, so that we may not rashly swear, as many do, who are often in the habit of pouring forth dreadful curses.

But as to the present passage, we ought not to think that they were then for the first time denied entrance into the land by God's oath, when they tempted him in Rephidim; for they had long before been excluded, even from the time they had refused to march forward at the report of the spies. God then does not here ascribe their expulsion from the land to this instance of tempting him as to the first cause; but he intimates that by no chastisement could they have been restored to a sound mind, but that they continually added new offenses: and thus he shows that they fully deserved to be thus severely punished, for they never ceased to increase more and more his wrath by various sins, as

[63] See Appendix M.

though he had said, ``This is the generation to which I denied the possession of the promised land, for during whole forty years afterwards it betrayed its obstinate madness by innumerable sins.''

12. Take heed, (or See,) brethren, lest there be at any time in any of you a wicked heart of unbelief, etc. I have preferred to retain literally what the Apostle states, rather than to give a paraphrase as to the wicked or depraved heart of unbelief, by which he intimates that unbelief would be connected with depravity or wickedness, if after having received the knowledge of Christ they departed from his faith. For he addressed them who had been imbued with the elements of Christianity; hence he immediately added, By departing; for the sin of defection is accompanied with perfidy. [64]

13. He also pointed out the remedy, so that they might not fall into this wickedness, and that was, to exhort one another. For as by nature we are inclined to evil, we have need of various helps to retain us in the fear of God. Unless our faith be now and then raised up, it will lie prostrate; unless it be warmed, it will be frozen; unless it be roused, it will grow torpid. He would have us then to stimulate one another by mutual exhortations, so that Satan may not creep into our hearts, and by his fallacies draw us away from God. And this is a way of speaking that ought to be especially observed; for we fall not immediately by the first assault into this madness of striving against God; but Satan by degrees accosts us artfully by indirect means, until he holds us ensnared in his delusions. Then indeed being blinded, we break forth into open rebellion. [65]

We must then meet this danger in due time, and it is one that is nigh us all, for nothing is more possible than to be deceived; and from this deception comes at length hardness of heart. We hence see how necessary it is for us to be roused by the incessant goads of exhortations. Nor does the Apostle give only a general precept, that all should take heed to themselves, but he should have them also to be solicitous for the salvation of every member, so that they should not suffer any of those who had been once called to perish through their neglect, and he who feels it his duty so to watch over the salvation of the whole flock as to neglect no one sheep, performs in this case the office of a good shepherd.

While it is called today. He now applies what David said more particularly to his own subjects; for he reminds us that the word today, mentioned in the

[64] The word connected with “heart” is {ἐν} {τῶ}, which properly means diseased and hence corrupted, depraved, wicked. Depraved or wicked would perhaps be the best rendering of it here. ``Unbelief'' is a genitive used for an adjective or a participle, --- ``a wicked unbelieving heart.'' It is unbelieving owing to its wickedness or depravity. Grotius says, that there are two kinds of unbelief, --- The first the rejection of the truth when first offered, --- and the second the renouncing of it after having once professed it. The latter is the more heinous sin. ``The departing,'' etc.; {ἐν} {τῶ} is rendered ``by'' by Macknight: it is considered by Grotius to be for {εἰς} {τὸ}, which word makes the meaning more evident, ``so as to depart,'' etc. --- Ed.

[65] “Deceitfulness of sin” is rendered by Stuart “sinful delusion.” It ought rather to be “deceitful (or seductive) sin” as “deceitfulness of riches” in Matthew 13:22, means “deceitful riches.” The “sin” was evidently that of apostasy: and it was deceitful, because there was a present prospect of relief from troubles and persecutions. The power of any sin to deceive and seduce, consists in some present gratification or interest. See note on verse 6. — Ed.

Psalm, ought not to be confined to the age of David, but that it comprehends every time in which God may address us. As often, then, and as long as he opened his sacred mouth to teach us, let this sentence come to our minds, ``Today, if ye will hear his voice''. In the same way Paul teaches us that when the Gospel is preached to us, it is the accepted time in which God hears us, and the Day of salvation in which he helps us. (2 Corinthians 6:2.)

Now, of this opportunity we ought to avail ourselves; for if through our sloth we suffer it to pass by, we shall hereafter in vain deplore its loss. So Christ says,

``Walk while ye have the light; come shortly shall the night.'' (John 12:35.)

The particle while, then, or as long as, intimates that, The seasonable time will not continue always, if we be too slothful to follow when the Lord calls us. God knocks at our door; unless we open to him he will no doubt in his turn close against us the gate of his kingdom. In a word, too late will be their groans who despise the grace offered to them today. As, then, we know not whether God will extend his calling to tomorrow, let us not delay. Today he calls us; let us immediately respond to him, for there is no faith except where there is such a readiness to obey.

Heb 3:14-19

Hebrews Chapter 3:14-19

14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end;

14. Participes enim facti sumus Christi, siquidem initium fiduciae (vel, subsistentiae) ad finem usque firmum tenuerimus;

15. While it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

15. In hoc quod dicitur, Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, ne obduretis corda vestra sicut in exacerbatione.

16. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

16. Quidam enim quum audissent, exacerbarunt; at non omnes qui egressi fuerant ex AEgypto per Mosen.

17. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcases fell in the wilderness?

17. Quibus autem infensus fuit quadraginta annis? an non iis qui peccaverant, quorum membra ceciderunt in deserto?

18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

18. Quibus autem juravit, non ingressuros in requiem suam nisi incredulis (aut, inobedientibus)?

19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

19. Et videmus non potuisse ingredi propter infidelitatem.

14. For we are made partakers, etc. He commends them for having begun well; but lest, under the pretext of the grace which they had obtained, they should indulge themselves in carnal security, he says that there was need of perseverance; for many having only tasted the Gospel, do not think of any progress as though they had reached the summit. Thus it is that they not only stop in the middle of their race, yea, nigh the startingposts, but turn another way. Plausible indeed is this objection, ``What can we wish more after having found Christ?'' But if he is possessed by faith, we must persevere in it, so that he may be our perpetual possession. Christ then has given himself to be enjoyed by us on this condition, that by the same faith by which we have been admitted into a participation of him, we are to preserve so great a blessing even to death. [66]

Hence he says beginning, intimating that their faith was only begun. As hypostasis sometimes means confidence, it may be so taken here; yet the term substance, as some have rendered it, I do not dislike, though I explain it in a way somewhat different. They think that faith is thus called, because the whole of what man may have without it is nothing but vanity; but I so regard it, because we recumb on it alone, as there is no other support on which we can rely. And suitable to this view is the word steadfast or firm; for we shall be firmly fixed and beyond the danger of vacillating, provided faith be our foundation. The sum of the whole then is, that faith whose beginnings only appear in us, is to make constant and steady progress to the end. [67]

15. While it is said, etc. He intimates that the reason for making progress never ceases as long as we live, because God calls us daily. For since faith responds to the preaching of the Gospel, as preaching continues through the whole course of our life, so we ought to continue growing in faith. The phrase, then, while it is said, is the same as though he had said, ``Since God never makes an end of speaking, it is not enough for us readily to receive his doctrine, except we exhibit the same teachableness and obedience tomorrow and every following day.'' [68]

16 For some, when they had heard, etc. David spoke of the fathers as though that whole generation were unbelieving; but it appears that some who truly

[66] What is implied here is that we may professedly be partakers of Christ: that is of his blessings as a Savior, and yet be not really so: the proof of the reality is perseverance. — Ed.

[67] Here is another instance of the genitive being the main subject, "the beginning of our confidence," i.e., our first confidence, which the Apostle calls "first faith" in 1 Timothy 5:12. Macknight renders it "the begun confidence." — Ed.

[68] Most connect this verse with the preceding, as in our version, and as Doddridge thus "forasmuch as it is said;" and Macknight thus "as ye may know by the saying." So does Beza; and Calvin seems to do the same; but some connect it with the 13th and others with the 14th verse. Modern authors, such as Stuart and Blooomfield, regard it as the commencement of a paragraph, and connect it with what follows. Stuart's version is — 15. With regard to the saying, "today while ye hear his voice, harden 16. Not your hearts as in the provocation;" who now were they that when they heard did provoke? Nay, did not all who came out of Egypt under Moses? Etc. Bloomfield approves of this version, only he considers the quotation is confined to the words, "Today, while ye hear his voice," and regards what follows, "harden not," etc., as said by the writer: See Appendix N. — Ed.

feared God mingled with the wicked. The apostle mentions this to modify what had been more severely said by David, in order that we may know that the word is preached to all for this end, that all may obey it with one consent, and that the whole people were justly condemned for unbelief, when the body was torn and mutilated by the defection of the greatest part.

But by saying that some provoked, while yet they were by far the greatest part, this object was not only to avoid giving offense, but also to encourage the Jews to imitate those who believed; as though he had said, ``As God forbids you to follow the unbelief of the fathers, so he sets before you other fathers whose faith is to be your example''. Thus is mitigated what otherwise might have appeared too hard; that is, had they been commanded wholly to dissent from their fathers. To come out by Moses, means by the hand of Moses, for he was the minister of their deliverance. But there is an implied comparison between the benefit which God had bestowed on them by Moses, and the participation of Christ previously mentioned.

17. But with whom was he grieved, or angry, etc. He means that God had never been angry with his people except for just causes, as Paul also reminds us in 1 Corinthians 10:5, 6. Therefore as many chastisements of God as we read were inflicted on the ancient people, so many grievous sins shall we find which provoked God's vengeance. At the same time we must come to this conclusion, that unbelief was the chief of all their evils; for though he mentions this the last, he yet means that it was the primary cause of their curse; and no doubt from the time they once became unbelievers, they never ceased to add one sin to another, and thus they brought on themselves new scourges continually. Hence those very persons who through unbelief rejected the possession of the land offered to them, pursued their own obstinacy, now lusting, then murmuring, now committing adultery, then polluting themselves with heathen superstitions, so that their depravity became more fully manifested.

The unbelief, then, which they showed from the beginning, prevented them from enjoying the kindness of God; for the contempt of his word ever led them to sin. And as at first they deserved through their unbelief that God should deprive them of the promised rest, so whatever sin they committed afterwards flowed from the same fountain.

It may be further asked, whether Moses, and Aaron, and those like them, were included in this number? To this I answer, that the Apostle speaks of the whole community rather than of individuals. It is certain that there were many godly men who were either not entangled in the general impiety or soon repented. Moses' faith was once shaken and only once, and that for a moment. The Apostle's words, therefore, contain a statement of the whole instead of a part, a mode of speaking frequently employed when a multitude or body of people are spoken of.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

Heb 4:1-2

Hebrews Chapter 4:1-2

1. Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it.

1. Timeamus ergo ne derelicta promissione introeundi in requiem ejus videatur quispiam nostrum esse frustratus.

2. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it

2. Nobis enim annuntiata est promissio quemadmodum et illis; at illis nihil profuit sermo auditus, quia non fuit cum fide conjunctus in iis qui audierant.

1. Let us therefore fear, etc. He concludes that there was reason to fear lest the Jews to whom he was writing should be deprived of the blessing offered to them; and then he says, lest anyone, intimating that it was his anxious desire to lead them, one and all, to God; for it is the duty of a good shepherd, in watching over the whole flock so to care for every sheep that no one may be lost; nay, we ought also so to feel for one another that every one should fear for his neighbors as well as for himself

But the fear which is here recommended is not that which shakes the confidence of faith but such as fills us with such concern that we grow not torpid with indifference. Let us then fear, not that we ought to tremble or to entertain distrust as though uncertain as to the issue, but lest we be unfaithful to God's grace.

By saying Lest we be disappointed of the promise left us, he intimates that no one comes short of it except he who by rejecting grace has first renounced the promise; for God is so far from repenting to do us good that he ceases not to bestow his gifts except when we despise his calling. The illative therefore, or then means that by the fall of others we are taught humility and watchfulness according to what Paul also says,

``These through unbelief have fallen; be not thou then high minded, but fear.'' [69]

[69] Calvin renders the last verb "be disappointed," (frustratus,) though the verb means properly to be behind in time, to be too late; yet it is commonly used in the sense of falling short of a thing, of being destitute; of being without. See Romans 3:23; 1 Corinthians 1:7; chapter 12:15. To "come short" of our version fitly expresses its meaning here, as adopted by Doddridge and Stuart; or "to fall short," as rendered by Macknight. "Seem" is considered by some to be pleonastic. The verb {δοκέω} is so no doubt sometimes, but not always; but here appears

(Romans 11:20.)

2. For to us, etc. He reminds us that the doctrine by which God invites us to himself at this day is the same with that which he formerly delivered to the fathers; and why did he say this? That we may know that the calling of God will in no degree be more profitable to us than it was to them, except we make it sure by faith. This, then, he concedes, that the Gospel is indeed preached to us; [70] but lest we should vainly glory, he immediately adds that the unbelieving whom God had formerly favored with the participation of so great blessings, yet received from them no fruit, and that therefore we also shall be destitute of his blessing unless we receive it by faith. He repeats the word hear for this end, that we may know that hearing is useless except the word addressed to us be by faith received.

But we must here observe the connection between the word and faith. It is such that faith is not to be separated from the word, and that the word separated from faith can confer no good; not indeed that the efficacy or power of the word depends on us; for were the whole world false, he who cannot lie would still never cease to be true, but the word never puts forth its power in us except when faith gives it an entrance. It is indeed the power of God unto salvation, but only to those who believe. (Romans 1:16.) There is in it revealed the righteousness of God, but it is from faith to faith. Thus it is that the word of God is always efficacious and saving to men, when viewed in itself or in its own nature; but no fruit will be found except by those who believe.

As to a former statement, when I said that there is no faith where the word is wanting, and that those who make such a divorce wholly extinguish faith and reduce it to nothing, the subject is worthy of special notice. For it hence appears evident that faith cannot exist in any but in the children of God, to whom alone the promise of adoption is offered. For what sort of faith have devils, to whom no salvation is promised? And what sort of faith have all the ungodly who are ignorant of the word? The hearing must ever precede faith, and that indeed that we may know that God speaks and not men.

Heb 4:3-10

Hebrews Chapter 4:3-10

3. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

3. Ingredimur enim in ejus requiem postquam credidimus: sicut dixit, Itaque juravi in ira mea, si introibunt in requiem meam; tametsi operibus a creatione mundi perfectis.

4. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God

to have a special meaning, as the Apostle would have no one to present even the appearance of neglecting to secure the rest promised. --- Ed.

[70] See Appendix O

did rest the seventh day from all his works.

4. Dixit enim alicubi sic de die septimo, Et requievit Deus septimo die ab omnibus operibus suis:

5. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest.

5. Et in hoc rursum, Si introibunt in requiem meam.

6. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief:

6. Quando igitur reliquum fit ut quidam ingrediantur in ipsam, et quibus prius evangelizatum fuit, non intrarunt propter incredulitatem:

7. Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.

7. Rursum quendam praeficit diem hodiernuum in David dicens post tantum temporis (quemadmodum dictum est) Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, ne obduretis corda vestra:

8. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day.

8. Nam si Iesus requiem illis praestitisset, non de alia loqueretur post illos dies.

9. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

9. Ergo relinquitur sabbathismus populo Dei.

10. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

10. Nam qui ingreditur in requiem ejus, requievit et ipse ab operibus propriis quemadmodum a suis Deus.

He now begins to embellish the passage which he had quoted from David. He has hitherto taken it, as they say, according to the letter, that is, in its literal sense; but he now amplifies and decorates it; and thus he rather alludes to than explains the words of David. This sort of decoration Paul employed in Romans 10:6, in referring to these words of Moses, ``Say not, who shall ascend into heaven!'' etc. Nor is it indeed anything unsuitable, in accommodating Scripture to a subject in hand, to illustrate by figurative terms what is more simply delivered. However, the sum of the whole is this, that what God threatens in the Psalm as to the loss of his rest, applies also to us, inasmuch as he invites us also at this day to a rest.

The chief difficulty of this passage arises from this, that it is perverted by many. The Apostle had no other thing in view by declaring that there is a rest for us, than to rouse us to desire it, and also to make us to fear, lest we should be shut out of it through unbelief He however teaches us at the same time, that the rest into which an entrance is now open to us, is far more valuable than that in the land of Canaan. But let us now come to particulars.

3. For we which have believed do enter into rest, or, for we enter into the rest after we have believed, etc. It is an argument from what is contrary. Unbelief alone shuts us out; then faith alone opens an entrance. We must indeed bear in mind what he has already stated, that God being angry with the unbelieving,

had sworn that they should not partake of that blessing. Then they enter in where unbelief does not hinder, provided only that God invites them. But by speaking in the first person he allures them with greater sweetness, separating them from aliens.

Although the works, etc. To define what our rest is, he reminds us of what Moses relates, that God having finished the creation of the world, immediately rested from his works and he finally concludes, that the true rest of the faithful, which is to continue forever, will be when they shall rest as God did. [71] And doubtless as the highest happiness of man is to be united to his God, so ought to be his ultimate end to which he ought to refer all his thoughts and actions. This he proves, because God who is said to have rested, declared a long time after that he would not give his rest to the unbelieving; he would have so declared to no purpose, had he not intended that the faithful should rest after his own example. Hence he says, It remaineth that some must enter in: for if not to enter in is the punishment of unbelief, then an entrance, as it has been said, is open to believers.

7. But there is some more difficulty in what he immediately subjoins, that there is another today appointed for us in the Psalm, because the former people had been excluded; but the words of David (as it may be said) seem to express no such thing, and mean only this, that God punished the unbelief of the people by refusing to them the possession of the land. To this I answer, that the inference is correct, that to us is offered what was denied to them; for the Holy Spirit reminds and warns us, that we may not do the same thing so as to incur the same punishment. For how does the matter stand? Were nothing at this day promised, how could this warning be suitable, ``Take heed lest the same thing happen to you as to the fathers.'' Rightly then does the Apostle say, that as the fathers' unbelief deprived them of the promised possession, the promise is renewed to their children, so that they may possess what had been neglected by their fathers.

8. For if Jesus had given them rest, or, had obtained rest for them, etc. He meant not to deny but that David understood by rest the land of Canaan, into which Joshua conducted the people; but he denies this to be the final rest to which the faithful aspire, and which we have also in common with the faithful of

[71] The general drift of the passage is evident, yet the construction has been found difficult. Without repeating the various solutions which have been offered, I shall give what appears to me the easiest construction, — 3. We indeed are entering into the rest who believe: as he hath said, “So that I sware in my wrath, They shall by no means enter into my rest,” when yet the works were finished since the foundation of 4. the world; (for he hath said thus in a certain place of the seventh day, “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works,” 5. and again in this place, “They shall by no means enter into my 6. rest;”) it then remains therefore that some do enter in because of unbelief. The particle {ἐπεῖ} has created the difficulty, which I render in the sense of {ἔπειτα}, then consequently the argument is simply this: Inasmuch as God had sworn that the unbelieving should not enter into his rest long after the rest of the sabbath was appointed; it follows as a necessary consequence that some do enter into it, though the unbelieving did not enter. The argument turns on the word ``rest;'' It was to show that it was not the rest of the Sabbath. The argument in the next verses turns on the word ``today,'' in order to show that it was not the rest of Canaan. The fourth and fifth verses are only explanatory of the concluding sentence of the preceding, and therefore ought to be regarded as parenthetic. --- Ed.

that age; for it is certain that they looked higher than to that land; nay, the land of Canaan was not otherwise so much valued except for this reason, because it was an image and a symbol of the spiritual inheritance. When, therefore, they obtained possession of it, they ought not to have rested as though they had attained to the summit of their wishes, but on the contrary to meditate on what was spiritual as by it suggested. They to whom David addressed the Psalm were in possession of that land, but they were reminded of the duty of seeking a better rest.

We then see how the land of Canaan was a rest; it was indeed but evanescent, beyond which it was the duty of the faithful to advance. In this sense the Apostle denies that that rest was given by Joshua; for the people under his guidance entered the promised land for this end, that they might with greater alacrity advance forward towards heaven.

And we may hence easily learn the difference between us and them; for though the same end is designed for both, yet they had, as added to them, external types to guide them; not so have we, nor have we indeed any need of them, for the naked truth itself is set before our eyes. Though our salvation is as yet in hope, yet as to the truth, it leads directly to heaven; nor does Christ extend his hand to us, that he may conduct us by the circuitous course of types and figures, but that he may withdraw us from the world and raise us up to heaven. Now that the Apostle separates the shadow from the substance, he did so for this reason, --- because he had to do with the Jews, who were too much attached to external things.

He draws the conclusion, that there is a sabbathizing reserved for Gods people, that is, a spiritual rest; to which God daily invites us.

10. For he that is entered into his rest, or, For he who has rested, etc. This is a definition of that perpetual Sabbath in which there is the highest felicity, when there will be a likeness between men and God, to whom they will be united. For whatever the philosophers may have ever said of the chief good, it was nothing but cold and vain, for they confined man to himself, while it is necessary for us to go out of ourselves to find happiness. The chief good of man is nothing else but union with God; this is attained when we are formed according to him as our exemplar.

Now this conformation the Apostle teaches us takes place when we rest from our works. It hence at length follows, that man becomes happy by selfdenial. For what else is to cease from our works, but to mortify our flesh, when a man renounces himself that he may live to God? For here we must always begin, when we speak of a godly and holy life, that man being in a manner dead to himself, should allow God to live in him, that he should abstain from his own works, so as to give place to God to work. We must indeed confess, that then only is our life rightly formed when it becomes subject to God. But through inbred corruption this is never the case, until we rest from our own works; nay, such is the opposition between God's government and our corrupt affections, that he cannot work in us until we rest. But though the completion of this

rest cannot be attained in this life, yet we ought ever to strive for it. [72] Thus believers enter it but on this condition, --- that by running they may continually go forward.

But I doubt not but that the Apostle designedly alluded to the Sabbath in order to reclaim the Jews from its external observances; for in no other way could its abrogation be understood, except by the knowledge of its spiritual design. He then treats of two things together; for by extolling the excellency of grace, he stimulates us to receive it by faith, and in the meantime he shows us in passing what is the true design of the Sabbath, lest the Jews should be foolishly attached to the outward rite. Of its abrogation indeed he does expressly speak, for this is not his subject, but by teaching them that the rite had a reference to something else, he gradually withdraws them from their superstitious notions. For he who understands that the main object of the precept was not external rest or earthly worship, immediately perceives, by looking on Christ, that the external rite was abolished by his coming; for when the body appears, the shadows immediately vanish away. Then our first business always is, to teach that Christ is the end of the Law.

Heb 4:11-13

Hebrews Chapter 4:11-13

11. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

11. Studeamus ergo ingredi illam requiem, nequis eodem cadat incredulitatis exemplo.

12. For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

12. Vivus enim sermo Dei et efficax, et penetrantior quovis gladio utrinque scindente, et pertingens usque ad divisionem animae et spiritus, compagumque et medullaarum, et discretor cogitationum et intentionum cordis.

13. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

13. Nec ulla est creatura quae non appareat coram ipso, imo omnia nuda et resupina in oculis ejus com quo nobis est ratio.

Having pointed out the goal to which we are to advance, he exhorts us to pursue our course, which we do, when we habituate ourselves to selfdenial. And as he compares entering into rest to a straight course, he sets falling in opposition to it, and thus he continues the metaphor in both clauses, at the same time he alludes to the history given by Moses of those who fell in the wilderness, because they were rebellious against God. (Numbers 26:65.) Hence he says, after the same example, signifying as though the punishment for unbelief and

[72] Many, like Calvin, have made remarks of this kind, but they are out of place here; for the rest here mentioned is clearly the rest in heaven. — Ed.

obstinacy is there set before us as in a picture; nor is there indeed a doubt but that a similar end awaits us, if there be found in us the same unbelief.

Then, ``to fall'' means to perish; or to speak more plainly, it is to fall, not as to sin, but as a punishment for it. But the figure corresponds as well with the word to ``enter'', as with the sad overthrow of the fathers, by whose example he intended to terrify the Jews.

12. For the word of God is quick, or living, etc. What he says here of the efficacy or power of the word, he says it, that they might know, that it could not be despised with impunity, as though he had said, ``Whenever the Lord addresses us by his word, he deals seriously with us, in order that he may touch all our inmost thoughts and feelings; and so there is no part of our soul which ought not to be roused.'' [73]

But before we proceed further, we must inquire whether the Apostle speaks of the effect of the word generally, or refers only to the faithful.

It indeed appears evident, that the word of God is not equally efficacious in all. For in the elect it exerts its own power, when humbled by a true knowledge of themselves, they flee to the grace of Christ; and this is never the case, except when it penetrates into the innermost heart. For hypocrisy must be sifted, which has marvelous and extremely winding recesses in the hearts of men; and then we must not be slightly pricked or torn, but be thoroughly wounded, that being prostrate under a sense of eternal death, we may be taught to die to ourselves. In short, we shall never be renewed in the whole mind, which Paul requires, (Ephesians 4:23,) until our old man be slain by the edge of the spiritual sword. Hence Paul says in another place, (Philippians 2:17,) that the faithful are offered as a sacrifice to God by the Gospel; for they cannot otherwise be brought to obey God than by having, as it were, their own will slain; nor can they otherwise receive the light of God's wisdom, than by having the wisdom of the flesh destroyed. Nothing of this kind is found in the reprobate; for they either carelessly disregard God speaking to them, and thus mock him, or clamour against his truth, and obstinately resist it. In short, as the word of God is a hammer, so they have a heart like the anvil, so that its hardness repels its strokes, however powerful they may be. The word of God, then, is far from being so efficacious towards them as to penetrate into them to the dividing of the soul and the spirit. Hence it appears, that this its character is to be confined to the faithful only, as they alone are thus searched to the quick.

The context, however, shows that there is here a general truth, and which extends also to the reprobate themselves; for though they are not softened, but set up a brazen and an iron heart against God's word, yet they must necessarily be restrained by their own guilt. They indeed laugh, but it is a sardonic laugh;

[73] It has been a matter of dispute whether the “word” here is Christ, or the Scripture. The fathers as well as later divines are divided. The former is the opinion of Augustin, Ambrose, and also of Dr. Owen and Doddridge: and the latter is held by Chrysostom, Theophylact, and also by Calvin, Beza, Macknight, Scott, Stuart and Bloomfield. The latter is clearly the most suitable to the words of the passage. The only difficulty is in verse 13; but there a transition is evidently made from the word of God to God himself; and thus both are in remarkable manner connected together. — Ed.

for they inwardly feel that they are, as it were, slain; they make evasions in various ways, so as not to come before God's tribunal; but though unwilling, they are yet dragged there by this very word which they arrogantly deride; so that they may be fitly compared to furious dogs, which bite and claw the chain by which they are bound, and yet can do nothing, as they still remain fast bound.

And further, though this effect of the word may not appear immediately as it were on the first day, yet it will be found at length by the event, that it has not been preached to any one in vain. General no doubt is what Christ declares, when he says, When the Spirit shall come, he will convince the world, (John 16:8 9.) for the Spirit exercises this office by the preaching, of the Gospel. And lastly, though the word of God does not always exert its power on man, yet it has it in a manner included in itself. And the Apostle speaks here of its character and proper office for this end only, --- that we may know that our consciences are summoned as guilty before God's tribunal as soon as it sounds in our ears, as though he had said, ``If any one thinks that the air is beaten by an empty sound when the word of God is preached, he is greatly mistaken; for it is a living thing and full of hidden power, which leaves nothing in man untouched.'' The sum of the whole then is this, --- that as soon as God opens his sacred mouth, all our faculties ought to be open to receive his word; for he would not have his word scattered in vain, so as to disappear or to fall neglected on the ground, but he would have it effectually to constrain the consciences of men, so as to bring them under his authority; and that he has put power in his word for this purpose, that it may scrutinize all the parts of the soul, search the thoughts, discern the affections, and in a word show itself to be the judge.

But here a new question arises, ``Is this word to be understood of the Law or of the Gospel?'' Those who think that the Apostle speaks of the Law bring these testimonies of Paul, --- that it is the ministration of death, (2 Corinthians 3:6, 7,) that it is the letter which killeth, that it worketh nothing but wrath, (Romans 4:15,) and similar passages. But here the Apostle points out also its different effects; for, as we have said, there is a certain vivifying killing of the soul, which is effected by the Gospel. Let us then know that the Apostle speaks generally of the truth of God, when he says, that it is living and efficacious. So Paul testifies, when he declares, that by his preaching there went forth an odor of death unto death to the unbelieving, but of life unto life to believers, (2 Corinthians 2:16,) so that God never speaks in vain; he draws some to salvation, others he drives into ruin. This is the power of binding and loosing which the Lord conferred on his Apostles. (Matthew 18:18.) And, indeed, he never promises to us salvation in Christ, without denouncing, on the other hand, vengeance on unbelievers; who by rejecting Christ bring death on themselves. [74]

It must be further noticed, that the Apostle speaks of God's word, which is brought to us by the ministry of men. For delirious and even dangerous are those notions, that though the internal word is efficacious, yet that which pro-

[74] See Appendix P.

ceeds from the mouth of man is lifeless and destitute of all power. I indeed admit that the power does not proceed from the tongue of man, nor exists in mere sound, but that the whole power is to be ascribed altogether to the Holy Spirit; there is, however, nothing in this to hinder the Spirit from putting forth his power in the word preached. For God, as he speaks not by himself, but by men, dwells carefully on this point, so that his truth may not be objected to in contempt, because men are its ministers. So Paul, by saying, that the Gospel is the power of God, (Romans 1:16.) designedly adorned with this distinction his own preaching, though he saw that it was slandered by some and despised by others. And when in another place, (Romans 10:8,) he teaches us that salvation is conferred by the doctrine of faith, he expressly says that it was the doctrine which was preached. We indeed find that God ever commends the truth administered to us by men, in order to induce us to receive it with reverence.

Now, by calling the word quick or living he must be understood as referring to men; which appears still clearer by the second word, powerful, for he shows what sort of life it possesses, when he expressly says that it is efficacious; for the Apostle's object was to teach us what the word is to us. [75] The sword is a metaphorical word often used in Scripture; but the Apostle not content with a simple comparison, says, that God's word is sharper than any sword, even than a sword that cuts on both sides, or twoedged; for at that time swords were in common use, which were blunt on one side, and sharp on the other. Piercing even to the dividing asunder of the soul and spirit, or to the dividing of the soul and spirit, etc. The word soul means often the same with spirit; but when they occur together, the first includes all the affections, and the second means what they call the intellectual faculty. So Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, uses the words, when he prays God to keep their spirit, and soul, and body blameless until the coming of Christ, (1 Thessalonians 5:23,) he meant no other thing, but that they might continue pure and chaste in mind, and will, and outward actions. Also Isaiah means the same when he says,

``My soul desired thee in the night; I sought thee with my spirit.'' (Isaiah 26:9.)

What he doubtless intends to show is, that he was so intent on seeking God, that he applied his whole mind and his whole heart. I know that some give a different explanation; but all the soundminded, as I expect, will assent to this view.

Now, to come to the passage before us, it is said that God's word pierces, or reaches to the dividing of soul and spirit, that is, it examines the whole soul of man; for it searches his thoughts and scrutinizes his will with all its desires. And then he adds the joints and marrow, intimating that there is nothing so hard or strong in man, nothing so hidden, that the powerful word cannot pervade it. [76] Paul declares the same when he says, that prophecy avails to reprove and to

[75] See Appendix Q.

[76] The metaphor of a sword is evidently carried on; the word is like the sword which "penetrates so as to separate the soul (the animal life) and the spirit, (the immortal part,) the joints also and the marrows, being even a strict judge of the thoughts and purposes of

judge men, so that the secrets of the heart may come, to light. (1 Corinthians 14:24.) And as it is Christ's office to uncover and bring to light the thoughts from the recesses of the heart, this he does for the most part by the Gospel.

Hence God's word is a discerner, ({κριτικὸς}, one that has power to discern,) for it brings the light of knowledge to the mind of man as it were from a labyrinth, where it was held before entangled. There is indeed no thicker darkness than that of unbelief, and hypocrisy is a horrible blindness; but God's word scatters this darkness and chases away this hypocrisy. Hence the separating or discerning which the Apostle mentions; for the vices, hid under the false appearance of virtues, begin then to be known, the varnish being wiped away. And if the reprobate remain for a time in their hidden recesses, yet they find at length that God's word has penetrated there also, so that they cannot escape God's judgment. Hence their clamour and also their fury, for were they not smitten by the word, they would not thus betray their madness, but they would seek to elude the word, or by evasion to escape from its power, or to pass it by unnoticed; but these things God does not allow them to do. Whenever then they slander God's word, or become enraged against it, they show that they feel within its power, however unwillingly and reluctantly. [77]

13. Neither is there any creature, etc. The conjunction here, as I think, is causal, and may be rendered for; for in order to confirm this truth, that whatever is hid in man is discerned and judged by God's word, he draws an argument from the nature of God himself. There is no creature, he says, which is hid from the eyes of God; there is, therefore, nothing so deep in man's soul, which cannot be drawn forth into light by that word that resembles its own author, for as it is God's office to search the heart, so he performs this examination by his word.

Interpreters, without considering that God's word is like a long staff by which he examines and searches what lies deep in our hearts, have strangely perverted this passage; and yet they have not relieved themselves. But all difficulty disappears when we take this view, --- that we ought to obey God's word in sincerity and with cordial affection, because God, who knows our hearts, has assigned to his word the office of penetrating even into our inmost thoughts. The ambiguous meaning of the last words has also led interpreters astray, which they have rendered, ``Of whom we speak;'' but they ought, on the contrary, to be rendered, With whom we have to do. The meaning is, that it is God who deals with us, or with whom we have a concern; and that, therefore, we ought not to trifle with him as with a mortal man, but that whenever his word is set before us, we ought to tremble, for nothing is hid from him.

Heb 4:14-16

Hebrews Chapter 4:14-16

the heart." — Ed.

[77] See Appendix R.

14. Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

14. Habentes igitur ponticem magnum qui coelos ingressus est, Iesum filium Dei, teneamus confessionem.

15. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

15. Neque enim habemus pontificem, qui compati non possit infirmitatibus nostris; sed in omnibus tentatum, secundum similitudinem, absque peccato.

16. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

16. Accedamus igitur cum ficucia ad thronum gratiae, ut obtineamus miseericordiam, et gratiam inveniamus in auxilium opportunum.

14. Seeing then that we have, or, Having then, etc. He has been hitherto speaking of Christ's apostleship, But he who passes on to his second office. For we have said that the Son of God sustained a twofold character when he was sent to us, even that of a teacher and of a priest. The Apostle, therefore, after having exhorted the Jews obediently to embrace the doctrine of Christ, now shows what benefit his priesthood has brought to us; and this is the second of the two points which he handles. And fitly does he connect the priesthood with the apostleship, since he reminds us that the design of both is to enable us to come to God. He employs an inference, then; for he had before referred to this great truth, that Christ is our high priest; [78] but as the character of the priesthood cannot be known except through teaching, it was necessary to prepare the way, so as to render men willing to hear Christ. It now remains, that they who acknowledge Christ as their teacher, should become teachable disciples, and also learn from his mouth, and in his school, what is the benefit of his priesthood, and what is its use and end.

In the first place he says, Having a great high priest, [79] Jesus Christ, let us hold fast our profession, or confession. Confession is here, as before, to be taken as a metonymy for faith; and as the priesthood serves to confirm the doctrine, the Apostle hence concludes that there is no reason to doubt or to waver respecting the faith of the Gospel, because the Son of God has approved and sanctioned it; for whosoever regards the doctrine as not confirmed, dishonors the Son of God, and deprives him of his honor as a priest; nay, such and so great a pledge ought to render us confident, so as to rely unhesitantly on the Gospel.

15. For we have not, etc. There is in the name which he mentions, the Son

[78] That is, in the latter part of chapter 2. In the beginning of chapter 3 he exhorted us to "consider" the apostle and high priest of our profession, and then proceeded to speak of him as an apostle. He now returns to the high priesthood, and says that as we have a great high priest, we ought to hold fast our profession. Such, according to Calvin, is the connection, and is adopted by Stuart and Bloomfield. — Ed.

[79] In the Apostle's time there were many called high priests, such as the heads of the Levitical courses; but "the great high priest" meant him who alone had the privilege of entering into the holy of holies, that is, the high priest, as distinguished from all the rest. — Ed.

of God, such majesty as ought to constrain us to fear and obey him. But were we to contemplate nothing but this in Christ, our consciences would not be pacified; for who of us does not dread the sight of the Son of God, especially when we consider what our condition is, and when our sins come to mind? The Jews might have had also another hindrance, for they had been accustomed to the Levitical priesthood; they saw in that one mortal man, chosen from the rest, who entered into the sanctuary, that by his prayer he might reconcile his brethren to God. It is a great thing, when the Mediator, who can pacify God towards us, is one of ourselves. By this sort of allurement the Jews might have been ensnared, so as to become ever attached to the Levitical priesthood, had not the Apostle anticipated this, and showed that the Son of God not only excelled in glory, but that he was also endued with equal kindness and compassion towards us.

It is, then, on this subject that he speaks, when he says that he was tried by our infirmities, that he might condole with us. As to the word sympathy, ({συμπαθεία},) I am not disposed to indulge in refinements; for frivolous, no less than curious, is this question, ``Is Christ now subject to our sorrows?'' It was not, indeed, the Apostle's object to weary us with such subtleties and vain speculations, but only to teach us that we have not to go far to seek a Mediator, since Christ of his own accord extends his hand to us, that we have no reason to dread the majesty of Christ since he is our brother, and that there is no cause to fear, lest he, as one unacquainted with evils, should not be touched by any feelings of humanity, so as to bring us help, since he took upon him our infirmities, in order that he might be more inclined to succor us. [80]

Then the whole discourse of the Apostle refers to what is apprehended by faith, for he does not speak of what Christ is in himself, but shows what he is to us. By the likeness, he understands that of nature, by which he intimates that Christ has put on our flesh, and also its feelings or affections, so that he not only paroled himself to be real man, but had also been taught by his own experience to help the miserable; not because the Son of God had need of such a training, but because we could not otherwise comprehend the care he feels for our salvation. Whenever, then, we labor under the infirmities of our flesh, let us remember that the Son of God experienced the same, in order that he might by his power raise us up, so that we may not be overwhelmed by them.

But it may be asked, What does he mean by infirmities? The word is indeed taken in various senses. Some understand by it cold and heat; hunger and other wants of the body; and also contempt, poverty, and other things of this mind, as in many places in the writings of Paul, especially in 2 Corinthians 12:10. But their opinion is more correct who include, together with external evils, the feelings of the souls such as fear, sorrow, the dread of death, and similar things. [81]

[80] Calvin has followed the Vulg. In rendering this clause, “who cannot sympathize (compati) with our infirmities.” Our version is that of Eramus and Beza. The meaning may thus be given, “Who cannot feel for us in our infirmities.” — Ed.

[81] The word “infirmities” is often used metonymically for things which we are too weak to

And doubtless the restriction, without sin, would not have been added, except he had been speaking of the inward feelings, which in us are always sinful on account of the depravity of our nature; but in Christ, who possessed the highest rectitude and perfect purity, they were free from everything vicious. Poverty, indeed, and diseases, and those things which are without us, are not to be counted as sinful. Since, therefore, he speaks of infirmities akin to sin, there is no doubt but that he refers to the feelings or affections of the mind, to which our nature is liable, and that on account of its infirmity. For the condition of the angels is in this respect better than ours; for they sorrow not, nor fear, nor are they harassed by variety of cares, nor by the dread of death. These infirmities Christ of his own accord undertook, and he willingly contended with them, not only that he might attain a victory over them for us, but also that we may feel assured that he is present with us whenever we are tried by them.

Thus he not only really became a man, but he also assumed all the qualities of human nature. There is, however, a limitation added, without sin; for we must ever remember this difference between Christ's feelings or affections and ours, that his feelings were always regulated according to the strict rule of justice, while ours flow from a turbid fountain, and always partake of the nature of their source, for they are turbulent and unbridled. [82]

16. Let us therefore come boldly, or, with confidence, etc. He draws this conclusion, --- that an access to God is open to all who come to him relying on Christ the Mediator; nay, he exhorts the faithful to venture without any hesitation to present themselves before God. And the chief benefit of divine teaching is a sure confidence in calling on God, as, on the other hand, the whole of religion falls to the ground, and is lost when this certainty is taken away from consciences.

It is hence obvious to conclude, that under the Papacy the light of the Gospel is extinct, for miserable men are bidden to doubt whether God is propitious to them or is angry with them. They indeed say that God is to be sought; but the way by which it is possible to come to him is not pointed out, and the gate is barred by which alone men can enter. They confess in words that Christ is a Mediator, but in reality they make the power of his priesthood of none effect, and deprive him of his honor.

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bear, even trials and temptations. Christ, our high priest, feels for us in all those straits and difficulties, whatever they be, which meet us in our course, and make us feel and know our weaknesses. — Ed.

[82] The common idea of what is here said is, that Christ though tried and tempted, was not yet guilty of sin, or did not fall into sin. That he had no sin, that he was without sin, is what we plainly learn from 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 John 3:5, etc.; but is this what is taught here? The clause, I conceive, may be thus rendered, — "But was in all things tried in like manner except sin;" that is, with the exception that he had no innate sin to contend with. The last words are literally, "in likeness with the exclusion of sin," which seems to import that it was a likeness with the exclusion of sin. But if the words "except (or without) sin" do not qualify "likeness," they must be connected with "tried" or tempted, and thus rendered, — "But was in like manner tried in all things without sin;" that is, without sinning, or falling into sin. The difference is, that in the one sense Christ had no inward sin to contend with, and that in the other he withstood temptation without falling into sin. Both senses are true, and either of them will suit this passage. — Ed.

For we must hold this principle, --- that Christ is not really known as a Mediator except all doubt as to our access to God is removed; otherwise the conclusion here drawn would not stand, ``We have a high priest Who is willing to help us; therefore we may come bold and without any hesitation to the throne of grace.'' And were we indeed fully persuaded that Christ is of his own accord stretching forth his hand to us, who of us would not come in perfect confidence? [83] It is then true what I said, that its power is taken away from Christ's priesthood whenever men have doubts, and are anxiously seeking for mediators, as though that one were not sufficient, in whose patronage all they who really trust, as the Apostle here directs them, have the assurance that their prayers are heard.

The ground of this assurance is, that the throne of God is not arrayed in naked majesty to confound us, but is adorned with a new name, even that of grace, which ought ever to be remembered whenever we shun the presence of God. For the glory of God, when we contemplate it alone, can produce no other effect than to fill us with despair; so awful is his throne. The Apostle, then, that he might remedy our diffidence, and free our minds from all fear and trembling, adorns it with ``grace,'' and gives it a name which can allure us by its sweetness, as though he had said, ``Since God has affirmed to his throne as it were the banner of `grace' and of his paternal love towards us, there are no reasons why his majesty should drive us away.'' [84]

The import of the whole is, that we are to call upon God without fear, since we know that he is propitious to us, and that this may be done is owing to the benefit conferred on us by Christ, as we find from Ephesians 3:12; for when Christ receives us under his protection and patronage, he covers with his goodness the majesty of God, which would otherwise be terrible to us, so that nothing appears there but grace and paternal favor.

That we may obtain mercy, etc. This is not added without great reason; it is for the purpose of encouraging as it were by name those who feel the need of mercy, lest any one should be cast down by the sense of his misery, and close up his way by his own diffidence. This expression, ``that we may obtain mercy'', contains especially this most delightful truth, that all who, relying on the advocacy of Christ, pray to God, are certain to obtain mercy; yet on the other hand the Apostle indirectly, or by implication, holds out a threatening to all who take not this way, and intimates that God will be inexorable to them, because they disregard the only true way of being reconciled to him.

He adds, To help in time of need, or, for a seasonable help; that is, if we desire to obtain all things necessary for our salvation. [85] Now, this season-

[83] "Confidence," that is, of being heard. — Ed.

[84] The "throne of grace" is evidently in opposition to the throne of judgment, which especially belongs to a king. Some of the Greek fathers regarded this as the throne of Christ; but most commentators consider it to be God's throne, as Christ is here represented as a priest and as access to God is ever described as being through Christ. See Ephesians 2:18. — Ed.

[85] Calvin's version is, "and find grace for a seasonable help;" which according to his explanation, means a help during the season or period of "today." Doddridge has, "for our

ableness refers to the time of calling, according to those words of Isaiah, which Paul accommodates to the preaching of the Gospel, ``Behold, now is the accepted time,'' etc., (Isaiah 49:8; 2 Corinthians 6:2;) for the Apostle refers to that ``today,'' during which God speaks to us. If we defer hearing until tomorrow, when God is speaking to us today, the unseasonable night will come, when what now may be done can no longer be done; and we shall in vain knock when the door is closed.

seasonable assistance," — Macknight, "for the purpose of seasonable help," — and Stuart, "and find favor so as to be assisted in time of need." Our version seems the best, "and find grace to help in the time of need." The address is to those exposed to trials and persecutions; and the seasonable or opportune help was such as their peculiar circumstances and wants required. The word {εὔκαιρον}, is in the Sept. put for ``due season,'' or in its time, in Psalm 104:27. The idea of Calvin is that some of the fathers, but is not suitable to this passage. ``Mercy'' is compassion, and ``grace'' is favor or benefit received; it means sometimes favor entertained, but here the effect of favor --- a benefit, and this benefit was to be a help in time of need. --- Ed.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

Heb 5:1-6

Hebrews Chapter 5:1-6

1. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins:

1. Omnis namque Pontifex ex hominibus assumptus, pro hominibus constituitur de eis quae (vel, ordinat ea quae) ad Deum pertinent, ut offerat dona et sacrifia pro peccatis;

2. Who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity.

2. Qui possit placabilem (vel, moderatum) se praebere ignorantibus et errantibus, quando ipse quoque circumdatus est infirmitate.

3. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

3. Et propter hanc debet, quemadmodum pro populo, ita et pro seipso offerre pro peccatis.

4. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron.

4. Ac nemo sibi usurpat honorem, sed qui vocatur a Deo, sicut et Aaron.

5. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee.

5. Quare nec Christus seipsum glorificavit ut esset Pontifex, sed qui loquutus est ad eum, Filius meus es tu, ego hodie genui te.

6. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

6. Quemadmodum et alibi dicit, Tu es sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedec.

1. For every high priest, etc. He compares Christ with the Levitical priests, and he teaches us what is the likeness and the difference between them; and the object of the whole discourse is, to show what Christ's office really is, and also to prove that whatever was ordained under the law was ordained on his account. Hence the Apostle passes on at last to show that the ancient priesthood was abolished.

He first says that the priests were taken from among men; secondly, that they did not act a private part but for the whole people; thirdly, that they were not to come empty to appease God, but furnished with sacrifices; fourthly, that they

were not to be exempt from human infirmities, that they might more readily succor the distressed; and lastly, that they were not presumptuously to rush into this office, and that then only was the honor legitimate when they were chosen and approved by God. We shall consider briefly each of these points.

We must first, however, expose the ignorance of those who apply these things to our time, as though there was at this day the same need of priests to offer sacrifices; at the same time there is no necessity for a long refutation. For what can be more evident than that the reality found in Christ is compared with its types, which, being prior in time, have now ceased? But this will appear more fully from the context. How extremely ridiculous then are they who seek by this passage to establish and support the sacrifice of the mass! I now return to the words of the Apostle.

Taken from among men, etc. This he says of the priests. It hence follows that it was necessary for Christ to be a real man; for as we are very far from God, we stand in a manner before him in the person of our priest, which could not be, were he not one of us. Hence, that the Son of God has a nature in common with us, does not diminish his dignity, but commends it the more to us; for he is fitted to reconcile us to God, because he is man. Therefore Paul, in order to prove that he is a Mediator, expressly calls him man; for had he been taken from among angels or any other beings, we could not by him be united to God, as he could not react down to us.

For men, etc. This is the second clause; the priest was not privately a minister for himself, but was appointed for the common good of the people. But it is of great consequence to notice this, so that we may know that the salvation of us all is connected with and revolves on the priesthood of Christ. The benefit is expressed in these words, ordains those things which pertain to God. They may, indeed, be explained in two ways, as the verb {καθίσταται} has a passive as well as an active sense. They who take it passively give this version, ``is ordained in those things,'' etc.; and thus they would have the preposition in to be understood; I approve more of the other rendering, that the high priest takes care of or ordains the things pertaining to God; for the construction flows better, and the sense is fuller. [86] But still in either way, what the Apostle had in view is the same, namely, that we have no intercourse with God, except there be a priest; for, as we are unholy, what have we to do with holy things? We are in a word alienated from God and his service until a priest interposes and undertakes our cause.

That he may offer both gifts, etc. The third thing he mentions respecting a priest is the offering of gifts. There are however here two things, gifts and sacrifices; the first word includes, as I think, various kinds of sacrifices, and is therefore a general term; but the second denotes especially the sacrifices of expiation. Still the meaning is, that the priest without a sacrifice is no peacemaker between God and man, for without a sacrifice sins are not atoned for,

[86] The former view is what is commonly taken, “is appointed;” and it comports with the subject in hand — the appointment of the priest, as it appears evident from what follows in verses 5 and 6. — Ed.

nor is the wrath of God pacified. Hence, whenever reconciliation between God and man takes place, this pledge must ever necessarily precede. Thus we see that angels are by no means capable of obtaining for us God's favor, because they have no sacrifice. The same must be thought of Prophets and Apostles. Christ alone then is he, who having taken away sins by his own sacrifice, can reconcile God to us.

2. Who can, etc. This fourth point has some affinity to the first, and yet it may be distinguished from it; for the Apostle before taught us that mankind are united to God in the person of one man, as all men partake of the same flesh and nature; but now he refers to another thing, and that is, that the priest ought to be kind and gentle to sinners, because he partakes of their infirmities. The word which the Apostle uses, {μετριοπαθεῖν} is differently explained both by Greek and Latin interpreters. [87] I, however, think that it simply means one capable of sympathy. All the things which are here said of the Levitical priests do not indeed apply to Christ; for Christ we know was exempt from every contagion of sin; he therefore differed from others in this respect, that he had no necessity of offering a sacrifice for himself. But it is enough for us to know that he bare our infirmities, though free from sin and undefiled. Then, as to the ancient and Levitical priests, the Apostle says, that they were subject to human infirmity, and that they made atonement also for their own sins, that they might not only be kind to others when gone astray, but also condole or sympathize with them. This part ought to be so far applied to Christ as to include that exception which he mentioned before, that is, that he bare our infirmities, being yet without sin. At the same time, though ever free from sin, yet that experience of infirmities before described is alone abundantly sufficient to incline him to help us, to make him merciful and ready to pardon, to render him solicitous for us in our miseries. The sum of what is said is, that Christ is a brother to us, not only on account of unity as to flesh and nature, but also by becoming a partaker of our infirmities, so that he is led, and as it were formed, to show forbearance and kindness. The participle, {δυνάμενος} is more forcible than in our common tongue, qui possit, ``who can,'' for it expresses aptness or fitness. The ignorant and those out of the way, or erring, he has named instead of sinners, according to what is done in Hebrew; for {שגגה{, shegage, means every kind of error or offense, as I shall have presently an occasion to explain.

4. And no man, etc. There is to be noticed in this verse partly a likeness and partly a difference. What makes an office lawful is the call of God; so that no one can rightly and orderly perform it without being made fit for it by

[87] "The classic or philosophic use of the word {μετριοπαθεῖν}, may be briefly explained. The Stoics maintained that a man should be {ἀπαθὴς}, i.e., not subject to passions, such as anger, fear, hope, joy, etc. The Platonists on the other hand averred that a wise man should {μετριοπαθὴς}, moderate in his affections, and not {ἀπαθὴς}. The leading sense, then, or the word {μετριοπαθεῖν}, is to be moderate in our feelings or passions.'' --- Stuart. But this is not exactly its meaning here. Schleusner, quoting the Greek Lexicographers, shows that it was used in the sense of being indulgent, or of acting kindly and forgivingly, or forebearingly; and this seems to be its meaning in this passage. The sentence is rendered by Macknight, ``Being able to have a right measure of compassion on the ignorant and erring.'' It may be rendered, ``Being capable of duly feeling for the ignorant and the erring,'' or the deceived, that is by sin. See as to the ignorant Leviticus 5:17-19; and as to the deceived by passions or interest, see Leviticus 6:1-7 --- Ed.

God. Christ and Aaron had this in common, that God called them both; but they differed in this, that Christ succeeded by a new and different way and was made a perpetual priest. It is hence evident that Aaron's priesthood was temporary, for it was to cease. We see the object of the Apostle; it was to defend the right of Christ's priesthood; and he did this by showing that God was its author. But this would not have been sufficient, unless it was made evident that an end was to be put to the old in order that a room might be obtained for this. And this point he proves by directing our attention to the terms on which Aaron was appointed, for we are not to extend them further than God's decree; and he will presently make it evident how long God had designed this order to continue. Christ then is a lawful priest, for he was appointed by God's authority. What is to be said of Aaron and his successors? That they had as much right as was granted them by the Lord, but not so much as men according to their own fancy concede to them.

But though this has been said with reference to what is here handled, yet we may hence draw a general truth, --- that no government is to be set up in the Church by the will of men, but that we are to wait for the command of God, and also that we ought to follow a certain rule in electing ministers, so that no one may intrude according to his own humor. Both these things ought to be distinctly noticed for the Apostle here speaks not of persons only, but also of the office itself; nay, he denies that the office which men appoint without God's command is lawful and divine. For as it appertains to God only to rule his Church, so he claims this right as his own, that is, to prescribe the way and manner of administration. I hence deem it as indisputable, that the Papal priesthood is spurious; for it has been framed in the workshop of men. God nowhere commands a sacrifice to be offered now to him for the expiation of sins; nowhere does he command priests to be appointed for such a purpose. While then the Pope ordains his priests for the purpose of sacrificing, the Apostle denies that they are to be counted lawful priests; they cannot therefore be such, except by some new privilege they exalt themselves above Christ, for he dared not of himself to take upon him this honor, but waited for the command of the Father.

This also ought to be held good as to persons, that no individual is of himself to seize on this honor without public authority. I speak now of offices divinely appointed. At the same time it may sometimes be, that one, not called by God, is yet to be tolerated, however little he may be approved, provided the office itself be divine and approved by God; for many often creep in through ambition or some bad motives, whose call has no evidence; and yet they are not to be immediately rejected, especially when this cannot be done by the public decision of the Church. For during two hundred years before the coming of Christ the foulest corruptions prevailed with respect to the priesthood, yet the right of honor, proceeding from the calling of God, still continued as to the office itself; and the men themselves were tolerated, because the freedom of the Church was subverted. It hence appears that the greatest defect is the character of

the office itself, that is, when men of themselves invent what God has never commanded. The less endurable then are those Romish sacrificers, who prattle of nothing but their own titles, that they may be counted sacred, while yet they have chosen themselves without any authority from God.

5. Thou art my Son, etc. This passage may seem to be farfetched; for though Christ was begotten of God the Father, he was not on this account made also a priest. But if we consider the end for which Christ was manifested to the world, it will plainly appear that this character necessarily belongs to him. We must however bear especially in mind what we said on the first chapter; that the begetting of Christ, of which the Psalmist speaks, was a testimony which the Father rendered to him before men. Therefore the mutual relation between the Father and the Son is not what is here intended; but regard is rather had to men to whom he was manifested. Now, what sort of Son did God manifest to us? One indued with no honor, with no power? Nay, one who was to be a Mediator between himself and man; his begetting then included his priesthood. [88]

6 As he saith in another place, or, elsewhere, etc. Here is expressed more clearly what the Apostle intended. This is a remarkable passage, and indeed the whole Psalm from which it is taken; for there is scarcely anywhere a clearer prophecy respecting Christ's eternal priesthood and his kingdom. And yet the Jews try all means to evade it, in order that they might obscure the glory of Christ; but they cannot succeed. They apply it to David, as though he was the person whom God bade to sit on his right hand; but this is an instance of extreme effrontery; for we know that it was not lawful for kings to exercise the priesthood. On this account, Uzziah, that is, for the sole crime of intermeddling with an office that did not belong to him, so provoked God that he was smitten with leprosy. (2 Chronicles 26:18.) It is therefore certain that neither David nor any one of the kings is intended here.

If they raise this objection and say, that princes are sometimes called {כהנים{cohenim, priests, I indeed allow it, but I deny that the word can be so understood here. For the comparison here made leaves nothing doubtful: Melchisedec was God's priest; and the Psalmist testifies that that king whom God has set on his right hand would be a |kohen| according to the order of Melchisedec. Who does not see that this is to be understood of the priesthood? For as it was a rare and almost a singular thing for the same person to be a priest and a king, at least an unusual thing among God's people, hence he sets forth Melchisedec as the type of the Messiah, as though he had said, ``The

[88] This passage, “Thou art my Son,” etc., in this place, is only adduced to show that Christ was the Son of God: Christ did not honor or magnify or exalt himself, (for so {δοξάζω} means here,) but he who said to him, ``Thou art my son,'' etc., did honor or exalt him. This is the meaning of the sentence. The verse may thus be rendered, --- 5. So also Christ, himself he did not exalt to be a high priest, but he who had said to him, ``My son art thou, I have this day begotten thee.'' It is the same as though he had said, ``Christ did not make himself a high priest but God.'' And the reason why he speaks of God as having said ``My Son,'' etc., seems to be this, --- to show that he who made him king (for the reference in Psalm 2 is to his appointment as a king) made him also a high priest. And this is confirmed by the next quotation from Psalm 110; for in the first verse he is spoken of as a king, and then in verse 4 his priesthood is mentioned. --- Ed.

royal dignity will not prevent him to exercise the priesthood also, for a type of such a thing has been already presented in Melchisedec.'' And indeed all among the Jews, possessed of any modesty, have conceded that the Messiah is the person here spoken of, and that his priesthood is what is commended.

What is in Greek, {κατὰ} {τάξιν} according to the order, is in Hebrew, -{על{ {דברתי} ol-deberti, and means the same, and may be rendered, ``according to the way'' or manner: and hereby is confirmed what I have already said, that as it was an unusual thing among the people of God for the same person to bear the office of a king and of a priest, an ancient example was brought forward, by which the Messiah was represented. The rest the Apostle himself will more minutely set forth in what follows.

Heb 5:7-11

Hebrews Chapter 5:7-11

7. Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared;

7. Qui in diebus carnis suae, quum et precationes et supplicationes obtulisset cum clamore valido et lachrymis ei qui poterat eum ex morte servare, et exauditus esset ex suo metu:

8. Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered;

8. Tametsi Filius erat, didicit ex iis quae passus est, obedientiam;

9. And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him;

9. Et sanctificatus omnibus qui illi obediunt, factus fuit causa aeternae salutis,

10. Called of God an high priest after the order of Melchisedec.

10. Cognominatus a Deo sacerdos secundum ordinem Melchisedec:

11. Of whom we have many things to say, and hard to be uttered, seeing ye are dull of hearing.

11. De quo nobis multus sermo et difficilis explicatu, quandoquidem tardi facti estis auribus.

7. Who in the days, etc. As the form and beauty of Christ is especially disfigured by the cross, while men do not consider the end for which he humbled himself, the Apostle again teaches us what he had before briefly referred to, that his wonderful goodness shines forth especially in this respect, that he for our good subjected himself to our infirmities. It hence appears that our faith is thus confirmed, and that his honor is not diminished for having borne our evils.

He points out two causes why it behooved Christ to suffer, the proximate and the ultimate. The proximate was, that he might learn obedience; and the ultimate, that he might be thus consecrated a priest for our salutation.

The days of his flesh no doubt mean his life in this world. It hence follows,

that the word flesh does not signify what is material, but a condition, according to what is said in 1 Corinthians 15:50, ``Flesh and blood shall not inherit the kingdom of God.'' Rave then do those fanatical men who dream that Christ is now divested of his flesh, because it is here intimated that he has outlived the days of his flesh for it is one thing to be a real man, though endued with a blessed immortality; it is another thing to be liable to those human sorrows and infirmities, which Christ sustained as long as he was in this world, but has now laid aside, having been received into heaven.

Let us now look into the subject. Christ who was a Son, who sought relief from the Father and was heard, yet suffered death, that thus he might be taught to obey. There is in every word a singular importance. By days of the flesh he intimates that the time of our miseries is limited, which brings no small alleviation. And doubtless hard were our condition, and by no means tolerable, if no end of suffering were set before us. The three things which follow bring us also no small consolations; Christ was a Son, whom his own dignity exempted from the common lot of men, and yet he subjected himself to that lot for our sakes: who now of us mortals can dare refuse the same condition? Another argument may be added, --- though we may be pressed down by adversity, yet we are not excluded from the number of God's children, since we see him going before us who was by nature his only Son; for that we are counted his children is owing only to the gift of adoption by which he admits us into a union with him, who alone lays claim to this honor in his own right.

When he had offered up prayers, etc. The second thing he mentions respecting Christ is, that he, as it became him, sought a remedy that he might be delivered from evils; and he said this that no one might think that Christ had an iron heart which felt nothing; for we ought always to consider why a thing is said. Had Christ been touched by no sorrow, no consolation could arise to us from his sufferings; but when we hear that he also endured the bitterest agonies of mind, the likeness becomes then evident to us. Christ, he says, did not undergo death and other evils because he disregarded them or was pressed down by no feeling of distress, but he prayed with tears, by which he testified the extreme anguish of his soul. [89] Then by tears and strong crying the Apostle meant to express the intensity of his grief, for it is usual to show it by outward symptoms; nor do I doubt but that he refers to that prayer which the Evangelists mention, ``Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,'' (Matthew 26:42; Luke 22:42;) and also to another, ``My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'' (Matthew 27:46.) For in the second instance mention is made by the evangelists of strong crying; and in the first it is not possible to believe that his eyes were dry, since drops of blood, through excessive grief, flowed from

[89] "Prayers and supplications" are nearly of the same meaning; the first word means a request, a petition, strictly a prayer; and the last an earnest or humble entreaty. The last word is found only here in the New Testament; once in the Septuagint, in Job 41:3; and once in the Apocrypha, 2 Macc. 9:18. Hesychius, as quoted by Schleusner, gives {παράκλησις}, request, entreaty, as its meaning: it comes from {ἱκέτης}, a suppliant. The word {ἱκετηρία}, which is here used means first an olive branch wrapped in wool, carried by suppliants as a symbol of entreaty and hence used often in the sense of entreaty and supplication. --- Ed.

his body. It is indeed certain that he was reduced to great straits; and being overwhelmed with real sorrows, he earnestly prayed his Father to bring him help. [90]

And what application is to be made of this? Even this, that whenever our evils press upon us and overwhelm us, we may call to mind the Son of God who labored under the same; and since he has gone before us there is no reason for us to faint. We are at the same time reminded that deliverance from evils can be found from no other but from God alone, and what better guidance can we have as to prayer than the example of Christ? He betook himself immediately to the Father. And thus the Apostle indicates what ought to be done by us when he says that he offered prayers to him who was able to deliver him from death; for by these words he intimates that he rightly prayed, because he fled to God the only Deliverer. His tears and crying recommend to us ardor and earnestness in prayer, for we ought not to pray to God formally, but with ardent desires.

And was heard, etc. Some render the following words, ``on account of his reverence'' or fears but I wholly differ from them. In the first place he puts the word alone {ἐυλαθείας} without the possessive ``his''; and then there is the preposition {ἀπὸ} ``from,'' not {ὑπὲρ} ``on account of,'' or any other signifying a cause or a reason. As, then, {εὐλάθεια} means for the most part fear or anxiety, I doubt not but that the Apostle means that Christ was heard from that which he feared, so that he was not overwhelmed by his evils or swallowed up by death. For in this contest the Son of God had to engage, not because he was tried by unbelief, the source of all our fears, but because he sustained as a man in our flesh the judgment of God, the terror of which could not have been overcome without an arduous effort. Chrysostom interprets it of Christ's dignity, which the Father in a manner reverenced; but this cannot be admitted. Others render it ``piety.'' But the explanation I have given is much more suitable, and requires no long arguments in its favor. [91]

Now he added this third particular, lest we should think that Christ's prayers were rejected, because he was not immediately delivered from his evils; for at no time was God's mercy and aid wanting to him. And hence we may conclude that God often hears our prayers, even when that is in no way made evident. For though it belongs not to us to prescribe to him as it were a fixed rule, nor does

[90] Stuart on this passage very justly observes, “If Jesus died as a common virtuous suffered, and merely as a martyr to the truth, without any vicarious suffering laid upon him, then is his death a most unaccountable event in respect to the manner of his behavior while suffering it; and it must be admitted that multitudes of humble, sinful, meek and very imperfect disciples of Christianity have surpassed their Master in the fortitude, and collected firmness and calm complacency which are requisite to triumph over the pangs of a dying hour. But who can well believe this? Or who can regard Jesus as a simple sufferer in the ordinary way upon the cross, and explain the mysteries of his dreadful horror before and during the hours of crucifixion?” What is referred to is certainly inexplicable, except we admit what is often and in various ways plainly taught us in God’s word, that Christ died for our sins. — Ed.

[91] The idea of the effect of hearing, that is deliverance, is no doubt included in {εἰσακουσθεὶς}, ``having been heard,'' as it is sometimes in the corresponding word in Hebrew; so that Stuart is justified in the rendering it delivered, --- ``and being delivered from that which he feared.'' It is rendered the same by Macknight, ``and being delivered from fear.'' Both Beza and Grotius render the last word fear; and this is its meaning as used in the Septuagint. --- Ed

it become him to grant whatsoever requests we may conceive in our minds or express with our tongues, yet he shows that he grants our prayers in everything necessary for our salvation. So when we seem apparently to be repulsed, we obtain far more than if he fully granted our requests.

But how was Christ heard from what he feared, as he underwent the death which he dreaded? To this I reply, that we must consider what it was that he feared; why was it that he dreaded death except that he saw in it the curse of God, and that he had to wrestle with the guilt of all iniquities, and also with hell itself? Hence was his trepidation and anxiety; for extremely terrible is God's judgment. He then obtained what he prayed for, when he came forth a conqueror from the pains of death, when he was sustained by the saving hand of the Father, when after a short conflict he gained a glorious victory over Satan, sin, and hell. Thus it often happens that we ask this or that, but not for a right end; yet God, not granting what we ask, at the same time finds out himself a way to succor us.

8. Yet learned he obedience, etc. The proximate end of Christ's sufferings was thus to habituate himself to obedience; not that he was driven to this by force, or that he had need of being thus exercised, as the case is with oxen or horses when their ferocity is to be tamed, for he was abundantly willing to render to his Father the obedience which he owed. But this was done from a regard to our benefit, that he might exhibit to us an instance and an example of subjection even to death itself. It may at the same time be truly said that Christ by his death learned fully what it was to obey God, since he was then led in a special manner to deny himself; for renouncing his own will, he so far gave himself up to his Father that of his own accord and willingly he underwent that death which he greatly dreaded. The meaning then is that Christ was by his sufferings taught how far God ought to be submitted to and obeyed.

It is then but right that we also should by his example be taught and prepared by various sorrows, and at length by death itself, to render obedience to God; nay, much more necessary is this in our case, for we have a disposition contumacious and ungovernable until the Lord subdues us by such exercises to bear his yoke. This benefit, which arises from the cross, ought to allay its bitterness in our hearts; for what can be more desirable than to be made obedient to God? But this cannot be effected but by the cross, for in prosperity we exult as with loose reins; nay, in most cases, when the yoke is shaken off, the wantonness of the flesh breaks forth into excesses. But when restraint is put on our will, when we seek to please God, in this act only does our obedience show itself; nay, it is an illustrious proof of perfect obedience when we choose the death to which God may call us, though we dread it, rather than the life which we naturally desire.

9. And being made perfect, or sanctified, etc. Here is the ultimate or the remoter end, as they call it, why it was necessary for Christ to suffer: it was that he might thus become initiated into his priesthood, as though the Apostle had said that the enduring of the cross and death were to Christ a solemn kind

of consecration, by which he intimates that all his sufferings had a regard to our salvation. It hence follows, that they are so far from being prejudicial to his dignity that they are on the contrary his glory; for if salvation be highly esteemed by us, how honorably ought we to think of its cause or author? For he speaks not here of Christ only as an example, but he ascends higher, even that he by his obedience has blotted out our transgressions. He became then the cause of salvation, because he obtained righteousness for us before God, having removed the disobedience of Adam by an act of an opposite kind, even obedience.

Sanctified suits the passage better than ``made perfect.'' The Greek word {τελειωθεὶς} means both; but as he speaks here of the priesthood, he fitly and suitably mentions sanctification. And so Christ himself speaks in another place, ``For their sakes I sanctify myself.'' (John 17:19.) It hence appears that this is to be properly applied to his human nature, in which he performed the office of a priest, and in which he also suffered. [92]

To all them that obey him. If then we desire that Christ's obedience should be profitable to us, we must imitate him; for the Apostle means that its benefit shall come to none but to those who obey. But by saying this he recommends faith to us; for he becomes not ours, nor his blessings, except as far as we receive them and him by faith. He seems at the same time to have adopted a universal term, all, for this end, that he might show that no one is precluded from salvation who is but teachable and becomes obedient to the Gospel of Christ.

10. Called of God, or named by God, etc. As it was necessary that he should pursue more at large the comparison between Christ and Melchisedec, on which he had briefly touched, and that the mind of the Jews should be stirred up to greater attention, he so passes to a digression that he still retails his argument.

11. He therefore makes a preface by saying that he had many things to say, but that they were to prepare themselves lest these things should be said in vain. He reminds them that they were hard or difficult things; not indeed to repel them, but to stimulate them to greater attention. For as things that are easily understood render us slothful, so we become more keenly bent on hearing when anything obscure is set before us. He however states that the cause of the difficulty was not in the subject but in themselves. And indeed the Lord speaks to us so clearly and without any obscurity, that his word is rightly called our light; but its brightness become dim through our darkness. [93] This

[92] The word {τελειωθεὶς}, means here the same as in chapter 2:10. Stuart gives it the same meaning here as in the former passage, ``Then when exalted to glory,'' etc.; but this does not comport with what follows, for it was not his exaltation to glory that qualified him to be ``the author (or the causer or effecter) of eternal salvation,'' but his perfect or complete work in suffering, by his having completely and perfectly performed the work of atonement. And that his suffering in obedience to God's will, even his vicarious suffering, is meant here, appears also from the following reference to his being a priest after the order of Melchisedec. The meaning then seems to be, that Christ having fully completed his work as a priest, and that by suffering, became thereby the author of eternal salvation. --- Ed

[93] The literal rendering is “Of whom we have many a word to say, and hardly explainable,” or hard to be explained. This hardness of explanation was however owing to their dullness of

happens partly through our dullness and partly through our sloth; for though we are very dull to understand the truth of God, yet there is to be added to this vice the depravity of our affections, for we apply our minds to vanity rather than to God's truth. We are also continually impeded either by our perverseness, or by the cares of the world, or by the lusts of our flesh. Of whom does not refer to Christ, but to Melchisedec; yet he is not referred to as a private man, but as the type of Christ, and in a manner personating him.

Heb 5:12-14

Hebrews Chapter 5:12-14

12. For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.

12. Nam quum debeatis esse doctores pro ratione temporis, rursum opus habetis, ut quis vos doceat elementa initii sermonum Dei; et facti estis ii quibus lacte opus sit et non solido cibo.

13. For every one that useth milk is unskillful in the word of righteousness: for he is a babe.

13. Nam quisquis lactis est particeps, imperitus est sermonis justitae, infans est enim.

14. But strong meat belongeth to them that are of full age, even those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

14. Perfectorum vero est solidus cibus, qui propter assuetudinem sensus habent exercitatos ad discretionem boni et mali.

12. For when for the time ye ought, etc. This reproof contains in it very sharp goads to rouse the Jews from their sloth. He says that it was unreasonable and disgraceful that they should still continue in the elements, in the first rudiments of knowledge, while they ought to have been teachers. ``You ought,'' he says, ``to have been the instructors of others, but ye are not even disciples capable of comprehending an ordinary truth; for ye do not as yet understand the first rudiments of Christianity.'' That he might, however, make them the more ashamed of themselves, he mentions the ``first principles,'' or the elements of the beginning of God's words, as though he had said, You do not know the alphabet. We must, indeed, learn through life; for he alone is truly wise who owns that he is very far from perfect knowledge; but we ought still to profit so much by learning as not to continue always in the first principles. Nor are we

comprehension, as Calvin justly observes. “Hard to be uttered” of our version is not correct; nor is “hard to be understood” of Doddridge right. Macknight gives the true meaning, “difficult to be explained.” Beza’s is the same. The reason is added “Since dull (or sluggish) ye are become in ears,” or in hearings. To be dull in ears is to be inattentive; but to be sluggish in ears seems to mean stupidity, slowness of comprehension. The latter is evidently meant here; that is, a tardiness or slowness in understanding. To hear with the ear is in the language of Scripture to understand. (Matthew 11:15; John 8:43; 1 Corinthians 14:2.) Hence to be sluggish in ears is to be slow or tardy in understanding the Word of God. Stuart therefore gives the sense, “Since ye are dull of apprehension.” — Ed.

to act in such a way, that what is said by Isaiah should be verified in us,

``There shall be to you a precept on precept, a precept on precept,'' etc. (Isaiah 28:10;)

but we ought, on the contrary, so to exert ourselves, that our progress may correspond to the time allowed us.

Doubtless, not only years, but days also, must be accounted for; so that every one ought to strive to make progress; but few there are who summon themselves to an account as to past time, or who show any concern for the future. We are, therefore, justly punished for our sloth, for most of us remain in elements fitted for children. We are further reminded, that it is the duty of every one to impart the knowledge he has to his brethren; so that no one is to retain what he knows to himself, but to communicate it to the edification of others. [94]

Such as have need of milk. Paul uses the same metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:2; and he reproaches the Corinthians with the same fault with what is mentioned here, at least with one that is very similar; for he says, that they were carnal and could not bear solid food. Milk then means an elementary doctrine suitable to the ignorant. Peter takes the word in another sense, when he bids us to desire the milk that is without deceit, (1 Peter 2:2;) for there is a twofold childhood, that is, as to wickedness, and as to understanding; and so Paul tells us, ``Be not children in understanding, but in wickedness.'' (1 Corinthians 14:20.) They then who are so tender that they cannot receive the higher doctrine, are by way of reproach called children.

For the right application of doctrines is to join us together, so that we may grow to a perfect manhood, to the measure of full age, and that we should not be like children, tossed here and there, and carried about by every wind of doctrine. (Ephesians 4:14.) We must indeed show some indulgence to those who have not yet known much of Christ, if they are not capable as yet of receiving solid food, but he who has had time to grow, if he till continues a child, is not entitled to any excuse. We indeed see that Isaiah brands the reprobate with this mark, that they were like children newly weaned from the breasts. (Isaiah 28:9.) The doctrine of Christ does indeed minister milk to babes as well as strong meat to adults; but as the babe is nourished by the milk of its nurse, not that it may ever depend on the breast, but that it may by degrees grow and take stronger food; so also at first we must suck milk from Scripture, so that we may afterwards feed on its bread. The Apostle yet so distinguishes between milk and strong food, that he still understands sound doctrine by both, but the ignorant begin with the one, and they who are welltaught are strengthened by the other.

[94] Our version of this clause is very literal and compact, and sufficiently plain, “For when for the time ye ought to be teachers.” Its elegance and conciseness are not retained either by Macknight or by Stuart. What is implied in the words, “for the time,” is sufficiently evident without being expressed. As to the following sentence, “Ye have need,” etc., some difficulty has been found in the construction. I render it as follows, “Ye have again need of this — that some one should teach you the first principles of the oracles of God.” I take {τίνα} to be accusative before ``teach.'' The word ``oracles'' is used by Peter in the same sense, as designating the doctrines of the Gospels, 1 Peter 4:11. --- Ed

13. For every one who uses milk, or, who partakes of milk, etc. He means those who from tenderness or weakness as yet refuse solid doctrine; for otherwise he who is grown up is not averse to milk. But he reproves here an infancy in understanding, such as constrains God even to prattle with us. He then says, that babes are not fit to receive the word of righteousness, understanding by righteousness the perfection of which he will presently speak. [95] For the Apostle does not here, as I think, refer to the question, how we are justified before God, but takes the word in a simpler sense, as denoting that completeness of knowledge which leads to perfection, which office Paul ascribes to the Gospel in his epistle to the Colossians, 1:28; as though he had said, that those who indulge themselves in their ignorance preclude themselves from a real knowledge of Christ, and that the doctrine of the Gospel is unfruitful in them, because they never reach the goal, nor come even near it.

14. Of full age, or perfect, etc. He calls those perfect who are adults; he mentions them in opposition to babes, as it is done in 1 Corinthians 2:6; 14:20; Ephesians 4:13. For the middle and manly age is the full age of human life; but he calls those by a figure men in Christ; who are spiritual. And such he would have all Christians to be, such as have attained by continual practice a habit to discern between good and evil. For he cannot have been otherwise taught aright in the truth, except we are fortified by his protection against all the falsehoods and delusions of Satan; for on this account it is called the sword of the Spirit. And Paul points out this benefit conferred by sound doctrine when he says, ``That we may not be carried about by every wind of doctrine.'' (Ephesians 4:14.) And truly what sort of faith is that which doubts, being suspended between truth and falsehood? Is it not in danger of coming to nothing every moment?

But not satisfied to mention in one word the mind, he mentions all the senses, in order to show that we are ever to strive until we be in every way furnished by God's word, and be so armed for battle, that Satan may by no means steal upon us with his fallacies. [96]

It hence appears what sort of Christianity there is under the Papacy, where not only the grossest ignorance is commended under the name of simplicity, but

[95] This is the view of Grotius and others, but some regard "the word of righteousness" as a paraphrasis for the Gospel; and Stuart renders it, "the word of salvation." Dr. Owen says that the Gospel is called "the word of righteousness," because it reveals the righteousness of God, Romans 1:17. It may also be so called, because it reveals and contains the truth, the full truth, partly revealed previously. The word "righteousness" has this meaning both in the Old and New Testaments. See Psalm 3:4; Isaiah 45:19, 23; and Matthew 21:23, 2 Corinthians 11:15. "The ministers of righteousness" in the last text are opposed to false ministers. — Ed.

[96] The word for "senses" means literally the organs of the senses, such as the eyes, the ears, etc., but here as signifying the senses themselves, as seeing, hearing, tasting, and smelling, by means of which those grown up are enabled by long experience to know what is good and wholesome for them, and also what is bad and injurious. By this comparison, which is here carried out fully, he intimates that the grown up in Christian truth attain by the habit of exercising all the senses or faculties of their minds, a capacity to distinguish between good and evil, between truth and error, in religion. The doctrine of reserve cannot be drawn from this passage; for though the Apostle says that they were not capable, owing to their sloth, or taking strong food, he yet lays it before them. — Ed.

where the people are also most rigidly prevented from seeking real knowledge; nay, it is easy to judge by what spirit they are influenced, who hardly allow that to be touched which the Apostle commands us to handle continually, who imagine that a laudable neglect which the Apostle here so severely reproves, who take away the word of God, the only rule of discerning rightly, which discerning he declares to be necessary for all Christians! But among those who are freed from this diabolical prohibition and enjoy the liberty of learning, there is yet often no less indifference both as to hearing and reading. When thus we exercise not our powers, we are stupidly ignorant and void of all discernment.

Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

Heb 6:1-2

Hebrews Chapter 6:1-2

1. Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God,

1. Quare omisso sermone principii Christi, ad perfectionem feramur, non jacentes rursum fundamentum poenitentiae ab operibus mortuis et fidei in Deum.

2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

2. (Baptismatum doctrinae et impositionis manuum) et resurrectionis mortuorum et judicii aeterni.

1. Therefore, leaving, etc. To his reproof he joins this exhortation, --- that leaving first principles they were to proceed forward to the goal. For by the word of beginning he understands the first rudiments, taught to the ignorant when received into the Church. Now, he bids them to leave these rudiments, not that the faithful are ever to forget them, but that they are not to remain in them; and this idea appears more clear from what follows, the comparison of a foundation; for in building a house we must never leave the foundation; and yet to be always engaged in laying it, would be ridiculous. For as the foundation is laid for the sake of what is built on it, he who is occupied in laying it and proceeds not to the superstruction, wearies himself with foolish and useless labor. In short, as the builder must begin with the foundation, so must he go on with his work that the house may be built. Similar is the case as to Christianity; we have the first principles as the foundation, but the higher doctrine ought immediately to follow which is to complete the building. They then act most unreasonably who remain in the first elements, for they propose to themselves no end, as though a builder spent all his labor on the foundation, and neglected to build up the house. So then he would have our faith to be at first so founded as afterwards to rise upwards, until by daily progress it be at length completed. [97]

Of repentance from dead works, etc. He here refers to a catechism commonly used. It is hence a probable conjecture that this Epistle was written, not immediately after the promulgation of the Gospel, but when they had some kind of polity established in the Churches; such as this, that the catechumen made

[97] See Appendix S.

a confession of his faith before he was admitted to baptism. And there were certain primary points on which the pastor questioned the catechumen, as it appears from the various testimonies of the fathers; there was an examination had especially on the creed called the Apostles' Creed. This was the first entrance, as it were, into the church to those who were adults and enlisted under Christ, as they were before alienated from faith in him. This custom the Apostle mentions, because there was a short time fixed for catechumens, during which they were taught the doctrine of religion, as a master instructs his children in the alphabet, in order that he may afterwards advance them to higher things.

But let us examine what he says. He mentions repentance and faith, which include the fullness of the Gospel; for what else does Christ command his Apostles to preach, but repentance and faith? When, therefore, Paul wished to show that he had faithfully performed his duty, he alleged his care and assiduity in teaching these two things. It seems then (as it may be said) unreasonable that the Apostle should bid repentance and faith to be omitted, when we ought to make progress in both through the whole course of our life. But when he adds, from dead works, he intimates that he speaks of first repentance; for though every sin is a dead work, either as it leads to death, or as it proceeds from the spiritual death of the soul; yet the faithful, already born again of the Spirit of God, cannot be said properly to repent from dead works. Regeneration is not indeed made perfect in them; but because of the seed of new life which is in them, however small it may be, this at least may be said of them that they cannot be deemed dead before God. The Apostle then does not include in general the whole of repentance, the practice of which ought to continue to the end; but he refers only to the beginning of repentance, when they who were lately and for the first time consecrated to the faith, commenced a new life. So also the word, faith, means that brief summary of godly doctrine, commonly called the Articles of Faith.

To these are added, the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. These are some of the highest mysteries of celestial wisdom; nay, the very end of all religion, which we ought to bear in mind through the whole course of our life. But as the very same truth is taught in one way to the ignorant, and in another way to those who have made some proficiency, the Apostle seems here to refer to the common mode of questioning, ``Dost thou believe the resurrection of the dead? Dost thou believe eternal life?'' These things were suitable to children, and that only once; therefore to turn back to them again was nothing else but to retrograde.

2. Of the doctrine of baptisms, etc. Some read them separately, ``of baptisms and of doctrine;'' but I prefer to connect them, though I explain them differently from others; for I regard the words as being in apposition, as grammarians say, according to this form, ``Not laying again the foundation of repentance, of faith in God, of the resurrection of the dead, which is the doctrine of baptisms and of the laying on of hands.'' If therefore these two clauses, the doctrine of baptisms and of the laying on of hands, be included in a parenthesis,

the passage would run better; for except you read them as in apposition, there would be the absurdity of a repetition. For what is the doctrine of baptism but what he mentions here, faith in God, repentance, judgment, and the like?

Chrysostom thinks that he uses ``baptisms'' in the plural number, because they who returned to first principles, in a measure abrogated their first baptism: but I cannot agree with him, for the doctrine had no reference to many baptisms, but by baptisms are meant the solemn rites, or the stated days of baptizing.

With baptism he connects the laying on of hands; for as there were two sorts of catechumens, so there were two rites. There were heathens who came not to baptism until they made a profession of their faith. Then as to these, these, the catechizing was wont to precede baptism. [98] But the children of the faithful, as they were adopted from the womb, and belonged to the body of the Church by right of the promise, were baptized in infancy; but after the time of infancy, they having been instructed in the faith, presented themselves as catechumens, which as to them took place after baptism; but another symbol was then added, the laying on of hands.

This one passage abundantly testifies that this rite had its beginning from the Apostles, which afterwards, however, was turned into superstition, as the world almost always degenerates into corruptions, even with regard to the best institutions. They have indeed contrived the fiction, that it is a sacrament by which the spirit of regeneration is conferred, a dogma by which they have mutilated baptism for what was peculiar to it, they transferred to the imposition of hands. Let us then know, that it was instituted by its first founders that it might be an appointed rite for prayer, as Augustine calls it. The profession of faith which youth made, after having passed the time of childhood, they indeed intended to confirm by this symbol, but they thought of nothing less than to destroy the efficacy of baptism. Wherefore the pure institution at this day ought to be retained, but the superstition ought to be removed. And this passage tends to confirm pedobaptism; for why should the same doctrine be called as to some baptism, but as to others the imposition of hands, except that the latter after having received baptism were taught in the faith, so that nothing remained for

[98] Calvin has followed some of the fathers in his exposition of these two clauses, who refer to a state of things which did not exist in the Church for a considerable time after the Apostolic age. What is here said comports with the time of the Apostles, and with that only more particularly. “Baptisms,” being in the plural number, have been a knotty point to many; but there is an especial reason for this in an Epistle to the Hebrews; some of them had no doubt been baptized by John, such were afterwards baptized only in the name of Christ, Acts 19:5, but those who not so baptized, were doubtless baptized in the name of Trinity. “The laying on of hands” on the baptized was an Apostolic practice, by which the miraculous gift of tongues was bestowed. Acts 8:15-17; 19:6. To understand the different things mentioned in the first two verses, we must consider the particulars stated in the 4th and the 5th verses; they are explanatory of each other. The penitent were “the enlightened;” “faith towards God” was “the heavenly gift;” the baptized, who had hands laid on them, were those who were “made partakers of the Holy Ghost;” the prospect and promise of a “resurrection,” was “the good word of God;” and “eternal judgment,” when believed made them to feel “the powers (or the powerful influences) of the word to come.” Thus the two passages illustrate one another. Such is the meaning which Schleusner gives {δυνάμεις} in this passage, which Scott and Bloomfield have adopted. --- Ed

them but the laying on of hands?

Heb 6:3-6

Hebrews Chapter 6:3-6

3. And this will we do, if God permit.

3. Et hoc faciemus, siquidem permiserit Deus.

4. For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost,

4. Nam impossibile est eos qui semel fuerunt illuminati, gustaveruntque donum coeleste, et participes facti fuerunt Spiritus sancti,

5. And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

5. Et gustaverunt bonum Dei verbum, virtutesque futuri seculi,

6. If they shall fall away, to renew them again unto repentance; seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.

6. Prolapsi sunt, iterum renovari ad poenitentiam, rursum crucifigentes sibi ipsis Filium Dei et ostentui habentes.

3. This will we do, etc. A dreadful denunciation follows; but the Apostle thus fulminated, lest the Jews should indulge their own supineness, and trifle with the favor of God; as though he had said, ``There ought not in this case it to be any delay; for there will not always be the opportunity for making progress; it is not in man's power to bound at once, whenever he pleases, from the starting point to the goal; but progress in our course is the special gift of God.''

4. For it is impossible, etc. This passage has given occasion to many to repudiate this Epistle, especially as the Novatians armed themselves with it to deny pardon to the fallen. Hence those of the Western Church, in particular, refused the authority of this Epistle, because the sect of Novatus annoyed them; and they were not sufficiently conversant in the truth so as to be equal to refute it by argument. But when the design of the Apostle is understood, it then appears evident that there is nothing here which countenances so delirious an error. Some who hold sacred the authority of the Epistle, while they attempt to dissipate this absurdity, yet do nothing but evade it. For some take ``impossible'' in the sense of rare or difficult, which is wholly different from its meaning. Many confine it to that repentance by which the catechumens in the ancient Church were wont to be prepared for baptism, as though indeed the Apostles prescribed fasting, or such things to the baptized. And then what great thing would the Apostle have said, by denying that repentance, the appendage of baptism, could be repeated? He threatens with the severest vengeance of God all those who would cast away the grace which had been once received; what weight would the sentence have had to shake the secure and the wavering with terror, if he only reminded them that there was no longer room for their first repentance? For this would extend to every kind of offense. What then is to be said? Since the Lord gives the hope of mercy to all without exception, it is

wholly unreasonable that any one for any cause whatever should be precluded.

The knot of the question is in the word, fall away. Whosoever then understands its meaning, can easily extricate himself from every difficulty. But it must be noticed, that there is a twofold falling away, one particular, and the other general. He who has in anything, or in any ways offended, has fallen away from his state as a Christian; therefore all sins are so many fallings. But the Apostle speaks not here of theft, or perjury, or murder, or drunkenness, or adultery; but he refers to a total defection or falling away from the Gospel, when a sinner offends not God in some one thing, but entirely renounces his grace.

And that this may be better understood, let us suppose a contrast between the gifts of God, which he has mentioned, and this falling away. For he falls away who forsakes the word of God, who extinguishes its light, who deprives himself of the taste of the heavens or gift, who relinquishes the participation of the Spirit. Now this is wholly to renounce God. We now see whom he excluded from the hope of pardon, even the apostates who alienated themselves from the Gospel of Christ, which they had previously embraced, and from the grace of God; and this happens to no one but to him who sins against the Holy Spirit. For he who violates the second table of the Law, or transgresses the first through ignorance, is not guilty of this defection; nor does God surely deprive any of his grace in such a way as to leave them none remaining except the reprobate.

If any one asks why the Apostle makes mention here of such apostasy while he is addressing believers, who were far off from a perfidy so heinous; to this I answer, that the danger was pointed out by him in time, that they might be on their guard. And this ought to be observed; for when we turn aside from the right way, we not only excuse to others our vices, but we also impose on ourselves. Satan stealthily creeps on us, and by degrees allures us by clandestine arts, so that when we go astray we know not that we are going astray. Thus gradually we slide, until at length we rush headlong into ruin. We may observe this daily in many. Therefore the Apostle does not without reason forewarn all the disciples of Christ to beware in time; for a continued torpor commonly ends in lethargy, which is followed by alienation of mind.

But we must notice in passing the names by which he signalizes the knowledge of the Gospel. He calls it illumination; it hence follows that men are blind, until Christ, the light of the world, enlightens them. He calls it a tasting of the heavenly gift; intimating that the things which Christ confers on us are above nature and the world, and that they are yet tasted by faith. He calls it the participation of the Spirit; for he it is who distributes to every one, as he wills, all the light and knowledge which he can have; for without him no one can say that Jesus is the Lord, (1 Corinthians 12:3;) he opens for us the eyes of our minds, and reveals to us the secret things of God. He calls it a tasting of the good word of God; by which he means, that the will of God is therein revealed, not in any sort of way, but in such a way as sweetly to delight us; in short, by this title is pointed out the difference between the Law and the Gospel; for that has

nothing but severity and condemnation, but this is a sweet testimony of God's love and fatherly kindness towards us. And lastly, he calls it a tasting of the powers of the world to come; by which he intimates, that we are admitted by faith as it were into the kingdom of heaven, so that we see in spirit that blessed immortality which is hid from our senses. [99]

Let us then know, that the Gospel cannot be otherwise rightly known than by the illumination of the Spirit, and that being thus drawn away from the world, we are raised up to heaven, and that knowing the goodness of God we rely on his word.

But here arises a new question, how can it be that he who has once made such a progress should afterwards fall away? For God, it may be said, calls none effectually but the elect, and Paul testifies that they are really his sons who are led by his Spirit, (Romans 8:14;) and he teaches us, that it is a sure pledge of adoption when Christ makes us partakers of his Spirit. The elect are also beyond the danger of finally falling away; for the Father who gave them to be preserved by Christ his Son is greater than all, and Christ promises to watch over them all so that none may perish. To all this I answer, That God indeed favors none but the elect alone with the Spirit of regeneration, and that by this they are distinguished from the reprobate; for they are renewed after his image and receive the earnest of the Spirit in hope of the future inheritance, and by the same Spirit the Gospel is sealed in their hearts. But I cannot admit that all this is any reason why he should not grant the reprobate also some taste of his grace, why he should not irradiate their minds with some sparks of his light, why he should not give them some perception of his goodness, and in some sort engrave his word on their hearts. Otherwise, where would be the temporal faith mentioned by Mark 4:17? There is therefore some knowledge even in the reprobate, which afterwards vanishes away, either because it did not strike roots sufficiently deep, or because it withers, being choked up. [100]

And by this bridle the Lord keeps us in fear and humility; and we certainly see how prone human nature is otherwise to security and foolish confidence. At the same time our solicitude ought to be such as not to disturb the peace of conscience. For the Lord strengthens faith in us, while he subdues our flesh: and hence he would have faith to remain and rest tranquilly as in a safe haven; but he exercises the flesh with various conflicts, that it may not grow wanton through idleness.

6. To renew them again into repentance, etc. Though this seems hard, yet there is no reason to charge God with cruelty when any one suffers only the punishment of his own defection; nor is this inconsistent with other parts of Scripture, where God's mercy is offered to sinners as soon as they sigh for it, (Ezekiel 18:27;) for repentance is required, which he never truly feels who has once wholly fallen away from the Gospel; for such are deprived, as they deserve, of God's Spirit and given up to a reprobate mind, so that being the slaves of the

[99] See Appendix T.
[100] See Appendix U.

devil they rush headlong into destruction. Thus it happens that they cease not to add sin to sin, until being wholly hardened they despise God, or like men in despair, express madly their hatred to him. The end of all apostates is, that they are either smitten with stupor, and fear nothing, or curse God their judge, because they cannot escape from him. [101]

In short, the Apostle warns us, that repentance is not at the will of man, but that it is given by God to those only who have not wholly fallen away from the faith. It is a warning very necessary to us, lest by often delaying until tomorrow, we should alienate ourselves more and more from God. The ungodly indeed deceive themselves by such sayings as this, --- that it will be sufficient for them to repent of their wicked life at their last breath. But when they come to die, the dire torments of conscience which they suffer, prove to them that the conversion of man is not an ordinary work. As then the Lord promises pardon to none but to those who repent of their iniquity, it is no wonder that they perish who either through despair or contempt, rush on in their obstinacy into destruction. But when any one rises up again after falling, we may hence conclude that he had not been guilty of defection, however grievously he may have sinned.

Crucifying again, etc. He also adds this to defend God's severity against the calumnies of men; for it would be wholly unbecoming, that God by pardoning apostates should expose his own Son to contempt. They are then wholly unworthy to obtain mercy. But the reason why he says, that Christ would thus be crucified again, is, because we die with him for the very purpose of living afterwards a new life; when therefore any return as it were unto death, they have need of another sacrifice, as we shall find in the tenth chapter. Crucifying for themselves means as far as in them lies. For this would be the case, and Christ would be slandered as it were triumphantly, were it allowed men to return to him after having fallen away and forsaken him.

Heb 6:7-10

Hebrews 6:7-10

7. For the earth which drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and bringeth forth herbs meet for them by whom it is dressed, receiveth blessing from God:

[101] Some render the verb “renew” actively, in this way, — “For it is impossible as to those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of holy spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the world to come, and have fallen away, to renew them again unto repentance, since they crucify again as to themselves to Son of God, and expose him to open shame.” This is more consistent with the foregoing, for the Apostle speaks of teaching. It is as though he had said “It is impossible for us as teachers;” as they had no commission. To “renew” may be rendered to “restore.” It is only found here, but is used by the Sept. for a verb which means renewing in the sense of restoring. See Psalm 103:5; 104:30; Lamentations 5:21. Josephus applies it to the renovation or restoration of the temple. The “crucifying” was what they did by falling away; for they thereby professed that he deserved to be crucified as an imposter, and thus counted his blood, as it is said in chapter 10:29, “unholy,” as the blood of a malefactor; and they thus also exhibited him as an object of public contempt. — Ed.

7. Siquidem terra quae imbrem saepius in se venientem imbibit, et progignit herbam commodam iis opera quorum et colitur, recipit benedictionem a Deo:

8. But that which beareth thorns and briers is rejected, and is nigh unto cursing; whose end is to be burned.

8. At quae produxerit spinas et tribulos, reproba est, et obnoxia maledictioni, cujus exitus tendit ad combustionem.

9. But, beloved, we are persuaded better things of you, and things that accompany salvation, though we thus speak.

9. Caeterum persuasimus nobis de vobis, dilecti, quae sint iis meliora, et cum salute conjunta, tametsi sic loquamur.

10. For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

10. Non enim injustus est Deus, ut obliviscatur operis vestri et laboris in charitatem impensi, quem ostendistis erga nomen ejus, dum ministrastis sanctis, et ministratis.

7. For the earth, etc. This is a similitude most appropriate to excite a desire to make progress in due time, for as the earth cannot bring forth a good crop in harvest except it causes the seed as soon as it is sown to germinate, so if we desire to bring forth good fruit, as soon as the Lord sows his word, it ought to strike roots in us without delay; for it cannot be expected to fructify, if it be either choked or perish. But as the similitude is very suitable, so it must be wisely applied to the design of the Apostle.

The earth, he says, which by sucking in the rain immediately produces a blade suitable to the seed sown, at length by God's blessing produces a ripe crop; so they who receive the seed of the Gospel into their hearts and bring forth genuine shoots, will always make progress until they produce ripe fruit. On the contrary, the earth, which after culture and irrigation brings, forth nothing but thorns, affords no hope of a harvest; nay, the more that grows which is its natural produce, the more hopeless is the case. Hence the only remedy the husbandman has is to burn up the noxious and useless weeds. So they who destroy the seed of the Gospel either by their indifference or by corrupt affections, so as to manifest no sign of good progress in their life, clearly show themselves to be reprobates, from whom no harvest can be expected.

The Apostle then not only speaks here of the fruit of the Gospel, but also exhorts us promptly and gladly to embrace it, and he further tells us, that the blade appears presently after the seed is sown, and that growing follows the daily irrigations. Some render {θοτάνην} {εὔθετὸν} ``a seasonable shoot,'' others, ``a shoot meet;'' either meaning suits the place; the first refers to time, the second to quality. [102] The allegorical meanings with which interpreters

[102] The word {βοτάνη} here means everything the earth produces service for food. It only occurs here in the New Testament, but is commonly used by the Sept. for {,{עשב which has the same extensive meaning: fruit or fruits would be its best rendering here. The word }εὔθετος} is also found in Luke 9:62; 14:34; and it means fit, meet, suitable, or useful; and the last is the meaning given it here by Grotius, Schleusner, Stuart, Bloomfield, and others. It is indeed true that it is used in the Sept. in the sense of seasonable. See Psalm 32:6 --- Ed

have here amused themselves, I pass by, as they are quite foreign to the object of the writer.

9. But we are persuaded, etc. As the preceding sentences were like thunderbolts, by which readers might have been struck dead, it was needful to mitigate this severity. He therefore says now, that he did not speak in this strain, as though he entertained such an opinion of them. And doubtless whosoever wishes to do good by teaching, ought so to treat his disciples as ever to add encouragement to them rather than to diminish it, for there is nothing that can alienate us more from attending to the truth than to see that we are deemed to be past hope. The Apostle then testifies that he thus warned the Jews, because he had a good hope of them, and was anxious to lead them to salvation. We hence conclude, that not only the reprobate ought to be reproved severely and with sharp earnestness, but also the elect themselves, even those whom we deem to be the children of God.

10. For God is not unrighteous, etc. These words signify as much as though he had said, that from good beginnings he hoped for a good end.

But here a difficulty arises, because he seems to say that God is bound by the services of men: ``I am persuaded,'' he says, ``as to your salvation, because God cannot forget your works.'' He seems thus to build salvation on works, and to make God a debtor to them. And the sophists, who oppose the merits of works to the grace of God, make much of this sentence, ``God is not unrighteous.'' For they hence conclude that it would be unjust for him not to render for works the reward of eternal salvation. To this I briefly reply that the Apostle does not here speak avowedly of the cause of our salvation, and that therefore no opinion can be formed from this passage as to the merits of works, nor can it be hence determined what is due to works. The Scripture shows everywhere that there is no other fountain of salvation but the gratuitous mercy of God: and that God everywhere promises reward to works, this depends on that gratuitous promise, by which he adopts us as his children, and reconciles us to himself by not imputing our sins. Reward then is reserved for works, not through merit, but the free bounty of God alone; and yet even this free reward of works does not take place, except we be first received into favor through the kind mediation of Christ.

We hence conclude, that God does not pay us a debt, but performs what he has of himself freely promised, and thus performs it, inasmuch as he pardons us and our works; nay, he looks not so much on our works as on his own grace in our works. It is on this account that he forgets not our works, because he recognizes himself and the work of his Spirit in them. And this is to be righteous, as the Apostle says, for he cannot deny himself. This passage, then, corresponds with that saying of Paul, ``He who has begun in you a good work will perfect it.'' (Philippians 1:6.) For what can God find in us to induce him to love us, except what he has first conferred on us? In short, the sophists are mistaken in imagining a mutual relation between God's righteousness and the merits of our works, since God on the contrary so regards himself and his own gifts, that

he carries on to the end what of his own goodwill he has begun in us, without any inducement from anything we do; nay, God is righteous in recompensing works, because he is true and faithful: and he has made himself a debtor to us, not by receiving anything from us; but as Augustine says, by freely promising all things. [103]

And labor of love, etc. By this he intimates that we are not to spare labor, if we desire to perform duty towards our neighbors; for they are not only to be helped by money, but also by counsel, by labor, and in various other ways. Great sedulity, then, must be exercised, many troubles must be undergone, and sometimes many dangers must be encountered. Thus let him who would engage in the duties of love, prepare himself for a life of labor. [104]

He mentions in proof of their love, that they had ministered and were still ministering to the saints. We are hence reminded, that we are not to neglect to serve our brethren. By mentioning the saints, he means not that we are debtors to them alone; for our love ought to expand and be manifested towards all mankind; but as the household of faith are especially recommended to us, peculiar attention is to be paid to them; for as love, when moved to do good, has partly a regard to God, and partly to our common nature, the nearer any one is to God, the more worthy he is of being assisted by us. In short, when we acknowledge any one as a child of God, we ought to embrace him with brotherly love.

By saying that they had ministered and were still ministering, he commended their perseverance; which in this particular was very necessary; for there is nothing to which we are more prone than to weariness in welldoing. Hence it is, that though many are found ready enough to help their brethren, yet the virtue of constancy is so rare, that a large portion soon relax as though their warmth had cooled. But what ought constantly to stimulate us is even this one expression used by the apostle, that the love shown to the saints is shown towards the name of the Lord; for he intimates that God holds himself indebted to us for whatever good we do to our neighbors, according to that saying,

``What ye have done to one of the least of these,
ye have done to me,'' (Matthew 25:40;)

and there is also another,

``He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord.''
(Proverbs 19:17.)

[103] Nothing can exceed the clearness and the truth of the preceding remarks. The word {ἄδικος}, unrighteousness, is rendered by many, unmerciful or unkind. But the reason for such a meaning is this: There are three kinds, we may say, of righteousness --- that of the law, of love, and of promise. To act according to the law is to be righteous; to comply with what love requires, that is, to be kind and charitable, is to be righteous, and hence almsgiving is called righteousness has often the meaning of faithfulness or mercy. See 1 John 1:9. Therefore the meaning here is, that God is not so unrighteous as not to fulfill his promise. Hence the notion of merit is at once shown to be groundless. --- Ed

[104] See Appendix X.

Heb 6:11-15

Hebrews Chapter 6:11-15

11. And we desire that every one of you do shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end:

11. Desideramus autem ununquemque vestrum idem ostendere studium ad certitudinem spei usque in finem;

12. That ye be not slothful, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

12. Ne segnes (vel, molles, aut fluxi) reddamini, sed potius imitatores eorum qui per fidem et patientiam haereditario obtinuerunt promissiones.

13. For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he sware by himself,

13. Abrahae enim promittens Deus, quandoquidem majorem per quem juraret, non habebat, juravit per seipsum;

14. Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

14. Dicens, Nisi benedicens benedixero tibi, et multiplicans multicavero te.

15. And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise.

15. Atque ita quum patienter expectasset, consequutus est promissionem.

11. And we desire, etc. As he blended with exhortation, lest he should altogether grieve their minds; so he now freely reminds them of what was still wanting in them, lest his courtesy should appear to have in it any flattery. ``You have made,'' he says, ``your love evident by many acts of kindness; it remains, however, that your faith should correspond with it; you have sedulously labored not to be wanting in your duties to men; but with no less earnestness it behooves you to make progress in faith, so as to manifest before God its unwavering and full certainty.''

Now, by these words the Apostle shows that there are two parts in Christianity which correspond with the two tables of the Law. Therefore, he who separates the one from the other, has nothing but what is mutilated and mangled. And hence it appears what sort of teachers they are who make no mention of faith, and enjoin only the duty of honesty and uprightness towards men; nay, it is a profane philosophy, that dwells only on the outward mask of righteousness, if indeed it deserves to be called philosophy; for it so unreasonably performs its own duties, that it robs God, to whom the preeminence belongs, of his own rights. Let us then remember, that the life of a Christian is not complete in all its parts, unless we attend to faith as well as to love.

To the full assurance of hope, or, to the certainty of hope, etc. As they who professed the Christian faith were distracted by various opinions, or were as yet entangled in many superstitions, he bids them to be so fixed in firm faith, as no longer to vacillate nor be driven here and there, suspended between alternate winds of doubts. This injunction is, however, applicable to all; for, as the truth of God is unchangeably fixed, so faith, which relies on him, when it is true, ought

to be certain, surmounting every doubt. It is a full assurance, {πληροφορία}, [105] an undoubting persuasion, when the godly mind settles it with itself, that it is not right to call in question what God, who cannot deceive or lie, has spoken.

The word hope, is here to be taken for faith, because of its affinity to it. The Apostle, however, seems to have designedly used it, because he was speaking of perseverance. And we may hence conclude how far short of faith is that general knowledge which the ungodly and the devils have in common; for they also believe that God is just and true, yet they derive hence no good hope, for they do not lay hold on his paternal favor in Christ. Let us then know that true faith is ever connected with hope.

He said to the end, or perfection; and he said this, that they might know that they had not yet reached the goal, and were therefore to think of further progress. He mentioned diligence, that they might know that they were not to sit down idly, but to strive in earnest. For it is not a small thing to ascend above the heavens, especially for these who hardly creep on the ground, and when innumerable obstacles are in the way. There is indeed, nothing more difficult than to keep our thoughts fixed on things in heaven, when the whole power of our nature inclines downwards, and when Satan or numberless devices draw us back to the earth. hence it is, that he bids us to beware of sloth or effeminacy.

12. But followers, or imitators, etc. To sloth he opposes imitation; it is then the same thing as though he said, that there was need of constant alacrity of mind; but it had far more weight, when he reminded them, that the fathers were not made partakers of the promises except through the unconquerable firmness of faith; for examples convey to us a more impressive idea of things. When a naked truth is set before us, it does not so much affect us, as when we see what is required of us fulfilled in the person of Abraham. But Abraham's example is referred to, not because it is the only one, but because it is more illustrious than that of any other. For though Abraham had this faith in common with all the godly; yet it is not without reason that he is called the father of the faithful. It is, then, no wonder that the Apostle selected him from all the rest, and turned towards him the eyes of his readers as to the clearest mirror of faith.

Faith and patience, etc. What is meant is, a firm faith, which has patience as its companion. For faith is what is, chiefly required; but as many who make at first a marvelous display of faith, soon fail, he shows, that the true evidence of that faith which is not fleeting and evanescent, is endurance. By saying that the promises were obtained by faith, he takes away the notion of merits; and still more clearly by saying, that they came by ``inheritance''; for we are in no

[105] This noun and the verb from which it comes, are peculiar to the new testament, but the latter is once used in the Sept., Ecclesiastes 8:11. The metaphor is taken from a ship in full sail, or from a tree fully laden with fruit. Fullness or perfection is the general idea. It is applied to knowledge in Colossians 2:2, and to faith in Hebrew 10:22. It is also found once more in 1 Thessalonians 1:5, and is applied to the assurance with which the gospel was preached. It may be rendered certainly, or assurance, or full assurance. As a passive participle it means to be fully persuaded in Romans 4:21, and in 14:5. See Appendix Y. — Ed.

other way made heirs but by the right of adoption. [106]

13. For when God made a promise to Abraham, etc. His object was to prove, that the grace of God is offered to us in vain, except we receive the promise by faith, and constantly cherish it in the bosom of our heart. And he proves it by this argument, that when God promised a countless offspring to Abraham, it seemed a thing incredible; Sarah had been through life barren; both had reached a sterile old age, when they were nearer the grave than to a conjugal bed; there was no vigor to beget children, when Sarah's womb, which had been barren through the prime of life, was now become dead. Who could believe that a nation would proceed from them, equaling the stars in number, and like the sand of the sea? It was, indeed, contrary to all reason. Yet Abraham looked for this and feared no disappointment, because he relied on the Word of God. [107] We must, then, notice the circumstance as to time, that the Apostle's reasoning may appear evident; and what he subjoins refers to this --- that he was made partaker of this blessing, but that it was after he had waited for what no one could have thought would ever come to pass. In this way ought glory to be given to God; we must quietly hope for what he does not as yet show to our senses, but hides from us and for a long time defers, in order that our patience may be exercised.

Why God did swear by himself we shall presently see. The manner of swearing, Except blessing I will bless thee, we have explained what it means in the third chapter: God's name is not here expressed, but must be understood, for except he performs what he promises, he testifies that he is not to he counted true and faithful.

Heb 6:16-20

Hebrews Chapter 6:16-20

16. For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

16. Nam homines quidem per eum jurant qui major est, et omnis ipsis controversiae finis est jusjurandum in confirmationem.

17. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the heirs of promise the immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an oath:

[106] The word for “patience” is properly long-suffering, or forbearance, Romans 2:4; but it is used here in the same sense of patient expectation, as the participle clearly means in verse 15. As to “inherit,” the present, as Grotius says, is used for the past tense — “who inherited,” or rather, “became heirs to the promises.” They did not really possess them, as we find in chapter 11:13, but heired them, as we may say; they died in faith and became entitled to them. The word “promises” is used here as well as in chapter 11; for many things were included in what God had promised to the fathers, but chiefly the Messiah and the heavenly inheritance. — Ed.

[107] It is said, that having “patiently endured” or rather waited, “he obtained the promise,” that is, of a numerous posterity, the particular thing previously referred to. After having waited for twenty-five years, (see Genesis 12:1-4, and Genesis 17:1-16,) a son was given him; and this beginning of the fulfilled promise was a pledge of its full accomplishment. This case is brought forward as an example of waiting faith. — Ed.

17. In quo Deus volens uberius ostendere haeridibus promissionis immutabilem consilii sui firmitudinem, interposuit jusjurandum;

18. That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us:

18. Ut per duas res immutabiles, in quibus impossibile sit Deum mentiri, validam consolationem habeamus nos qui confugimus ad obtinendam propositam spem;

19. Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

19. Quam velut anchoram habemus animae tutam et firmam, et quae ingreditur ad ea quae intro velum sunt;.

20. Whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus, made an high priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

20. Quo praecursor noster ingressus est Iesus, secondum ordinem Melchisedec factus in aeternum pontifex.

16. For men, etc. It is an argument from the less to the greater; if credit is given to man, who is by nature false, when he swears, and for this reason, because he confirms what he says by God's name, how much more credit is due to God, who is eternal truth, when he swears by himself?

Now he mentions several things to commend this declaration; and first he says that men swear by the greater; by which he means that they who are wanting in due authority borrow it from another. He adds that there is so much reverence in an oath that it suffices for confirmation, and puts an end to all disputes where the testimonies of men and other proofs are wanting. Then is not he a sufficient witness for himself whom all appeal to as a witness? Is he not to obtain credit for what he says, who, by his authority, removes all doubts among others? If God's name, pronounced by man's tongue, possesses so much superiority, how much more weight ought it to have, when God himself swears by his own name? Thus much as to the main point.

But here in passing, two things are to be noticed, --- that we are to swear by God's name when necessity requires, and that Christians are allowed to make an oath, because it is a lawful remedy for removing contentions. God in express words bids us to swear by his name; if other names are blended with it, the oath is profaned. For this there are especially three reasons: when there is no way of bringing the truth to light, it is not right, for the sake of verifying it, to have recourse to any but to God, who is himself eternal truth; and then, since he alone knows the heart, his own office is taken from him, when in things hidden, of which men can form no opinion, we appeal to any other judge; and thirdly, because in swearing we not only appeal to him as a witness, but also call upon him as an avenger of perjury in case we speak falsely. It is no wonder, then, that he is so greatly displeased with those who swear by another name, for his own honor is thus disparaged. And that there are different forms often used in Scripture, makes nothing against this truth;

for they did not swear by heaven or earth, as though they ascribed any divine power to them, or attributed to them the least portion of divinity, but by this indirect protestation, so to speak, they had a regard to the one true God. There are indeed various kinds of protestations; but the chief one is, when we refer to God as a judge and directly appeal to his judgmentseat; another is, when we name things especially dear to us as our life, or our head, or anything of this kind; and the third is, when we call creatures as witnesses before God. But in all these ways we swear properly by no other than by God. hence they betray their impiety no less than their ignorance, who contend that it is lawful to connect dead saints with God so as to attribute to them the right of punishing.

Further, this passage teaches us, as it has been said, that an oath may be lawfully used by Christians; and this ought to be particularly observed, on account of fanatical men who are disposed to abrogate the practice of solemn swearing which God has prescribed in his Law. For certainly the Apostle speaks here of the custom of swearing as of a holy practice, and approved by God. Moreover, he does not say of it as having been formerly in use, but as of a thing still practiced. Let it then be employed as a help to find out the truth when other proofs are wanting.

17. God, willing, etc. See how kindly God as a gracious Father accommodates himself to our slowness to believe; as he sees that we rest not on his simple word, that he might more fully impress it on our hearts he adds an oath. Hence also it appears how much it concerns us to know that there is such a certainty respecting his goodwill towards us, that there is no longer any occasion for wavering or for trembling. For when God forbids his name to be taken in vain or on a slight occasion, and denounces the severest vengeance on all who rashly abuse it, when he commands reverence to be rendered to his majesty, he thus teaches us that he holds his name in the highest esteem and honor. The certainty of salvation is then a necessary thing; for he who forbids to swear without reason has been pleased to swear for the sake of rendering it certain. And we may hence also conclude what great account he makes of our salvation; for in order to secure it, he not only pardons our unbelief, but giving up as it were his own right, and yielding to us far more than what we could claim, he kindly provides a remedy for it.

Unto the heirs of promise, etc. He seems especially to point out the Jews; for though the heirship came at length to the Gentiles, yet the former were the first lawful heirs, and the latter, being aliens, were made the second heirs, and that beyond the right of nature. So Peter, addressing the Jews in his first sermon, says,

``To you and to your children is the promise made, and to those who are afar of, whom the Lord shall call.'' (Acts 2:39.)

He left indeed a place for adventitious heirs, but he sets the Jews in the first rank, according to what he also says in the third chapter, ``Ye are the children of the fathers and of the covenant,'' etc. (Acts 3:25.) So also in this place the Apostle, in order to make the Jews more ready to receive the covenant, shows

that it was for their sakes chiefly it was confirmed by an oath. At the same time this declaration belongs at this day to us also, for we have entered into the place quitted by them through unbelief

Observe that what is testified to us in the Gospel is called the counsel of God, that no one may doubt but that this truth proceeds from the very inmost thoughts of God. Believers ought therefore to be fully persuaded that whenever they hear the voice of the Gospel, the secret counsel of God, which lay hid in him, is proclaimed to them, and that hence is made known to them what he has decreed respecting our salvation before the creation of the world.

18. That by two immutable things, etc. What God says as well as what he swears is immutable. (Psalm 12:6; Numb. 23:19.) It may be with men far otherwise; for their vanity is such that there cannot be much firmness in their word. But the word of God is in various ways extolled; it is pure and without any dross, like gold seven times purified. Even Balaam, though an enemy, was yet constrained to bring this testimony,

``God is not like the sons of men that he should lie, neither like men that he should repent: has he then said, and shall he not do it? Has he spoken, and shall he not make it good?'' (Numbers 23:19.)

The word of God, then, is a sure truth, and in itself authoritative, ({αὐτόπιστος} selfworthy of trust.) But when an oath is added it is an overplus added to a full measure. We have, then, this strong consolation, that God, who cannot deceive when he speaks, being not content with making a promise, has confirmed it by an oath. [108]

Who have fled for refuge, etc. By these words he intimates that we do not truly trust in God except when we forsake every other protection and flee for refuge to his sure promise, and feel assured that it is our only safe asylum. Hence by the word flee is set forth our poverty and our need; for we flee not to God except when constrained. But when he adds the hope set before us, he intimates that we have not far to go to seek the aid we want, for God himself of his own free will meets us and puts as it were in our hand what we are to hope for; it is set before us. But as by this truth he designed to encourage the Jews to embrace the Gospel in which salvation was offered to them; so also

[108] The "two immutable things," says most, are the promise and the oath. But some of late, such as Stuart, have disputed this interpretation; and they hold that they are two oaths, — the first was made to Abraham respecting a Son (the Messiah) in whom all nations should be blessed; and the second refers to Christ's priesthood, recorded in Psalm 110:4. This is the clearly to go out of the passage for its interpretation. The case of the fathers, and especially Abraham, in verses 12, 13, 14 and 15, was introduced for the sake of illustration. And having mentioned God's oath with regard to Abraham, he proceeds in verse 16 to state the use of an oath among men, and evidently reverting to the promise of eternal life implied in "the hope" mentioned in verse 11, he says that God confirmed that promise, called here God's "counsel," by an oath; and the oath specially referred to seems to have been that respecting the priesthood of his Son, more than once mentioned before and at the end of this chapter; for upon his priesthood in an especial manner depended the promise of eternal life. The "counsel" of God means his revealed counsel or gracious purpose, his promise of eternal life to those who believe. In establishing a priesthood by an oath, he confirmed this promise, for its accomplishment depended on that priesthood. To call two oaths two immutable things is nothing so apposite as to call so the promise and the oath by which the priesthood was established. — Ed.

he thus deprived the unbelieving, who rejected the favor presented to them, of every excuse. And doubtless this might have been more truly said after the promulgation of the Gospel than under the Law: ``There is now no reason for you to say, `Who shall ascent into heaven? Or, Who shall descend into the deep? Or, Who shall pass over the sea? For nigh is the word, it is in thy mouth and in thy heart.'" [109] (Deuteronomy 30:12; Romans 10:6.)

But there is a metonymy in the word hope, for the effect is put for the cause; and I understand by it the promise on which our hope leans or relies, for I cannot agree with those who take hope here for the thing hoped for --- by no means: and this also must be added, that the Apostle speaks not of a naked promise, suspended as it were in the air, but of that which is received by faith; or, if you prefer a short expression, the hope here means the promise apprehended by faith. By the word laying hold, as well as by hope, he denotes firmness.

19. As an anchor, etc. It is a striking likeness when he compares faith leaning on God's word to an anchor; for doubtless, as long as we sojourn in this world, we stand not on firm ground, but are tossed here and there as it were in the midst of the sea, and that indeed very turbulent; for Satan is incessantly stirring up innumerable storms, which would immediately upset and sink our vessel, were we not to cast our anchor fast in the deep. For nowhere a haven appears to our eyes, but wherever we look water alone is in view; yea, waves also arise and threaten us; but as the anchor is cast through the waters into a dark and unseen place, and while it lies hid there, keeps the vessel beaten by the waves from being overwhelmed; so must our hope be fixed on the invisible God. There is this difference, --- the anchor is cast downwards into the sea, for it has the earth as its bottom; but our hope rises upwards and soars aloft, for in the world it finds nothing on which it can stand, nor ought it to cleave to created things, but to rest on God alone. As the cable also by which the anchor is suspended joins the vessel with the earth through a long and dark intermediate space, so the truth of God is a bond to connect us with himself, so that no distance of place and no darkness can prevent us from cleaving to him. Thus when united to God, though we must struggle with continual storms, we are yet beyond the peril of shipwreck. Hence he says, that this anchor is sure and steadfast, or safe and firm. [110] It may indeed be that by the violence of

[109] The "strong consolation" is rendered by Theophylact "strong encouragement;" nor is it unsuitable here. The influence of the "two immutable things" was no other than to give strong encouragement to those who believed: the tendency was to confirm them in the faith. Stuart gives it the meaning of "persuasion," and renders the passage thus, "So that by two immutable things, concerning which is impossible for God to lie, we, who have sought for refuge, might be strongly persuaded to hold fast the hope that is set before us." The great objection to this is the separation of "fleeing" from the latter part of the sentence, which I find is done by none; and to seek for refuge, or to flee for refuge, is not the meaning of {καταφυγόντες}, but merely to flee; and to construe it by itself gives no meaning. We are hence under the necessity of construing it with what follows, ``That we might have a strong consolation (or encouragement) who have fled to lay hold on the hope set before us.'' So Beza substantially, and Doddridge, and Macknight. --- Ed

[110] "Safe," that is safely fixed; and "firm," that is strong, so as not to be bent nor broken, as Parens says. Stuart seems to have inverted the proper meaning of the words, as he applies {ἀσφαλῶ} to the anchor as having been made of good materials, and {θεβαίαν} as signifying that it is firmly

the waves the anchor may be plucked off, or the cable be broken, or the beaten ship be torn to pieces. This happens on the sea; but the power of God to sustain us is wholly different, and so also is the strength of hope and the firmness of his word.

Which entereth into that, or those things, etc. As we have said, until faith reaches to God, it finds nothing but what is unstable and evanescent; it is hence necessary for it to penetrate even into heaven. But as the Apostle is speaking to the Jews, he alludes to the ancient Tabernacle, and says, that they ought not to abide in those things which are seen, but to penetrate into the inmost recesses, which lie hid within the veil, as though he had said, that all the external and ancient figures and shadows were to be passed over, in order that faith might be fixed on Christ alone.

And carefully ought this reasoning to be observed, --- that as Christ has entered into heaven, so faith ought to be directed there also: for we are hence taught that faith should look nowhere else. And doubtless it is in vain for man to seek God in his own majesty, for it is too far removed from them; but Christ stretches forth his hand to us, that he may lead us to heaven. And this was shadowed forth formerly under the Law; for the high priest entered the holy of holies, not in his own name only, but also in that of the people, inasmuch as he bare in a manner the twelve tribes on his breast and on his shoulders; for as a memorial for them twelve stones were wrought on the breastplate, and on the two onyx stones on his shoulders were engraved their names, so that in the person of one man all entered into the sanctuary together. Rightly then does the Apostle speak, when he reminds them that our high priest has entered into heaven; for he has not entered only for himself, but also for us. There is therefore no reason to fear that access to heaven will be closed up against our faith, as it is never disjoined from Christ. And as it becomes us to follow Christ who is gone before, he is therefore called our Forerunner, or precursor. [111]

fixed. The first word means what cannot fall, be subverted, or overthrown, and must therefore refer to what is safely fixed; and the other means firm, stable, constant, enduring. So Schleusner renders the words, ``tutam ac firmam,'' safe and firm; and he quotes Phavorinus as giving the meaning of the first word {ἕδραιος}, steadfast. --- Ed

[111] Calvin's version is "Where our precursor Jesus has entered." The {πρόδρομος} is one who goes before to prepare the way for those who follow him. It is used in the Sept. to designate the first ripe grapes and the first ripe figs. Numbers 13:20; Isaiah 28:4. These were the precursors for us (or, in our behalf) Jesus has entered.'' He has not only gone to prepare a place for his people; but he is also their leader whom they are to follow; and where he has entered they shall also enter. His entrance is a pledge of their entrance. --- Ed

Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

Heb 7:1-3

Hebrews 7:1-3

1. For this Melchisedec, king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him;

1. Hic enim erat Melchisedec rex Salem, pontifex Dei altissimi, qui occurrit Abrahae revertenti a caede regum, et benedixit illi;

2. To whom also Abraham gave a tenth part of all; first being by interpretation King of righteousness, and after that also King of Salem, which is, King of peace;

2. Cui et decimas ex omnibus impartitus est Abraham; qui primum quidem ex interpretatione dicitur Rex justitiae, deinde etiam Rex Salem, quod est Rex pacis;

3. Without father, without mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days, nor end of life; but made like unto the Son of God; abideth a priest continually.

3. Sine patre, sine matre, sine genere, nec initium dierum, nec vitae finem habens; sed assimilatus Filio Dei manet sacerdos in perpetuum.

1. For this Melchisedec, etc. He has hitherto been stimulating the Jews by exhortations, that they might attentively consider the comparison between Christ and Melchisedec. At the end of the last chapter, that he might return from his digression to his subject, he quoted again the passage from the Psalms; and now he enters fully into what he had before slightly referred to; for he enumerates particularly the things connected with Melchisedec, in which he resembled Christ. It is indeed no wonder that he dwells so minutely on this subject. It was doubtless no common thing that in a country abounding in the corruptions of so many superstitions, a man was found who preserved the pure worship of God; for on one side he was nigh to Sodom and Gomorrah, and on the other to the Canaanites, so that he was on every side encompassed by ungodly men. Besides, the whole world was so fallen into impiety, that it is very probable that God was nowhere faithfully worshipped except in the family of Abraham; for his father and his grandfather, who ought to have retained true religion, had long before degenerated into idolatry. It was therefore a memorable fact, that there was still a king who not only retained true religion, but also performed himself the office of a priest. And it was doubtless necessary that in him who was to be a type of the Son of God all things excellent should be found: and

that Christ was shadowed forth by this type is evident from the Psalm referred to; for David did not say without reason, ``Thou art a priest forever after the order Melchisedec;'' no, but on the contrary, by these words a sublime mystery was recommended to the Church.

Let us now consider each of those particulars in which the Apostle makes Christ like Melchisedec. [112]

The first likeness is in the name; for it was not without a mystery that he was called the King of righteousness. For though this honor is ascribed to kings who rule with moderation and in equity, yet this belongs really to Christ alone, who not only exercises authority justly as others do, but also communicates to us the righteous of God, partly when he makes us to be counted righteous by a gratuitous reconciliation, and partly when he renews us by his Spirit, that we may lead a godly and holy life. He is then called the King of righteousness, because of what he effects in diffusing righteousness on all his people. [113] It hence follows, that out of his kingdom nothing but sin reigns among men. And therefore Zechariah, when he introduces him, as by the solemn decree of God, into the possession of his kingdom, thus extols him, ---

``Rejoice, O daughter of Sion, Behold thy righteous King
cometh to thee,'' (Zechariah 2:10;)

intimating that the righteousness, which is otherwise wanting to us, is brought to us by the coming of Christ.

The second likeness which the Apostle states is as to the kingdom of peace. This peace indeed is the fruit of that righteousness which he has mentioned. It hence follows that wherever Christ's kingdom extends, there peace ought to be, as we find in Isaiah 2 and 9, and in other places. But as peace among the Hebrews means also a prosperous and happy state, it may be so taken here: yet I prefer to understand it here of that inward peace which tranquilizes the conscience and renders it confident before God. And the excellency of this blessing cannot be sufficiently estimated, unless you consider on the other hand, how miserable a thing it is to be tormented by constant inquietude; which must necessarily be the case until we have our consciences pacified by being reconciled to God through Christ.

3. Without father, etc. I prefer this rendering to that of ``unknown father;'' for the Apostle meant to express something more emphatic than that the family of Melchisedec was obscure or unknown. Nor does this objection disturb me,

[112] The passage reads better, and the meaning appears more evident, when we consider was as understood in the first verse, as Calvin does. The first part refers to what he did as to Abraham: and the second, to what he was as a type of Christ. Now this Melchisedec, king of Salem, was a priest of the most high God; who met Abraham returning from the overthrow of the kings, and blessed him; to whom Abraham also divided the tenth of all: being first indeed, by interpretation, King of righteousness, and then also King of Salem, which is, King of Peace; without father, without mother, without decent, having no beginning of days or end of life, but By saying that he “blessed” Abraham, we are to render that he prayed God to bless him, as we find it explained in Genesis 14:19.

[113] It is not as a king, but as a priest that Christ is our righteousness. Therefore strictly speaking, as a king, he administers righteousness, or acts righteously. “The king of righteousness,” may be rendered, as Stuart does, a righteous king. See Psalm 45:7 — Ed.

that the reality does not correspond with the figure or type, because Christ has a Father in heaven, and had a mother on earth; for the Apostle immediately explains his meaning by adding without descent, or kindred. He then exempts Melchisedec from what is common to others, a descent by birth; by which he means that he is eternal, so that his beginning from men was not to be sought after. It is indeed certain that he descended from parents; but the Apostle does not speak of him here in his private capacity; on the contrary, he sets him forth as a type of Christ. He therefore allows himself to see nothing in him but what Scripture contains. For in treating of things respecting Christ, such reverence ought to be observed as not to know anything but what is written in the Word of the Lord. Now, as the Holy Spirit in mentioning this king, the most illustrious of his age, is wholly silent as to his birth, and makes afterwards no record of his death, is not this the same thing as though eternity was to be ascribed to him? And what was shadowed forth in Melchisedec is really exhibited in Christ. It behooves us then to be satisfied with this moderate view, that while Scripture sets forth to us Melchisedec as one who had never been born and never died, it shows to us as in a mirror, that Christ has neither a beginning nor an end. [114]

But we hence also learn how much reverence and sobriety is required as to the spiritual mysteries of God: for what is not found read in Scripture the Apostle is not only willing to be ignorant of, but also would have us to seek to know. And surely it is not lawful for us to allege anything of Christ from our own thoughts. And Melchisedec is not to be considered here, as they say, in his private capacity, but as a sacred type of Christ; nor ought we to think that it was accidentally or inadvertently omitted that no kindred is ascribed to him, and that nothing is said of his death; but on the contrary, that this was done designedly by the Spirit, in order to give us an idea of one above the common order of men. There seems therefore to be no probability in the conjecture of those who say that Melchisedec was Shem the son of Noah; for if we make him to be some known individual, we destroy this third likeness between Melchisedec and Christ.

Made like, or assimilated, etc. Not as far as what was typified required; for we must always bear in mind that there is but an analogy between the thing signified and the sign; for they make themselves ridiculous who imagine that he came down from heaven, in order that there might be a perfect similarity. It is enough that we see in him the lineaments of Christ, as the form of the living man may be seen in his picture, while yet the man himself is very different from what represents him. [115] It seems not to be worth one's while to refute the

[114] Some regard what is said of Melchisedec being without father, etc., as meaning that he was so in his office as a king and priest, there being no account of a predecessor or of a successor to him; but this view cannot be taken on account of these words, "without mother, without descent," etc., Calvin gives the explanation commonly received. — Ed.

[115] Our version "made like," etc., is objected to by Stuart; and he renders it, "being like," alleging that the Apostle's object is to show, not that Melchisedec was "made like" to Christ as a priest, but the contrary, according to Psalm 110:4. But the object here seems to be different: he shows why it is that there is no record of Melchisedec's office as to its beginning or end; it was that he might be made a fit type to represent the Son of God. — Ed.

delirious notions of those who dream that Christ himself, or the holy Spirit, or an angel, appeared at that time; unless indeed one thought it to be the duty of a rightminded man to dispute with Postillus and such fanatics; for that impostor asserts that he is Melchisedec with no less supercilious folly than those mad spirits of old, mentioned by Jerome, who pretended that they were Christ.

Heb 7:4-10

Hebrews Chapter 7:4-10

4. Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils.

4. Considerate autem quantus sit hic, cui et decimas dedit de spoliis Abraham patriarcha.

5. And verily they that are of the sons of Levi, who receive the office of the priesthood, have a commandment to take tithes of the people according to the law, that is, of their brethren, though they come out of the loins of Abraham:

5. Atque ii quidem qui sacerdotium accipiunt, qui scilicet sunt ex filiis Levi, praeceptum habent a populo decimas sumendi juxta legem, hoc est, a fratribus suis licet egressis ex lumbis Abrahae:

6. But he whose descent is not counted from them received tithes of Abraham, and blessed him that had the promises.

6. Cujus autem genus non recensetur ex ipsis, decimas sumpsit ab Abraham, et habentem promissiones benedixit.

7. And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better.

7. Porro sine controversia quod minus est a potiore benedicitur.

8. And here men that die receive tithes; but there he receiveth them, of whom it is witnessed that he liveth.

8. Atque hic quidem homines qui moriuntur, decimas accipiunt; illic autem is de quo testatum est quod vivat:

9. And as I may so say, Levi also, who receiveth tithes, payed tithes in Abraham.

9. Et ut ita loquar, in Abraham decimatus est ipse Levi qui decimas solet accipere;

10. For he was yet in the loins of his father, when Melchisedec met him.

10. Nam is adhuc in lumbis patris erat quum occurrerit Abrahae Melchisedec.

4. Now consider, etc. This is the fourth comparison between Christ and Melchisedec, that Abraham presented tithes to him. But though tithes were instituted for several reasons, yet the Apostle here refers only to what serves his present purpose. One reason why tithes were paid to the Levites was, because they were the children of Abraham, to whose seed the land was promised. It was, then, by a hereditary right that a portion of the land was allotted to them; for as they were not allowed to possess land, a compensation was made to them in tithes. There was also another reason, --- that as they were occupied in the service of God and the public ministry of the Church, it was right that

they should be supported at the public cost of the people. Then the rest of the Israelites owed them tithes as a remuneration for their work. But these reasons bear not at all on the present subject; therefore, the Apostle passes them by. The only reason now alleged is, that as the people offered the tithes as a sacred tribute to God, the Levites only received them. It hence appears that it was no small honor that God in a manner substituted them for himself. Then Abraham, being one of the chief sergeants of God and a prophet, having offered tithes to Melchisedec the priest, thereby confessed that Melchisedec excelled him in dignity. If, then, the patriarch Abraham owned him more honourable than himself, his dignity must have been singular and extraordinary. The word patriarch is mentioned for the sake of setting forth his dignity; for it was in the highest degree honourable to him to have been called a father in the Church of God.

Then the argument is this, --- Abraham, who excelled all others, was yet inferior to Melchisedec; then Melchisedec had the highest place of honor, and is to be regarded as superior to all the sons of Levi. The first part is proved, for what Abraham owed to God he gave to Melchisedec: then by paying him the tenth he confessed himself to be inferior.

5. And verily they, etc. It would be more suitable to render the words thus, ``because they are the sons of Levi.'' The Apostle indeed does not assign it as a reason that they received tithes because they were the sons of Levi; but he is comparing the whole tribe with Melchisedec in this way. Though God granted to the Levites the right of requiring tithes from the people, and thus set them above all the Israelites, yet they have all descended from the same parent; and Abraham, the father of them all, paid tithes to a priest of another race: then all the descendants of Abraham are inferior to this priest. Thus the right conferred on the Levites was particular as to the rest of their brethren; yet Melchisedec, without exception, occupies the highest place, so that all are inferior to him. Some think that the tenths of tenths are intended, which the Levites paid to the higher priests; but there is no reason thus to confine the general declaration. The view, then, I have given is the most probable.

6. Blessed him, etc. This is the fifth comparison between Christ and Melchisedec. The Apostle assumes it as an admitted principle that the less is blessed by the greater; and then he adds that Melchisedec blessed Abraham: hence the conclusion is that the less was Abraham. But for the sake of strengthening his argument he again raises the dignity of Abraham; for the more glorious Abraham is made, the higher the dignity of Melchisedec appears. For this purpose he says that Abraham had the promises; by which he means that he was the first of the holy race with whom God made the covenant of eternal life. It was not indeed a common honor that God chose him from all the rest that he might deposit with him the privilege of adoption and the testimony of his love. But all this was no hindrance that he should not submit himself in all his preeminence to the priesthood of Melchisedec. We hence see how great he was to whom Abraham gave place in these two things, --- that

he suffered himself to be blessed by him, and that he offered him tithes as to God's vicegerent.

7. The less is, [116] etc. Let us first know what the word blessed means here. It means indeed a solemn praying by which he who is invested with some high and public honor, recommends to God men in private stations and under his ministry. Another way of blessing is when we pray for one another; which is commonly done by all the godly. But this blessing mentioned by the Apostle was a symbol of greater authority. Thus Isaac blessed his son Jacob, and Jacob himself blessed his grandsons, Ephraim and Manasseh. (Genesis 27:27; 48:15.) This was not done mutually, for the son could not do the like to the father; but a higher authority was required for such a blessing as this. And this appears more evident still from Numbers 6:23, where a command is given to the priest to bless the people, and then a promise is immediately added, that they would be blessed whom they blessed. It hence appears that the blessing of the priest depended on this, --- that it was not so much man's blessing as that of God. For as the priest in offering sacrifices represented Christ, so in blessing the people he was nothing more than a minister and legate of the supreme God. In the same sense ought to be understood what Luke records when he says, that Christ lifted up his hands and blessed the Apostles. (Luke 24:50.) The practice of lifting up the hands he no doubt borrowed from the priests, in order to show that he was the person by whom God the Father blesses us. Of this blessing mention is also made in Psalm 116:17; 118:1

Let us now apply this idea to what the apostle treats of: The blessing of the priest, while it is a divine work is also an evidence of a higher honor; then Melchisedec, in blessing Abraham, assumed to himself a higher dignity. This he did, not presumptuously, but according to his right as a priest: then he was more eminent than Abraham. Yet Abraham was he with whom God was pleased to make the covenant of salvation; though, then, he was superior to all others, yet he was surpassed by Melchisedec. [117]

8. Of whom it is witnessed that he liveth. He takes the silence respecting his death, as I have said, as an evidence of his life. This would not indeed hold as to others, but as to Melchisedec it ought rightly to be so regarded, inasmuch as he was a type of Christ. For as the spiritual kingdom and priesthood of Christ are spoken of here, there is no place left for human conjectures; nor is it lawful for us to seek to know anything farther than what we read in Scripture. But we are not hence to conclude that the man who met Abraham is yet alive, as some have childishly thought, for this is to be applied to the other person whom he

[116] The words are in the neuter gender, “what is less blessed by the greater.” This is an idiom; the neuter is put for the masculine, as {πᾶν} is used for all men in John 6:37, and {πᾶν} {μωρὰ} for foolish men in 1 Corinthians 1:27. The meaning is, ``the inferior is blessed by his superior.'' --- Ed

[117] There are three kinds of blessing mentioned in Scripture, — prayer for a blessing, Matthew 5:44; prophetic blessing, as in the case of the patriarchs, chapter 11:20, 21; and sacerdotal blessing, as recorded in Numbers 6:23-27. The latter is what is meant here. It was a blessing announced in the name of the Lord, or a prayer offered in his name, and by his authority. — Ed.

represented, even the Son of God. And by these words the Apostle intended to show, that the dignity of Melchisedec's priesthood was to be perpetual, while that of the Levites was temporary. [118]

For he thus reasons, --- those to whom the Law assigns tithes are dying men; by which it was indicated that the priesthood would some time be abrogated, as their life came to an end: but the Scripture makes no mention of the death of Melchisedec, when it relates that tithes were paid to him; so the authority of his priesthood is limited by no time, but on the contrary there is given an indication of perpetuity. And this is added for this purpose, lest a posterior law, as it is usual, should seem to take away from the authority of a former law. For it might have been otherwise objected and said, that the right which Melchisedec formerly possessed is now void and null, because God had introduced another law by Moses, by which he transferred the right to the Levites. But the Apostle anticipates this objection by saying, that tithes were paid to the Levites only for a time, because they did not live; but that Melchisedec, because he is immortal, retains even to the end what was once given to him by God.

9. Levi also, etc. He advances farther, and says, that even Levi himself, who was then in the loins of Abraham, was not exempt from the same subordination; for Abraham, by paying tithes, made himself and his posterity inferior to the priesthood of Melchisedec. [119] But here one, on the other hand, may say, that in the same way Judas also of whose seed Christ was born, paid tithes. But this knot can be easily untied, when one considers two things which are settled beyond all dispute among Christians: first, Christ is not to be counted simply as one of the sons of Abraham, but is to be exempted by a peculiar privilege from the common order of men; and this is what he himself said, ``If he is the son of David, then does David call him his Lord?'' (Matthew 22:45;) secondly, since Melchisedec is a type of Christ, it is by no means reasonable that the one should be set in opposition to the other; for we must remember that common saying, that what is subordinate is not in opposition: hence the type, which comes short of the reality, ought by no means to be opposed to it, nor can it be, for such is the conflict of equals.

These five particulars, mentioned by the Apostle, complete the comparison between Christ and Melchisedec, and thus is dissipated the gloss of those who seek to show that the chief likeness between them is in offering of bread and wine. We see that the Apostle carefully, and even scrupulously, examines here each of these points; he mentions the name of the man, the seat of his kingdom, the perpetuity of his life, his right to tithes, and his benediction.

[118] Critics often make a difficulty where is none. The obvious meaning of this verse is given by Calvin, — continual succession, owing to death, betokened the unenduring character of the Levitical priesthood; but the perpetuity of that Melchisedec is proved by this, that he lives. To live often means to be perpetual; and to die intimates what is evanescent. The Levites were dying men, which showed the character of their office, Melchisedec is represented as not dying, which betokens that his office as a priest is perpetual. — Ed.

[119] Our version is “For he was yet,” etc., {ἔτι}, here is not yet, but even, as in Luke 1:15, or then, as rendered by Stuart; ``For he was even (or then) in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him.'' --- Ed

There is, forsooth! in these things, less importance than in the oblation! Shall we say that the Spirit of God, through forgetfulness, omitted this, so that he dwelt on minor things, and left unnoticed the chief thing, and what was most necessary for his purpose? I marvel the more that so many of the ancient doctors of the Church were so led away by this notion, that they dwelt only on the offering of bread and wine. And thus they spoke, ``Christ is a priest according to the order of Melchisedec; and Melchisedec offered bread and wine; then the sacrifice of bread and wine is suitable to the priesthood of Christ.'' The Apostle will hereafter speak largely of the ancient sacrifices; but of this new sacrifice of bread and wine he says not a word. Whence then did ecclesiastical writers derive this notion? Doubtless, as one error usually leads to another, having of themselves imagined a sacrifice in Christ's Supper without any command from him, and thus adulterated the Supper by adding a sacrifice, they afterwards endeavored to find out plausible arguments here and there in order to disguise and cover their error. This offering of bread and wine pleased them, and was instantly laid hold on without any discretion. For who can concede that these men were more intelligent than the Spirit of God? Yet if we receive what they teach, we must condemn God's Spirit for inadvertence in having omitted a matter so important, especially as the question is avowedly handled!

I hence conclude, that the ancients invented a sacrifice, of which Moses had never thought; for Melchisedec offered bread and wine, not to God, but on the contrary to Abraham and his companions. These are the words, ``Melchisedec, king of Salem, went out to meet him, and brought forth bread and wine; and the same was priest to the most high God, and blessed him.'' (Genesis 14:18.) The first thing mentioned was a royal act; he refreshed those wearied after the battle and their journey with sustenance; the blessing was the act of a priest. If then his offering had anything mystical in it, the completion of it is to be found in Christ, when he fed the hungry and those wearied with fatigue. But the Papists are extremely ridiculous, who though they deny that there is bread and wine in the Mass, yet prattle about the sacrifice of bread and wine.

Heb 7:11-14

Hebrews Chapter 7:11-14

11. If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron?

11. Porro si consummatio per Leviticum sacerdotium erat (populus enim sub eo legem accepit) quid adhuc opus fuit secundum ordinem Melchisedec alterum exoriri sacerdotem, et non secundum ordinem Aaron dici?

12. For the priesthood being changed, there is made of necessity a change also of the law.

12. Etenim dum transfertur sacerdotium, necessario etiam fit legis transla-

tio.

13. For he of whom these things are spoken pertaineth to another tribe, of which no man gave attendance at the altar.

13. Certe is de quo haec dicuntur, alterius fuit tribus particeps, ex qua nemo adstitit altari.

14. For it is evident that our Lord sprang out of Juda; of which tribe Moses spake nothing concerning priesthood.

14. Clarum enim est quod ex tribu Judae natus sit Dominus noster, de qua tribu nihil loquutus est Moses quod ad sacerdotium spectat.

11. If therefore perfection, or, moreover if perfection, [120] etc. From the same testimony the Apostle concludes, that the old covenant was abrogated by the coming of Christ. He has hitherto spoken of the office and person of the priest; but as God had instituted a priesthood for the purpose of ratifying the Law, the former being abolished, the latter necessarily ceases. That this may be better understood, we must bear in mind the general truth, --- That no covenant between God and man is in force and ratified, except it rests on a priesthood. Hence the Apostle says, that the Law was introduced among the ancient people under the Levitical priesthood; by which he intimates, that it not only prevailed during the time of the Law, but that it was instituted, as we have said for the sake of confirming the Law.

He now reasons thus, If the ministry of the Church was perfect under the order of Aaron, why was it necessary to return to another order? For in perfection nothing can be changed. It then follows, that the ministry of the Law was not perfect, for that new order was to be introduced of which David speaks. [121]

For under it the people received the Law, etc. This parenthesis is inserted in order that we may know that the Law was annexed to the priesthood. The Apostle had in view to prove that in the Law of Moses there was no ultimate end at which we ought to stop. This he proves by the abrogation of the priesthoods and in this way: Had the authority of the ancient priesthood been such as to be sufficient fully to establish the Law, God would have never introduced in its place another and a different priesthood. Now, as some might doubt whether the abolition of the Law followed the abolition of the priesthood, he says that the Law was not only brought in under it, but that it was also by it established. [122]

12. For the priesthood being changed, or, transferred, etc. As the authority

[120] The particles {Ei} {μὲν} {οὖν}, are rendered by Elsner, ``but if,'' --- by Doddridge, ``now if,'' --- by Stuart, ``moreover if,'' and by Macknight, ``moreover, if indeed;'' and all these consider that there is here a commencement from what has preceded. --- Ed

[121] "Perfection," or completion, rather than consummation is no doubt the best word {τελείωσις}. To render it ``perfect expiation,'' as Schleusner does, is not to render the word, but to explain it. The imperfection of the Levitical priesthood was doubtless its capacity really to make an atonement for sin, as its work was ceremonial and typical: but it was enough for the present purpose merely to say that it was not perfect, as it failed to answer the great end of establishing a priesthood. And the Apostle grounds its deficiency, or imperfect character, on the fact that a priest of another order had been promised. This was an argument which the Jews could not resist, as it was founded on the Scriptures, which they themselves acknowledged as divine. --- Ed

[122] See Appendix Z.

of the Law and the priesthood is the same, Christ became not only a priest, but also a Lawgiver; so that the right of Aaron, as well as of Moses, was transferred to him. The sum of the whole is, that the ministry of Moses was no less temporary than that of Aaron; and hence both were annulled by the coming of Christ, for the one could not stand without the other. By the word Law, we understand what peculiarly belonged to Moses; for the Law contains the rule of life, and the gratuitous covenant of life; and in it we find everywhere many remarkable sentences by which we are instructed as to faith, and as to the fear of God. None of these were abolished by Christ, but only that part which regarded the ancient priesthood.

For Christ is here compared with Moses; whatever then they had in common, is not to be taken to the account, but only the things in which they differ. They in common offer God's mercy to us, prescribe the rule of a holy and godly life, teach us the true worship of God, and exhort us to exercise faith and patience, and all the duties of godliness. But Moses was different from Christ in this respect, that while the love of the Gospel was not as yet made known, he kept the people under veils, set forth the knowledge of Christ by types and shadows, and, in short, accommodated himself to the capacity of ignorant people, and did not rise higher than to puerile elements. We must then remember, that the Law is that part of the ministration which Moses had as peculiarly his own, and different from that of Christ. That law, as it was subordinate to the ancient priesthood, was abolished when the priesthood was abolished. And Christ, being made a priest, was invested also with the authority of a legislator, that he might be the teacher and interpreter of the new covenant. At the same time, the word Law is applied, though not in its strict sense, to the Gospel; but this impropriety of language is so far from having anything harsh in it, that on account of the contrast it adds beauty to the sentence, as we find in the seventh chapter of the Epistle to the Romans

Moreover, the impiety of the Pope is extremely arrogant, who has inserted this article in his decretals, that he himself is now invested with the same authority as Aaron formerly had, because the Law and also the priesthood have been transferred to him. We see what the Apostle says; he maintains that ceremonies have ceased since the time when Christ came forth with command to proclaim the new covenant. It is then absurd hence to conclude, that anything has been transferred to the ministers of Christ; for Christ himself is alone contrasted here with Moses and Aaron. Under what pretext then can Antichrist arrogate to himself any such authority? I do not indeed speak now for the sake of disproving so gross an arrogance; but it is worth while to remind readers of this sacrilegious audacity, that they may know that this notorious servant of the servants of Christ wholly disregards the honor of his Master, and boldly mangles the Scriptures, that he may have some cloak for his own tyranny.

13. For he of whom these things are spoken, or, said, [123] etc. As the Apostle

[123] Calvin renders “for”, {γὰρ}, ``doubtless --- certe,'' and Stuart, ``now;'' but it may better be rendered here, ``for,'' as a reason is given for a change in ``the law'' respecting the priesthood. The {γὰρ} in the former

was speaking to them who confessed Jesus the Son of Mary to be the Christ, he proves that an end was put to the ancient priesthood, because the new Priest, who had been set in the place of the old, was of another tribe, and not of Levi; for according to the Law the honor of the priesthood was to continue, by a special privilege, in that tribe. But he says that it was evident that Christ was born of the tribe of Judah, for it was then a fact commonly known. As then they acknowledged that he was the Christ, it was also necessary that they should be persuaded that he was the son of David; for he who had been promised could derive his origin from no other.

Heb 7:15-22

Hebrews Chapter 7:15-22

15. And it is yet far more evident: for that after the similitude of Melchisedec there ariseth another priest,

15. Idque magis etiam liquet, siquidem ad similitudinem Melchisedec exoritur sacerdos alius;

16. Who is made, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.

16. Qui non juxta legem mandati carnalis factus fuit, sed secundum potentiam vitae insolubilis.

17. For he testifieth, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.

17. Testatur enim ad hunc modum, Tu serdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedec.

18. For there is verily a disannulling of the commandment going before for the weakness and unprofitableness thereof.

18. Abrogatio enim sit prioris mandati propter imbecillitatem et inutilitatem.

19. For the law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in of a better hope did; by the which we draw nigh unto God.

19. Nihil enim lex perfecit, sed accessit introductio ad spem potiorem per quam appropinquamus Deo:

20. And inasmuch as not without an oath he was made priest:

20. Atque hoc potiorem, quod non absque jurejurando res acta sit: nam illi quidem citra jusjurandum sacerdotes facti sunt:

21. (For those priests were made without an oath; but this with an oath by him that said unto him, The Lord sware and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec:)

21. Hic vero cum jurejurando, per eum qui dixit illi, Tu sacerdos in aeternum secundum ordinem Melchisedec.

22. By so much was Jesus made a surety of a better testament.

22. Tanto potioris Testamenti sponsor factus est Iesus.

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verse may be rendered ``indeed,'' or ``wherefore'' as by Macknight. In the 11th verse, the Apostle proves the imperfection or defectiveness of the Levitical priesthood, by the promise of another priest after the order of Melchisedec for Christ was not of the tribe specified by the Law. --- Ed

15. And it is yet far more evident, etc. He proves by another argument, that the Law is abolished. He reasoned before as to the person of the priest, but now as to the nature of the priesthood, and the reason for which it was appointed. The ancient priesthood, he says, had to do with external rites; but in Christ's priesthood there is nothing but what is spiritual. It hence appears, that the former was evanescent and temporary; but that the latter was to be perpetual.

16. Carnal commandment, etc. It was called carnal, because it refers to things corporal, that is, to external rites. We know how Aaron and his sons were initiated into their office. What was fulfilled in Christ by the hidden and celestial power of the Spirit, was shadowed forth under the Law by ointment, various vestments, the sprinkling of blood, and other earthly ceremonies. Now this kind of institution was suitable to the nature of the priesthood; it hence follows, that the priesthood itself was liable to change. At the same time, as we shall hereafter see, the priesthood was not so carnal, but that it was still spiritual; but the Apostle here refers only to the difference between Christ and Aaron. However spiritual then might have been the meaning of these shadows, they were yet but shadows in themselves; and as they were made up of the elements of this world, they may justly be called earthly.

After the power of an endless life, or, of an indissoluble life. As Christ is a perpetual priest, it was necessary, that he should be different from Aaron as to the manner of his appointment; and so it was, for it was not Moses, a mortal man, who consecrated him, but the Holy Spirit, and that not with oil, nor with the blood of goats, nor with the outward pomp of vestments, but with celestial power, which the Apostle here sets in opposition to weak elements. We hence see how the eternity of his priesthood was exhibited in Christ.

17. Thou art a priest forever, etc. It is on the single word forever, that the Apostle lays stress in this passage; for he confirms what he said of an indissoluble life. He then shows that Christ differs from the whole race of Levi, because he is made a priest for ever. [124]

But here it may be objected, as the Jews also do, that the word, {לעולם} laoulam, does not always mean eternity, but the extent of one age, or, at farthest, a long time; and it is added, that when Moses speaks of the ancient sacrifices, he often uses this expression, ``This ordinance shall be forever.'' (Exodus 12:17, and 19:9.) To this I answer that whenever the sacrifices of the Law are mentioned, ``forever'' is to be confined to the time of the Law; nor ought this to be deemed strange; for by the coming of Christ a certain renovation of the world was effected. Whenever, then, Moses speaks of his own ministration, he extends the longest time no farther than to Christ. It must yet be also observed, that ``forever'' is applied to the ancient sacrifices, not with regard to the ex-

[124] This paragraph extends from the 11th verse to the end of the 17th. The “law” parenthetically referred to in the 11th, seems not to be the Mosaic Law generally, as too commonly supposed, but the law respecting the Levitical priesthood, as it appears evident from the 12th and the following verses, for what is spoken of is Christ as being a priest not in succession from Aaron, but according to the order of Melchisedec. See Appendix A 2. — Ed.

ternal ceremony, but on account of their mystical signification. On the present occasion, however, this reason ought to be sufficient, that Moses and his ministrations were for ever; that is, until the coming of the kingdom of Christ, under whom the world was renovated. Now when Christ is come, and a perpetual priesthood is given to him, we can find no end to his age, so that it cannot terminate after a certain period of time. So when applied to him, the word ought to be understood in the sense of eternity; for by the context we are always to judge of the meaning of the word, {לעולם{ laoulam

18. For there is verily a disannulling, or abrogation, etc. As the Apostle's discourse depends on this hinge, that the Law together with the priesthood had come to an end, he explains the reason why it ought to have been abolished, even because it was weak and unprofitable. And he speaks thus in reference to the ceremonies, which had nothing substantial in them, nor in themselves anything available to salvation; for the promise of favor annexed to them, and what Moses everywhere testifies that God would be pacified by sacrifices and that sins would be expiated, did not properly belong to sacrifices, but were only adventitious to them. For as all types had a reference to Christ, so from him they derived all their virtue and effect; nay, of themselves they availed nothing or effected nothing; but their whole efficacy depended on Christ alone

But as the Jews foolishly set up these in opposition to Christ, the Apostle, referring to this notion, shows the difference between these things and Christ. For as soon as they are separated from Christ, there is nothing left in them, but the weakness of which he speaks; in a word, there is no benefit to be found in the ancient ceremonies, except as they refer to Christ; for in this way they so made the Jews acquainted with God's grace, that they in a manner kept them in expectation of it. Let us then remember that the Law is useless, when separated from Christ. And he also confirms the same truth by calling it the commandment going before; for it is a wellknown and common saying, that former laws are abrogated by the latter. The Law had been promulgated long before David; but he was in possession of his kingdom when he proclaimed this prophecy respecting the appointment of a new priest; this new Law then annulled the former.

19. For the Law made nothing perfect, etc. As he had spoken rather harshly of the Law, he now mitigates or, as it were, corrects that asperity; for he concedes to it some utility, as it had pointed out the way which leads at length to salvation. It was, however, of such a kind as to be far short of perfection. The Apostle then reasons thus: The Law was only a beginning; then something more perfect was necessarily, to follow; for it is not fit that God's children should always continue in childish elements. By the word bringing in, or introduction, he means a certain preparation made by the Law, as children are taught in those elements which smooth the way to what is higher. But as the preposition {ἐπὶ} denotes a consequence, when one thing follows another; it ought, as I think, to be thus rendered, ``but added was an introduction into a better hope.'' For he mentions two introductions, according to my view; the first by Melchisedec as a

type; and the second by the Law, which was in time later. Moreover, by Law he designates the Levitical priesthood, which was superadded to the priesthood of Melchisedec.

By a better hope is to be understood the condition of the faithful under the reign of Christ; but he had in view the fathers, who could not be satisfied with the state in which they were then, but aspired to higher things. Hence that saying, ``Many kings and prophets desired to see the things which ye see.'' (Luke 10:24.) They were therefore led by the hand of the Law as a schoolmaster, that they might advance farther. [125]

By the which we draw nigh, etc. There is to be understood here an implied contrast between us and the fathers; for in honor and privilege we excel them, as God has communicated to us a full knowledge of himself, but he appeared to them as it were afar off and obscurely. And there is an allusion here made to the tabernacle or the temple; for the people stood afar off in the court, nor was there a nearer access to the sanctuary opened to any one except to the priests; and into the interior sanctuary the highest priest only entered; but now, the tabernacle being removed, God admits us into a familiar approach to himself, which the fathers were not permitted to have. Then he who still holds to the shadows of the Law, or seeks to restore them, not only obscures the glory of Christ, but also deprives us of an immense benefit; for he puts God at a great distance from us, to approach whom there is a liberty granted to us by the Gospel. And whosoever continues in the Law, knowingly and willingly deprives himself of the privilege of approaching nigh to God.

20. And inasmuch as not without an oath, etc. Here is another argument, why the Law ought to give place to the Gospel; for God has set Christ's priesthood above that of Aaron, since in honor to the former he was pleased to make an oath. For when he appointed the ancient priests, he introduced no oath; but it is said of Christ, the Lord swore; which was doubtless done for the sake of honoring him. We see the end for which he again quotes the Psalmist, even that we may know, that more honor through God's oath was given to Christ than to any others. But we must bear in mind this truth, that a priest is made that he may be the surety of a covenant. The Apostle hence concludes, that the covenant which God has made by Christ with us, is far more excellent than the old covenant of which Moses was the interpreter.

Heb 7:23-28

Hebrews Chapter 7:23-28

23. And they truly were many priests, because they were not suffered to continue by reason of death:

[125] Calvin is peculiar in his view of this verse. He considered the Law to be “an introduction to a better hope.” Many agree with our version, such as Beza, Doddridge, Macknight, Stuart, etc. But there are those who render “introduction” in connection with “disannulling.” See Appendix B 2. — Ed.

23. Et illi quidem plures facti fuerunt sacerdotes, quod prohiberentur morti permanere:

24. But this man, because he continueth ever, hath an unchangeable priesthood.

24. Hic autem quia perpetuo manet immutabile habet sacerdotium.

25. Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.

25. Unde et servare in aeternum potest eos qui per ipsum Deo appropinquant, semper vivens ut intercedat pro nobis.

26. For such an high priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens;

26. Talis enim nos decebat Pontifex, sanctus, innocens, impollutus, segregatus a peccatoribus, et excelsior coelis factus;

27. Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's: for this he did once, when he offered up himself.

27. Qui non necesse habeat quotidie, quemadmodum sacerdotes, primum pro suis peccatis hostias offerre, deinde pro populi: hoc enim semel fecit, quum seipsum obtulit.

28. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore.

28. Lex quidem homines constituit sacerdotes habentes informatem; sermo autem jurisjurandi, quod lege posterius est, Filium in aeternum perfectum.

23. And they truly, etc. He had already touched on this comparison; but as the subject deserved more attention, he unfolds it more fully, though the point discussed is different from what it was before; for then he concluded that the ancient priesthood was to come to an end because they who exercised it were mortal; but now he simply shows that Christ remains perpetually a priest. This he does by an argument taken from things unequal; the ancient priests were many, for death put an end to their priesthood; but there is no death to prevent Christ from discharging his office. Then he alone is a perpetual priest. Thus a different cause produces different effects.

25. Wherefore he is able to save, etc. This is the fruit of an eternal priesthood, even our salvation, if indeed we gather this fruit by faith as we ought to do. For where death is or a change, you will there seek salvation in vain; hence they who cleave to the ancient priesthood, can never attain salvation. When he says, them that come unto God, or who approach God, by this phrase he points out the faithful who alone enjoy the salvation procured by Christ; but he yet at the same time indicates what faith ought to regard in a mediator. The chief good of man is to be united to his God, with whom is the fountain of life and of all blessings; but their own unworthiness drives all away from any access to him. Then the peculiar office of a mediator is to bring us help in this respect, and to stretch out his hand to us that he may lead us to heaven. And he ever

alludes to the ancient shadows of the Law; for though the high priest carried the names of the twelve tribes on his shoulders and symbols on his breast, yet he alone entered the sanctuary, while the people stood in the court. But now by relying on Christ the Mediator we enter by faith into heaven, for there is no longer any veil intervening, but God appears to us openly, and lovingly invites us to a familiar access. [126]

Seeing he ever liveth, etc. What sort of pledge and how great is this of love towards us! Christ liveth for us, not for himself! That he was received into a blessed immortality to reign in heaven, this has taken place, as the Apostle declares, for our sake. Then the life, and the kingdom, and the glory of Christ are all destined for our salvation as to their object; nor has Christ any thing, which may not be applied to our benefit; for he has been given to us by the Father once for all on this condition, that all his should be ours. He at the same time teaches us by what Christ is doing, that he is performing his office as a priest; for it belongs to a priest to intercede for the people, that they may obtain favor with God. This is what Christ is ever doing, for it was for this purpose that he rose again from the dead. Then of right, for his continual intercession, he claims for himself the office of the priesthood.

26. For such an high priest, etc. He reasons from what is necessarily connected with the subject. These conditions, or qualifications, as they commonly say, are of necessity required in a priest --- that he should be just, harmless, and pure from every spot. This honor belongs to Christ alone. Then what was required for the real discharge of the office was wanting in the priests of the law. It hence follows, that there was no perfection in the Levitical priesthood; nor was it indeed in itself legitimate, unless it was subservient to that of Christ; and, doubtless, the external ornaments of the high priest indicated this defect; for why were those costly and splendid vestments used with which God commanded Aaron to be adorned while performing holy rites, except that they were symbols of a holiness and excellency far exceeding all human virtues? Now, these types were introduced, because the reality did not exist. It then appears that Christ alone is the fully qualified priest.

Separate from sinners, etc. This clause includes all the rest. For there was some holiness, and harmlessness, and purity in Aaron, but only a small measure; for he and his sons were defiled with many spots; but Christ, exempt from the common lot of men, is alone free from every sin; hence in him alone is found

[126] Calvin's version of the former part of the verse is, "Hence he is also able to save for ever those who through him draw nigh to God." Instead of "to the uttermost" of our version, we have here "forever," according to the Vulg. Macknight renders the phrase the same and Stuart "always." But the original, {εἰς} {τὸ} {παντελὲς}, do not refer to time, but to what is fully or perfectly done. It is so taken by Erasmus, Beza, Capellus and Schleusner. There is another difference, whether to connect the words with ``able'' or with ``save.'' Most join them with ``save,'' ``he is able also fully (or, for ever) able to save.'' When we consider what the subject is --- the perfection of Christ as a priest, and not the character of his salvation. We must see that the latter is the right view, and that the passage ought to have been thus rendered, --- ``And hence he is fully (or perfectly) able to save those who through him come to God.'' And the words which follow may be deemed as affording a reason for this, ``always living in order to intercede for them,'' or, ``to interpose in their behalf.'' However, there is not much difference in the meaning, whether the word ``fully'' or perfectly be connected with ``able'' or with ``save;'' the same truth is essentially conveyed. --- Ed.

real holiness and innocency. For he is not said to be separate from us, because he repels us from his society, but because he has this excellency above us all, that he is free from every uncleanness. [127]

And we hence conclude, that all prayers, which are not supported by Christ's intercession, are rejected.

It may, however, be asked as to angels, whether they are separate from sinners? And if so, what prevents them from discharging the offices of the priesthood, and from being our mediators with God? To this there is an easy reply: --- No one is a lawful priest, except he is appointed by God's command; and God has nowhere conferred this honor on angels. It would then be a sacrilegious usurpation, were they, without being called, to intrude into the office; besides, it is necessary, as we shall presently see at the beginning of the next chapter, that the Mediator between God and men should himself be a man. At the same time the last thing mentioned here by the Apostle is abundantly sufficient as an answer to the question; for no one can unite us to God but he who reaches to God; and this is not the privilege of angels, for they are not said to have been made higher than the heavens. It then belongs to Christ alone to conciliate God to us, as he has ascended above all the heavens. Now, these words mean the same as though Christ were said to have been placed above all orders of creatures, so that he stands eminent above all angels.

27. Who needeth not, etc. He pursues the contrast between Christ and the Levitical priests; and he points out especially two defects, so to speak, in the ancient priesthood, by which it appears that it was not perfect. And here, indeed, he only touches briefly on the subject; but he afterwards explains every particular more at large, and particularly that which refers to the daily sacrifices, as the main question was respecting these. It is briefly also that I will now touch on the several points. One of the defects of the ancient priesthood was, that the high priest offered sacrifices for his own sins; how then could he have pacified God for others, who had God justly displeased with himself? Then they were by no means equal to the work of expiating for sins. The other defect was, that they offered various sacrifices daily; it hence follows, that there was no real expiation; for sins remain when purgation is repeated. The case with Christ was wholly different; for he himself needed no sacrifice, as he was sprinkled with no spot of sin; and such was the sacrifice, that it was alone sufficient to the end of the world, for he offered himself. [128]

28. For the law, etc. From the defects of men he draws his conclusion as to the weakness of the priesthood, as though he had said, ``Since the law makes

[127] Christ as a priest was “holy” with regard to God; “harmless,” or innocent, or guileless, according to Chrysostom, with respect to men; “undefiled” as to himself, morally so, as the priests under the law were so ceremonially; “separate,” or separated “from sinners” removed from their society to another place, and “exalted higher than the heavens.” There is an allusion to the Levitical high priest, especially in the three last words, and a contrast in the two last; the Levitical high priest continued among sinners, Christ is removed from them; the former entered into the holy of holies, the latter has entered into a place higher that the heavens, even the heavens of heavens. How immeasurable is the superiority of our high priest! — Ed.

[128] See Appendix C 2.

no real priests, the defect must by some other means be remedied; and it is remedied by the word of the oath; for Christ was made a priest, being not of the common order of men, but the Son of God, subject to no defect, but adorned and endowed with the highest perfection.'' He again reminds us, that the oath was posterior to the law, in order to show that God, being not satisfied with the priesthood of the law, designed to constitute a better priesthood; for in the institutions of God what succeeds advances the former to a better state, or it abolishes what was designed to exist only for a time.

Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8

Heb 8:1-6

Hebrews Chapter 8:1-6

1. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such an high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens;

1. Porro eurum quae dicuntur summa est, Talem habemus pontificem qui consedit in dextera throni majestatis in coelis;

2. A minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

2. Sanctorum minister et tabernaculi veri quod fixit Dominus et non homo.

3. For every high priest is ordained to offer gifts and sacrifices: wherefore it is of necessity that this man have somewhat also to offer.

3. Omnis enim pontifex ad offerendum dona et sacrificia constituitur; unde necesse est hunc quoque habere quod offerat.

4. For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer gifts according to the law:

4. Sane si in terra esset, ne pontifex quidem esset, quamdiu essent sacerdotes qui secundum legem offerrent dona;

5. Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the tabernacle: for, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.

5. Qui in exemplari et umbra ministrant coelestium, quemadmodum oraculo admonitus fuit Moses, quum tabernaculum esset perfecturus, Vide, inquit, ut facias omnia secundum typum qui tibi ostensus fuit in monte.

6. But now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry, by how much also he is the mediator of a better covenant, which was established upon better promises.

6. Nunc autem excellentius obtinuit ministerium, quanto et potioris testamenti Mediator, quod supeer praestantioiribus promissionibus promulgatum fuit.

1. Now of the things, etc. That readers might know the subject he handles, he reminds them that his object is to prove that Christ's priesthood, by which that of the law had been abolished, is spiritual. He, indeed, proceeds with the same argument; but as he contends with various reasonings, he introduced this

admonition, that he might keep his readers attentive to what he had in view.

He has already shown that Christ is a high priest; he now contends that his priesthood is celestial. It hence follows, that by his coming the priesthood established by Moses under the law was made void, for it was earthly. and as Christ suffered in the humble condition of his flesh, and having taken the form of a servant, made himself of no reputation in the world, (Philippians 2:7;) the Apostle reminds us of his ascension, by which was removed not only the reproach of the cross, but also of that abject and mean condition which he had assumed together with our flesh; for it is by the power of the Spirit which gloriously appeared in the resurrection and the ascension of Christ, that the dignity of his priesthood is to be estimated. He then reasons thus --- ``Since Christ has ascended to the right hand of God, that he might reign gloriously in heaven, he is not the minister of the earthly but of the heavenly sanctuary. [129]

2. Of the sanctuary, or, literally, of holy things, etc. The word is to be taken, as being in the neuter gender; and the Apostle explains himself by saying, of the true tabernacle. [130]

But it may be asked, whether the tabernacle built by Moses was a false one, and presumptuously constructed, for there is an implied contrast in the words? To this I answer, that to us mentioned here is not set in opposition to what is false, but only to what is typical; as we find in John 1:17, ``The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.'' Then the old tabernacle was not the empty inventions of man, but the effigy of the heavenly tabernacle. As, however, a shadow differs from the substance, and the sign from the thing signified, the Apostle denies it to have been the true tabernacle, as though he had said, that it was only a shadow.

Which the Lord pitched, or, fixed, etc. What does the Apostle mean by locating Christ's priesthood in heaven? For doubtless he suffered on earth, and by an earthly blood he atoned for our sins, for he derived his origin from the seed of Abraham; the sacrifice of his death was visible; and lastly, that he might offer himself to the Father, it was necessary for him to descend from heaven to the earth, and as man to become exposed to the sorrows of this mortal life, and at length to death itself. To all this I reply, that whatever of an earthly kind appears at first sight to be in Christ, it is to be viewed spiritually by the eye of faith. Thus his flesh, which proceeded from the seed of Abraham, since it was the temple of God, possessed a vivifying power; yea, the death of Christ became the life of the world, which is certainly above nature. The Apostle

[129] See Appendix D 2.

[130] It is better to take “holy things” as designating the holy duties of the priest, afterwards specified when the offering of gifts and sacrifices is mentioned, than as signifying “the sanctuary.” Christ is a priest and a minister in sacred things, and a minister in the true tabernacle. He has holy things to do, and he does them, not in the shadowy and typical tabernacle, but in that which is real and celestial. We find, that the word in the next chapter means the holiest place, accompanied as here with the article, chapter 9: 8-12, and without the article, the holy place or the sanctuary, chapter 9:2. So then if this meaning be taken, the rendering here ought to be, “the minister of the holiest;” and then “tabernacle” is used as including the whole building, as in chapter 9:2. But the context here seems to favor the former meaning. The version of Doddridge is, “A minister of holy things.” — Ed.

therefore does not refer to what belongs peculiarly to human nature, but to the hidden power of the Spirit; and hence it is, that the death of Christ has nothing earthly in it. When therefore we speak of Christ, let us learn to raise up all our thoughts to the kingdom of God, so that no doubt may remain in us.

Nearly to the same purpose is the language of Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:1; he calls God the builder of this tabernacle, in order to set forth its stability and perpetuity; for, on the other hand, what is built by men's hands, is unstable, and at last sure to perish. But he says this, because redemption was truly a divine work, attained by the death of Christ; and in this the power of Christ manifested itself in a wonderful manner.

3. For every high priest, etc. The Apostle intends to show, that Christ's priesthood cannot coexist with the Levitical priesthood. He proves it in this way, --- ``The Law appointed priests to offer sacrifices to God; it hence appears that the priesthood is an empty name without a sacrifice. But Christ had no sacrifice, such as was offered under the Law; it hence follows, that his priesthood is not earthly or carnal, but one of a more excellent character.''

Let us now examine every clause. The first thing that deserves notice, is that which he teaches that no priest is appointed except to offer gifts; it is hence evident, that no favor from God can be obtained for men except through the interposition of a sacrifice. Hence, that our prayers may be heard, they must be founded on a sacrifice; their audacity, therefore, is altogether pernicious and fatal, who pass by Christ and forget his death, and yet rush into the presence of God. Now, if we wish to pray in a profitable manner, we must learn ever to set before us the death of Christ, which alone sanctifies our prayers. For God will never hear us unless he is reconciled; but he must be first pacified, for our sins cause him to be displeased with us. Sacrifice must necessarily precede, in order that there may be any benefit from prayer.

We may hence further conclude, that no one either among men or angels is qualified for pacifying God, for all are without any sacrifice of their own which they can offer to appease God. And hereby is abundantly exposed the effrontery of the Papists who make Apostles and martyrs to share with Christ as mediators in the work of intercession; for in vain do they assign them such an office, except they supply them with sacrifices. [131]

4. For if he were on earth, etc. It is now beyond dispute that Christ is a high priest; but as the office of a judge does not exist without laws and statutes, so the office of sacrificing must be connected with Christ as a priest: yet he has no earthly or visible sacrifice; he cannot then be a priest on earth. We must always hold this truth that when the Apostle speaks of the death of Christ, he regards not the external action, but the spiritual benefit. He suffered death as men do, but as a priest he atoned for the sins of the world in a divine manner; there was an external shedding of blood, but there was also an internal and spiritual purgation; in a word, he died on earth, but the virtue and efficacy of

[131] "This man" of our version, in the latter clause of the verse, should be either "he," or "this high priest," in contrast with the high priest at the beginning of the verse. Such is the rendering of Macknight and Stuart. — Ed.

his death proceeded from heaven.

What immediately follows some render thus, ``He could not be a priest of the number of those who offer gifts according to the Law.'' But the words of the Apostle mean another thing; and therefore I prefer this rendering, ``He could not be a priest as long as there are priests who,'' etc. For he intends to show one of these two things, either that Christ is no priest, while the priesthood of the Law continued, as he had no sacrifice, or that the sacrifices of the law ceased as soon as Christ appeared. The first of these is against all reason, for it is an act of impiety to deprive Christ of his priesthood. It then remains for us to confess, that the Levitical order is now abolished.

5. Who serve unto the example, etc. The verb {λατρεύειν} to serve, I take here to mean the performing of sacred rites; and so {ἐν} or {ἐπὶ} is to be understood. This is certainly more appropriate than the rendering given by some, ``Who serve the shadow and example of heavenly things; and the construction in Greek will admit naturally of the meaning I have proposed. In short, he teaches us that the true worship of God consists not in the ceremonies of the Law, and that hence the Levitical priests, while exercising their functions, had nothing but a shadow and a copy, which is inferior to the prototype, for this is the meaning of the word {ὑποδείγμα}, exemplar. And he thus anticipates what might have been raised as an objection; for he shows that the worship of God, according to the ancient sacrifices, was not superfluous, because it referred to what was higher, even to heavenly realities. [132]

As Moses was admonished by God, etc. This passage is found in Exodus 25:40; and the apostle adduces it here on purpose, so that he might prove that the whole service, according to the Law, was nothing more than a picture as it were, designed to shadow forth what is found spiritually in Christ. God commanded that all the parts of the tabernacle should correspond with the original pattern, which had been shown to Moses on the mount. And if the form of the tabernacle had a reference to something else, then the same must have been the case as to the rituals and the priesthood; it hence follows that there was nothing real in them.

This is a remarkable passage, for it contains three things entitled to special notice.

[132] Our version of this clause is hardly intelligible. Calvin's rendering with a little addition would convey a clear meaning. "Who do service in that which is the exemplar and shadow of celestial things." Stuart considers "tabernacle" as being understood. We have the words, "who serve the tabernacle," in chapter 13:10, that is, "who do the service belonging to the tabernacle," or, "who attend on the tabernacle." So the literal rendering here is, "who serve the model and shadow of celestial things," which means, "who do the service belonging to the model and shadows of celestial things." The tabernacle no doubt is what is meant; and it is called a "model," or likeness, because it emblematically represented, or exhibited things heavenly, and a "shadow," because it was not the substance or the reality. Stuart seems to have unwisely combined the two words, "a mere copy;" for the two ideas they convey are not thus so clearly seen. But to "serve," or to do service, includes what was done by the people as well as by the priests. Those who offered the sacrifices, as well as the priests through whom they offered the sacrifices, or performed the services belonging to the tabernacle; the latter are meant here, and the former or both in chapter 10:2; 13:10. To serve the Lord, and to offer sacrifices to him, are in Exodus represented as the same; see chapter 8:1; 10:7, 26. — Ed.

First, we hence learn that the ancient rituals were not without reason appointed, as though God did by them engage the attention of the people as with the diversions of children; and that the form of the tabernacle was not an empty thing, intended only to allure and attract the eyes by its external splendor; for there was a real and spiritual meaning in all these things, since Moses was commanded to execute every thing according to the original pattern which was given from heaven. Extremely profane then must the opinion of those be, who hold that the ceremonies were only enjoined that they might serve as means to restrain the wantonness of the people, that they might not seek after the foreign rites of heathens. There is indeed something in this, but it is far from being all; they omit what is much more important, that they were the means of retaining the people in their expectation of a Mediator.

There is, however, no reason that we should be here overcurious, so as to seek in every nail and minute things some sublime mystery, as Hesychius did and many of the ancient writers, who anxiously toiled in this work; for while they sought refinedly to philosophize on things unknown to them, they childishly blundered, and by their foolish trifling made themselves ridiculous. We ought therefore to exercise moderation in this respect, which we shall do if we seek only to know what has been revealed to us respecting Christ.

Secondly, we are here taught that all those modes of worship are false and spurious, which men allow themselves by their own wit to invent, and beyond God's command; for since God gives this direction, that all things are to be done according to his own rule, it is not lawful for us to do anything different from it; for these two forms of expression, ``see that thou do all things according to the patterns,'' and, ``See that thou do nothing beyond the pattern,'' amount to the same thing. Then by enforcing the rule delivered by himself, he prohibits us to depart from it even in the least thing. For this reason all the modes of worship taught by men fall to the ground, and also those things called sacraments which have not proceeded from God.

Thirdly, let us hence learn that there are no true symbols of religion but those which conform to what Christ requires. We must then take heed, lest we, while seeking to adapt our own inventions to Christ, transfigure him, as the Papists do, so that he should not be at all like himself; for it does not belong to us to devise anything as we please, but to God alone it belongs to show us what to do; it is to be ``according to the pattern'' showed to us.

6. But now has he obtained a more excellent ministry, etc. As he had before inferred the excellency of the covenant from the dignity of the priesthood, so also now he maintains that Christ's priesthood is more excellent than that of Aaron, because he is the interpreter and Mediator of a better covenant. Both were necessary, for the Jews were to be led away from the superstitious observance of rituals, by which they were prevented from advancing directly forward to the attainment of the real and pure truth of the Gospel. The Apostle says now that it was but right that Moses and Aaron should give way to Christ as to one more excellent, because the gospel is a more excellent covenant than the Law,

and also because the death of Christ was a nobler sacrifice than the victims under the Law.

But what he adds is not without some difficulty, --- that the covenant of the Gospel was proclaimed on better promises; [133] for it is certain that the fathers who lived under the Law had the same hope of eternal life set before them as we have, as they had the grace of adoption in common with us, then faith must have rested on the same promises. But the comparison made by the Apostle refers to the form rather than to the substance; for though God promised to them the same salvation which he at this day promises to us, yet neither the manner nor the character of the revelation is the same or equal to what we enjoy. If anyone wishes to know more on this subject, let him read the 4th and 5th chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians and my Institutes.

Heb 8:7-13

Hebrews Chapter 8:7-13

7. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second.

7. Si enim primum ellud reprehensione caruisset, non fuisset secundo quaesitus locus.

8. For finding fault with them, he saith, Behold, the days come, saith the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah:

8. Porro incusans eos, dicit, Ecce dies veniunt, dicit Dominus, quum perficiam super domum Israel, et super domum Juda foedus novum:

9. Not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they continued not in my covenant, and I regarded them not, saith the Lord.

9. Non secundum foedus quod feci cum patribus eorum in die, quo apprehendi manum eorum, ut educerem eos e terra, Aegypti, quai ipsi non perstiterunt in foedere meo, et ego neglexi eos, dicit Dominus.

10. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

10. Quia hoc est foedus quod disponam domui Israel illus diebus, dicit Dominus, Ponam leges meas in mente ipsorum, et in cordibus eorum scribam eos; et ero illis in deum et ipsi erunt mihi in populum:

11. And they shall not teach every man his neighbor, and every man his

[133] Instead of "proclaimed," it is "established" in our version, and in that of Doddridge, and Macknight, and of Stuart, "sanctioned." The verb means what is set as a law; that is, firmly and irrevocably fixed. It was a covenant firmly set or founded on more excellent promises. What these are, we learn in the following verses. This verse is connected with the fourth; and the fifth is to be put in a parenthesis. The reasoning is, — Though he is no priest on earth, yet he has a higher ministry, inasmuch as the covenant of which he is the Mediator is far superior to that of priests on earth; that is, the Levitical priests. Then he proceeds to the end of the chapter with the covenant, and shows its superiority. — Ed.

brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest.

11. Et non docebunt unusquisque civem suum et unusquisque fratrem suum, dicendo, Cognosce Dominum; quia omnes me scient a parvo inter vos usque ad magnum.

12. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.

12. Quoniam propitius ero injustitiis, et peccatorum eorum et iniquitatum non recordabor amplius.

13. In that he saith, A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.

13. Dicende novum antiquavit prius; quod autem antiquatur et veterascit prope est ut evanescat.

7. For if that first, etc. He confirms what he had said of the excellency of the covenant which God has made with us through Christ; and he confirms it on this ground, because the covenant of the Law was neither valid nor permanent; for if nothing was wanting in it, why was another substituted for it? But another has been substituted; and from this it is evident that the old covenant was not in every respect perfect. To prove this he adduces the testimony of Jeremiah, which we shall presently examine.

But it seems hardly consistent to say, that after having said that no place would have been sought for the second covenant, had the first been faultless, he should then say that the people were at fault, and that for this cause the new covenant was introduced as a remedy; and thus it appears unjust, that if the blame was in the people it should be transferred to God's covenant. Then the argument seems not valid, for though God might have a hundred times blamed the people, yet the covenant could not on that account be deemed faulty. The answer to this objection may be easily given. Though the crime of violating the covenant was justly imputed to the people, who had through their own perfidy departed from God, yet the weakness of the covenant is also pointed out, because it was not written in their hearts. Then, to render it perfect and valid, God declares that it needed an amendment. It was not, therefore, without reason that the Apostle contended that a place was to be sought for a second. [134]

8. Behold, the days come, etc. (Jeremiah 31:31-34.) The Prophet speaks of future time; he arraigns the people of perfidy, because they continued not faithful after having received the Law. The Law, then, was the covenant which was broken, as God complains, by the people. To remedy this evil, he promised a new and a different covenant, the fulfillment of which prophecy was the ab-

[134] This apparent inconsistency is avoided by some by rendering the 8th verse differently, "But finding fault," that is, with the first covenant, "he" Chrysostom, Beza, Doddridge, our own version, as well as Calvin and the Vulgate, connect "them" with "finding fault with," and more correctly too; for the Israelites are blamed in the very passage that is quoted. There was a double fault or defect, which is explained in Romans 8:3, "For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh," etc. This double fault or weakness more fully sets forth the excellency of the new covenant. —Ed.

rogation of the old covenant.

But it may be said, the Apostle seems unreasonably to turn this prophecy to suit his own purpose; for here the question is respecting ceremonies, but the Prophet speaks of the whole Law: what has it to do with ceremonies, when God inscribes on the heart the rule of a godly and holy life, delivered by the voice and teaching of men? To this I reply that the argument is applied from the whole to a part. There is no doubt but that the Prophet includes the whole dispensation of Moses when he says, ``I have made with you a covenant which you have not kept.'' Besides, the Law was in a manner clothed with ceremonies; now when the body is dead, what is the use of garments? It is a common saying that the accessory is of the same character with his principal. No wonder, then, that the ceremonies, which are nothing more than appendages to the old covenant, should come to an end, together with the whole dispensation of Moses. Nor is it unusual with the Apostles, when they speak of ceremonies, to discuss the general question respecting the whole Law. Though, then, the prophet Jeremiah extends wider than to ceremonies, yet as it includes them under the name of the old covenant, it may be fitly applied to the present subject.

Now, by the days which the prophet mentions, all agree that Christ's kingdom is signified; it hence follows, that the old covenant was changed by the coming of Christ. And he names the house of Israel and the house of Judah, because the posterity of Abraham had been divided into two kingdoms. So the promise is to gather again all the elect together into one body, however separated they may have been formerly.

9. Not according to the covenant, etc. Here is expressed the difference between the covenant which then existed and the new one which he caused them to expect. The Prophet might have otherwise said only: ``I will renew the covenant which through your fault has come to nothing;'' but he now expressly declares that it would be one unlike the former. By saying that the covenant was made in the day when he laid holds on their hand to rescue them from bondage, he enhanced the sin of defection by thus reminding them of so great a benefit. At the same time he did not accuse one age only of ingratitude; but as these very men who had been delivered immediately fell away, and as their posterity after their example continually relapsed, hence the whole nation had become covenantbreakers.

By saying that he disregarded them or cared not for them, he intimates that it would profit them nothing to have been once adopted as his people, unless he succored them by this new kind of remedy. At the same time the Prophet expresses in Hebrew something more; but this has little to do with the present question. [135]

10 For this is the covenant that I will make, etc. There are two main parts in this covenant; the first regards the gratuitous remission of sins; and the other, the inward renovation of the heart; there is a third which depends on the second, and that is the illumination of the mind as to the knowledge of God.

[135] See Appendix E 2.

There are here many things most deserving of notice.

The first is, that God calls us to himself without effect as long as he speaks to us in no other way than by the voice of man. He indeed teaches us and commands what is right but he speaks to the deaf; for when we seem to hear anything, our ears are only struck by an empty sound; and the heart, full of depravity and perverseness, rejects every wholesome doctrine. In short, the word of God never penetrates into our hearts, for they are iron and stone until they are softened by him; nay, they have engraven on them a contrary law, for perverse passions rule within, which lead us to rebellion. In vain then does God proclaim his Law by the voice of man, unless he writes it by his Spirit on our hearts, that is, unless he forms and prepares us for obedience. It hence appears of what avail is freewill and the uprightness of nature before God regenerates us. We will indeed and choose freely; but our will is carried away by a sort of insane impulse to resist God. Thus it comes that the Law is ruinous and fatal to us as long as it remains written only on tables of stone, as Paul also teaches us. (2 Corinthians 3:3.) In short, we then only obediently embrace what God commands, when by his Spirit he changes and corrects the natural pravity of our hearts; otherwise he finds nothing in us but corrupt affections and a heart wholly given up to evil. The declaration indeed is clear, that a new covenant is made according to which God engraves his laws on our hearts, for otherwise it would be in vain and of no effect. [136]

The second particular refers to the gratuitous pardon of sins. Though they have sinned, saith the Lord, yet I will pardon them. This part is also most necessary; for God never so forms us for obedience to his righteousness, but that many corrupt affections of the flesh still remain; nay, it is only in part that the viciousness of our nature is corrected; so that evil lusts break out now and then. And hence is that contest of which Paul complains, when the godly do not obey God as they ought, but in various ways offend. (Romans 7:13.) Whatever desire then there may be in us to live righteously, we are still guilty of eternal death before God, because our life is ever very far from the perfection which the Law requires. There would then be no stability in the covenant, except God gratuitously forgave our sins. But it is the peculiar privilege of the faithful who have once embraced the covenant offered to them in Christ, that they feel assured that God is propitious to them; nor is the sin to which they are liable, a hindrance to them, for they have the promise of pardon.

And it must be observed that this pardon is promised to them, not for one day only, but to the very end of life, so that they have a daily reconciliation with God. For this favor is extended to the whole of Christ's kingdom, as Paul abundantly proves in the fifth chapter of his second Epistle to the Corinthians. And doubtless this is the only true asylum of our faith, to which if we flee not, constant despair must be our lot. For we are all of us guilty; nor can we be

[136] The Apostle adopts here the Septuagint version. The Hebrew is “I will put my law in their inmost part, and on their heart will I write (or engrave) it.” The word “law” and “heart”, are put here in the plural number, and the “inmost part” is rendered “mind.” These changes are according to the peculiar character of the two languages. — Ed.

otherwise released then by fleeing to God's mercy, which alone can pardon us.

And they shall be to me, etc. It is the fruit of the covenant, that God chooses us for his people, and assures us that he will be the guardian of our salvation. This is indeed the meaning of these words, And I will be to them a God; for he is not the God of the dead, nor does he take us under his protection, but that he may make us partakers of righteousness and of life, so that David justly exclaims, ``Blessed are the people to whom the Lord is God (Psalm 144:15.) There is further no doubt but that this truth belongs also to us; for though the Israelites had the first place, and are the proper and legitimate heirs of the covenant, yet their prerogative does not hinder us from having also a title to it. In short, however far and wide the kingdom of Christ extends, this covenant of salvation is of the same extent.

But it may be asked, whether there was under the Law a sure and certain promise of salvation, whether the fathers had the gift of the Spirit, whether they enjoyed God's paternal favor through the remission of sins? Yes, it is evident that they worshipped God with a sincere heart and a pure conscience, and that they walked in his commandments, and this could not have been the case except they had been inwardly taught by the Spirit; and it is also evident, that whenever they thought of their sins, they were raised up by the assurance of a gratuitous pardon. And yet the Apostle, by referring the prophecy of Jeremiah to the coming of Christ, seems to rob them of these blessings. To this I reply, that he does not expressly deny that God formerly wrote his Law on their hearts and pardoned their sins, but he makes a comparison between the less and the greater. As then the Father has put forth more fully the power of his Spirit under the kingdom of Christ, and has poured forth more abundantly his mercy on mankind, this exuberance renders insignificant the small portion of grace which he had been pleased to bestow on the fathers. We also see that the promises were then obscure and intricate, so that they shone only like the moon and stars in comparison with the clear light of the Gospel which shines brightly on us.

If it be objected and said, that the faith and obedience of Abraham so excelled, that hardly any such an example can at this day be found in the whole world; my answer is this, that the question here is not about persons, but that reference is made to the economical condition of the Church. Besides, whatever spiritual gifts the fathers obtained, they were accidental as it were to their age; for it was necessary for them to direct their eyes to Christ in order to become possessed of them. Hence it was not without reason that the Apostle, in comparing the Gospel with the Law, took away from the latter what is peculiar to the former. There is yet no reason why God should not have extended the grace of the new covenant to the fathers. This is the true solution of the question.

11. And they shall not teach, etc. We have said that the third point is as it were a part of the second, included in these words, I will put my laws in their mind; for it is the work of the Spirit of God to illuminate our minds, so that we

may know what the will of God is, and also to bend our hearts to obedience. For the right knowledge of God is a wisdom which far surpasses the comprehension of man's understanding; therefore, to attain it no one is able except through the secret revelation of the Spirit. Hence Isaiah, in speaking of the restoration of the Church, says, that all God's children would be his disciples or scholars. (Isaiah 28:16.) The meaning of our Prophet is the same when he introduces God as saying, They shall know me. For God does not promise what is in our own power, but what he alone can perform for us. In short, these words of the Prophet are the same as though he had said, that our minds are blind and destitute of all right understanding until they are illuminated by the Spirit of God. Thus God is rightly known by those alone to whom he has been pleased by a special favor to reveal himself.

By saying, From the least to the greatest, he first intimates that God's grace would be poured on all ranks of men, so that no class would be without it. He, secondly, reminds us that no rude and ignorant men are precluded from this heavenly wisdom, and that the great and the noble cannot attain it by their own acuteness or by the help of learning. Thus God connects the meanest and the lowest with the highest, so that their ignorance is no impediment to the one, nor can the other ascend so high by their own acumen; but the one Spirit is equally the teacher of them all.

Fanatical men take hence the occasion to do away with public preaching, as though it were of no use in Christ's kingdom; but their madness may be easily exposed. Their objection is this: ``After the coming of Christ every one is to teach his neighbor; away then with the external ministry, that a place may be given to the internal inspiration of God.'' But they pass by this, that the Prophet does not wholly deny that they would teach one another, but his words are these, They shall not teach, saying, Know the Lord; as though he had said, ``Ignorance shall not as heretofore so possess the minds of men as not to know who God is.'' But we know that the use of teaching is twofold; first, that they who are wholly ignorant may learn the first elements; and secondly, that those who are initiated may make progress. As then Christians, as long as they live, ought to make progress, it cannot surely be said, that any one is so wise that he needs not to be taught; so that no small part of our wisdom is a teachable spirit. And what is the way of making progress if we desire to be the disciples of Christ? This is shown to us by Paul when he says, that Christ gave pastors and teachers. (Ephesians 4:11.) It hence appears that nothing less was thought of by the Prophet than to rob the Church of such a benefit. [137] His only object was to show that God would make himself known to small and great, according to what was also predicted by Joel 2:28. It ought also in passing to be noticed, that this light of sacred knowledge is promised peculiarly to the Church; hence this passage belongs to none but to the household of faith. [138]

[137] It is a sufficient answer to the fanatics here alluded to, that their conclusion from his text militates against the practice of the apostolic Church as established by Christ himself, he having sent apostles, evangelists, pastors and teachers. — Ed.

[138] The 12th verse is passed over. It differs in words, though not in substance, both from

13. In that he saith, A new, etc. From the fact of one covenant being established, he infers the subversion of the other; and by calling it the old covenant, he assumes that it was to be abrogated; for what is old tends to a decay. [139] Besides, as the new is substituted, it must be that the former has come to an end; for the second, as it has been said, is of another character. But if the whole dispensation of Moses, as far as it was opposed to the dispensation of Christ, has passed away, then the ceremonies also must have ceased.

the Hebrew and the Sept. It is indeed the latter version with the addition of these words, "and their iniquities." The nouns are in the singular number in Hebrew, "unrighteousness" and "sin." When the Apostle quotes again the passage in chapter 10:17, he leaves out "unrighteousness," and mentions only "sins and iniquities." There is also a shade of difference as to the first verb. In Hebrew remission or forgiveness is its meaning, but here the idea is mercy. The Apostle no doubt considered that the truth was essentially conveyed in the Greek version. — Ed.

[139] This verse may be thus rendered, — "By saying, 'a new covenant,' he has made ancient the first: now what is ancient and becomes old is nigh a dissolution (or disappearing.)" It is said to be ancient in contrast with the new; and old or aged is afterwards added to be ancient in order to show its weak and feeble character, being like an old man tottering on the brink of the grave, who, when buried, disappears from among the living. It is supposed that there is here an intimation of the dissolution of the whole Jewish polity, which soon afterwards took place. — Ed.

Chapter 9

CHAPTER 9

Heb 9:1-5

Hebrews Chapter 9:1-5

1. Then verily the first covenant had also ordinances of divine service, and a worldly sanctuary.

1. Habebat quidem prius illud justificationes cultus et sanctum mundanum:

2. For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein was the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread; which is called the sanctuary.

2. Tabernaculum enim primum compositum erat, in quo candelabrum et mensa et panum propositio; quod dicitur sanctuarium.

3. And after the second veil, the tabernacle which is called the Holiest of all;

3. Post secundum autem velum tabernaculum quod sancta sanctorum dicitur;

4. Which had the golden censer, and the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, wherein was the golden pot that had manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant;

4. Aureum habens thuribulum et arcam foederis undique coopertam auro, in qua urna aurea habens manna, et virga Aaronis quae floruerat, et tabulae testamenti;

5. And over it the cherubims of glory shadowing the mercyseat; of which we cannot now speak particularly.

5. Supra autem ipsam cherubin gloriae obumbrantes propitiatorium; de quibus non attinet nunc dicere sigillatim.

1 Then verily the first, etc [140] After having spoken generally of the abrogation of the old covenant, he now refers specially to the ceremonies. His object is to show that there was nothing practiced then to which Christ's coming has not put an end. He says first, that under the old covenant there was a specific form of divine worship, and that it was peculiarly adapted to that time. It will hereafter appear by the comparison what kind of things were those rituals prescribed under the Law.

Some copies read, {πρώτη} {σκηνὴ} the first tabernacle; but I suspect that there is a mistake as to the word ``tabernacle;'' nor do I doubt but that some unlearned reader, not finding a noun to the adjective, and in his ignorance

[140] Rather, “Yet even the first,” etc. It is connected with the last verse of the preceding chapter; as though he had said, — “Though the covenant is become antiquated, yet it had many things divinely appointed connected with it.” {Μὲν} {οὖν} mean ``yet,'' or however. See Art. 8:4. Macknight has ``Now verily;'' and Stuart, ``Moreover.'' --- Ed

applying to the tabernacle what had been said of the covenant, unwisely added the word {σκηνὴ} tabernacle. I indeed greatly wonder that the mistake had so prevailed, that it is found in the Greek copies almost universally. [141] But necessity constrains me to follow the ancient reading. For the Apostle, as I have said, had been speaking of the old covenant; he now comes to ceremonies, which were additions, as it were, to it. He then intimates that all the rites of the Mosaic Law were a part of the old covenant, and that they partook of the same ancientness, and were therefore to perish.

Many take the word {λατρείας} as an accusative plural. I agree with those who connect the two words together, {δικαιώματα} {λατρείας} for institutes or rites, which the Hebrews call {חוקים{, and the Greeks have rendered by the word {δικαιώματα} ordinances. The sense is, that the whole form or manner of worshipping God was annexed to the old covenant, and that it consisted of sacrifices, ablutions, and other symbols, together with the sanctuary. And he calls it a worldly sanctuary, because there was no heavenly truth or reality in those rites; for though the sanctuary was the effigy of the original pattern which had been shown to Moses; yet an effigy or image is a different thing from the reality, and especially when they are compared, as here, as things opposed to each other. Hence the sanctuary in itself was indeed earthly, and is rightly classed among the elements of the world, it was yet heavenly as to what it signified. [142]

2. For there was a tabernacle, etc. As the Apostle here touches but lightly on the structure of the tabernacle, that he might not be detained beyond what his subject required; so will I also designedly abstain from any refined explanation of it. It is then sufficient for our present purpose to consider the tabernacle in its three parts, --- the first was the court of the people; the middle was commonly called the sanctuary; and the last was the inner sanctuary, which they called, by way of eminence, the holy of holies. [143]

As to the first sanctuary, which was contiguous to the court of the people, he says that there were the candlestick and the table on which the shewbread was set: he calls this place, in the plural number, the holies. Then, after this is mentioned, the most secret place, which they called the holy of holies, still more remote from the view of the people, and it was even hid from the priests who ministered in the first sanctuary; for as by a veil the sanctuary was closed up to

[141] It has since been discovered that it is not found in many of the best MSS., and is dismissed from the text by Griesbach and all modern critics. The noun understood is evidently "covenant," spoken of in the preceding chapter. — Ed.

[142] Many, such as Grotius, Beza, etc., consider that "ordinances" and "services" (not service) are distinct, and both in the objective case, and render the words "rituals, services, and a wordly sanctuary." And if the sequel is duly examined, it will be found that this is the right construction. The Apostle, according to the manner of the prophet, reverses the order, and speaks distinctly of these three particulars, — first, "the wordly sanctuary" — the tabernacle in verses 2, 3, 4, and 5; secondly, "the services" in verses 6 and 7; and thirdly, "the rituals" in verse 10, where the word "ordinances" again occur. There can therefore be hardly a doubt as to the construction of the first verse. The sanctuary is called worldly in contrast with what is heavenly or divine, not made with hands: see verse 11. — Ed.

[143] See Appendix F 2.

the people, so another veil kept the priests from the holy of holies. There, the Apostle says, was the {θυμιατήριον} by which name I understand the altar of incense, or fumigation, rather than the censer; [144] then the ark of the covenant, with its covering, the two cherubim, the golden pot filled with manna, the rod of Aaron, and the two tables. Thus far the Apostle proceeds in describing the tabernacle.

But he says that the pot in which Moses had deposited the manna, and Aaron's rod which had budded, were in the ark with the two tables; but this seems inconsistent with sacred history, which in 1 King s 8:9, relates that there was nothing in the ark but the two tables. But it is easy to reconcile these two passages: God had commanded the pot and Aaron's rod to be laid up before the testimony; it is hence probable that they were deposited in the ark, together with the tables. But when the Temple was built, these things were arranged in a different order, and certain history relates it as a thing new that the ark had nothing else but the two tables. [145]

5. Of which we cannot now, etc. As nothing can satisfy, curious men, the apostle cuts off every occasion for refinements unsuitable to his present purpose, and lest a longer discussion of these things should break off the thread of his argument. If, therefore, any one should disregard the Apostle's example, and dwell more minutely on the subject, he would be acting very unreasonably. There might be, indeed, an occasion for doing this elsewhere; but it is now better to attend to the subject of which he treats: it may further be said, that to philosophize beyond just limits, which some do, is not only useless, but also dangerous. There are some things which are not obscure and fitted for the edification of faith; but discretion and sobriety ought to be observed, lest we seek to be wise above what God has been pleased to reveal.

Heb 9:6-12

Hebrews Chapter 9:6-12

6. Now when these things were thus ordained, the priests went always into the first tabernacle, accomplishing the service of God

6. His vero sic compositis, in prius tabernaculum semper ingrediuntur sacerdotes qui sacra peragunt:

7. But into the second went the high priest alone once every year, not without

[144] This is evidently a mistake, for the altar of incense was in the sanctuary — the first tabernacle. See Exodus 30:1-6. The word is used in the Sept., for "censer," 2 Chronicles 26:19. There were many censors made, as it is supposed, of brass; for they were daily used in the sanctuary for incense; but this golden censor was probably used only on the day of expiation, when the chief priest entered the holiest place; and the probability is, though there is no account of this in the Old Testament, that it was laid up or deposited, as Stuart suggests, in the holy of holies. — Ed.

[145] Stuart observes, "Our author is speaking of the tabernacle, and not of the temple; still less of the second temple, which must have lacked even the tables of testimony. The probability is, that the ark, during its many removals, and in particular during its captivity by the Philistines, was deprived of those sacred deposits; for we hear no more concerning them." — Ed.

blood, which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people:

7. At in secundum semel quotannis solus pontifex, non sine sanguine quem offert pro suis et populi ignorantiis:

8. The Holy Ghost this signifying, that the way into the holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first tabernacle was yet standing:

8. Hoc declarante Spiritu Sancto, nondum manifestatum esse sanctorum viam, stante adhuc priore tabernaculo;

9. Which was a figure for the time then present, in which were offered both gifts and sacrifices, that could not make him that did the service perfect, as pertaining to the conscience;

9. Quae similitudo erat in praesens tempus, quo dona et hostiae offeruntur quae non possunt secundum conscientiam sanctificare cultorem;

10. Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation.

10. Solum in cibis et potibus et diversis ablutionibus et sanctifictionibus carnis usque ad tempus correctionis imposita.

11. But Christ being come an high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this building;

11. Christus autem superveniens pontifex futurorum bonorum per majus et perfectius tabernaculum non manufactum, hoc est, non hujus creationis;

12. Neither by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us

12. Neque per sanguinem hircorum et vitulorum, sed per proprium sanguinem intravit semel in sancta, aeterna redemptione inventa.

6. Now, when these things were thus ordained, etc. Omitting other things, he undertakes to handle the chief point in dispute: he says that the priests who performed sacred rites were wont to enter the first tabernacle daily, but that the chief priest entered the holy of holies only yearly with the appointed sacrifice. He hence concludes, that while the tabernacle under the Law was standing, the sanctuary was closed up, and that only through that being removed could the way be open for us to the kingdom of God. We see that the very form of the ancient tabernacle reminded the Jews that they were to look for something else. Then foolishly did they act who, by retaining the shadows of the Law, willfully obstructed their own way.

He mentions {πρώτην} {σκηνὴν} the first tabernacle, in ver. 2, in a different sense from what it has here, for here it means the first sanctuary, but there the whole tabernacle; for he sets it in opposition to the spiritual sanctuary of Christ, which he presently mentions. He contends that this had fallen for our great benefit, for through its fall a more familiar access to God has been obtained for us.

7. For himself and for the errors of the people, or for his own and the ignorances of the people. As the verb |shagag|, means in Hebrew to err, to mistake, so |shgagah|, derived from it, properly denotes error, or mistake; but yet it is

generally taken for any kind of sin; and doubtless we never sin except when deceived by the allurements of Satan. The Apostle does not understand by it mere ignorance, as they say, but, on the contrary, he includes also voluntary sins; but as I have already said, no sin is free from error or ignorance; for however knowingly and willfully any one may sin, yet it must be that he is blinded by his lust, so that he does not judge rightly, or rather he forgets himself and God; for men never deliberately rush headlong into ruin, but being entangled in the deceptions of Satan, they lose the power of judging rightly. [146]

9. Which was a figure, etc. The word {παραθολὴ}, used here, signifies, as I think, the same thing with {ἀντίτυπος}, antitype; for he means that that tabernacle was a second pattern which corresponded with the first. For the portrait of a man ought to be so like the man himself, that when seen, it ought immediately to remind us of him whom it represents. He says further, that it was a figure, or likeness, for the time then present, that is, as long as the external observance was in force; and he says this in order to confine its use and duration to the time of the Law; for it means the same with what he afterwards adds, that all the ceremonies were imposed until the time of reformation; nor is it any objection that he uses the present tense in saying, gifts are offered; for as he had to do with the Jews, he speaks by way of concession, as though he were one of those who sacrificed. Gifts and sacrifices differ, as the first is a general term, and the other is particular.

That could not make him that did the service perfect as pertaining to the conscience; that is, they did not reach the soul so as to confer true holiness. I do not reject the words, make perfect, and yet I prefer the term sanctify, as being more suitable to the context. But that readers may better understand the meaning of the Apostle, let the contrast between the flesh and the conscience be noticed; he denies that worshippers could be spiritually and inwardly cleansed by the sacrifices of the Law. It is added as a reason, that all these rites were of the flesh or carnal. What then does he allow them to be? It is commonly supposed, that they were useful only as means of training to men, conducive to virtue and decorum. But they who thus think do not sufficiently consider the promises which are added. This gloss, therefore, ought to be wholly repudiated. Absurdly and ignorantly too do they interpret the ordinances of the flesh, as being such as cleansed or sanctified only the body; for the Apostle understands by these words that they were earthly symbols, which did not reach the soul; for though they were true testimonies of perfect holiness, yet they by no means contained it in themselves, nor could they convey it to men; for the faithful were

[146] It is said that the high priest entered the holiest place "once every year," that is, on one day, the day of expiation, every year; but on that day he went in at least three times. See Leviticus 16:12-15; and probably four times, according to the Jewish tradition; and one of the times, as supposed by Stuart, was for the purpose of bringing out the golden censer. The word rendered "errors," literally means "ignorances," and so some render it "sins of ignorance;" but it is used in the Apocrypha as designating sins in general; and Grotius refers to Tob. 3:3; Judith 5:20; Sirach 23:2, 1 Macc. 13:39. And that it means sins of all kinds is evident from the account given in Leviticus 16 of the atonement made on the annual man, says Estius, "is ignorant; and all sins proceed from error in judgement." Hence it seems, sins were called ignorances. — Ed.

by such helps led, as it were, by the hand to Christ, that they might obtain from him what was wanting in the symbols.

Were any one to ask why the Apostle speaks with so little respect and even with contempt of Sacraments divinely instituted, and extenuates their efficacy? This he does, because he separates them from Christ; and we know that when viewed in themselves they are but beggarly elements, as Paul calls them. (Galatians 4:9.)

10. Until the time of reformation, etc. Here he alludes to the prophecy of Jeremiah. (Jeremiah 31:31.) [147] The new covenant succeeded the old as a reformation. He expressly mentions meats and drinks, and other things of minor importance, because by these trifling observances a more certain opinion may be formed how far short was the Law of the perfection of the Gospel. [148]

11. But Christ being come, etc. He now sets before us the reality of the things under the Law, that it may turn our eyes from them to itself; for he who believes that the things then shadowed forth under the Law have been really found in Christ, will no longer cleave to the shadows, but will embrace the substance and the genuine reality.

But the particulars of the comparison between Christ and the ancient high priest, ought to be carefully noticed. He had said that the high priest alone entered the sanctuary once a year with blood to expiate sins. Christ is in this life the ancient high priests for he alone possesses the dignity and the office of a high priest; but he differs from him in this respect, that he brings with him eternal blessings which secure a perpetuity to his priesthood. Secondly, there is this likeness between the ancient high priest and ours, that both entered the holy of holies through the sanctuary; but they differ in this, that Christ alone entered into heaven through the temple of his own body. That the holy of holies was once every year opened to the high priest to make the appointed expiation --- this obscurely prefigured the one true sacrifice of Christ. To enter once then was common to both, but to the earthly it was every year, while it was to the heavenly forever, even to the end of the world. The offering of blood was common to both; but there was a great difference as to the blood; for Christ offered, not the blood of beasts, but his own blood. Expiation was common to both; but that according to the Law, as it was inefficacious, was repeated every year; but the expiation made by Christ is always effectual and is the cause of eternal salvation to us. Thus, there is great importance almost in every word. Some render the words, ``But Christ standing by,'' or asking; but the meaning of the Apostle is not thus expressed; for he intimates that when the Levitical priests had for the prefixed time performed their office, Christ came in their place, according to what we found in the seventh chapter. [149]

Of good things to come, etc. Take these for eternal things; for as {μέλλων}

[147] Although the original text in the book refers to Jer 31:37, which warns of an ultimate rejection of Israel; it would seem that Jer 31:31 is more appropriate in the current context of reformation. — fj.

[148] See Appendix G 2.

[149] See commentary on Chapter 7 .

{καιρὸς}, time to come, is set in opposition to the present {τῷ} {ἐνεστηκότι}; so future blessings are to the present. The meaning is, that we are led by Christ's priesthood into the celestial kingdom of God, and that we are made partakers of spiritual righteousness and of eternal life, so that it is not right to desire anything better. Christ alone, then, has that by which he can retain and satisfy us in himself. [150]

By a greater and more perfect tabernacle, etc. Though this passage is variously explained, yet I have no doubt but that he means the body of Christ; for as there was formerly an access for the Levitical high priest to the holy of holies through the sanctuary, so Christ through his own body entered into the glory of heaven; for as he had put on our flesh and in it suffered, he obtained for himself this privilege, that he should appear before God as a Mediator for us. In the first place, the word sanctuary is fitly and suitably applied to the body of Christ, for it is the temple in which the whole majesty of God dwells. He is further said to have made a way for us by his body to ascend into heaven, because in that body he consecrated himself to God, he became in it sanctified to be our true righteousness, he prepared himself in it to offer a sacrifice; in a word, he made himself in it of no reputation, and suffered the death of the cross; therefore, the Father highly exalted him and gave him a name above every name, that every knee should bow to him. (Philippians 2:8-10.) He then entered into heaven through his own body, because on this account it is that he now sits at the Father's right hand; he for this reason intercedes for us in heaven, because he had put on our flesh, and consecrated it as a temple to God the Father, and in it sanctified himself to obtain for us an eternal righteousness, having made an expiation for our sins. [151]

It may however seem strange, that he denies the body of Christ to be of this building; for doubtless he proceeded from the seed of Abraham, and was liable to sufferings and to death. To this I reply, that he speaks not here of his material body, or of what belongs to the body as such, but of the spiritual efficacy which emanates from it to us. For as far as Christ's flesh is quickening, and is a heavenly food to nourish souls, as far as his blood is a spiritual drink

[150] "Good things (or blessings) to come," may have a reference to the blessings promised in the Old Testament as the blessings of the kingdom of Christ, included in "the eternal redemption" mentioned in the next verse. — Ed.

[151] There is no other view that is satisfactory. The idea that has been by some suggested, that the "better tabernacle" is the visible heaven through which he entered into the heaven of heavens, has no evidence in its support. Some of the Ancients, such as Ambrose, and also Doddridge and Scott consider heaven as intended, as in chapter 8:2, (but "tabernacle" in that passage means the whole structure, especially the holy of holies.) According to this view {διὰ} is rendered in --- ``in a greater and more perfect tabernacle.'' But Chrysostom, Theophylact, Grotius, Beza, etc., agree with Calvin in regarding Christ's human nature as signified by the ``tabernacle;'' and what confirms this exposition is what we find in chapter 10:5, 10, and 20. ``Not made with hands,'' and ``not of this creation,'' for no objection; for Christ's body was supernaturally formed; and the contrast is with the material tabernacle, a human structure, made by men and made of earthly materials. It is, however, better to connect ``tabernacle'' with the preceding than with the following words, --- But Christ, having come the high priest of the good things to come by means of a better and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation, has entered once for all into the holiest, not indeed with (or by) the blood of goats and calves but (or by) his own blood, having obtained an eternal redemption. ``Creation'' here means the world; it was not made of worldy materials. See verse 1. --- Ed.

and has a cleansing power, we are not to imagine anything earthly or material as being in them. And then we must remember that this is said in allusion to the ancient tabernacle, which was made of wood, brass, skins, silver, and gold, which were all dead things; but the power of God made the flesh of Christ to be a living and spiritual temple.

12. Neither by the blood of goats, etc. All these things tend to show that the things of Christ so far excel the shadows of the Law, that they justly reduce them all to nothing. For what is the value of Christ's blood, if it be deemed no better than the blood of beasts? What sort of expiation was made by his death, if the purgations according to the Law be still retained? As soon then as Christ came forth with the efficacious influence of his death, all the typical observances must necessarily have ceased.

Heb 9:13-17

Hebrews Chapter 9:13-17

13. For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh:

13. Si enim sanguis taurorum et hircorum, et cinis vitulae aspersus eos qui communicant, sanctificat ad carnis puritatem,

14. How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

14. Quanto magis sanguis Christi, qui per Spiritum aueternum sepsum obtulit irreprehensibilem Deo, mundabit conscientiam vestram a mortuis operibus ad serviendum Deo viventi?

15. And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

15. Ac propterea testamenti novi mediator est, ut morte intercedente in redemptionem transgressionum quae sub priore testamento erant, qui vocati sunt promissionem accipiant aeternae haeriditatis.

16. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.

16. Nam ubi est testamentum, illic necesse est mortem testatoris intercedere.

17. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.

17. Testamentum enim in mortuis firmum est, quia nunquam validum est quandiu vivit testator.

13. For if the blood of bulls, etc. This passage has given to many all occasion to go astray, because they did not consider that sacraments are spoken of, which had a spiritual import. The cleansing of the flesh they leave explained of what avails among men, as the heathens had their expiations to blot out the infamy

of crimes. But this explanation is indeed very heathenish; for wrong is done to God's promises, if we restrict the effect to civil matters only. Often does this declaration occur in the writings of Moses, that iniquity was expiated when a sacrifice was duly offered. This is no doubt the spiritual teaching of faith. Besides, all the sacrifices were destined for this end, that they might lead men to Christ; as the eternal salvation of the soul is through Christ, so these were true witnesses of this salvation.

What then does the Apostle mean when he speaks of the purgations of the flesh? He means what is symbolical or sacramental, as follows, --- If the blood of beasts was a true symbol of purgation, so that it cleansed in a sacramental manner, how much more shall Christ who is himself the truth, not only bear witness to a purgation by an external rite, but also really perform this for consciences? The argument then is from the signs to the thing signified; for the effect by a long time preceded the reality of the signs.

14. Who through the eternal Spirit, etc. He now clearly shows how Christ's death is to be estimated, not by the external act, but by the power of the Spirit. For Christ suffered as man; but that death becomes saving to us through the efficacious power of the Spirit; for a sacrifice, which was to be an eternal expiation, was a work more than human. And he calls the Spirit eternal for this reason, that we may know that the reconciliation, of which he is the worker or effecter, is eternal. [152] By saying, without spot, or unblamable, though he alludes to the victims under the Law, which were not to have a blemish or defect, he yet means, that Christ alone was the lawful victim and capable of appeasing God; for there was always in others something that might be justly deemed wanting; and hence he said before that the covenant of the Law was not {ἀμεμπτον}, blameless.

From dead works, etc. Understand by these either such works as produce death, or such as are the fruits or effects of death; for as the life of the soul is our union with God, so they who are alienated from him through sin may be justly deemed to be dead.

To serve the living God. This, we must observe, is the end of our purgation; for we are not washed by Christ, that we may plunge ourselves again into new filth, but that our purity may serve to glorify God. Besides, he teaches us, that

[152] Some as Grotius and Schleusner, take “the eternal Spirit” as meaning the same thing as “endless life” in chapter 7:16, — “who having (or in) an eternal spirit,” or life, etc.; they give the sense of “in” to {διὰ}. The comparison they represent to be between perishable victims and the sacrifice of Christ, who possesses a spirit or life that is eternal. Others, as Junius and Beza, consider Christ's divine nature as signified by ``the eternal Spirit.'' Beza says, that it was the Deity united to humanity that consecrated the whole sacrifice and endued it with vivifying power. The view of Stuart can hardly be comprehended. But the explanation most commonly adopted is that given here by Calvin that the Holy Spirit is meant, whose aid and influence are often mentioned in connection with Christ; see Matthew 12:28; Acts 1:2; 10:38. Some MSS and fathers have ``holy'' instead of ``eternal,'' but the greatest number and the best have the last word. Dr. Owen, Doddridge and Scott take this view. Why the Spirit is called ``eternal'' is not very evident. It may have been for the purpose of showing that the Spirit mentioned before in verse 8 is the same Spirit, he being eternal, and thus in order to prove that the offering of Christ was according to the divine will. God is said to be eternal in Romans 16:26, where a reference is made to the past and the present dispensation, with the view, as it seems, to show that he is the author of both. But perhaps the explanation of Calvin is the most suitable. --- Ed.

nothing can proceed from us that can be pleasing to God until we are purified by the blood of Christ; for as we are all enemies to God before our reconciliation, so he regards as abominable all our works; hence the beginning of acceptable service is reconciliation. And then, as no work is so pure and so free from stains, that it can of itself please God, it is necessary that the purgation through the blood of Christ should intervene, which alone can efface all stains. And there is a striking contrast between the living God and dead works.

15. And for this cause he is Mediator of the New Testament, etc. He concludes that there is no more need of another priest, for Christ fulfills the office under the New Testament; for he claims not for Christ the honor of a Mediator, so that others may at the same time remain as such with him; but he maintains that all others were repudiated when Christ undertook the office. But that he might more fully confirm this fact, he mentions how he commenced to discharge his office of a Mediator; even through death intervening. Since this is found alone in Christ, being wanting in all others, it follows that he alone can be justly deemed a Mediator. [153]

He further records the virtue and efficacy of his death by saying that he paid the price for sins under the first covenant or testament, which could not be blotted out by the blood of beasts; by which words he was seeking draw away the Jews from the Law to Christ. For, if the Law was so weak that all the remedies it applied for expiating sins did by no means accomplish what they represented, who could rest in it as in a safe harbor? This one thing, then, ought to have been enough to stimulate them to seek for something better than the law; for they could not but be in perpetual anxiety. On the other hand, when we come to Christ, as we obtain in him a full redemption, there is nothing which can any more distress us. Then, in these words he shows that the Law is weak, that the Jews might no longer recumb on it; and he teaches them to rely on Christ, for in him is found whatever can be desired for pacifying consciences.

Now, if any one asks, whether sins under the Law where remitted to the fathers, we must bear in mind the solution already stated, --- that they were remitted, but remitted through Christ. Then notwithstanding their external expiations, they were always held guilty. For this reason Paul says, that the Law was a handwriting against us. (Colossians 2:14.) For when the sinner came forward and openly confessed that he was guilty before God, and acknowledged by sacrificing an innocent animal that he was worthy of eternal death, what did he obtain by his victim, except that he sealed his own death as it were by this handwriting? In short, even then they only reposed in the remission of sins, when they looked to Christ. But if only a regard to Christ took away sins, they could never have been freed from them, had they continued to rest

[153] Here begins a new subject, that the covenant, or it may be viewed as the resumption of what is found in chapter 8:6, 7. "For this cause," or for this reason, refers, as it seems, to what follows, "in order that," {ὅπως}, etc. --- And for this reason is he the Mediator of a new covenant, in order that death being undergone for the redemption of transgressions under the first covenant, they who were called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance. As in Romans 3:25, 26, the reference is to the retrospective effect of Christ's expiatory sacrifice. Hence ``are called'' is not correct; and the participle is in the past tense. To ``receive the promise,'' means to enjoy its fulfillment. --- Ed.

in the Law. David indeed declares, that blessed is the man to whom sins are not imputed, (Psalm 32:2;) but that he might be a partaker of this blessedness, it was necessary for him to leave the Law, and to have his eyes fixed on Christ; for if he rested in the Law, he could never have been freed from guilt.

They who are called, etc. The object of the divine covenant is, that having been adopted as children, we may at length be made heirs of eternal life. The Apostle teaches us that we obtain this by Christ. It is hence evident, that in him is the fulfillment of the covenant. But the promise of the inheritance is to be taken for the promised inheritance, as though he had said, ``The promise of eternal life is not otherwise made to us to be enjoined, than through the death of Christ.'' Life, indeed, was formerly promised to the fathers, and the same has been the inheritance of God's children from the beginning, but we do not otherwise enter into the possession of it, than through the blood of Christ previously shed.

But he speaks of the called, that he might the more influence the Jews who were made partakers of this calling; for it is a singular favor, when we have the gift of the knowledge of Christ bestowed on us. We ought then to take the more heed, lest we neglect so valuable a treasure, and our thoughts should wander elsewhere. Some regard the called to be the elect, but incorrectly in my judgment; for the Apostle teaches here the same thing as we find in Romans 3:25, that righteousness and salvation have been procured by the blood of Christ, but that we become partakers of them by faith.

16. For where a testament is, etc. Even this one passage is a sufficient proof, that this Epistle was not written in Hebrew; for {ברית{ means in Hebrew a covenant, but not a testament; but in Greek, {διαθήκη}, includes both ideas; and the Apostle, alluding to its secondary meaning, holds that the promises should not have been otherwise ratified and valid, had they not been sealed by the death of Christ. And this he proves by referring to what is usually the case as to wills or testaments, the effect of which is suspended until the death of those whose wills they are.

The Apostle may yet seem to rest on too weak an argument, so that what he says may be easily disproved. For it may be said, that God made no testament or will under the Law; but it was a covenant that he made with the ancient people. Thus, neither from the fact nor from the name, can it be concluded that Christ's death was necessary. For if he infers from the fact, that Christ ought to have died, because a testament is not ratified except by the death of the testator, the answer may be this, that |berit|, the word ever used by Moses, is a covenant made between those who are alive, and we cannot think otherwise of the fact itself. Now, as to the word used, he simply alluded, as I have already said, to the two meanings it has in Greek; he therefore dwells chiefly on the thing in itself. Nor is it any objection to say, that it was a covenant that God made with his people; for that very covenant bore some likeness to a testament, for it was ratified by blood. [154]

[154] See Appendix H 2.

We must ever hold this truth, that no symbols have ever been adopted by God unnecessarily or unsuitably. And God in establishing the covenant of the law made use of blood. Then it was not such a contract, as they say, between the living, as did not require death. Besides, what rightly belongs to a testament is, that it begins to take effect after death. If we consider that the Apostle reasons from the thing itself, and not from the word, and if we bear in mind that he avowedly takes as granted what I have already stated, that nothing has been instituted in vain by God, there will be no great difficulty.

If anyone objects and says, that the heathens ratified covenants according to the other meaning by sacrifices; this indeed I admit to be true; but God did not borrow the rite of sacrificing from the practice of the heathens; on the contrary, all the heathen sacrifices were corruptions, which had derived their origin from the institutions of God. We must then return to the same point, that the covenant of God which was made with blood, may be fitly compared to a testament, as it is of the same kind and character.

Heb 9:18-23

Hebrews Chapter 9:18-23

18. Whereupon neither the first testament was dedicated without blood.

18. Inde neque primum illud sine sanguine dedicatum fuit.

19. For when Moses had spoken every precept to all the people according to the law, he took the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, and sprinkled both the book, and all the people,

19. Nam postquam exposuisset Moses secundum legem totum mandatum universo populo, accipiens sanguinem vitulorum et hircorum, cum aqua et lana coccinea et hysopo, librum et totum populum aspersit,

20. Saying, This is the blood of the testament which God hath enjoined unto you.

20. Dicens, Hic est sanguis testamenti quod Deus mandavit vobis omnibus.

21. Moreover he sprinkled with blood both the tabernacle, and all the vessels of the ministry.

21. Quin tabernaculum et omnia vasa ministerii sanguine similiter aspersit.

22. And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without shedding of blood is no remission.

22. Et propemodum sanguine omnia purgantur secundum legem, nec sine sanguinis effusione sit remissio.

23. It was therefore necessary that the patterns of things in the heavens should be purified with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

23. Necesse igitur est exempla eorum quae sunt in coelis istis purgari; ipsa vero coelestia melioribus quam illae fuerint hostiis.

18. Whereupon neither the first, etc. It hence appears that the fact is what is mainly urged, and that it is not a question about the word, though the Apostle

turned to his own purpose a word presented to his attention in that language in which he wrote, as though one, while speaking of God's covenant, which is often called in Greek {μαρτυρία}, a testimony, were to recommend it among other things under that title. And doubtless that is a testimony, {μαρτυρία}, to which angels from heaven has borne witness, and of which there have been so many illustrious witnesses on earth, even all the holy Prophets, Apostles, and a vast number of martyrs, and of which at last the Son of God himself became a surety. No one in such a discourse would deem any such thing as unreasonable. And yet the Hebrew word, {תעודה{ will admit of no such meaning as a covenant; but as nothing is advanced but what is consistent with the thing itself, no scrupulous regard is to be paid to the meaning of a word.

The Apostle then says, that the old testament or covenant was dedicated with blood. He hence concludes, that men were even then reminded, that it could not be valid and efficacious except death intervened. For though the blood of beasts was then shed, yet, he denies that it availed to confine an everlasting covenant. That this may appear more clearly, we must notice the custom of sprinkling which he quotes from Moses. He first teaches us that the covenant was dedicated or consecrated, not that it had in itself anything profane; but as there is nothing so holy that men by their uncleanness will not defile, except God prevents it by making a renewal of all things, therefore the dedication was made on account of men, who alone wanted it.

He afterwards adds, that the tabernacle and all the vessels, and also the very book of the law, were sprinkled; by which rite the people were then taught, that God could not be sought or looked to for salvation, nor rightly worshipped, except faith in every case looked to an intervening blood. For the majesty of God is justly to be dreaded by us, and the way to his presence is nothing to us but a dangerous labyrinth, until we know that he is pacified towards us through the blood of Christ, and that this blood affords to us a free access. All kinds of worship are then faulty and impure until Christ cleanses them by the sprinkling of his blood. [155]

For the tabernacle was a sort of visible image of God; and as the vessels for

[155]It is worthy of notice that the Apostle mentions here several things which are not particularly by Moses in Exodus 24:3-8, where the account is given; and yet what is there stated sufficiently warrants the particulars mentioned here. The blood of “goats” is not mentioned, and yet burnt offerings are said to have been offered, and goats were so offered; see Leviticus 1:10. Moses says nothing of “scarlet wool and hyssop;” but he mentions “sprinkling,” and this was commonly done thereby; see Leviticus 14:51. “Blood” only is mentioned by Moses; but we find that when sprinkled, “water” was often connected with it. See Leviticus 14:52; Numbers 19:18 The main difficulty is respecting “the book” being sprinkled, which is not stated by Moses. But as the altar was sprinkled, there was the same reason for sprinkling the book, though that is not expressly mentioned. However, it is evident that this was the general opinion among the Jews, for otherwise the Apostle would not have mentioned it in an Epistle especially addressed to them. Then the “tabernacle,” it was not expressly mentioned that it was sprinkled with blood when consecrated; and this was some time after the covenant was made. The setting up of the tabernacle is mentioned in Exodus 40:17-33. In the previous verses, 9 and 10, there is a direction given to anoint the tabernacle, and all its vessels, and also to hallow them and to anoint the alter, and to sanctify it. The hallowing or sanctifying was no doubt done by sprinkling them with blood. See as a proof of this Exodus 29:21. We hence perceive how well acquainted the writer must have been with the Jewish rituals. — Ed.

ministering were destined for his service, so they were symbols of true worship. But since none of these were for salvation to the people, we hence reasonably conclude, that where Christ does not appear with his blood, we have nothing to do with God. So doctrine itself, however unchangeable may be the will of God, cannot be efficacious for our benefit, unless it be dedicated by blood, as is plainly set forth in this verse.

I know that others give a different interpretation; for they consider the tabernacle to be the body of the Church, and vessels the faithful, whose ministry God employs; but what I have stated is much more appropriate. For whenever God was to be called upon, they turned themselves to the sanctuary; and it was a common way of speaking to say that they stood before the Lord when they appeared in the temple.

20. Saying, This is the blood of the testament, [156] etc. If that was the blood of the testament, then neither the testament was without blood ratified, nor the blood without the testament available for expiation. It is hence necessary that both should be united; and we see that before the explanation of the Law, no symbol was added, for what would a sacrament be except the word preceded it? Hence a symbol is a kind of appendage to the word. And mark, this word was not whispered like a magic incantation, but pronounced with a clear voice, as it was destined for the people, according to what the words of the covenant express, which God hath enjoined unto you. [157] Perverted, then, are the sacraments, and it is a wicked corruption when there is no explanation of the commandment given, which is as it were the very soul of the sacrament. Hence the Papists, who take away the true understanding of things from signs, retain only dead elements.

This passage reminds us that the promises of God are then only profitable to us when they are confirmed by the blood of Christ. For what Paul testifies in 2 Corinthians 1:20, that all God's promises are yea and amen in Christ --- this happens when his blood like a seal is engraven on our hearts, or when we not only hear God speaking, but also see Christ offering himself as a pledge for those things which are spoken. If this thought only came to our minds, that what we read is not written so much with ink as with the blood of Christ, that when the Gospel is preached, his sacred blood distills together with the voice, there would be far greater attention as well as reverence on our part. A symbol of this was the sprinkling mentioned by Moses!

At the same time there is more stated here than what is expressed by Moses; for he does not mention that the book and the people were sprinkled, nor does

[156] Both Calvin and our verse retain the word “testament” as derived from verse 17; but as that verse and the preceding are to be viewed as parenthetic, the word “covenant” is the term used by Moses. The latter is the word adopted by Beza, Doddridge, Macknight, and Stuart, “This is the blood of the covenant,” etc. — Ed.

[157] The Apostle here follows neither the Hebrew nor the Septuagint. The Hebrew is “which the Lord (Jehovah) hath made with you;” and the Septuagint, “Which the Lord hath covenanted ({διέθετο}) with you.'' And instead of ``Behold the blood of the covenant,'' (the same in both) we have here, ``This is the blood of the covenant.'' But though the words are different, yet the meaning is essentially the same, --- the main things regarded by the Apostles in their quotations. --- Ed

he name the goats, nor the scarlet wool, nor the hyssop. As to the book, that it was sprinkled cannot be clearly shown, yet the probability is that it was, for Moses is said to have produced it after he had sacrificed; and he did this when he bound the people to God by a solemn compact. With regard to the rest, the Apostle seems to have blended together various kinds of expiations, the reason for which was the same. Nor indeed was there anything unsuitable in this, since he was speaking of the general subject Or purgation under the Old Testament, which was done by means of blood. Now as to the sprinkling made by hyssop and scarlet wool, it is evident that it represented the mystical sprinkling made by the Spirit. We know that the hyssop possesses a singular power to cleanse and to purify; so Christ employs his Spirit to sprinkle us in order to wash us by his own blood when he leads us to true repentance, when he purifies us from the depraved lusts of our flesh, when he imbues us with the precious gift of his own righteousness. For it was not in vain that God had instituted this rite. David also alluded to this when he said,

``Thou wilt sprinkle me, O Lord, with hyssop, and I shall be cleansed.'' (Psalm 51:7.)

These remarks will be sufficient for those who wish to be soberminded in their speculations.

22. And almost all things, etc. By saying almost he seems to imply that some things were otherwise purified. And doubtless they often washed themselves and other unclean things with water. But even water itself derived its power to cleanse from the sacrifices; so that the Apostle at length truly declares that without blood there was no remission. [158] Then uncleanness was imputed until it was expiated by a sacrifice. And as without Christ there is no purity nor salvation, so nothing without blood can be either pure or saving; for Christ is never to be separated from the sacrifice of his death. But the Apostle meant only to say that this symbol was almost always made use of. But if at any time the purgation was not so made, it was nevertheless through blood, since all the rites derived their efficacy in a manner from the general expiation. For the people were not each of them sprinkled, (for how could so small a portion of blood be sufficient for so large a multitude?) yet the purgation extended to all. Hence the particle almost signifies the same as though he had said, that the use of this rite was so common that they seldom omitted it in purgations. For what Chrysostom says, that unfitness is thus denoted, because these were only figures under the Law, is inconsistent with the Apostle's design.

No remission, etc. Thus men are prevented from appearing before God; for as he is justly displeased with them all, there is no ground for them to promise themselves any favor until he is pacified. But there is but one way of pacification, and that is by an expiation made by blood: hence no pardon of sins can be hoped for unless we bring blood, and this is done when we flee by faith to the death of Christ.

[158] Metals were purified by fire, and clothes by being washed in water, (Numbers 31:22-24;) but these were purifications not accompanied with remission of sins. So that what is said here is literally true. — Ed.

23. The patterns, or exemplars, etc. Lest any one should object and say that the blood by which the old testament was dedicated was different from that of a testator, the Apostle meets this objection, and says that it was no wonder that the tabernacle which was earthly was consecrated by the sacrificing of beasts; for there was an analogy and a likeness between the purification and the things purified. But the heavenly pattern or exemplar of which he now speaks was to be consecrated in a very different way; there was here no need of goats or of calves. It hence follows that the death of the testator was necessary.

The meaning then is this, --- as under the Law there were only earthly images of spiritual things, so the rite of expiation was also, so to speak, carnal and figurative; but as the heavenly pattern allows of nothing earthly, so it requires another blood than that of beasts, such as may correspond with its excellency. Thus the death of the testator is necessary, in order that the testament may be really consecrated.

He calls the kingdom of Christ heavenly things, [159] for it is spiritual and possesses a full revelation of the truth. Better sacrifices he mentions instead of ``a better sacrifice,'' for it was only one; but he uses the plural number for the sake of the antithesis or contrast.

Heb 9:24-28

Hebrews Chapter 9:24-28

24. For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us:

24. Neque enim in manufacta sancta ingressus est Christus, exempla verorum; sed in ipsum coelum, ut nunc appareat coram facie Dei pro nobis:

25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, as the high priest entereth into the holy place every year with blood of others;

25. Neque ut saepe offerat seipsum, quemadmodum pontifex ingeditur in sancta quotannis cum sanguine aliena;

26. For then must he often have suffered since the foundation of the world: but now once in the end of the world hath he appeared to put away sin by the

[159] By making “heavenly things” to mean things in heaven above, and not in the kingdom of heaven on earth, commentators have been under the necessity of altering the sense of the word “purified.” The tabernacle represented the whole kingdom of Christ, both on earth and in heaven. The sanctuary and the court, where the alter of burnt offering was, represented what Christ has done and is doing on earth; and the holy of holies was a representation of Christ’s kingdom in heaven. The victims were slain in the court without the vail; the shedding of blood was the atonement, but its sprinkling was its purifying and sanctifying effects. All the heavenly things in the Church on earth require purifying by the sprinkling of the blood of the atoning sacrifice once offered by Christ; and it is to this the reference is made here. And having provided means for purification, he as the high priest, by virtue of his sacrifice, entered into the holiest, heavenly things on earth, for the Church here below, in order to prepare it for the holiest above. “In the heavens” may probably refer to two parts of Christ’s kingdom, the one in heaven and the other on earth; and latter, as things which require a sacrifice; and then in the following verse the former part is alluded to, the kingdom above, even heaven, represented by the holy of holies. — Ed.

sacrifice of himself.

26. (Quando quidem oportuisset illum saepius pati a creatione mundi:) nunc autem in consummatione seculorum, semel in destructionem peccati per victimam sui ipsius apparuit.

27. And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:

27. Et quatenus constitutum est hominibus semel mori, post hoc vero judicium;

28. So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin unto salvation.

28. Ita et Christus semel oblatus, ut multorum anferret peccata: secundo absque peccato conspicietur iis qui eum expectant in salutem.

24. For Christ is not entered, etc. This is a confirmation of the former verse. He had spoken of the true sanctuary, even the heavenly; he now adds that Christ entered there. It hence follows that a suitable confirmation is required. The holy places he takes for the sanctuary; he says that it is not made with hands, because it ought not to be classed with the created things which are subject to decay; for he does not mean here the heaven we see, and in which the stars shine, but the glorious kingdom of God which is above all the heavens. He calls the old sanctuary the {ἀντίτυπον}, the antitype of the true, that is, of the spiritual; for all the external figures represented as in a mirror what would have otherwise been above our corporeal senses. Greek writers sometimes use the same word in speaking of our sacraments, and wisely too and suitably, for every sacrament is a visible image of what is invisible.

Now to appear, etc. So formerly the Levitical priest stood before God in the name of the people, but typically; for in Christ is found the reality and the full accomplishment of what was typified. The ark was indeed a symbol of the divine presence; But it is Christ who really presents himself before God, and stands there to obtain favor for us, so that now there is no reason why we should flee from God's tribunal, since we have so kind an advocate, through whose faithfulness and protection we are made secure and safe. Christ was indeed our advocate when he was on earth; but it was a further concession made to our infirmity that he ascended into heaven to undertake there the office of an advocate. So that whenever mention is made of his ascension into heaven, this benefit ought ever to come to our minds, that he appears there before God to defend us by his advocacy. Foolishly, then, and unreasonably the question is asked by some, has he not always appeared there? For the Apostle speaks here only of his intercession, for the sake of which he entered the heavenly sanctuary.

25. Nor yet that he should offer himself often, etc. How, then, is he a priest, one may say, if he offers no sacrifices? To this I reply that it is not requited of a priest that he should be continually sacrificing; for even under the Law there were days appointed for the chief sacrifices every year; they had also their hours daily morning and evening. But as that only true sacrifice which Christ offered once for all is ever efficacious, and thus perpetual in its effects,

it is no wonder that on its virtue, which never fails, Christ's eternal priesthood should be sustained. And here again he shows how and in what things Christ differs from the Levitical priest. Of the sanctuary he had spoken before; but he notices one difference as to the kind of sacrifice, for Christ offered himself and not an animal; and he adds another; that he repeated not his sacrifice, as under the Law, for the repetition there was frequent and even incessant.

26. For then must he often have suffered, etc. He shows how great an absurdity follows, if we do not count it enough that an expiation has been made by the one sacrifice of Christ. For he hence concludes that he must have died often; for death is connected with sacrifices. How this latter supposition is most unreasonable; it then follows that the virtue of the one sacrifice is eternal and extends to all ages. And he says since the foundation of the world, or from the beginning of the world [160] for in all ages from the beginning there were sins which needed expiation. Except then the sacrifice of Christ was efficacious, no one of the fathers would have obtained salvation; for as they were exposed to God's wrath, a remedy for deliverance would have failed them, had not Christ by suffering once suffered so much as was necessary to reconcile men to God from the beginning of the world even to the end. Except then we look for many deaths, we must be satisfied with the one true sacrifice.

And hence it is evident how frivolous is the distinction, in the acuteness of which the Papists take so much delight; for they say that the sacrifice of Christ on the cross was bloody, but that the sacrifice of the mass which they pretend to offer daily to God, is unbloody. Were this subtle evasion adopted, then the Spirit of God would be accused of inadvertence, having not thought of such a thing; for the Apostle assumes it here as an admitted truth, that there is no sacrifice without death. I care nothing that ancient writers have spoken thus; for it is not in the power of men to invent sacrifices as they please. Here stands a truth declared by the Holy Spirit, that sins are not expiated by a sacrifice except blood be shed. Therefore the notion, that Christ is often offered, is a device of the devil.

But now once in the end of the world, etc. He calls that the end of the world or the consummation of the ages, which Paul calls ``the fullness of time,'' (Galatians 4:4;) for it was the maturity of that time which God had determined in his eternal purpose; and thus cut off is every occasion for men's curiosity, that they may not dare to inquire why it was no sooner, or why in that age rather than in another. For it behooves us to acquiesce in God's secret purpose, the reason for which appears clear to him, though it may not be evident to us. In

[160] This sentence is not to be taken strictly in its literal meaning; for the world was founded and all things were set in due order before sin entered into it. The phrase is used in a similar way in Luke 11:50. It is a popular mode of speaking intelligible to common readers though not suitable to over-nice and hair-splitting critics. The truth implied, as Beza observes, is, that sins since the beginning of the world have alone have been expiated by the blood of Christ, the virtue of which extends to all sins, past and future. The effects of his sufferings being perpetual and the same as to all ages, from the beginning to the end of the world, there was no necessity of having them repeated. As to their retrospective influence, see verse 15, and Romans 3:25, 26 — Ed.

short, the Apostle intimates that Christ's death was in due time, as he was sent into the world for this end by the Father, in whose power is the lawful right to regulate all things as well as time, and who ordains their succession with consummate wisdom, though often hid from us

This consummation is also set in opposition to the imperfection of past time; for God so held his ancient people in suspense, that it might have been easily concluded that things had not yet reached a fixed state. Hence Paul declares that the end of the ages had come upon us, (1 Corinthians 10:11;) by which he means that the kingdom of Christ contained the accomplishment of all things. But since it was the fullness of time when Christ appeared to expiate sins, they are guilty of offering him an atrocious insult, who seek to renew his sacrifice, as though all things were not completed by his death. He then appeared once for all; for had he done so once or twice, there must have been something defective in the first oblation; but this is inconsistent with fullness.

To put away, or to destroy sin, etc. [161] This agrees with Daniel's prophecy, in which the sealing up and the abolition of sins are promised, and in which it is also declared that there would be an end to sacrifices, (Daniel 9:24-27;) for to what purpose are expiations when sins are destroyed? But this destruction is then only effected, when sins are not imputed to those who flee to the sacrifice of Christ; for though pardon is to be sought daily, as we daily provoke God's wrath; yet as we are reconciled to God in no other way than by the one death of Christ, sin is rightly said to be put away or destroyed by it.

27. And as it is appointed, etc. The meaning is this: since we patiently wait after death for the day of judgment, it being the common lot of nature which it is not right to struggle against; why should there be less patience in waiting for the second coming of Christ? For if a long interval of time does not diminish, as to men, the hope of a happy resurrection, how unreasonable would it be to render less honor to Christ? But less would it be, were we to call upon him to undergo a second death, when he had once died. Were any one to object and say, that some had died twice, such as Lazarus, and not once; the answer would be this, --- that the Apostle speaks here of the ordinary lot of men; but they are to be excepted from this condition, who shall by an instantaneous change put off corruption, (1 Corinthians 15:51;) for he includes none but those who wait for a long time in the dust for the redemption of their bodies.

28. The second time without sin, etc. The Apostle urges this one thing, --- that we ought not to be disquieted by vain and impure longings for new kinds of expiations, for the death of Christ is abundantly sufficient for us. Hence he says, that he once appeared and made a sacrifice to abolish sins, and that at his second coming he will make openly manifest the efficacy of his death, so that

[161] Literally it is “for the abolishing of sin,” as Doddridge renders it. The word occurs only in one other place, chapter 7:18, and is rendered “disannulling;” and Macknight gives it that meaning here, taking “sin” in the sense of sin-offering, “He hath been manifested to abolish sin-offering by the sacrifice of himself.” But this is inconsistent with the drift of the passage. To remove or abolish sin is doubtless what is meant. To “take away sin,” is the version of Beza; and “to remove the punishment due to sin,” is that of Stuart. — Ed.

sin will have no more power to hurt us. [162]

To bear, or, take away sins, is to free from guilt by his satisfaction those who have sinned. He says the sins of many, that is, of all, as in Romans 5:15. It is yet certain that all receive no benefit from the death of Christ; but this happens, because their unbelief prevents them. At the same time this question is not to be discussed here, for the Apostle is not speaking of the few or of the many to whom the death of Christ may be available; but he simply means that he died for others and not for himself; and therefore he opposes many to one. [163]

But what does he mean by saying that Christ will appear without sin? Some say, without a propitiation or an expiatory sacrifice for sin, as the word sin is taken in Romans 8:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21; and in many places in the writings of Moses; but in my judgment he intended to express something more suitable to his present purpose, namely, that Christ at his coming will make it known how truly and really he had taken away sins, so that there would be no need of any other sacrifice to pacify God; as though he had said, ``When we come to the tribunal of Christ, we shall find that there was nothing wanting in his death.'' [164]

And to the same effect is what he immediately adds, unto salvation to them who look, or wait for him. Others render the sentence differently, ``To them who look for him unto salvation;'' But the other meaning is the most appropriate; for he means that those shall find complete salvation who recumb with quiet minds on the death of Christ; for this looking for or wanting has a reference to the subject discussed. The Scripture indeed does elsewhere ascribe this in common to believers, that they look for the coming of the Lord, in order to distinguish them from the ungodly, by whom his coming is dreaded, (1 Thessalonians 1:10;) but as the Apostle now contends that we ought to acquiesce in the one true sacrifice of Christ, he calls it the looking for Christ, when we are satisfied with his redemption alone, and seek no other remedies or helps. [165]

[162] "Was once offered," {προσενεχθεὶς}, --- Grotius regarded this participle as having a reflective sense, ``having once for all offered up himself;'' and so does Stuart. The first aorist passive has often this sense. ``By whom was he offered?'' asks Theophylact; he answers, ``by himself, he being a high priest.'' This amounts to the same thing. --- Ed

[163] "We are told that {οἱ} {πολλοὶ} is often equivalent to {πάντες}. It is not however quite certain that the Apostle here meant to express {πάντων}; the verse concludes with the mention of those who `wait for him' i.e., who wait for Christ's second coming in humble hope of receiving their reward; and these manifestly are not the whole human race.'' --- Bp. Middleton, quoted by Bloomfield. --- Ed

[164] Schleusner and Stuart consider "without sin" to mean "without sin-offering" without any sacrifice for sin. Doddridge and Scott take its meaning to be "without being in the likeness of sinful flesh," or, without that humiliating form in which he atoned for sin. Some have said, "without sin" being imputed to him. The construction which the passage seems to afford is this, "without bearing sin." The previous clause is that, to bear or to suffer for, he having made the first time a full and complete expiation. To "bear sins," is not, as some say, to take them away, in allusion to the scape goat, but to endure the punishment due to them, to make an atonement for them. See 1 Peter 2:24; where the same word to "bear," in connection with "sins," is used; and where it clearly means to bear the penalty of sin; the end of the verse is, "with whose stripes we are healed." — Ed.

[165] Most commentators adopt the same view, as conveyed in our version, connecting "salvation" with appearing, such as Beza, Grotius, Doddridge, Scott and Stuart. — Ed.

Chapter 10

CHAPTER 10

Heb 10:1-4

Hebrews Chapter 10:1-4

1. For the law having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with those sacrifices which they offered year by year continually make the comers thereunto perfect.

1. Umbram enim habens lex futurorum bonorum, non ipsam vivam imaginem rerum, sacrificiis quae quotannis eadem continenter offeruntur nunquam potest eos qui accedunt perficere (vel, sanctificare.)

2. For then would they not have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.

2. Alioqui annon desiisent offeri? propterea quod nullam amplius conscientiam peccatorum haberent cultores semel purgati.

3. But in those sacrifices there is a remembrance again made of sins every year.

3. Atqui in his fit quotannis commemoratio peccatorum.

4. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.

4. Impossible enim est ut sanguis taurorum tollat peccata.

1. For the Law having a shadow, etc. He has borrowed this similitude from the pictorial art; for a shadow here is in a sense different from what it has in Colossians 2:17; where he calls the ancient rites or ceremonies shadows, because they did not possess the real substance of what they represented. But he now says that they were like rude lineaments, which shadow forth the perfect picture; for painters, before they introduce the living colors by the pencil, are wont to mark out the outlines of what they intend to represent. This indistinct representation is called by the Greeks {σκιαγραφία}, which you might call in Latin, ``umbratilem``, shadowy. The Greeks had also the {εἰκὼν}, the full likeness. Hence also ``eiconia'' are called images (imagines) in Latin, which represent to the life the form of men or of animals or of places.

The difference then which the Apostle makes between the Law and the Gospel is this, --- that under the Law was shadowed forth only in rude and imperfect lines what is under the Gospel set forth in living colors and graphically distinct. He thus confirms again what he had previously said, that the Law was not useless, nor its ceremonies unprofitable. For though there was not in them the image of heavenly things, finished, as they say, by the last touch

of the artist; yet the representation, such as it was, was of no small benefit to the fathers; but still our condition is much more favorable. We must however observe, that the things which were shown to them at a distance are the same with those which are now set before our eyes. Hence to both the same Christ is exhibited, the same righteousness, sanctification, and salvation; and the difference only is in the manner of painting or setting them forth.

Of good things to come, etc. These, I think, are eternal things. I indeed allow that the kingdom of Christ, which is now present with us, was formerly announced as future; but the Apostle's words mean that we have a lively image of future blessings. He then understands that spiritual pattern, the full fruition of which is deferred to the resurrection and the future world. At the same time I confess again that these good things began to be revealed at the beginning of the kingdom of Christ; but what he now treats of is this, that they are not only future blessings as to the Old Testament, but also with respect to us, who still hope for them.

Which they offered year by year, etc. He speaks especially of the yearly sacrifice, mentioned in Leviticus 16, though all the sacrifices are here included under one kind. Now he reasons thus: When there is no longer any consciousness of sin, there is then no need of sacrifice; but under the Law the offering of the same sacrifice was often repeated; then no satisfaction was given to God, nor was guilt removed nor were consciences appeased; were it otherwise there would have been made an end of sacrificing. We must further carefully observe, that he calls those the same sacrifices which were appointed for a similar purpose; for a better notion may be formed of them by the design for which God instituted them, than by the different beasts which were offered.

And this one thing is abundantly sufficient to confute and expose the subtlety of the Papists, by which they seem to themselves ingeniously to evade an absurdity in defending the sacrifice of the mass; for when it is objected to them that the repetition of the sacrifice is superfluous, since the virtue of that sacrifice which Christ offered is perpetual, they immediately reply that the sacrifice in the mass is not different but the same. This is their answer. But what, on the contrary, does the Apostle say? He expressly denies that the sacrifice which is repeatedly offered, though the same, is efficacious or capable of making an atonement. Now, though the Papists should cry out a thousand times that the sacrifice which Christ once offered is the same with, and not different from what they make daily, I shall still always contend, according to the express words of the Apostle, that since the offerings of Christ availed to pacify God, not only an end was put to former sacrifices, but that it is also impious to repeat the sacrifice. It is hence quite evident that the offering of Christ in the mass is sacrilegious. [166]

[166] No remark is made on the second verse. Doddridge and Beza read the first clause without negative {οὐκ} and not as a question, according to the Vulg. And the Syr. Versions, ``Otherwise they would have ceased to be offered.'' Most MSS. favor our present reading. There is no real difference in the meaning. The words, ``no more conscience of sins,'' are rendered by Beza, ``no more conscious of sins;'' by Doddridge, ``no more consciousness of sins;'' and by Stuart, ``no longer conscious of sins.'' The true meaning

3. A remembrance again, etc. Though the Gospel is a message of reconciliation with God, yet it is necessary that we should daily remember our sins; but what the Apostle means is, that sins were brought to remembrance that guilt might be removed by the means of the sacrifice then offered. It is not, then, any kind of remembrance that is here meant, but that which might lead to such a confession of guilt before God, as rendered a sacrifice necessary for its removal.

Such is the sacrifice of the mass with the Papists; for they pretend that by it the grace of God is applied to us in order that sins may be blotted out. But since the Apostle concludes that the sacrifices of the Law were weak, because they were every year repeated in order to obtain pardon, for the very same reason it may be concluded that the sacrifice of Christ was weak, if it must be daily offered, in order that its virtue may be applied to us. With whatever masks, then, they may cover their mass, they can never escape the charge of an atrocious blasphemy against Christ.

4. For it is not possible, etc. He confirms the former sentiment with the same reason which he had adduced before, that the blood of beasts could not cleanse souls from sin. The Jews, indeed, had in this a symbol and a pledge of the real cleansing; but it was with reference to another, even as the blood of the calf represented the blood of Christ. But the Apostle is speaking here of the efficacy of the blood of beasts in itself. He therefore justly takes away from it the power of cleansing. There is also to be understood a contrast which is not expressed, as though he had said, ``It is no wonder that the ancient sacrifices were insufficient, so that they were to be offered continually, for they had nothing in them but the blood of beasts, which could not reach the conscience; but far otherwise is the power of Christ's blood: It is not then right to measure the offering which he has made by the former sacrifices.''

Heb 10:5-10

Hebrews Chapter 10:5-10

5. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me:

5. Quapropter egrediens in mundum dicit, Sacrificium et oblationem noluisti, corpus autem aptasti mihi;

6. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.

6. Holocausta et victimas pro peccato non probasti;

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is no doubt thus conveyed. We meet with two other instances of conscience, {συνειδήσης}, being followed by what may be called the genitive case of the object, ``conscience of the idol,'' i.e., as to the idol, 1 Corinthians 8:7, --- ``conscience of God,'' i.e., as to God, or towards God, 1 Peter 2:19. And here, ``conscience of sins,'' must mean conscience with reference to sins, i.e., conviction of sins, a conscience apprehensive of what sins deserve. It is a word, says Parkhurst, which ``is rarely found in the ancient heathen writers;'' but it occurs often in the New Testament, though not but once in the Sept., Ecclesiastes 10:20. Its common meaning is conscience, and not consciousness, though it may be so rendered here, consistently with the real meaning of the passage. Michaelis in his Introduction to the New Testament, is referred to by Parkhurst, as having produced two instances, one from Philo, and the other from Diod. Siculus, in which it means ``consciousness.'' --- Ed

7. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God.

7. Tunc dixi, Ecce adsum; in capite libri scriptum est de me, ut faciam, O Deus, voluntatem tuam.

8. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law;

8. Quum prius dixesset, sacrificium et oblationem, holocausta et victimas pro peccato noluisti, neque comprobasti quae secundum legem offeruntur;

9. Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second.

9. Tunc dixit, Ecce adsum ut faciam, O Deus, voluntatem tuam, tollit prius ut secundum statuat:

10. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all

10. In qua voluntate sanctificati sumus per oblationem corporis Iesu Christi semel.

5. Wherefore, when he cometh, etc. This entering into the world was the manifestation of Christ in the flesh; for when he put on man's nature that he might be a Redeemer to the world and appeared to men, he is said to have then come into the world, as elsewhere he is said to have descended from heaven. (John 6:41.) And yet the fortieth Psalm, which he quotes, seems to be improperly applied to Christ, for what is found there by no means suits his character, such as, ``My iniquities have laid hold on me,'' except we consider that Christ willingly took on himself the sins of his members. The whole of what is said, no doubt, rightly accords with David; but as it is well known that David was a type of Christ, there is nothing unreasonable in transferring to Christ what David declared respecting himself, and especially when mention is made of abolishing the ceremonies of the Law, as the case is in this passage. Yet all do not consider that the words have this meaning, for they think that sacrifices are not here expressly repudiated, but that the superstitious notion which had generally prevailed, that the whole worship of God consisted in them, is what is condemned; and if it be so, it may be said that this testimony has little to do with the present question. It behoves us, then, to examine this passage more minutely, that it may appear evident whether the apostle has fitly adduced it.

Everywhere in the Prophets sentences of this kind occur, that sacrifices do not please God, that they are not required by him, that he sets no value on them; nay, on the contrary, that they are an abomination to him. But then the blame was not in the sacrifices themselves, but what was adventitious to them was referred to; for as hypocrites, while obstinate in their impiety, still sought to pacify God with sacrifices, they were in this manner reproved. The Prophets, then, rejected sacrifices, not as they were instituted by God, but as they were vitiated by wicked men, and profaned through unclean consciences. But here the reason is different, for he is not condemning sacrifices offered in hypocrisy, or

otherwise not rightly performed through the depravity and wickedness of men; but he denies that they are required of the faithful and sincere worshippers of God; for he speaks of himself who offered them with a clean heart and pure hands, and yet he says that they did not please God.

Were any one to except and say that they were not accepted on their own account or for their own worthiness, but for the sake of something else, I should still say that unsuitable to this place is an argument of this kind; for then would men be called back to spiritual worship, when ascribing too much to external ceremonies; then the Holy Spirit would be considered as declaring that ceremonies are nothing with God, when by men's error they are too highly exalted.

David, being under the Law, ought not surely to have neglected the rite of sacrificing. He ought, I allow, to have worshipped God with sincerity of heart; but it was not lawful for him to omit what God had commanded, and he had the command to sacrifice in common with all the rest. We hence conclude that he looked farther than to his own age, when he said, Sacrifice thou wouldest not. It was, indeed, in some respects true, even in David's time, that God regarded not sacrifices; but as they were yet all held under the yoke of the schoolmaster, David could not perform the worship of God in a complete manner, unless when clothed, so to speak, in a form of this kind. We must, then, necessarily come to the kingdom of Christ, in order that the truth of God's unwillingness to receive sacrifice may fully appear. There is a similar passage in Psalm 16:10, ``Thou wilt not suffer thine holy one to see corruption;'' for though God delivered David for a time from corruption, yet this was not fully accomplished except in Christ.

There is no small importance in this, that when he professes that he would do the will of God, he assigns no place to sacrifices; for we hence conclude that without them there may be a perfect obedience to God, which could not be true were not the Law annulled. I do not, however, deny but that David in this place, as well as in Psalm 51:16, so extenuated external sacrifices as to prefer to them that which is the main thing; but there is no doubt but that in both places he cast his eyes on the kingdom of Christ. And thus the Apostle is a witness, that Christ is justly introduced as the speaker in this Psalm, in which not even the lowest place among God's commandments is allowed to sacrifices, which God had yet strictly required under the Law.

But a body hast thou prepared me, etc. The words of David are different, ``An ear hast thou bored for me,'' a phrase which some think has been borrowed from an ancient rite or custom of the Law, (Exodus 21:6;) for if any one set no value on the liberty granted at the jubilee, and wished to be under perpetual servitude, his ear was bored with an awl. The meaning, as they thinks was this, ``Thou shalt have me, O Lord, as a servant forever.'' I, however, take another view, regarding it as intimating docility and obedience; for we are deaf until God opens our ears, that is, until he corrects the stubbornness that cleaves to us. There is at the same time an implied contrast between the promiscuous and vulgar mass, (to whom the sacrifices were like phantoms without any power,) and David, to whom God had discovered their spiritual and legitimate use and

application.

But the Apostle followed the Greek translators when he said, ``A body hast thou prepared;'' for in quoting these words the Apostles were not so scrupulous, provided they perverted not Scripture to their own purpose. We must always have a regard to the end for which they quote passages, for they are very careful as to the main object, so as not to turn Scripture to another meaning; but as to words and other things, which bear not on the subject in hand, they use great freedom. [167]

7. In the volume or chapter of the book, etc. Volume is properly the meaning of the Hebrew word; for we know that books were formerly rolled up in the form of a cylinder. There is also nothing unreasonable in understanding book as meaning the Law, which prescribes to all God's children the rule of a holy life; though it seems to me a more suitable view to consider him as saying, that he deemed himself to be in the catalogue of those who render themselves obedient to God. The Law, indeed, bids us all to obey God; but David means, that he was numbered among those who are called to obey God; and then he testifies that he obeyed his vocation, by adding, I come to do thy will; and this peculiarly belongs to Christ. For though all the saints aspire after the righteousness of God, yet it is Christ alone who was fully competent to do God's will.

This passage, however, ought to stimulate us all to render prompt obedience to God; for Christ is a pattern of perfect obedience for this end, that all who are his may contend with one another in imitating him, that they may together respond to the call of God, and that their life may exemplify this saying, Lo, I come. To the same purpose is what follows, It is written, that is, that we should do the will of God, according to what is said elsewhere, that the end of our election is, to be holy and unblamable in his sight. (Colossians 1:22.)

9. He taketh away, etc. See now why and for what purpose this passage was quoted, even that we may know that the full and perfect righteousness under the kingdom of Christ stands in no need of the sacrifices of the Law; for when they are removed, the will of God is set up as a perfect rule. It hence follows, that the sacrifices of beasts were to be removed by the priesthood of Christ, as they had nothing in common with it. For there was no reason, as we have said, for him to reject the sacrifices on account of an accidental blame; for he is not dealing with hypocrites, nor does he condemn the superstition of perverted worship; but he denies that the usual sacrifices are required of a pious man rightly instructed, and he testifies that without sacrifices God is fully and perfectly obeyed.

10. By the which will, etc. After having accommodated to his subject David's testimony, he now takes the occasion to turn some of the words to his own purpose, but more for the sake of ornament than of explanation. David professed, not so much in his own person as in that of Christ, that he was ready to do the will of God. This is to be extended to all the members of Christ; for Paul's

[167] This is no doubt true; but here the identity of meaning is difficult to be made out. See Appendix I 2. — Ed.

doctrine is general, when he says, ``This is the will of God, even your sanctification, that every one of you abstain from uncleanness''. (1 Thessalonians 4:3.) But as it was a supereminent example of obedience in Christ to offer himself to the death of the cross, and as it was for this especially that he put on the form of a servant, the Apostle says, that Christ by offering himself fulfilled the command of his Father, and that we have been thus sanctified. [168] When he adds, through the offering of the body, etc., he alludes to that part of the Psalm, where he says, ``A body hast thou prepared for me,'' at least as it is found in Greek. He thus intimates that Christ found in himself what could appease God, so that he had no need of external aids. For if the Levitical priests had a fit body, the sacrifices of beasts would have been superfluous. But Christ alone was sufficient, and was by himself capable of performing whatever God required.

Heb 10:11-18

Hebrews Chapter 10:11-18

11. And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, which can never take away sins:

11. Et omnis quidem sacerdos quotidie ad ministrandum adstat, et easdem saepius offerendum victimas, quae nunquam possunt tollere peccata:

12. But this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins for ever, sat down on the right hand of God;

12. Ipse autem una pro peccatis oblata victima, perpetuo sedet in dextera Dei;

13. From henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool.

13. Quod reliquum est expectans donec ponantur inimici sui scabellum pedum suorum.

14. For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

14. Una enim oblatione consecravit (vel, perfecit) in perpetuum eos qui sanctificantur.

15. Whereof the Holy Ghost also is a witness to us: for after that he had said before,

15. Testimonium autem reddit nobis etiam Spiritus Sanctus; nam postquam praedixerat,

[168] “Sanctified,” here, as in chapter 2:11, includes the idea of expiation; it is to be sanctified, or cleansed from guilt, rather than from pollution, because it is said to be by the offering of the body of Christ, which was especially an expiation for sins, as it appears from what follows; and the main object of the quotation afterwards made was to show that by his death remission of sins is obtained. “By the which will,” or, by which will, is commonly taken to mean, “By the accomplishing of which will;” or {ἐν} may be taken as in chapter 4:11, in the sense of {κατὰ}, ``according to which will we are cleansed (that is, from guilt) through the offering of the body of Christ once made.'' ``Will'' here does not mean the act of willing, but the object of the will, that which God wills, approves and is pleased with, and is set in opposition to the legal sacrifices. And as there is a {οἱ} in many good copies after {ἐσμὲν}, some have rendered the verse thus, ``By which will we are cleansed who are cleansed by the offering of the body of Christ once made.'' Thus ``the will,'' or what pleased God, is first opposed to the sacrifices, and then identified with the offering of Christ's body. --- Ed

16. This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them;

16. Hoc esse testamentum quod statuam cum ipsis post dies illos, dicit Dominus, ut ponam leges meas in corda illorum, et in mentibus eorum inscribam illas,

17. And their sins and iniquities will I remember no more.

17. Et peccatorum et iniquitatum eorum non recordabor amplius.

18. Now where remission of these is, there is no more offering for sin.

18. Porro ubi fit horum remissio, non est amplius oblatio pro peccato.

11. And every priest, etc. Here is the conclusion of the whole argument, --- that the practice of daily sacrificing is inconsistent with and wholly foreign to the priesthood of Christ; and that hence after his coming the Levitical priests whose custom and settled practice was daily to offer, were deposed from their office; for the character of things which are contrary is, that when one thing is set up, the other falls to the ground. He has hitherto labored enough, and more than enough, in defending the priesthood of Christ; the conclusion then is, that the ancient priesthood, which is inconsistent with this, has ceased; for all the saints find a full consecration in the one offering of Christ. At the same time the word {τετελείωκεν}, which I render ``has consecrated,'' may yet be rendered ``has perfected;'' but I prefer the former meaning, because he treats here of sacred things. [169]

By saying, them who are sanctified, he includes all the children of God; and he reminds us that the grace of sanctification is sought elsewhere in vain.

But lest men should imagine that Christ is now idle in heaven, he repeats again that he sat down at God's right hand; by which phrase is denoted, as we have seen elsewhere, his dominion and power. There is therefore no reason for us to fear, that he will suffer the efficacy of his death to be destroyed or to lie buried; for he lives for this end, that by his power he may fill heaven and earth. He then reminds us in the words of the Psalm how long this state of things is to be, even until Christ shall lay prostrate all his enemies. If then our faith seeks Christ sitting on God's right hand, and recumbs quietly on him as there sitting, we shall at length enjoy the fruit of his victory; yea, when our foes, Satan, sin, death, and the whole world are vanquished, and when corruption of our flesh is cast off, we shall triumph for ever together with our head.

15. The Holy Ghost also is a witness, etc. [170] This testimony from Jeremiah is not adduced the second time without reason or superfluously. He quoted it before for a different purpose, even to show that it was necessary for the Old Testament to be abrogated, because another, a new one, had been promised, and for this end, to amend the weakness of the old. [171] But he has now another

[169] See Appendix K 2.

[170] "Now testify to us does also the Holy Spirit;" such may be the rendering of the words. The {δὲ} is translated ``And,'' by Macknight, and ``Morever,'' by Stuart, but ``Now'' seems the most suitable. --- Ed

[171] The quotation as made here affords a remarkable instance of what Calvin has previously

thing in view; for he takes his stand on these words alone, Their iniquities will I remember no more; and hence he concludes, that there is no more need of a sacrifice since sins are blotted out. [172]

This inference may indeed seem not to be well founded; for though formerly there were innumerable promises as to the remission of sins under the Law and in the prophets, yet the Church ceased not to offer sacrifices; hence remission of sins does not exclude sacrifices. But if you consider each particular more closely, you will find that the fathers also had the same promises as to the remission of sins, under the Law, as we have at this day; relying on them, they called on God, and rejoiced in the pardon they obtained. And yet the Prophet, as though he had adduced something new and unheard of before, promises that there would be no remembrance of sins before God under the new covenant. Hence we may conclude, that sins are now remitted in a way different from what they were formerly; but this difference is not in the promise, nor in faith, but in the very price by which remissions is procured. God then does not now remember sins, because an expiation has been made once for all; otherwise what is said by the Prophet would have been to no purpose, that the benefit of the New Testament was to be this --- that God would no more remember sins.

Now, since we have come to the close of the discussion respecting the priesthood of Christ, readers must be brief reminded, that the sacrifices of the Law are not more effectually proved here to have been abolished, than the sacrifice of the mass practiced by the Papists is proved to be a vain fiction.

They maintain that their mass is a sacrifice for expiating the sins of the living and of the dead; but the Apostle denies that there is now any place for a sacrifice, even since the time in which the prophecy of Jeremiah has been fulfilled.

They try to make an evasion by saying, that it is not a new sacrifice, or different from that of Christ, but the same; on the contrary, the Apostle contends that the same sacrifice ought not to be repeated, and declares that Christ's sacrifice is only one, and that it was offered for all; and, further, he often claims for Christ alone the honor of being a priest, so that no one was fit to offer him but himself alone.

The Papists have another evasion, and call their sacrifice bloodless; but the

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said, that the Apostles were not very scrupulous in the use of words, but attended to the meaning. The words have been before quoted in chapter 8:10-12. There we have “into their mind — {καρδίας},'' here, ``into their minds --- {διανοιῶν};'' and in the 12th verse in chapter 8, and the 17th in this chapter, are in words wholly different, though in meaning essentially the same. We need not wonder then that there is sometimes a variety in quotations made from the Old Testament, since the Apostle varies in a quotation when given the second time by himself. --- Ed

[172] This quotation clearly shows the meaning of the word “sanctified.” The sanctified, or those atoned for, or expiated, were made perfect by having their sins perfectly and completely forgiven them. The sufficiently of Christ’s sacrifice for taking away sins, for a full and complete remission, is the subject throughout, and not the effect of that sacrifice in the work of sanctification. The chapter begins with sins as to the conscience; and here the words of Jeremiah are referred to, not for the purpose of showing that the new covenant provides for the renovation of the heart, (though it includes that too.) but of proving that it secures the free and full remission of sins, procured, as stated before, by the one sacrifice of Christ, once offered and perpetually efficacious. — Ed.

Apostle affirms it as a truth without exception, that death is necessary in order to make a sacrifice.

The Papists attempt to evade again by saying, that the mass is the application of the one sacrifice which Christ has made; but the Apostle teaches us on the contrary, that the sacrifices of the Law were abolished by Christ's death for this reason, because in them a remembrance of sins was made; it hence appears evident, that this kind of application which they have devised has ceased.

In short, let the Papists twist themselves into any forms they please, they can never escape from the plain arguments of the Apostle, by which it appears clear that their mass abounds in impieties; for first, according to the Apostle's testimony, Christ alone was fit to offer himself; in the mass he is offered by other hands; --- secondly, the Apostle asserts that Christ's sacrifice was not only one, but was also once offered, so that it is impious to repeat it; but in the mass, however they may prate about the sacrifice, yet it is evidently made every day, and they themselves confess it; --- thirdly, the Apostle acknowledges no sacrifice without blood and death; they then chatter in vain, that the sacrifice they offer is bloodless; --- fourthly, the Apostle in speaking of obtaining pardon for sins, bids us to flee to that one sacrifice which Christ offered on the cross, and makes this distinction between us and the fathers, that the rite of continually sacrificing was done away by the coming of Christ; but the Papists, in order to make the death of Christ efficacious, require daily applications by means of a sacrifice; so that they calling themselves Christians, differ nothing from the Jews except in the external symbol.

Heb 10:19-23

Hebrews Chapter 10:19-23

19. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

19. Habentes itaque, fratres, fiduciam ingrediendi in sancta per sanguinem Iesu,

20. By a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, his flesh;

20. Via quam dedicavit nobis recentem ac vivam per velum, hoc est carnem suam,

21. And having an high priest over the house of God;

21. Et sacerdotem magnum super domum Dei,

22. Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

22. Accedamus cum sincero corde in certitudine fidei, aspersi cordibus a conscientia mala, et abluti corpore aqua munda;

23. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)

23. Teneamus confessionem spei inflexibilem, fidelis enim qui promisit.

19. Having therefore, brethren, etc. He states the conclusion or the sum of his previous doctrine, to which he then fitly subjoins a serious exhortation, and denounces a severe threatening on those who had renounced the grace of Christ. Now, the sum of what he had said is, that all the ceremonies by which an access under the Law was open to the sanctuary, have their real fulfillment in Christ, so that to him who has Christ, the use of them is superfluous and useless To set this forth more fully, he allegorically describes the access which Christ has opened to us; for he compares heaven to the old sanctuary, and sets forth the things which have been spiritually accomplished in Christ in typical expressions. Allegories do indeed sometimes obscure rather than illustrate a subject; but when the Apostle transfers to Christ the ancient figures of the Law, there is no small elegance in what he says, and no small light is attained; and he did this, that we may recognize as now really exhibited in him whatever the Law shadowed forth. But as there is great weight almost in every word, so we must remember that there is here to be understood a contrast, --- the truth or reality as seen in Christ, and the abolition of the ancient types.

He says first, that we have boldness to enter into the holiest. This privilege was never granted to the fathers under the Law, for the people were forbidden to enter the visible sanctuary, though the high priest bore the names of the tribes on his shoulders, and twelve stones as a memorial of them on his breast. But now the case is very different, for not only symbolically, but in reality an entrance into heaven is made open to us through the favor of Christ, for he has made us a royal priesthood. [173]

He adds, by the blood of Jesus, because the door of the sanctuary was not opened for the periodical entrance of the high priest, except through the intervention of blood. But he afterwards marks the difference between this blood and that of beasts; for the blood of beasts, as it soon turns to corruption, could not long retain its efficacy; but the blood of Christ, which is subject to no corruption, but flows ever as a pure stream, is sufficient for us even to the end of the world. It is no wonder that beasts slain in sacrifice had no power to quicken, as they were dead; but Christ who arose from the dead to bestow life on us, communicates his own life to us. It is a perpetual consecration of the way, because the blood of Christ is always in a manner distilling before the presence of the Father, in order to irrigate heaven and earth.

20. Through the veil, etc. As the veil covered the recesses of the sanctuary and yet afforded entrance there, so the divinity, though hid in the flesh of Christ, yet leads us even into heaven; nor can any one find God except he to whom the man Christ becomes the door and the way. Thus we are reminded, that Christ's glory is not to be estimated according to the external appearance of his flesh;

[173] Macknight makes this “entrance” to be death! As though the Apostle was speaking of what was future, while in verse 22, with which the contents of this verse and the following are connected, he says, “let us draw near;” that is, we who have this entrance, even “the new and living way.” Possessing such a privilege, they were to draw nigh. It is clearly an entrance and a way which believers now possess. — Ed.

nor is his flesh to be despised, because it conceals as a veil the majesty of God, while it is also that which conducts us to the enjoyment of all the good things of God.

21. And having a high priest, etc. Whatever he has previously said of the abrogation of the ancient priesthood, it behoves us now to bear in mind, for Christ could not be a priest without having the former priests divested of their office, as it was another order. He then intimates that all those things which Christ had changed at his coming ought to be relinquished; and God has set him over his whole house for this end, --- that every one who seeks a place in the Church, may submit to Christ and choose him, and no other, as his leader and ruler. [174]

22. Let us draw near with a true heart, etc. As he shows that in Christ and his sacrifice there is nothing but what is spiritual or heavenly, so he would have what we bring on our part to correspond. The Jews formerly cleansed themselves by various washings to prepare themselves for the service of God. It is no wonder that the rites for cleansing were carnal, since the worship of God itself, involved in shadows, as yet partook in a manner of what was carnal. For the priest, being a mortal, was chosen from among sinners to perform for a time sacred things; he was, indeed, adorned with precious vestments, but yet they were those of this world, that he might stand in the presence of God; he only came near the work of the covenant; and to sanctify his entrance, he borrowed for a sacrifice a brute animal either from herd or the flock. But in Christ all these things are far superior; He himself is not only pure and innocent, but is also the fountain of all holiness and righteousness, and was constituted a priest by a heavenly oracle, not for the short period of a mortal life, but perpetually. To sanction his appointment an oath was interposed. He came forth adorned with all the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the highest perfection; he propitiated God by his own blood, and reconciled him to men; he ascended up above all the heavens to appear before God as our Mediator.

Now, on our part, nothing is to be brought but what corresponds with all this, as there ought to be a mutual agreement or concord between the priest and the people. Away then with all the external washings of the flesh, and cease let the whole apparatus of ceremonies; for the Apostle sets a true heart, and the certainty of faith, and a cleansing from all vices, in opposition to these external rites. And hence we learn what must be the frame of our minds in order that we may enjoy the benefits conferred by Christ; for there is no coming to him without an upright or a true heart, and a sure faith, and a pure conscience.

Now, a true or sincere heart is opposed to a heart that is hypocritical and deceitful. [175] By the term full assurance, {πληροφορία} the Apostle points

[174] See Appendix L 2.

[175] This true, sincere, or upright heart, freed from vice and pollution, was symbolized by the washing at the end of the verse. Without washing the priests were not allowed to minister, and were threatened with death, Exodus 30:19-21; and when any of them touched an unclean thing, he was not allowed to eat of holy things until he washed himself, see 12:6 [sic]. Washing the body was a most important thing, as it symbolized the inward washing of the heart, which alone makes us true, or sincere, or faithful to God. We have here two

out the nature of faith, and at the same time reminds us, that the grace of Christ cannot be received except by those who possess a fixed and unhesitating conviction. The sprinkling of the heart from an evil conscience takes place, either when we are, by obtaining pardon, deemed pure before God, or when the heart, cleansed from all corrupt affections, is not stimulated by the goads of the flesh. I am disposed to include both these things. [176] What follows, our bodies washed with pure water, is generally understood of baptism; but it seems to me more probable that the Apostle alludes to the ancient ceremonies of the Law; and so by water he designates the Spirit of God, according to what is said by Ezekiel, ``I will sprinkle clean water upon you.'' (Ezekiel 36:25.) The meaning is, that we are made partakers of Christ, if we come to him, sanctified in body and soul; and yet that this sanctification is not what consists in a visible parade of ceremonies, but that it is from faith, pure conscience, and that cleanness of soul and body which flows from, and is effected by, the Spirit of God. So Paul exhorts the faithful to cleanse themselves from all filthiness of flesh and spirit, since they had been adopted by God as his children. [177] (2 Corinthians 7:1.)

23. Let us hold fast, etc. As he exhorts here the Jews to persevere, he mentions hope rather than faith; for as hope is born of faith, so it is fed and sustained by it to the last. He requires also profession or confession, for it is not true faith except it shows itself before men. And he seems indirectly to touch the dissimulation of those who paid too much attention, in order to please their own nation, to the ceremonies of the Law. He therefore bids them not only to believe with the heart, but also to show and to profess how much they honored Christ.

But we ought carefully to notice the reason which he subjoins, for he is faithful that promised. For we hence first learn, that our faith rests on this foundation, that God is true, that is, true to his promise, which his word contains; for that we may believe, the voice or word of God must precede; but it is not every kind of word that is capable of producing faith; a promise alone is that on which faith recumbs. And so from this passage we may learn the mutual relation between the faith of men and the promise of God; for except God promises, no one can believe. [178]

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things — a sincere heart, and assurance of faith: the last is then set forth by sprinkling, a word borrowed for Levitical rites; and the first by the washing of the body as under the law. — Ed.

[176] {Πονηρὸς} means {{רע in Hebrew, the evil of sin wicked, and also the effect of sin, miserable It seems to be in the latter sense here; a miserable conscience is one oppressed with guilt. So Grotius and Stuart regard the meaning. It is the same as ``consciousness of sin'' in verse .2 What seems to be meant is an accusing or guilty conscience, laboring under the pressure of conscious sin. But Doddridge and Scott, like Calvin, combine the two ideas of guilt and pollution; though washing, afterwards mentioned, appears more appropriately to refer to the latter; and forgiveness is what is most commonly connected with the blood of Christ. --- Ed

[177] See Appendix M 2.

[178] Our version has “faith,” but it should be “hope,” as found in almost all copies. “Profession of hope” is a Hebraism for professed hope, or the hope we profess. He mentioned “faith” in the preceding verse, and now “hope” as being its daughter, and as that which especially sustained them under their trials. — Ed.

Heb 10:24-27

Hebrews Chapter 10:24-27

24. And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works:

24. Et consideremus nos mutuo in aemulationem charitatis et bonorum operum;

25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching.

25. Neque deseramus aggregationem nostri, quemadmodum mos est quibusdam; sed exhortemur, idque eo magis, quia videtis approppinquantem diem.

26. For if we sin willfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,

26. Voluntarie enim peccantibus nobis post acceptam veritatis notitiam, non amplius relinquitur pro peccatis hostia;

27. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.

27. Sed terribilis expectatio judicii, et zelus ignis qui devorabit adversarios.

24. And let us consider one another, etc. I doubt not but that he addresses the Jews especially in this exhortation. It is wellknown how great was the arrogance of that nation; being the posterity of Abraham, they boasted that they alone, to the exclusion of all others, had been chosen by the Lord to inherit the covenant of eternal life. Inflated by such a privilege, they despised other nations, and wished to be thought as being alone in the Church of God; nay, they superciliously arrogated to themselves the name of being The Church. It was necessary for the Apostles to labor much to correct this pride; and this, in my judgment, is what the Apostle is doing here, in order that the Jews might not bear it ill that the Gentiles were associated with them and united as one body in the Church.

And first, indeed, he says, Let us consider one another; for God was then gathering a Church both from the Jews and from the Gentiles, between whom there had always been a great discord, so that their union was like the combination of fire and water. Hence the Jews recoiled from this, for they thought it a great indignity that the Gentiles, should be made equal with them. To this goad of wicked emulation which pricked them, the Apostle sets up another in opposition to it, even that of love; or the word {παροξυσμὸς}, which he uses, signifies the ardor of contention. Then that the Jews might not be inflamed with envy, and be led into contention, the Apostle exhorts them to a godly emulation, even to stimulate one another to love. [179]

[179]The words literally are, “And let us observe (or take notice of) one another for the instigation of love and of good works;” that is, “Let us notice the state and circumstances of each other for the purpose of stimulating love and acts of kindness and benevolence, its proper fruits.” Love is the principle, and good or benevolent works are what it produces. “And let us attentively consider one another in order to the quickening of love and good works.” — Macknight. “Let us moreover attentively regard one another for the sake of

25. Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, etc. This confirms the view that has been given. The composition of the Greek word ought to be noticed; for {ἐπὶ}signifies an addition; then {ἐπισυναγωγὴ}, assembling together, means a congregation increased by additions. The wall of partition having been pulled down, God was then gathering those as his children who had been aliens from the Church; so the Gentiles were a new and unwonted addition to the Church. This the Jews regarded as a reproach to them, so that many made a secession from the Church, thinking that such a mixture afforded them a just excuse; nor could they be easily induced to surrender their own right; and further, they considered the right of adoption as peculiar, and as belonging exclusively to themselves. The Apostle, therefore, warns them, lest this equality should provoke them to forsake the Church; and that he might not seem to warn them for no reason, he mentions that this neglect was common to many. [180]

We now understand the design of the apostle, and what was the necessity that constrained him to give this exhortation. We may at the same time gather from this passage a general doctrine:

It is an evil which prevails everywhere among mankind, that every one sets himself above others, and especially that those who seem in anything to excel cannot well endure their inferiors to be on an equality with themselves. And then there is so much morosity almost in all, that individuals would gladly make churches for themselves if they could; for they find it so difficult to accommodate themselves to the ways and habits of others. The rich envy one another; and hardly one in a hundred can be found among the rich, who allows to the poor the name and rank of brethren. Unless similarity of habits or some allurements or advantages draw us together, it is very difficult even to maintain a continual concord among ourselves. Extremely needed, therefore, by us all is the admonition to be stimulated to love and not to envy, and not to separate from those whom God has joined to us, but to embrace with brotherly kindness all those who are united to us in faith. And surely it behoves us the more earnestly to cultivate unity, as the more eagerly watchful Satan is, either to tear us by any means from the Church, or stealthily to seduce us from it. And such would be the happy effect, were no one to please himself too much, and were all of us to preserve this one object, mutually to provoke one another to love, and to allow no emulation among ourselves, but that of doing ``good works''. For doubtless the contempt of the brethren, moroseness, envy, immoderate

exciting to love and good works." — Stuart. The idea of emulation seems not to be included in the words. The meaning of the exhortation is, to take opportunity which circumstances afforded, to promote love and the exercise of benevolence. As an instance of the want of love, he notices in the next verse their neglect of meeting together for divine worship; and by not meeting together they had no opportunity of doing the good work admonishing and exhorting one another. — Ed.

[180] Another view is commonly given of the cause of this neglect; it was the dread of persecution, according to Doddridge; and Scott says, that it was either "timidity or lukewarmness." As the Apostle had previously mentioned "love" the probability is that the main cause was coldness and indifference; and the cause of such a neglect is still for the most part the same. — Ed.

estimate of ourselves, and other sinful impulses, clearly show that our love is either very cold, or does not at all exist.

Having said, ``Not forsaking the assembling together,'' he adds, But exhorting one another; by which he intimates that all the godly ought by all means possible to exert themselves in the work of gathering together the Church on every side; for we are called by the Lord on this condition, that every one should afterwards strive to lead others to the truth, to restore the wandering to the right way, to extend a helping hand to the fallen, to win over those who are without. But if we ought to bestow so much labor on those who are yet aliens to the flock of Christ, how much more diligence is required in exhorting the brethren whom God has already joined to us?

As the manner of some is, etc. It hence appears that the origin of all schisms was, that proud men, despising others, pleased themselves too much. But when we hear that there were faithless men even in the age of the Apostles, who departed from the Church, we ought to be less shocked and disturbed by similar instances of defection which we may see in the present day. It is indeed no light offense when men who had given some evidence of piety and professed the same faith with us, fall away from the living God; but as it is no new thing, we ought, as I have already said, to be less disturbed by such an event. But the Apostle introduced this clause to show that he did not speak without a cause, but in order to apply a remedy to a disease that was making progress.

And so much the more, etc. Some think this passage to be of the same import with that of Paul,

``It is time to awake out of sleep, for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.'' (Romans 13:11.)

But I rather think that reference is here made to the last coming of Christ, the expectation of which ought especially to rouse us to the practice of a holy life as well as to careful and diligent efforts in the work of gathering together the Church. For to what end did Christ come except to collect us all into one body from that dispersion in which we are now wandering? Therefore, the nearer his coming is, the more we ought to labor that the scattered may be assembled and united together, that there may be one fold and one shepherd (John 10:16.)

Were any one to ask, how could the Apostle say that those who were as yet afar off from the manifestation of Christ, saw the day near and just at hand? I would answer, that from the beginning of the kingdom of Christ the Church was so constituted that the faithful ought to have considered the Judge as coming soon; nor were they indeed deceived by a false notion, when they were prepared to receive Christ almost every moment; for such was the condition of the Church from the time the Gospel was promulgated, that the whole of that period might truly and properly be called the last. They then who have been dead many ages ago lived in the last days no less than we. Laughed at is our simplicity in this respect by the worldlywise and scoffers, who deem as fabulous all that we believe respecting the resurrection of the flesh and the last judgment; but that our faith may not fail through their mockery, the Holy Spirit reminds us that

a thousand years are before God as one day, (2 Peter 3:8;) so that whenever we think of the eternity of the celestial kingdom no time ought to appear long to us. And further, since Christ, after having completed all things necessary for our salvation, has ascended into heaven, it is but reasonable that we who are continually looking for his second manifestation should regard every day as though it were the last. [181]

26. For if we sin willfully, or voluntarily etc. He shows how severe a vengeance of God awaits all those who fall away from the grace of Christ; for being without that one true salvation, they are now as it were given up to an inevitable destruction. With this testimony Novatus and his sect formerly armed themselves, in order to take away the hope of pardon from all indiscriminately who had fallen after baptism. They who were not able to refute his calumny chose rather to deny the authority of this Epistle than to subscribe to so great an absurdity. But the true meaning of the passage, unaided by any help from any other part, is quite sufficient of itself to expose the effrontery of Novatus

Those who sin, mentioned by the Apostle, are not such as offend in any way, but such as forsake the Church, and wholly alienate themselves from Christ. For he speaks not here of this or of that sin, but he condemns by name those who willfully renounced fellowship with the Church. But there is a vast difference between particular fallings and a complete defection of this kind, by which we entirely fall away from the grace of Christ. And as this cannot be the case with any one except he has been already enlightened, he says, If we sin willfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth; as though he had said, ``If we knowingly and willingly renounce the grace which we had obtained.'' It is now evident how widely apart is this doctrine from the error of Novatus

And that the Apostle here refers only to apostates, is clear from the whole passage; for what he treats of is this, that those who had been once received into the Church ought not to forsake it, as some were wont to do. He now declares that there remained for such no sacrifice for sin, because they had willfully sinned after having received the knowledge of the truth. But as to sinners who fall in any other way, Christ offers himself daily to them, so that they are to seek no other sacrifice for expiating their sins. He denies, then, that any sacrifice remains for them who renounce the death of Christ, which is not done by any offense except by a total renunciation of the faith.

This severity of God is indeed dreadful, but it is set forth for the purpose of inspiring terror. He cannot, however, be accused of cruelty; for as the death of

[181] "As ye see drawing nigh the day;" so are the words literally. The day of judgment, say some; the day of Jerusalem's destruction, say other. Doddridge introduces both in his paraphrase; and Scott and Bloomfield regard the day of judgment as intended; but Stuart is in favor of the opinion that the destruction of Jerusalem is what is referred to, and so Hammond and Mede. The word "day" is applied to both. The day of judgment is called "that day," (Jude 6;) and the destruction of Jerusalem is called the Son of man's day, "his day," (Luke 17:24) And both these days must have been well known to the Hebrews to whom Paul was writing. The reference, then, might have been well thus made to either without any addition. But the sentence itself seems to favor the opinion that the day of Jerusalem is intended; "as ye see," he says; which denotes that there were things in the circumstances of the times which clearly betokened the approaching ruin of that city and nation. — Ed.

Christ is the only remedy by which we can be delivered from eternal death, are not they who destroy as far as they can its virtue and benefit worthy of being left to despair? God invites to daily reconciliation those who abide in Christ; they are daily washed by the blood of Christ, their sins are daily expiated by his perpetual sacrifice. As salvation is not to be sought except in him, there is no need to wonder that all those who willfully forsake him are deprived of every hope of pardon: this is the import of the adverb {ἔτι}, more. But Christ's sacrifice is efficacious to the godly even to death, though they often sin; nay, it retains ever its efficacy, for this very reason, because they cannot be free from sin as long as they dwell in the flesh. The Apostle then refers to those alone who wickedly forsake Christ, and thus deprive themselves of the benefit of his death.

The clause, ``after having received the knowledge of the truth,'' was added for the purpose of aggravating their ingratitude; for he who willingly and with deliberate impiety extinguishes the light of God kindled in his heart has nothing to allege as an excuse before God. Let us then learn not only to receive with reverence and prompt docility of mind the truth offered to us, but also firmly to persevere in the knowledge of it, so that we may not suffer the terrible punishment of those who despise it. [182]

27. But a certain fearful looking for, etc. He means the torment of an evil conscience which the ungodly feel, who not only have no grace, but who also know that having tasted grace they have lost it forever through their own fault; such must not only be pricked and bitten, but also tormented and lacerated in a dreadful manner. Hence it is that they war rebelliously against God, for they cannot endure so strict a Judge. They indeed try in every way to remove the sense of God's wrath, but all in vain; for when God allows them a short respite, he soon draws them before his tribunal, and harasses them with the torments which they especially shun.

He adds, fiery indignation, or the heat of fire; by which he means, as I think, a vehement impulse or a violent ardor. The word fire is a common metaphor; for as the ungodly are now in a heat through dread of divine wrath, so they shall then burn through the same feeling. Nor is it unknown to me, that the sophists have refinedly speculated as to this fire; but I have no regard of their glosses, since it is evident that it is the same mode of speaking as when Scripture connects fire with worm. (Isaiah 66:24.) But no man doubts but that worm is used metaphorically to designate that dreadful torment of conscience by which the ungodly are gnawed. [183]

[182] See Appendix N 2.

[183] It is {πυρὸς} {ζῶλος}, ``heat of fire;'' which means hot or burning fire; the genitive here, as in some other instances, is the main subject. See chapter 3:13, note. The language is still borrowed from the Old Testament: God often destroyed the rebellious among the Israelites with fire --- a symbol of the dreadful punishment of the wicked hereafter. See Leviticus 10:2; Numbers 16:35. The word {ζῶλος} is properly heat, but is used in a variety of senses; heat of emulation --- ``envy,'' Acts 13:45; --- of wrath --- ``indignation'' Acts 5:17; --- of concern, good and bad --- ``zeal,'' Romans 10:2, and Philippians 3:6; --- of suspicion as to love --- ``jealousy,'' 2 Corinthians 11:2; --- and of affection --- ``love,'' 2 Corinthians 11:2. It is the context that determines the character of this heat. Here is has evidently its literal meaning, as being connected with fire, only the noun is used for the adjective. --- Ed

Which shall devour the adversaries. It shall so devour them as to destroy, but not to consume them; for it will be inextinguishable. And thus he reminds us, that they are all to be counted the enemies of Christ who have refused to hold the place granted them among the faithful; for there is no intermediate state, as they who depart from the Church give themselves up to Satan.

Heb 10:28-31

Hebrews Chapter 10:28-31

28. He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses:

28. Qui abjecerit legem Mosis, sine misericordia sub duobus vel tribus testibus moritur:

29. Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?

29. Quanto putatis graviore dignus judicabitur supplicio qui Filium Dei conculcaverit, et sanguinem Testamenti, per quem fuerat sanctificatus, profanum duxerit, et Spiritum gratiae contumelia affecerit?

30. For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.

30. Novimus enim quis dicat, Mihi vindicta, et ego rependam, dicit Dominus; et rursum, Dominus judicabit populum suum.

31. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

31. Horribile est incidere in manus Dei viventis.

28. He that despised, etc. This is an argument from the less to the greater; for if it was a capital offense to violate the law of Moses, how much heavier punishment does the rejection of the gospel deserve, a sin which involves so many and so heinous impieties! This reasoning was indeed most fitted to impress the Jews; for so severe a punishment on apostates under the Law was neither new to them, nor could it appear unjustly rigorous. They ought then to have acknowledged that vengeance just, however severe, by which God now sanctions the majesty of his Gospel [184]

Hereby is also confirmed what I have already said, that the Apostle speaks not of particular sins, but of the entire denial of Christ; for the Law did not punish all kinds of transgressions with death, but apostasy, that is, when any one wholly renounced religion; for the Apostle referred to a passage in Deuteronomy 17:2-7, [185] where we find, that if any one violated God's covenant by wor-

[184] "Despised" of our version ought to have been "rejected," as Calvin renders the word, for the renouncing of the Law is what is meant. Followed by "commandment" in Mark 7:9, it is rendered "reject," and "cast off" when followed by "faith" in 1 Timothy 5:12; and "cast off" would be very suitable here. — Ed.

[185] Both Doddridge and Stuart refer to Numbers 15:30, 31, but incorrectly, as there the specific sin of apostasy is not mentioned, nor is there mention made of witnesses. Besides, it

shipping foreign gods, he was to be brought outside of the gate and stoned to death.

Now, though the Law proceeded from God, and Moses was not its author, but its minister, yet the Apostle calls it the law of Moses, because it had been given through him: this was said in order to amplify the more the dignity of the Gospel, which has been delivered to us by the Son of God.

Under two or three witnesses, etc. This bears not on the present subject; but it was a part of the civil law of Moses that two or three witnesses were required to prove the accused guilty. However, we hence learn what sort of crime the Apostle meant; for had not this been added, an opening would have been left for many false conjectures. But now it is beyond all dispute that he speaks of apostasy. At the same time that equity ought to be observed which almost all statesmen have adopted, that no one is to be condemned without being proved guilty by the testimony of two witnesses. [186]

29. Who has trodden under foot the Son of God, etc. There is this likeness between apostates under the Law and under the Gospel, that both perish without mercy; but the kind of death is different; for the Apostle denounces on the despisers of Christ not only the deaths of the body, but eternal perdition. And therefore he says that a sorer punishment awaits them. And he designates the desertion of Christianity by three things; for he says that thus the Son of God is trodden under foot, that his blood is counted an unholy thing, and that despite is done to the Spirit of grace. Now, it is a more heinous thing to tread under foot than to despise or reject; and the dignity of Christ is far different from that of Moses; and further, he does not simply set the Gospel in opposition to the Law, but the person of Christ and of the Holy Spirit to the person of Moses.

The blood of the covenant, etc. He enhances ingratitude by a comparison with the benefits. It is the greatest indignity to count the blood of Christ unholy, by which our holiness is effected; this is done by those who depart from the faith. For our faith looks not on the naked doctrine, but on the blood by which our salvation has been ratified. He calls it the blood of the covenant, because then only were the promises made sure to us when this pledge was added. But he points out the manner of this confirmation by saying that we are sanctified; for the blood shed would avail us nothing, except we were sprinkled with it by the Holy Spirit; and hence come our expiation and sanctification. The apostle at the same time alludes to the ancient rite of sprinkling, which availed not to real sanctification, but was only its shadow or image. [187]

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is not the presumptuous or willful sin there referred to, that is here intended, but the sin of apostasy, when it is the result of a free choice, without any outward constraining power as under violent persecution. — Ed.

[186] "Neither the king nor the Senate," says Grotius, "had the power to pardon." It is to be observed that God delegated the power to execute apostates to the rulers of Israel: but we find here that he has under the Gospel resumed that power and holds it in his own hands; the execution of the vengeance belongs alone to him, and the punishment will be everlasting perdition. Then to assume such a power now is a most impious presumption, whether done by civil or ecclesiastical rulers. To put apostates or heretics to death, receives no sanction from the Gospel, and is wholly alien to its spirit. — Ed.

[187] The words "covenant," and "sanctified," and "unclean" or "unholy," are derived from

The Spirit of grace. He calls it the Spirit of grace from the effects produced; for it is by the Spirit and through his influence that we receive the grace offered to us in Christ. For he it is who enlightens our minds by faith, who seals the adoption of God on our hearts, who regenerates us unto newness of life, who grafts us into the body of Christ, that he may live in us and we in him. He is therefore rightly called the Spirit of grace, by whom Christ becomes ours with all his blessings. But to do despite to him, or to treat him with scorn, by whom we are endowed with so many benefits, is an impiety extremely wicked. Hence learn that all who willfully render useless his grace, by which they had been favored, act disdainfully towards the Spirit of God.

It is therefore no wonder that God so severely visits blasphemies of this kind; it is no wonder that he shows himself inexorable towards those who tread under foot Christ the Mediator, who alone reconciles us to himself; it is no wonder that he closes up the way of salvation against those who spurn the Holy Spirit, the only true guide. [188]

30. For we know him that hath said, etc. Both the passages are taken from Deuteronomy 32:35, 36. But as Moses there promises that God would take vengeance for the wrongs done to his people, it seems that the words are improperly and constrainedly applied to the vengeance referred to here; for what does the Apostle speak of? Even that the impiety of those who despised God would not be unpunished. Paul also in Romans 12:19, knowing the true sense of the passage, accommodates it to another purpose; for having in view to exhort us to patience, he bids us to give place to God to take vengeance, because this office belongs to him; and this he proves by the testimony of Moses. But there is no reason why we should not turn a special declaration to a universal truth. Though then the design of Moses was to console the faithful, as they would have God as the avenger of wrongs done to them; yet we may always conclude from his words that it is the peculiar office of God to take vengeance on the ungodly. Nor does he pervert his testimony who hence proves that the contempt of God will not be unpunished; for he is a righteous judge who claims to himself the office of taking vengeance.

At the same time the Apostle might here also reason from the less to the

the old dispensation. "The blood of the covenant" was the blood shed on the cross; and the reference to it is not as sprinkled for the ratifying of the covenant, but as the blood of atonement, as "the blood of the New Testament, or rather covenant, "shed for many for the remission of sins," Matthew 26:28. Then "sanctified" has the same meaning here as in verse 10 and in chapter 2:11, expiated or atoned for; "by which he has expiated." He who professes the Christian faith, professes to believe in the atoning sacrifice of Christ, that Christ shed his blood for many for the remission of sins. As to "unholy," or rather unclean, such was the blood of a malefactor or impostor, and as such Christ was counted by the Jews and by every Jew who returned to Judaism. — Ed.

[188] Most strangely does Schleusner paraphrase this clause, "contumaciously repudiating the divine favor." The case here contemplated is the same with that in chapter 6: 4-6. The Holy Spirit is there so distinctly mentioned that it is impossible to turn or change the plain meaning of the passage; and to be "partakers of the Holy Spirit" was no doubt to be in that age. Here he is mentioned only as the holy Spirit of grace, i.e., the bestower of grace, or it may be taken as meaning "the gracious" or benevolent "Spirit;" as "God of all grace" in 1 Peter 5:10, may mean either the author and giver of every grace, or the most gracious God, though the former meaning is most consistent with the context

greater, and in this manner: ``God says that he will not suffer his people to be injured with impunity, and declares that he will surely be their avenger: If he suffers not wrongs done to men to be unpunished, will he not avenge his own? Has he so little or no care and concern for his own glory, as to connive at and pass by indignities offered to him?'' But the former view is more simple and natural, --- that the Apostle only shows that God will not be mocked with impunity, since it is his peculiar office to render to the ungodly what they have deserved. [189]

The Lord shall judge his people. Here another and a greater difficulty arises; for the meaning of Moses seems not to agree with what here intended. The Apostle seems to have quoted this passage as though Moses had used the word punish, and not judge; but as it immediately follows by way of explanation, ``He will be merciful to his saints,'' it appears evident that to judge here is to act as a governor, according to its frequent meaning in the Hebrew; but this seems to have little to do with the present subject. Nevertheless he who weighs well all things will find that this passage is fitly and suitably adduced here; for God cannot govern the Church without purifying it, and without restoring to order the confusion that may be in it. Therefore this governing ought justly to be dreaded by hypocrites, who will then be punished for usurping a place among the faithful, and for perfidiously using the sacred name of God, when the master of the family undertakes himself the care of setting in order his own house. It is in this sense that God is said to arise to judge his people, that is, when he separates the truly godly from hypocrites, (Psalm 1:4;) and in Psalm 125:5, [190] where the Prophet speaks of exterminating hypocrites, that they might no more dare to boast that they were of the Church, because God bore with them; he promises peace to Israel after having executed his judgment.

It was not then unreasonably that the apostle reminded them that God presided over his Church and omitted nothing necessary for its rightful government, in order that they might all learn carefully to keep themselves under his power, and remember that they had to render an account to their judge. [191]

He hence concludes that it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. A mortal man, however incensed he may be, cannot carry his vengeance beyond death; but God's power is not bounded by so narrow limits; besides, we often escape from men, but we cannot escape from God's judgment. Who soever then considers that he has to do with God, must (except he be extremely stupid) really tremble and quake; nay, such an apprehension of God must neces-

[189] The quotation is literally neither from the Hebrew nor from the Sept., but is the same as quoted in Romans 12:19; which seems to show that Paul is the Author of both epistles. The Hebrew is, “Mine is vengeance and recompense;” and the Sept., “In the day vengeance will I recompense.” The sense is the same, though the words are different. — Ed.

[190] The original text referred to Ps 125:3, which seems to be directed more at the fact that the wicked will not persevere over the righteous, whereas Ps 125:5 refers to the wicked joining the “workers of iniquity,” and that “peace will be upon Israel”; neither are quite as explicit as the commentary in terms of the final destruction of the wicked, but in my humble opinion, verse 5 has more relevance.-fj.

[191] See Appendix O 2.

sarily absorb the whole man, so that no sorrows, or torments can be compared with it. In short, whenever our flesh allures us or we flatter ourselves by any means in our sins, this admonition alone ought to be sufficient to arouse us, that ``it is a fearful thing to fall into to hands of the living God;'' for his wrath is furnished with dreadful punishments which are to be forever.

However, the saying of David, when he exclaimed, that it was better to fall into Gods hands than into the hands of men, (2 Samuel 24:14,) seems to be inconsistent with what is said here. But this apparent inconsistency vanishes, when we consider that David, relying confidently on God's mercy, chose him as his Judge rather than men; for though he knew that God was displeased with him, yet he felt confident that he would be reconciled to him; in himself, indeed, he was prostrate on the ground, but yet he was raised up by the promise of grace. As then he believed God not to be inexorable, there is no wonder that he dreaded his wrath less, than that of men; but the Apostle here speaks of God's wrath as being dreadful to the reprobate, who being destitute of the hope of pardon, expect nothing but extreme severity, as they have already closed up against themselves the door of grace. And we know that God is set forth in various ways according to the character of those whom he addresses; and this is what David means when he says, ``With the merciful thou wilt be merciful, and with the froward thou wilt be froward.'' (Psalm 18:25-27.) [192]

Heb 10:32-35

Hebrews Chapter 10:32-35

32. But call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;

32. Recordamini dierum superiorum, quibus illuminati multum certamen sustinuistis passionum;

33. Partly, whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and afflictions; and partly, whilst ye became companions of them that were so used.

33. Partim dum probris et afflictionibus fuistis traducti, partim dum socii facti estis eorum qui sic conversabantur.

34. For ye had compassion of me in my bonds, and took joyfully the spoiling of your goods, knowing in yourselves that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance.

34. Etenim vinculis meis compassi estis, et rapinam bonorum vestrorum suscepistit cum guidio, scientes vos habere meliorem substantiam in coelis et manentem:

35. Cast not away therefore your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

35. Ne abjiciatis igitur fiduciam vestram quae remunerationem magnam

[192] The original text had Ps 18:27, but because the quote comes partly from the first half of verse 25, and partly from the last half of verse 26, and is emphasized by verse 27, I decided that all three verses should be referenced.-fj.

habet.

32. But call to remembrance, etc. In order to stimulate them, and to rouse their alacrity to go forward, he reminds them of the evidences of piety which they had previously manifested; for it is a shameful thing to begin well, and to faint in the middle of our course, and still more shameful to retrograde after having made great progress. The remembrance then of past warfare, if it had been carried on faithfully and diligently under the banner of Christ, is at length useful to us, not as a pretext for sloth, as though we had already served our time, but to render us more active in finishing the remaining part of our course. For Christ has not enlisted us on this condition, that we should after a few years ask for a discharge like soldiers who have served their time, but that we should pursue our warfare even to the end.

He further strengthens his exhortation by saying, that they had already performed great exploits at a time when they were as yet new recruits: the more shame then would it be to them, if now they fainted after having been long tried; for the word enlightened is to be limited to the time when they first enlisted under Christ, as though he had said, ``As soon as ye were initiated into the faith of Christ, ye underwent hard and arduous contests; now practice ought to have rendered you stronger, so as to become more courageous.'' He, however, at the same time reminds them, that it was through God's favor that they believed, and not through their own strength; they were enlightened when immersed in darkness and without eyes to see, except light from above had shone upon them. Whenever then those things which we have done or suffered for Christ come to our minds, let them be to us so many goads to stir us on to higher attainments. [193]

33. Partly, whilst ye were made, etc. We see who they were whom he addresses, even those whose faith had been proved by no common trials, and yet he refrains not from exhorting them to greater things. Let no man therefore deceive himself by self-flattery as though he had reached the goal, or had no need of incentives from others.

Now he says, that they had been made gazingstocks both by reproaches and afflictions, or exposed to public shame by reproaches and distresses, as though they were exposed on a public theater. [194] We hence learn that the persecutions which they had sustained were remarkably severe. But we ought especially to notice the latter clause, when he says that they became companions, or associates of the godly in their persecutions; for as it is Christ's cause

[193] "A great fight of affliction," is rendered by Doddridge, "a great contest of sufferings;" by Macknight. "a great combat of afflictions;" and by Stuart, "a great contest with sufferings." The last word may be deemed as the genitive case of the object, "a great contest as to sufferings;" or the word {πολλὴν}, may be rendered, ``long contest as to sufferings.'' Doddridge remarks that contest {ὑπομέω} is used to show the courage displayed. But ``endure,'' is in the case not the proper word, but ``sustain,'' If ``endure'' be retained, then we must give its secondary sense to {ἄθλησιν}, toil, labor, struggle; and so Schleusner does, ``Ye endured the great toil of sufferings,'' or, a great struggle with sufferings. --- Ed

[194] The words may be rendered, "When ye were publicly exposed to reproaches and afflictions," or, to revilings and persecutions. They were reproached with bad names, or reviled, and also oppressed and persecuted. — Ed.

for which all the godly contend, and as it is what their contend for in common, whatever one of them suffers, all the rest ought to transfer, as it were, to themselves; and this is what ought by all means to be done by us, unless we would separate ourselves from Christ himself. [195]

34. And took joyfully, [196] etc. There is no doubt but as they were men who had feelings, the loss of their goods caused them grief; but yet their sorrow was such as did not prevent the joy of which the Apostle speaks. As poverty is deemed an evil, the plunder of their goods considered in itself touched them with grief; but as they looked higher, they found a cause for joy, which allayed whatever grief they felt. It is indeed thus necessary that our thoughts should be drawn away from the world, by looking at the heavenly recompense; nor do I say any other thing but what all the godly find to be the case by experience. And no doubt we joyfully embrace what we are persuaded will end in our salvation; and this persuasion the children of God doubtless have respecting the conflicts which they undertake for the glory of Christ. Hence carnal feelings never so prevail in overwhelming them with grief, but that with their minds raised up to heaven they emerge into spiritual joy.

And this is proved by what he subjoins, knowing that ye have in heaven a better and an enduring substance. Joyfully then did they endure the plundering of their goods, not because they were glad to find themselves plundered; but as their minds were fixed on the recompense, they easily forgot the grief occasioned by their present calamity. And indeed wherever there is a lively perception of heavenly things, the world with all its allurements is not so relished, that either poverty or shame can overwhelm our minds with grief. If then we wish to bear anything for Christ with patience and resigned minds, let us accustom ourselves to a frequent meditation on that felicity, in comparison with which all the good things of the world are nothing but refuse. Nor are we to pass by these words, ``knowing that ye have''; [197] for except one be fully persuaded that the inheritance which God has promised to his children belongs

[195] The latter clause of this verse is rendered the same as in our version by Beza and Macknight, while Grotius, Doddridge, Stuart and Bloomfield, give in effect this rendering, "when ye became partakers (i.e., in sympathy, and in their losses) with those who were so treated." It signifies, says Grotius, that they sympathized with their brethren in their calamities, and also succored them as far as they could by praying for them, and administering to their wants. In Matthew 23:30, {κοινωνοὶ} {αὐτῶν} is rendered, ``partakers with them,'' or sharers with them; and so it might be rendered here, ``sharers with those who were so treated,'' i.e., sharers in reproach and suffering. --- Ed.

[196] The preceding clause is literally "For ye sympathized with my bonds." There is a different reading, "For ye sympathized with the prisoners — {δεσμίοις}. The authority as to MSS. is nearly equal; and there is nothing decisive in the context. A similar phrase is in chapter 4:15. ``who cannot sympathize with our infirmities.'' Grotius, Hammond and Stuart, are in the text as it is, and also Bishop Jebb, and Bloomfield. There is here a clear instance of an inverted order as to the subjects previously mentioned which often occur in the Prophets, and in other parts of Scripture. The last subject in the previous verse is here first referred to, and then the first. --- Ed.

[197] Calvin leaves out {ἐν} {ἑαυτοῖς}, as the Vulg. does. The {ἐν} is deemed by most spurious, but most retain {ἑαυτοῖς}, though they do not connect it as in our version, with ``knowing,'' and render the clause thus, ``knowing that you have for yourselves in heaven a better and an enduring substance,'' or property or possession. The word for ``substance'' occurs only here, except in the plural number in Acts 2:45. It occurs often in the Sept., and stands for words in Hebrew, which signify substance, wealth, riches, possessions. --- Ed

to him, all his knowledge will be cold and useless.

35. Cast not away, therefore, etc. He shows what especially makes us strong to persevere, even the retaining of confidence; for when that is lost, we lose the recompense set before us. It hence appears that confidence is the foundation of a godly and holy life. By mentioning reward, he diminishes nothing from the gratuitous promise of Salvation; for the faithful know that their labor is not vain in the Lord in such a way that they still rest on God's mercy alone. But it has been often stated elsewhere how reward is not incompatible with the gratuitous imputation of righteousness.

Heb 10:36-39

Hebrews Chapter 10:36-39

36. For ye have need of patience, that, after ye have done the will of God, ye might receive the promise.

36. Patientiae enim opus habetis, ut quum voluntatem Dei feceritis obtineatis promissionem.

37. For yet a little while, and he that shall come will come, and will not tarry.

37. Adhuc enim pusillum temporis, quando qui venturus est veniet et non tardabit.

38. Now the just shall live by faith: but if any man draw back, my soul shall have no pleasure in him.

38. Justus autem ex fide vivet, et si subductus fuerit non oblectabitur anima mea in eo.

39. But we are not of them who draw back unto perdition; but of them that believe to the saving of the soul.

39. Nos autem non sumus subductionis in perditionem, sed fidei in acquisitionem animae.

36. For ye have need of patience, etc. He says that patience is necessary, not only because we have to endure to the end, but as Satan has innumerable arts by which he harasses us; and hence except we possess extraordinary patience, we shall a thousand times be broken down before we come to the half of our course. The inheritance of eternal life is indeed certain to us, but as life is like a race, we ought to go on towards the goal. But in our way there are many hindrances and difficulties, which not only delay us, but which would also stop our course altogether, except we had great firmness of mind to pass through them. Satan craftily suggests every kind of trouble in order to discourage us. In short, Christians will never advance two paces without fainting, except they are sustained by patience. [198] This then is the only way or means by which we can firmly and constantly advance; we shall not otherwise obey God, nor even enjoy the promised inheritance, which is here by metonymy called the

[198] Or, “patient waiting,” as rendered by Erasmus and Stuart, and not “perseverance,” as rendered by Macknight. They were to suffer patiently their trials, looking forward to their termination; and in order to encourage them patiently to endure, he reminds them in the next verse that it will only be for a very short time. — Ed.

``promise''.

37. For yet a little while, or, for yet a very little time, etc. That it may not be grievous to us to endure, he reminds us that the time will not be long. There is indeed nothing that avails more to sustain our minds, should they at any time become faint, than the hope of a speedy and near termination. As a general holds forth to his soldiers the prospect that the war will soon end, provided they hold out a little longer; so the Apostle reminds us that the Lord will shortly come to deliver us from all evils, provided our minds faint not through want of firmness.

And in order that this consolation might have more assurance and authority, he adduces the testimony of the Prophet Habakkuk. (Habakkuk 2:4.) But as he follows the Greek version, he departs somewhat from the words of the Prophet. I will first briefly explain what the Prophet says, and then we shall compare it with what the Apostle relates here.

When the Prophet had spoken of the dreadful overthrow of his own nation, being terrified by his prophecy, he had nothing to do but to quit as it were the world, and to betake himself to his watchtower; and his watchtower was the Word of God, by which he was raised as it were into heaven. Being thus placed in this station, he was bidden to write a new prophecy, which brought to the godly the hope of salvation. Yet as men are naturally unreasonable, and are so hasty in their wishes that they always think God tardy, whatever haste he may make, he told them that the promise would come without delay; at the same time he added, ``If it tarries, wait for it.'' By which he meant, that what God promises will never come so soon, but that it seems to us to tarry, according to an old proverb, ``Even speed is delay to desire.'' Then follow these words, ``Behold, his soul that is lifted up is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith.'' By these words he intimates that the ungodly, however they may be fortified by defenses, should not be able to stand, for there is no life of security but by faith. Let the unbelieving then fortify themselves as they please, they can find nothing in the whole world but what is fading, so that they must ever be subject to trembling; but their faith will never disappoint the godly, because it rests on God. This is the meaning of the Prophet.

Now the Apostle applies to God what Habakkuk said of the promise; but as God by fulfilling his promises in a manner shows what he is, as to the subject itself there is not much difference; nay, the Lord comes whenever he puts forth his hand to help us. The Apostle follows the Prophet in saying, That it would be shortly; because God defers not his help longer than it is expedient; for he does not by delaying time deceive us as men are wont to do; but he knows his own time which he suffers not to pass by without coming to our aid at the moment required. Now he says, He that cometh will come, and will not tarry. Here are two clauses: by the first we are taught that God will come to our aid, for he has promised; and by the second, that he will do so in due time, not later than he ought. [199]

[199] It is evident from the manner in which the quotation is made, that the Apostle meant

38. Now the just, etc. He means that patience is born of faith; and this is true, for we shall never be able to carry on our contests unless we are sustained by faith, even as, on the other hand, John truly declares, that our victory over the world is by faith. (1 John 5:4.) It is by faith that we ascend on high; that we leap over all the perils of this present life, and all its miseries and troubles; that we possess a quiet standing in the midst of storms and tempests. Then the Apostle announced this truth, that all who are counted just before God do not live otherwise than by faith. And the future tense of the verb live, betokens the perpetuity of this life. Let readers consult on this subject Romans 1:17, [200] and Galatians 3:11, where this passage is quoted.

But if any man draw back, etc. This is the rendering of {עפלה{ elation, as used by the Prophet, for the words are, ``Where there shall be elation or munition, the soul of that man shall not continue right in him.'' The Apostle gives here the Greek version, which partly agrees with the words of the Prophet, and partly differs from them. For this drawing back differs but little, if anything, from that elation or pride with which the ungodly are inflated, since their refractory opposition to God proceeds from that false confidence with which they are inebriated; for hence it is that they renounce his authority and promise themselves a quiet state, free from all evil. They may be said, then, to draw back, when they set up defenses of this kind, by which they drive away every fear of God and reverence for his name. And thus by this expression is intimated the power of faith no less than the character of impiety; for pride is impiety, because it renders not to God the honor due to him, by rendering man obedient to him. From selfsecurity, insolence, and contempt, it comes that as long as it is well with the wicked, they dare, as one has said, to insult the clouds. But since nothing is more contrary to faith than this drawing back, for the true character of faith is, that it draws a man unto submission to God when drawn back by his own sinful nature.

The other clause, ``He will not please my soul,'' or as I have rendered it more fully, ``My soul shall not delight in him,'' is to be taken as the expression of the Apostle's feeling; for it was not his purpose to quote exactly the words of the Prophet, but only to refer to the passage to invite readers to a closer examination of it. [201]

only to adapt to his own purpose the passage in Habakkuk; he does not quote it in the order in which it is found there, nor literally from the Hebrew, nor wholly so from the Sept. What is said in Habakkuk of the vision, he applies here to the Lord. Surely, such a use of a passage is legitimate. The coming of Christ mentioned here, according to Mede, was his coming to destroy Jerusalem, and to put an end to the Jewish polity. If "the approaching day," in verse 25, be considered to be that event then the same event is most probably referred to here. Besides, he speaks here of the enmity of the unbelieving Jews; and as our Savior represented the destruction of Jerusalem as a blessing to his people, it becomes still more probable that Christ's coming to destroy that nation is intended. — Ed.

[200] The Book has Ro 1:7, — an obvious typesetting error.-fj.

[201] This verse, with the exception of the two clauses being inverted, and of my being not added to "faith," is literally the same with the Sept. But the last clause here and the first in Habakkuk, differs in words materially from the Hebrew, according to the received text. There are two MSS. which give {{עלפה instead of ,{עפלה} a transposition of two letters. If not exactly in words. The Hebrew, then, would be as follows --- Behold the fainting! Not right is his soul within him; But the righteousness by his faith shall he live. The fainting i.e., as to faith and he who ``draws back,'' or withdraws through fear, as the verb

39. But we are not of them which draw back, etc. The Apostle made a free use of the Greek version, which was most suitable to the doctrine which he was discussing; and he now wisely applies it. He had before warned them, lest by forsaking the Church they should alienate themselves from the faith and the grace of Christ; he now teaches them that they had been called for this end, that they might not draw back. And he again sets faith and drawing back in opposition the one to the other, and also the preservation of the soul to its perdition.

Now let it be noticed that this truth belongs also to us, for we, whom God has favored with the light of the Gospel, ought to acknowledge that we have been called in order that we may advance more and more in our obedience to God, and strive constantly to draw nearer to him. This is the real preservation of the soul, for by so doing we shall escape eternal perdition.

means, are descriptive of the same character. To persevere in expecting the fulfillment of a promise, is the subject in Habakkuk and also in this passage. And then, that the soul of the fainting is not right, is the same as to say that such a soul is not what God approves. A theological dispute has arisen, though unnecessarily, from the construction of the last clause in this verse. The introduction of ``any one,'' or any man, has been objected to, and that it ought to be ``but if he,'' i.e., ``the righteousness'' draw back, etc. The probability is, that as ``anyone'' should not be ascribed to Beza, for Pagininus and others had done so before him. However, the doctrine of perseverance is in no way imperiled by leaving out ``any one.'' The Bible is full of this mode of addressing Christians, and yet the Bible assures us that the sheep of Christ shall never perish. Warnings and admonitions are the very means which God employs to secure the final salvation of his people; and to conclude from such warnings that they may finally fall away, is by no means a legitimate argument. --- Ed.

Chapter 11

CHAPTER 11

Heb 11:1

Hebrews Chapter 11:1

1. Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.

1. Porro fides est rerum sperandarum substantia, demonstratio eorum quae non videntur.

1. Now faith, etc. Whoever made this the beginning of the eleventh chapter, has unwisely disjointed the context; for the object of the Apostle was to prove what he had already said that there is need of patience. [202] He had quoted the testimony of Habakkuk, who says that the just lives by faith; he now shows what remained to be proved --- that faith can be no more separated from patience than from itself. The order then of what he says is this, --- ``We shall not reach the goal of salvation except we have patience, for the Prophet declares that the just lives by faith; but faith directs us to things afar off which we do not as yet enjoy; it then necessarily includes patience.'' Therefore the minor proposition in the argument is this, Faith is the substance of things hoped for, etc. It is hence also evident, that greatly mistaken are they who think that an exact definition of faith is given here; for the Apostle does not speak here of the whole of what faith is, but selects that part of it which was suitable to his purpose, even that it has patience ever connected with it. [203] Let us now consider the words.

He calls faith the hypostasis, the substance of things hoped for. We indeed know that what we hope for is not what we have as it were in hand, but what is as yet hid from us, or at least the enjoyment of which is delayed to another time. The Apostle now teaches us the same thing with what we find in Romans 8:24; where it is said that what is hoped for is not seen, and hence the inference is drawn, that it is to be waited for in patience. So the Apostle here reminds us, that faith regards not present things, but such as are waited for. Nor is this kind of contradiction without its force and beauty: Faith, he says, is the hypostasis, the prop, or the foundation on which we plant our foot, --- the prop of what? Of things absent, which are so far from being really possessed by us,

[202] Griesbach makes the division at the thirty-eighth verse of the last chapter, and this is no doubt what the subject requires. — Ed.

[203] "Faith is here generally described, not only as it justifies, but also as it acts towards God and lays hold on his promises, works, and blessings revealed in his word, past, present, and future." — Pareus.

that they are far beyond the reach of our understanding.

The same view is to be taken of the second clause, when he calls faith the evidence or demonstration of things not seen; for demonstration makes things to appear or to be seen; and it is commonly applied to what is subject to our senses. [204]

Then these two things, though apparently inconsistent, do yet perfectly harmonize when we speak of faith; for the Spirit of God shows to us hidden things, the knowledge of which cannot reach our senses: Promised to us is eternal life, but it is promised to the dead; we are assured of a happy resurrection, but we are as yet involved in corruption; we are pronounced just, as yet sin dwells in us; we hear that we are happy, but we are as yet in the midst of many miseries; an abundance of all good things is promised to us, but still we often hunger and thirst; God proclaims that he will come quickly, but he seems deaf when we cry to him. What would become of us were we not supported by hope, and did not our minds emerge out of the midst of darkness above the world through the light of God's word and of his Spirit? Faith, then, is rightly said to be the subsistence or substance of things which are as yet the objects of hope and the evidence of things not seen. Augustine sometimes renders evidence ``conviction,'' which I do not disapprove, for it faithfully expresses the Apostle's meaning: but I prefer ``demonstration,'' as it is more literal.

Heb 11:2-4

Hebrews Chapter 11:2-4

2. For by it the elders obtained a good report.

2. Per hane enim testimonium consequuti sunt seniores.

3. Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.

3. Fide intelligimus aptata esse secula verbo Dei, ut non apparentium spectacula fierent.

[204] The two words “substance” and “evidence” have been variously rendered, though the meaning continues materially the same: “substinance” and “demonstration” by Beza: “confident expectation” and “conviction” by Grotius and Doddridge: “confidence” and “evidence” by Macknight: “confidence” and “convincing evidence” by Stuart. When the primary meaning of words is suitable, there is no necessity of having recourse to what is secondary. The first word means properly a foundation, a basis, a prop, a support: and what can be more appropriate here? Faith is the basis or the prop (as Calvin renders it in his exposition) of things hoped for; that is, faith is the foundation of hope; it is the fulcrum on which hope rests. The other word is properly “demonstration” a proof supported by reasons — what is made clear and evident. Conviction is the result of demonstration. So, then, the meaning is this — faith sustains hope, and exhibits to view things unseen: it is the basis on which the objects of hope rest, and the demonstration or manifestation of what is not seen. The word “substance” is derived from the Vulgate: though its etymological meaning corresponds with the original, yet its received meaning is quite different. The original word occurs five times in the New Testament, and is rendered “confidence” in 2 Corinthians 9:4, 11:17; Hebrews 3:14, — “person” in Hebrew 1:3, — and here “substance;” but why not its more literal meaning, “foundation?” The things “hoped for” include the promises; but the things “not seen,” all that is revealed as to what is past and is to come, — the creation, the future destiny of man, etc. — Ed.

4. By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts: and by it he being dead yet speaketh.

4. Fide Abel praestantiorem hostiam quam Cain obtulit Deo; per quam testimonium abtinuit quod justus esset, testimonium reddente Deo ejus donis: et per ipsam mortuus adhuc loquitur.

2. For by it the elders, [205] etc. He handles this subject to the end of the chapter --- that the fathers obtained salvation and were accepted by God in no other way than by faith.

The Jews indeed had some reasons for paying great deference to the fathers; but a foolish admiration of the fathers had so prevailed among them, that it proved a great hindrance to a thorough surrender of themselves to Christ and to his government. It was occasioned either by ambition or superstition, or by both. For when they heard that they were the blessed and holy seed of Abraham, inflated with this distinction they fixed their eyes on men rather than on God. Then added to this was a false emulation; for they did not consider what was mainly worthy of imitation in their fathers. It thus happened that they became attached to the old ceremonies, as though the whole of religion and perfect holiness consisted in them. This error the Apostle exposes and condemns; and be shows what was the chief excellency of the fathers, in order that their posterity might understand how they might become really like them.

Let us then bear in mind that the main point and the very hinge on which the Apostle's argument turns is this, --- That all the fathers from the beginning of the world, were approved by God in no other way than by being united to him by faith: and this he shows, that the Jews might know that by faith alone they could be bound together in holy unity with the fathers, and that as soon as they renounced faith, they became banished from the Church, and that they were then no longer the legitimate children of Abraham, but a degenerate race and bastards. [206]

3. Through, or by, faith we understand, [207] etc. This is a most striking proof

[205] Macknight and Stuart render the word “ancients” and more suitably in our language. The word “elders” most commonly refers to age, but “ancients” to time: those meant here were such as lived before and under the Law. — Ed.

[206] The verb rendered in our version “obtained a good report,” is rendered by Calvin, “obtained a testimony;” by Beza, “were approved;” by Macknight “were born witness to;” and Stuart, “obtained commendation”. It is better to retain the idea of a testimony, as a reference is made either to the written testimony of Scripture, or to some express testimony given by God, as in the case of Abel. As the verb is everywhere used in a good sense, as referring to a good testimony, “the good report” of our version, or “the honorable testimony” of Doddridge, seems to convey the right meaning. — Ed.

[207] That is “We, by faith in God’s word which gives the record, understand, or know how the world was made.” This the heathens did not know by the light of reason, and yet they might have known this, as the Apostle declares in Romans 1:20. The reference here, according to this view, is to the fact, to the case as it was, but in the Romans to what ought to have been the case. Why “worlds?” the same word, though in the plural number is rendered “world” in verse 36 and 1 Corinthians 10:11, and so here by Beza and others. The universe, the whole visible creation, is what is meant, as it appears from “seen” in the next clause: and the word {αἰὼν}, in the singular number, says Stuart, is not employed to designate the ``world'' that is the universe. It is said to be used plurally to express the various parts of which the world is composed. But the term ``world'' in our language comprehends the whole: it means the whole visible creation. The verb ``framed,'' is rendered

of the last verse; for we differ nothing from the brute creation, if we understand not that the world has been created by God. To what end have men been endued with understanding and reason, except that they might acknowledge their Creator? But it is by faith alone we know that it was God who created the world. No wonder then that faith shone forth in the fathers above all other virtues.

But it may be here asked, Why does the Apostle assert that what even infidels acknowledge is only understood by faith? For the very appearance of heaven and earth constrains even the ungodly to acknowledge some Maker; and hence Paul condemns all for ingratitude, because they did not, after having known God, give him the honor due to him. (Romans 1:25.) And no doubt religion would not have so prevailed among all nations, had not men's minds been impressed with the convictions that God is the Creator of the world. It thus then appears that this knowledge which the Apostle ascribes to faith, exists without faith.

To this I reply, --- that though there has been an opinion of this kind among heathens, that the world was made by God, it was yet very evanescent, for as soon as they formed a notion of some God, they became instantly vain in their imaginations, so that they groped in the dark, having in their thoughts a mere shadow of some uncertain deity, and not the knowledge of the true God. Besides, as it was only a transient opinion that flit in their minds, it was far from being anything like knowledge. We may further add, that they assigned to fortune or chance the supremacy in the government of the world, and they made no mention of God's providence which alone rules everything. Men's minds therefore are wholly blind, so that they see not the light of nature which shines forth in created things, until being irradiated by God's Spirit, they begin to understand by faith what otherwise they cannot comprehend. Hence most correctly does the Apostle ascribe such an understanding to faith; for they who have faith do not entertain a slight opinion as to God being the Creator of the world, but they have a deep conviction fixed in their minds and behold the true God. And further, they understand the power of his word, not only as manifested instantaneously in creating the world, but also as put forth continually in its preservation; nor is it his power only that they understand, but also his goodness, and wisdom, and justice. And hence they are led to worship, love, and honor him.

Not made of things which do appear. As to this clause, all interpreters seem to me to have been mistaken; and the mistake has arisen from separating the preposition from the participle {φαὶνομένων}. They give this rendering, ``So that visible things were made from things which do not appear.'' But from such words hardly any sense can be elicited, at least a very jejune sense; and

``compacted'' by Beza --- ``adjusted'' by Doddridge --- ``produced'' by Macknight --- and ``formed'' by Stuart. Calvin has ``fitted'' or joined together, aptata, the word used by the Vulgate. It is justly said by Leigh, that the verb properly means to compact or knit together disjointed parts, either of a body or a building. But it is used also in the sense of adjusting, fitting, preparing, setting in order, and perfecting, or completing. It is most commonly used in the sense of making perfect or complete. But we may render the words ``the world was set in order by the word of God.'' --- Ed.

further, the text does not admit of such a meaning, for then the words must have been, {ἐκ} {μὴ} {φαινομένων}: but the order adopted by the Apostle is different. If, then, the words were rendered literally, the meaning would be as follows, --- ``So that they became the visible of things not visible,'' or, not apparent. Thus the preposition would be joined to the participle to which it belongs. Besides, the words would then contain a very important truth, --- that we have in this visible world, a conspicuous image of God; and thus the same truth is taught here, as in Romans 1:20, where it is said, that the invisible things of God are made known to us by the creation of the world, they being seen in his works. God has given us, throughout the whole framework of this world, clear evidences of his eternal wisdom, goodness, and power; and though he is in himself invisible, he in a manner becomes visible to us in his works. [208]

Correctly then is this world called the mirror of divinity; not that there is sufficient clearness for man to gain a full knowledge of God, by looking at the world, but that he has thus so far revealed himself, that the ignorance of the ungodly is without excuse. Now the faithful, to whom he has given eyes, see sparks of his glory, as it were, glittering in every created thing. The world was no doubt made, that it might be the theater of the divine glory.

4. By faith Abel offered, etc. The Apostle's object in this chapter is to show, that however excellent were the works of the saints, it was from faith they derived their value, their worthiness, and all their excellences; and hence follows what he has already intimated, that the fathers pleased God by faith alone.

Now he commends faith here on two accounts, --- it renders obedience to God, for it attempts and undertakes nothing, but what is according to the rule of God's word, --- and it relies on God's promises, and thus it gains the value and worth which belongs to works from his grace alone. Hence, wherever the word faith is found in this chapter, we must bear in mind, that the Apostle speaks of it, in order that the Jews might regard no other rule than God's word, and might also depend alone on his promises.

He says, first, that Abel's sacrifice was for no other reason preferable to

[208] Moderns no less than the ancients differ from Calvin as to this clause; and yet his explanation is more suited to the passage, and especially to {εἰς} {τὸ} which means properly, to the end that, or, in order to, denoting the object or final cause. But there is no authority for making {ἐκ} and {φαινομένων} one word as he proposes: yet if the transposition of {μὴ} be admitted, which both ancient and modern critics allow, the meaning advocated by Calvin may still be defended: ``in order that of things not apparent there might be things visible;'' the things not apparent or visible being the power, wisdom and goodness of God, in exact harmony with Romans 1:20, where God's power and divinity are said to be ``invisible things'' --- {τὰ} {ἀόρατα}: they are things not apparent. Again, the verb {κατηρτίσθαι} denotes not creation, but the fitting or adjusting, or setting in order of things previously created: it seems to designate the work done, not as described in the first verse of Genesis, but in the following verses: so that the object or design of this adjustment or arrangement is what is expressed in this clause; it was, that there might be visible things as evidence or manifestations of things invisible. It may be further said, that the world is said to have been set in order by the word of God: and so it is recorded in Genesis: but this word or fiat is not mentioned in the first verse of that book, in which the heavens and the earth are said to have been created. It hence appears that the reference here is to the setting in order of this world, and not to the first creation of its materials; and if so, the second clause cannot refer to the creation of the world out of nothing, as it is necessarily connected with what the first clause contains. ``Faith'' then refers here, if this view must be taken, not to the fact that the world was made by God, which even heathens admitted, but to the design of God in creation, the manifestation of his own glory. ``The heavens,'' says the Psalmist ``declare the glory of God,'' etc. --- Ed.

that of his brother, except that it was sanctified by faith: [209] for surely the fat of brute animals did not smell so sweetly, that it could, by its odor, pacify God. The Scripture indeed shows plainly, why God accepted his sacrifice, for Moses's words are these, ``God had respect to Abel, and to his gifts.'' It is hence obvious to conclude, that his sacrifice was accepted, because he himself was graciously accepted. But how did he obtain this favor, except that his heart was purified by faith.

God testifying, etc. He confirms what I have already stated, that no works, coming from us can please God, until we ourselves are received into favor, or to speak more briefly, that no works are deemed just before God, but those of a just man: for he reasons thus, --- God bore a testimony to Abel's gifts; then he had obtained the praise of being just before God. [210]

This doctrine is useful, and ought especially to be noticed, as we are not easily convinced of its truth; for when in any work, anything splendid appears, we are immediately rapt in admiration, and we think that it cannot possibly be disapproved of by God: but God, who regards only the inward purity of the heart, heeds not the outward masks of works. Let us then learn, that no right or good work can proceed from us, until we are justified before God.

By it he being dead, etc. To faith he also ascribes this, --- that God testified that Abel was no less the object of his care after his death, than during his life: for when he says, that though dead, he still speaketh, he means, as Moses tells us, that God was moved by his violent death to take vengeance. When, therefore, Abel or his blood is said to speak, the words are to be understood figuratively. It was yet a singular evidence of God's love towards him, that he had a care for him when he was dead; and it hence appears, that he was one of God's saints, whose death is precious to him. [211]

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[209] "Abel's offering was more acceptable than that of Cain, because he had faith." — Grotius. The word "sacrifice," {θυσία}, means properly an offered victim, but sometimes anything offered to God. Indeed Abel's sacrifice is called in Genesis 4:4, an offering. The word {πλείων} is literally more, but is used in the sense of more in number, quantity or excellency. The last is evidently the meaning here; for Abel's offering, according to the account given, was not in the number or quantity, but in quality. Then a better or a more excellent sacrifice, and not a fuller, as some have rendered it, is the right version. --- Ed

[210] What the Apostle evidently refers to are these words, "the Lord had respect to Abel and to his offering." He calls this "testifying." How this was done, we are not told. The divine approbation was in some way conveyed; there was respect had to Abel and to his offering, but not to Cain nor to his offering. The Apostle says here first, that Abel "obtained a testimony that he was righteous," and then he adds by way of explanation: God testifying of his gifts. It seems then that the approbation of his gifts was the testimony he received that he was righteous, this was evidently the meaning of the Apostle. Now the question is, how was this testimony as to that sacrifice. What was it? Such, we may reasonably conclude as was given in other recorded instances; it was by fire sent from heaven to consume the sacrifice. See Leviticus 9:24; 1 Kings 18:38; 2 Chronicles 7:1. "By which," and "by it," are commonly referred to faith, but the passage would be plainer, by referring them to "the sacrifice." It was by the means or medium of the sacrifice, that the testimony was given, and it was on the account of it that Abel was put to death; "and through it, having died, he yet speaketh;" that is, though he died, owing to his sacrifice being approved, he yet speaketh, that is, by his example as a believer, say some, in the atonement; as a sufferer in behalf of the truth, say others. — Ed.

[211] Though this view has been taken by Grotius and many others, yet the one suggested above is what has been mostly adopted. It is Abel himself who here speaks as a man of

Heb 11:5-6

Hebrews Chapter 11:5-6

5. By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this testimony, that he pleased God.

5. Fide Enoch translatus est ne videret mortem; neque inventus est propterea quod Deus illum transtulerat; nam ante translationem suam testimonium adeptus erat quod placuisset Deo.

6. But without faith it is impossible to please him: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

6. Sine fide autem impossibile est placere Deo; nam qui ad Deum accedit, eum credere oportet quod sit, et quod remunerator sit iis qui eum quaerunt.

5. By faith Enoch, etc. He chose a few of the most ancient, that he might make a transition to Abraham and his posterity. He teaches us that through faith, it was that Enoch was translated.

But we ought especially to consider the reason why God in so unusual a manner removed him from the earth. The event was remarkable, and hence all may know how dear he was to God. Impiety and all kinds of corruptions then prevailed everywhere. Had he died as other men, it would have not occurred to any, that he was thus preserved from the prevailing contagion by God's providence; but, as he was taken away without dying, the hand of God from heaven, removing him as it were from the fire, was openly manifested. It was not to then an ordinary honor with which God had favored him. Moses indeed tells us, that he was a righteous man, and that he walked with God; but as righteousness begins with faith, it is justly ascribed to his faith, that he pleased God. [212]

As to the subtle questions which the curious usually moot, it is better to pass them over, without taking much notice of them. They ask, what became of these two men, Enoch and Elijah? And then, that they may not appear merely to ask questions, they imagine that they are reserved for the last days of the Church, that they may then come forth into the world; and for this purpose the Revelation of John is referred to. Let us leave this airy philosophy to those light and vain minds, which cannot be satisfied with what is solid. Let it suffice us to know, that their translation was a sort of extraordinary death; nor let us doubt but that they were divested of their mortal and corruptible flesh, in order that they might, with the other members of Christ, be renewed into a blessed immortality. [213]

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faith; it is the voice of his blood that is referred to in chapter 12:24. Instead of the received reading, the preponderance of copies is in favor of {λαλεῖ} --- Ed

[212] "He reasons thus: — He who pleases God is endued with faith; Enoch pleased God; then Enoch was endued with faith." — J. Capellus.

[213] It is the Sept. that is followed by the Apostle. Instead of "he walked with God," we have here, "he pleased God;" and for, "he was not," the phrase is "he was not found." One part of the verse is nearly a literal quotation, "and he was not found, because God had translated him;" and this ought to be put parenthetically, for what follows is connected with the first

6. But without faith, etc. What is said here belongs to all the examples which the Apostle records in this chapter; but as there is in the passage some measure of obscurity, it is necessary to examine its meaning more closely.

But there is no better interpreter than the Apostle himself. The proof, then, which he immediately subjoins, may serve as an explanation. The reason he assigns why no one can please God without faith, is this, --- because no one will ever come to God, except he believes that God is, and is also convinced that he is a remunerator to all who seek him. If access then to God is not opened, but by faith, it follows, that all who are without it, are the objects of God's displeasure. Hence the Apostle shows how faith obtains favor for us, even because faith is our teacher as to the true worship of God, and makes us certain as to his goodwill, so that we may not think that we seek him in vain. These two clauses ought not to be slightly passed over, --- that we must believe that God is, and that we ought to feel assured that he is not sought in vain. [214]

It does not indeed seem a great matter, when the Apostle requires us to believe that God is; but when you more closely consider it, you will find that there is here a rich, profound, and sublime truth; for though almost all admit without disputing that God is, yet it is evident, that except the Lord retains us in the true and certain knowledge of himself, various doubts will ever creep in, and obliterate every thought of a Divine Being. To this vanity the disposition of man is no doubt prone, so that to forget God becomes an easy thing. At the same time the Apostle does not mean, that men ought to feel assured that there is some God, for he speaks only of the true God; nay, it will not be sufficient for you to form a notion of any God you please; but you must understand what sort of Being the true God is; for what will it profit us to devise and form an idol, and to ascribe to it the glory due to God?

We now then perceive what the Apostle means in the first clause; he denies that we can have an access to God, except we have the truth, that God is deeply fixed in our hearts, so as not to be led here and there by various opinions.

It is hence evident, that men in vain weary themselves in serving God, except they observe the right way, and that all religions are not only vain, but also pernicious, with which the true and certain knowledge of God is not connected; for all are prohibited from having any access to God, who do not distinguish and separate him from all idols; in short, there is no religion except where this truth reigns dominant. But if the true knowledge of God has its seat in our hearts it

clause, as it contains a reason for what is there asserted; Enoch was through faith translated, for he had a testimony that he pleased God; and to please God is an evidence of faith, as proved by the following verse. Strange are the vagaries of learned men! Some of the German divines have attempted to prove that Enoch was not translated without dying. Though no words can express the event more clearly than those of the Apostle. This is an instance of what men will do to support a false system, when once fully imbibed. — Ed.

[214] To “come to God,” is very expressive, and is literally the word. To “approach to” by Doddridge, and “to worship,” by Macknight, are no improvements, but otherwise. God is represented as sitting on the throne of grace; hence the idea of coming to him. Enoch walked with God, as though God was a friend and a companion; hence to come to him is the appropriate expression. Stuart says, that it is a metaphor derived from the practice of coming to the temple to worship, God being represented as there present. — Ed.

will not fail to lead us to honor and fear him; for God, without his majesty is not really known. Hence arises the desire to serve him, hence it comes that the whole life is so formed, that he is regarded as the end in all things

The second clause is that we ought to be fully persuaded that God is not sought in vain; and this persuasion includes the hope of salvation and eternal life, for no one will be in a suitable state of heart to seek God except a sense of the divine goodness be deeply felt, so as to look for salvation from him. We indeed flee from God, or wholly disregard him, when there is no hope of salvation. But let us bear in mind, that this is what must be really believed, and not held merely as a matter of opinions; for even the ungodly may sometimes entertain such a notion, and yet they do not come to God; and for this reason, because they have not a firm and fixed faith. [215] This then is the other part of faith by which we obtain favor with God, even when we feel assured that salvation is laid up for us in him.

But many shamefully pervert this clause; for they hence elicit the merits of works, and the conceit about deserving. And they reason thus: ``We please God by faith, because we believe him to be a rewarder; then faith has respect to the merits of works.'' This error cannot be better exposed, than by considering how God is to be sought; while any one is wandering from the right way of seeking him, [216] he cannot be said to be engaged in the work. Now Scripture assigns this as the right way, --- that a man, prostrate in himself, and smitten with the conviction that he deserves eternal death, and in selfdespair, is to flee to Christ as the only asylum for salvation. Nowhere certainly can we find that we are to bring to God any merits of works to put us in a state of favor with him. Then he who understands that this is the only right way of seeking God, will be freed from every difficulty on the subject; for reward refers not to the worthiness or value of works but to faith.

Thus, these frigid glosses of the Sophists, such as, ``by faith we please God, for we deserve when we intend to please,'' fall wholly to the ground. The Apostle's object was to carry us much higher, even that conscience might feel assured that it is not a vain thing to seek God; and this certainty or assurance far exceeds what we can of ourselves attain, especially when any one considers his own self. For it is not to be laid down as an abstract principle, that God is a rewarder to those who seek him; but every one of us ought individually to apply this doctrine to himself, so that we may know that we are regarded by God, that he has such a care for our salvation as never to be wanting to us, that our prayers are heard by him, that he will be to us a perpetual deliverer. But as none of these things come to us except through Christ, our faith must ever

[215] "Certainly there is no true faith in the doctrine of salvation, unless it be attended with this magnetic force, by which it draws the soul to God." — Archb. Leighton

[216] Calvin does not connect "diligently" with seeking, as in our version. Merely to seek, is what the verb means. It is rendered in Acts 15:17, "to seek after," and so in Romans 3:11, and carefully is added to it on chapter 12:17. It is found often in the Sept. in the sense of seeking, and stands for a verb in Hebrew, which means simply to seek. See Deuteronomy 4:29; Psalm 14:2; Jeremiah 29:13. Stuart's version is, "Who seek him?" and so is Beza's — Ed.

regard him and cleave to him alone.

From these two clauses, we may learn how, and why it is impossible for man to please God without faith; God justly regards us all as objects of his displeasure, as we are all by nature under his curse; and we have no remedy in our own power. It is hence necessary that God should anticipate us by his grace; and hence it comes, that we are brought to know that God is, and in such a way that no corrupt superstition can seduce us, and also that we become assured of a certain salvation from him.

Were any one to desire a fuller view of this subject, he should make his commencement here, --- that we in vain attempt to try anything, except we look to God; for the only true end of life is to promote his glory; but this can never be done, unless there be first the true knowledge of him. Yet this is still but the half of faith, and will profit us but little, except confidence be added. Hence faith will only then be complete and secure us God's favor, when we shall feel a confidence that we shall not seek him in vain, and thus entertain the certainty of obtaining salvation from him. But no one, except he be blinded by presumption, and fascinated by selflove, can feel assured that God will be a rewarder of his merits. Hence this confidence of which we speak recumbs not on works, nor on man's own worthiness, but on the grace of God alone; and as grace is nowhere found but in Christ, it is on him alone that faith ought to be fixed.

Heb 11:7

Hebrews Chapter 11:7

7. By faith Noah, being warned of God of things not seen as yet, moved with fear, prepared an ark to the saving of his house; by the which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

7. Fide Noe, divinitus admonitus de iis quae nondum videbantur, veritus apparavit arcam in salutem domus suae; per quam condemnavit mundum, et ejus (quae secundum fidem est) justitiae factus est haeres.

7. By faith Noah, etc. It was a wonderful example of magnanimity, that when the whole world were promising themselves impunity, and securely and unrestrainedly indulging themselves in sinful pleasures, Noah alone paid regard to Gods vengeance though deferred for a considerable time, --- that he greatly wearied himself for a hundred and twenty years in building the ark, --- that he stood unshaken amidst the scoffs of so many ungodly men, --- that he entertained no doubt but that he would be safe in the midst of the ruin of the whole world, --- yea, that he felt sure of life as it were in the grave, even in the ark. It is briefly that I shall touch on the subject; each one can better for himself weigh all the circumstances.

The Apostle ascribes to faith the praise of so remarkable a fortitude. He has been hitherto speaking of the fathers who lived in the first age of the world; but it was a kind of regeneration when Noah and his family emerged from the

deluge. It is hence evident that in all ages men have neither been approved by God, nor performed anything worthy of praise otherwise than by faith.

Let us now then see what are the things he presents to our consideration in the case of Noah. They are the following, --- that having been warned of things to come, but not yet made visible, he feared, --- that he built an ark, --- that he condemned the world by building it, --- and that he became the heir of that righteousness which is faith. [217]

What I have just mentioned is that which especially sets forth the power of faith; for the Apostle ever reminds us of this truth, that faith is the evidence of things not seen; and doubtless it is its peculiar office to behold in God's word the things which are hid, and far removed from our senses. When it was declared to Noah that there would be a deluge after one hundred and twenty years, first, the length of time might have removed every fear; secondly, the thing in itself seemed incredible; thirdly, he saw the ungodly heedlessly indulging in sinful pleasures; and lastly, the terrible announcement of a deluge might have appeared to him as intended only to terrify men. But Noah attended so much to God's word, that turning away his eyes from the appearance of things at that time, he feared the destruction which God had threatened, as though it was present. Hence the faith which he had in God's word prepared him to render obedience to God; and of this he afterwards gave a proof by building the ark.

But here a question is raised. Why does the Apostle make faith the cause of fear, since it has respect to promises of grace rather than to threatening? For Paul for this reason calls the Gospel, in which God's righteousness is offered to us for salvation, the word of faith. It seems then to have been improperly stated, that Noah was by faith led to fear. To this, I reply, that faith indeed properly springs from promises; it is founded on them, it rests on them. We hence say that Christ is the real object of faith, for through him our heavenly Father is reconciled to us, and by him all the promises of salvation are sealed and confirmed. Yet there is no reason why faith should not look to God and reverently receive whatever he may say; or if you prefer another way of stating the subject, it rightly belongs to faith to hear God whenever he speaks, and

[217] This is a very clear statement of the case of Noah. Many learned critics have given a different view, among moderns, Stuart and Dr. Bloomfield. The word rendered very correctly in our version, “being moved with fear,” they have rendered “with reverence” connecting it with “prepared.” The only other instance in which it occurs, it has the meaning of fear or dread, as to the consequences, see Acts 23:10. Besides, the whole tenor of the passage comports with this meaning: what was the warning? It was that of a dreadful judgment; and how is judgment to be regarded, but with fear? Faith, as Calvin will tell us presently, regards judgments as well as promises. Men are exhorted to flee from the wrath to come: when they believe that there is a wrath to come, do not they fear? Doddridge and Scott coincide with Calvin. The other difference is, as to {δι} {ἧς}, ``by which,'' before ``condemned.'' This is not so manifestly wrong as the other, yet the meaning which Calvin gives is the most obvious, and the most suitable. Stuart refers ``which'' to faith, while it ought evidently to be referred to the ark; Noah by building the ark which he did by faith, condemned the conduct of others in neglecting to provide for the coming destruction. His preparation, done by faith, condemned their neglect, which was owing to unbelief. As to the word ``heir,'' it means an heir in prospect, and an heir in possession, as in chapter 1:2. So it is evidently to be understood here. Noah became heir or possessor of the righteousness, which is by faith. The rendering of Stuart is nothing so expressive as the literal, ``and obtained the justification which is by faith.'' --- Ed.

unhesitatingly to embrace whatsoever may proceed from his sacred mouth. Thus far it has regard to commands and threatening, as well as to gratuitous promises. But as no man is moved as he ought and as much as is needful, to obey God's commands, nor is sufficiently stirred up to deprecate his wrath, unless he has already laid hold on the promises of grace, so as to acknowledge him as a kind Father, and the author of salvation, --- hence the Gospel is called the word of faith, the principal part being stated for the whole; and thus is set forth the mutual relation that there is between them both. Faith, then, though its most direct regard is to God's promises, yet looks on his threatening so far as it is necessary for it to be taught to fear and obey God.

Prepared an ark, etc. Here is pointed out that obedience which flows from faith as water from a fountain. The work of building the ark was long and laborious. It might have been haltered by the scoffs of the ungodly, and thus suspended a thousand times; nor is there a doubt but they mocked and derided the holy man on every side. That he then bore their wanton insults with an unshaken spirit, is a proof that his resolution to obey was not of an ordinary kind. But how was it that he so perseveringly obeyed God except that he had previously rested on the promise which gave him the hope of deliverance; and in this confidence he persevered even to the last; for he could not have had the courage willingly to undergo so many toils, nor could he have been able to overcome so many obstacles, nor could he have stood so firm in his purpose for so long a time, had he not beforehand possessed this confidence.

It hence appears that faith alone is the teacher of obedience; and we may on the contrary draw this conclusion, that it is unbelief that prevents us to obey God. And at this day the unbelief of the world exhibits itself dreadfully in this way, for there are a very few who obey God.

By the which he condemned the world, etc. It were strange to say that Noah's deliverance condemned the world, and the context will hardly allow faith to be meant; we must then understand this of the ark. And he is said on two accounts to have by the ark condemned the world; for by being so long occupied in building it, he took away every excuse from the wicked; --- and the event which followed proved how just was the destruction of the world; for why was the ark made the means of deliverance to one family, except that the Lord thus spared a righteous man that he should not perish with the ungodly. Had he then not been preserved, the condemnation of the world would not have been so apparent. Noah then by obeying God's command condemned by his example the obstinate disobedience of the world: his wonderful deliverance from the midst of death, was an evidence that the world justly perished; for God would have doubtless saved it, had it not been unworthy of salvation

Of the righteousness which is by faith. This is the last thing in the character of Noah, which the Apostle reminds us to observe. Moses records that he was a righteous man: history does not expressly say that the cause and root of his righteousness was faith, but the Apostle declares that as arising from the facts of the case. And this is not only true, because no one ever devotes himself

really and sincerely to God's service, but he who relies on the promises of his paternal kindness, and feels assured that his life is approved by him; but also on this account, because the life of no one, however holy it may be, when tried by the rule of God's law, can please him without pardon being granted. Then righteousness must necessarily recumb on faith.

Heb 11:8-12

Hebrews Chapter 11:8-12

8. By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went.

8. Fide Abraham, quum vocatus est, obedivit ut exiret in locum quem accepturus erat in haereditatem; et exivit nesciens quo veniret.

9. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise:

9. Fide peregrinatus est in terra promissa quasi aliena, in tabernaculis habitans cum Isaac et Jacob, cohaeredibus ejusdem promissionis:

10. For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.

10. Expectavit enim civitatem habentem fundamenta, cujus architectus et opifex est Deus.

11. Through faith also Sara herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised.

11. Fide et ipsa Sara facultatem ad conceptionem seminis accepit, et praeter tempus aetatis peperit, quia fidelem existimavit eum qui promiserat.

12. Therefore sprang there even of one, and him as good as dead, so many as the stars of the sky in multitude, and as the sand which is by the sea shore innumerable.

12. Propterea etiam ex uno geniti sunt, et quidem emortuo, multitudine tanquam astra coeli et quasi arena quae est juxta marginem maris innumerabilis.

8. By faith Abraham, etc. He comes now to Abraham, who is the chief father of God's church on earth, and in whose name the Jews gloried, as though by the distinction of being the holy race of Abraham alone, they were removed from the common order of men. But he now reminds them of what they ought to possess as the main thing, that they might be counted among his children. He therefore calls their attention to faith, for Abraham himself had no excellency which did not proceed from faith.

He first teaches us that faith was the cause why he immediately obeyed God when he was commanded to remove from his own country; and then that through the same faith it was that he went on without wavering, according to what he was called to do even to the end. By these two things, --- his promptness

in obeying, and his perseverance, was Abraham's faith most clearly proved.

When he was called, etc. The old Latin translator and Erasmus apply this to his name, which is extremely tame and frigid. On the contrary, I refer it to the oracle by which he was called from his own country. He indeed did in this way undergo a voluntary exile, while yet he did nothing but by God's command; and no doubt it is one of the chief things which belong to faith, not to move a step except God's word shows us the way, and as a lantern gives us light, according to what David says. (Psalm 119:105.) Let us then learn that it is a thing to be observed through life, that we are to undertake nothing to which God does not call us.

To go out into a place, [218] etc. To the command was added a promise, that God would give him a land for an inheritance. This promise he immediately embraced, and hastened as though he was sent to take possession of this land. It is a no ordinary trial of faith to give up what we have in hand, in order to seek what is afar off, and unknown to us. For when God commanded him to leave his own country, he did not point out the place where he intended him to live, but left him in suspense and perplexity of mind: ``go'', he said, ``into the place that I will show thee.'' (Genesis 12:1.) Why did he defer to point out the place, except that his faith might be more and more exercised? Besides, the love of his native land might not only have retarded the alacrity of Abraham, but also held him so bound to it, so as not to quit his home. His faith then was not of an ordinary kind, which thus broke through all hindrances and carried him where the Lord called him to go.

9. By faith he sojourned, etc. The second particular is, that having entered into the land, he was hardly received as a stranger and a sojourner. Where was the inheritance which he had expected? It might have indeed occurred instantly to his mind, that he had been deceived by God. Still greater was the disappointment, which the Apostle does not mention, when shortly after a famine drove him from the country, when he was compelled to flee to the land of Gerar; but the Apostle considered it enough to say, as a commendation to his faith, that he became a sojourner in the land of promise; for to be a sojourner seemed contrary to what had been promised. That Abraham then courageously sustained this trial was an instance of great fortitude; but it proceeded from faith alone.

With Isaac and Jacob, etc. He does not mean that they dwelt in the same tent, or lived at the same time; but he makes Abraham's son and grandson his companions, because they sojourned alike in the inheritance promised to them, and yet failed not in their faith, however long it was that God delayed the time;

[218] This is differently connected by Calvin, his version is “by faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed, so that he went forth,” etc. Bloomfield by supposing {ωστε} understood before {ἐξελθεῖν}, seems to be of the same opinion. Beza renders the verb by a gerund, ``abiendo,'' by departing. This construction is more agreeable to the location of the words; the other introduces an unnatural transposition. Besides, the idea is somewhat different. There are thus two things in the verse stated more directly, as evidences and proofs of faith, --- his departure from his own country, and his ignorance as to the country where he was going. His faith was such that he obeyed, so as to leave his own country, and also to go to a country, of which he knew nothing. --- Ed

for the longer the delay the greater was the trial; but by setting up the shield of faith they repelled all the assaults of doubt and unbelief. [219]

10. For he looked for, etc. He gives a reason why he ascribes their patience to faith, even because they looked forward to heaven. This was indeed to see things invisible. It was no doubt a great thing to cherish in their hearts the assurance given them by God respecting the possession of the land until it was after some ages realized; yet as they did not confine their thoughts, no, not to that land, but penetrated even into heaven, it was still a clearer evidence of their faith.

He calls heaven a city that has foundations, because of its perpetuity; for in the world there is nothing but what is transitory and fading. It may indeed appear strange that he makes God the Maker of heavens as though he did not also create the earth; to this I answer, that as in earthly buildings, the hands of men make use of materials, the workmanship of God is not unfitly set in opposition to them. Now, whatever is formed by men is like its authors in instability; so also is the perpetuity of the heavenly life, it corresponds with the nature of God its founder. [220] Moreover, the Apostle teaches us that all weariness is relieved by expectation, so that we ought never to be weary in following God.

11. Through faith also, Sarah herself, etc. That women may know that this truth belongs to them as well as to men, he adduces the example of Sarah; which he mentions in preference to that of others, because she was the mother of all the faithful.

But it may seem strange that her faith is commended, who was openly charged with unbelief; for she laughed at the word of the angel as though it were a fable; and it was not the laugh of wonder and admiration, for otherwise she would not have been so severely reproved by the angel. It must indeed be confessed, that her faith was blended with unbelief; [221] but as she cast aside her unbelief when reproved, her faith is acknowledged by God and com-

[219] The preposition {μετὰ} may often be rendered ``as well as.'' See Matthew 2:3; Luke 11:7, 1 Corinthians 16:11; ``dwelling in tents, as well as Isaac and Jacob, co-heirs to the same promise.'' It means not here the same time, says Grotius, but parity as to what is stated. --- Ed

[220] The words, "builder and maker," are rendered by Calvin, "master builder and maker." The terms seem reversed. The first word means the maker or worker; and the second, the master-builder or planner. Beza's version is, "the maker, (artifex) and the founder, (conditor)." The order is, according to what is very common in Scripture, the effect mentioned first, then the cause, of the maker first, then the contriver. The last word, no doubt used in the sense of a worker or maker, but also in the sense of an architect or planner; but the former word means a skillful worker or artificer, but not a master-builder. In order, therefore, to give a sistant meaning to each, the sentence is to be thus rendered, — "Whose maker and planner is God;" he not only made it, but also planned and contrived it. — Ed.

[221] "The same thing is affirmed of Abraham, Genesis 17:17. The truth is the first annunciation, that a child would spring from them, occasioned both in his and Sarah's mind a feeling of incongruity, of impossibility, that the course of nature should be so reversed. Subsequent consideration brought both to a full belief in the reality of the promised blessing." — Stuart. It is remarkable, that at the first announcement Abraham laughed, as Sarah did afterward; and not only so, but he also said, "O that Ishmael might live before thee!" evidently showing that he did not then believe the promise which had been made to him. In the following chapter, the 18th, the promise is repeated, when Sarah laughed. And in order to confirm them both, they were reminded of God's power, verse 14. Then faith overcame unbelief. — Ed.

mended. What then she rejected at first as being incredible, she afterwards as soon as she heard that it came from God, obediently received.

And hence we deduce a useful doctrine, --- that when our faith in some things wavers or halts, it ceases not to be approved of God, provided we indulge not the spirit of unbelief. The meaning then is, that the miracle which God performed when Isaac was born, was the fruit of the faith of Abraham, and of his wife, by which they laid hold on the power of God.

Because she judged him faithful, etc. These reasons, by which the power and character of faith are set forth, ought to be carefully noticed. Were any one only to hear that Sarah brought forth a child through faith, all that is meant would not be conveyed to him, but the explanation which the Apostle adds removes every obscurity; for he declares that Sarah's faith was this, --- that she counted God to be true to his word, that is, to what he had promised.

There are two clauses to this declaration; for we hence learn first, that there is no faith without God's word, for of his faithfulness we cannot be convinced, until he has spoken. And this of itself is abundantly sufficient to confute the fiction of the sophists respecting implicit faith; for we must ever hold that there is a mutual relation between God's word and our faith. But as faith is founded chiefly, according to what has been already said, on the benevolence or kindness of God, it is not every word, though coming from his mouth, that is sufficient; but a promise is necessary as an evidence of his favor. Hence Sarah is said to have counted God faithful who had promised. True faith then is that which hears God speaking and rests on his promise.

12. Therefore sprang there even of one, etc. He now also reminds the Jews, that it was by faith that they were the descendants of Abraham; for he was as it were half dead, [222] and Sarah his wife, who had been barren in the flower of her age, was now sterile, being far advanced in years. Sooner then might oil be expected to flow from a stone, than a nation to proceed from them: and yet there sprang from them an innumerable multitude. If now the Jews are proud of their origin, let them consider what it was. Whatever they are, everything is doubtless to be ascribed to the faith of Abraham and Sarah. It hence follows, that they cannot retain and defend the position they have acquired in any other way than by faith.

Heb 11:13-16

Hebrews Chapter 11:13-16

13. These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.

[222] Calvin renders {ταῦτα} adverbially ``quidem,'' ``and indeed dead;'' Doddridge ``in his repeat;'' Macknight, ``to these matters;'' Stuart ``as to these things.'' But the word is rendered in Luke 6:23, ``in the like manner;'' and this would be the best rendering here. Abraham was like Sarah, ``dead'' as to the power of begetting children, --- ``Therefore even from one, and him in a like manner dead, there sprang so many as the stars,'' etc. --- Ed

13. Secundum fidem mortui sunt isti omnes non acceptis promissionibus, sed quum procul eas vidissent et credidissent [223] et salutassent et confessi essent quod hospites et peregrini erant super terram.

14. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.

14. Sane qui haec dicunt ostendunt se patriam inquirere:

15. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned.

15. Et si quidem illius meminissent a qua exierant, habebant tempus revertendi:

16. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.

16. Nunc vero meliorem appetunt, id est, coelestem; quare non erubescit Deus vocari Deus ipsorum, paravit enim illus civitatem.

13. These all died in faith, etc. He enhances by a comparison the faith of the patriarchs: for when they had only tasted of the promises, as though fully satisfied with their sweetness, they despised all that was in the world; and they never forgot the taste of them, however small it was either in life or in death. [224]

At the same time the expression in faith, is differently explained. Some understand simply this that they died in faith, because in this life they never enjoyed the promised blessings, as at this day also salvation is hid from us, being hoped for. But I rather assent to those who think that there is expressed here a difference between us and the fathers; and I give this explanation, --- ``Though God gave to the fathers only a taste of that grace which is largely poured on us, though he showed to them at a distance only an obscure representation of Christ, who is now set forth to us clearly before our eyes, yet they were satisfied and never fell away from their faith: how much greater reason then have we at this day to persevere? If we grow faint, we are doubly inexcusable''. It is then an enhancing circumstance, that the fathers had a distant view of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, while we at this day have so near a view of it, and that they hailed the promises afar off, while we have them as it were quite near us; for if they nevertheless persevered even unto death, what sloth will it be to become wearied in faith, when the Lord sustains us by so many helps. Were any one to object and say, that they could not have believed without receiving the promises on which faith is necessarily founded: to this the answer is, that the expression is to be understood comparatively; for they were far from that high position to which God has raised us. Hence it is that though they had the same salvation promised them, yet they had not the promises so clearly revealed to them as they are to us under the kingdom of Christ; but they were content to

[223] Griesbach and most critics consider {καὶ} {πεισθέντες} as not genuine, and therefore exclude it from the text. --- Ed

[224] "These all" must be limited to Abraham, and those mentioned after him, for to them the promises had been made; and he speaks only of such. So Beza and Stuart. — Ed.

behold them afar off. [225]

And confessed that they were strangers, etc. This confession was made by Jacob, when he answered Pharaoh, that the time of his pilgrimage was short compared with that of his fathers, and full of many sorrows. (Genesis 47:9.) Since Jacob confessed himself a pilgrim in the land, which had been promised to him as a perpetual inheritance, it is quite evident that his mind was by no means fixed on this world, but that he raised it up above the heavens. Hence the Apostle concludes, that the fathers, by speaking thus, openly showed that they had a better country in heaven; for as they were pilgrims here, they had a country and an abiding habitation elsewhere.

But if they in spirit amid dark clouds, took a flight into the celestial country, what ought we to do at this day? For Christ stretches forth his hand to us, as it were openly, from heaven, to raise us up to himself. If the land of Canaan did not engross their attention, how much more weaned from things below ought we to be, who have no promised habitation in this world?

15. And truly if they had been mindful, etc. He anticipates an objection that might have been made, --- that they were strangers because they had left their own country. The apostle meets this objection, and says, that though they called themselves strangers, they yet did not think of Mesopotamia; for if they had a desire to return, they might have done so: but they had willingly banished themselves from it, nay, they had disowned it, as though it did not belong to them. By another country, then, they meant, that which is beyond this world. [226]

16. Wherefore God is not ashamed, etc. He refers to that passage, ``I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.'' (Exodus 3:6.) It is a singular honor when God makes men illustrious, by attaching his name to them; and designs thus to have himself distinguished from idols. This privilege, as the Apostle teaches us, depends also on faith; for when the holy fathers aspired to a celestial country, God on the other hand counted them as citizens. We are hence to conclude, that there is no place for us among God's children, except we renounce the world, and that there will be for us no inheritance in heaven, except we become pilgrims on earth; Moreover, the Apostle justly concludes from these words, --- ``I am the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob,'' that they were heirs of heaven, since he who thus speaks is not the God of the dead,

[225] Mention is made of “promises;” and then “heavenly country” is the only thing afterwards specified. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob had received many promises which were not fulfilled to them — a numerous seed, the land of Canaan, the Messiah, the resurrection (implied in the promise of being their God) and the heavenly country. There is no reason why all these should not form the “promises” which they saw afar and embraced, though the promise of the heavenly country is alone afterwards, expressly mentioned, it being as it were the completion of all the other promises, and suitably referred to after the acknowledgment they made of being strangers and sojourners on the earth. Their faith embraced all the promises, while it had a especial reference to the eternal inheritance, which though they entered into rest, as to their spirits, they have not yet attained, and which shall not be attained either by them, or by us, until Christ’s second coming, when we shall together be introduced into the heavenly country. See a Note on the 39th and 40th verses. — Ed.

[226] “But now they desire,” etc. The historical present is used here instead of the past tense — “But now they desired, etc.” So Beza, Grotius, and others. — Ed.

but of the living.

Heb 11:17-22

Hebrews Chapter 11:17-22

17. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son,

17. Fide Abraham obtulit Isaac quum tentatus est; ac unigenitum obtulit quum promissiones accepisset;

18. Of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called:

18. Ad quem dictum erat, In Isaac, vocabitur tibi semen:

19. Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.

19. Quum reputasset Deum etiam ex mortuis posse suscitare; unde eum quoque in similitudine recuperavit.

20. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

20. Fide Isaac de futuris benedixis Jacob et Esau.

21. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff.

21. Fide jacob moriens singulos filios Joseph benedixit, et adoravit ad summitatem virgae ejus.

22. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones.

22. Fide Joseph moriens de exitufiliorum Israel meminit, et de ossibus suis mandavit.

17. By faith Abraham, etc. He proceeds with the history of Abraham, and relates the offering up of his son; and it was a singular instance of firmness, so that there is hardly another like it to be found. Hence for the sake of enhancing it, he adds, when he was tempted, or tried. Abraham had indeed already proved what he was, by many trials; yet as this trial surpassed every other, so the Apostle would have it to be regarded above all his trials. It is then as though he had said, ``The highest excellency of Abraham was the sacrificing of his son:'' for God is said to have then in an especial manner tried him. And yet this act flowed from faith; then Abraham had nothing more excellent than faith, which brought forth such extraordinary fruit.

The word, tempted or tried, means no other thing than proved. What James says, that we are not tempted by God, is to be understood differently, (Jas. 1:13;) he means that God does not tempt us to do evil; for he testifies that this is really done by every man's own lust. At the same time he says not that God does not try our integrity and obedience, though God does not thus search us, as if he knew not otherwise what is hid in our hearts; nay, God wants no probation that he may know us; but when he brings us to the light, that we may by our works show what was before hid, he is said to try or prove us; and then that which is made openly manifest, is said to be made known to God. For it is a very usual

and frequent mode of speaking in Scripture, that what is peculiar to men is ascribed to God.

The sacrificing of Isaac is to be estimated according to the purpose of the heart: for it was not owing to Abraham that he did not actually perform what he was commanded to do. His resolution to obey was then the same, as though he had actually sacrificed his son.

And offered up his only-begotten Son, etc. By these various circumstances, the Apostle intended to show, how great and how severe the trial of Abraham was; and there are still other things related by Moses, which had the same tendency. Abraham was commanded to take his own son, his only begotten and beloved son Isaac, to lead to the place, which was afterwards to be shown to him, and there to sacrifice him with his own hands. These tender words God seems to have designedly accumulated, that he might pierce the inmost heart of the holy man, as with so many wounds; and then that he might more severely try him, he commanded him to go a threedays' journey. How sharp, must we think, was his anguish to have continually before his eyes his own son, whom he had already resolved to put to a bloody death! As they were coming to the place, Isaac pierced his breast with yet a new wound, by asking him, ``Where is the victim?'' The death of a son, under any circumstances, must have been very grievous, a bloody death would have still caused a greater sorrow; but when he was bidden to slay his own, --- that indeed must have been too dreadful for a father's heart to endure; and he must have been a thousand times disabled, had not faith raised up his heart above the world. It is not then without reason, that the apostle records that he was then tried.

It may, however, be asked, why is Isaac called the only begotten, for Ishmael was born before him and was still living. To this the answer is, that by God's express command he was driven from the family, so that he was accounted as one dead, at least, he held no place among Abraham's children.

And he that received the promises, etc. All the things we have hitherto related, however deeply they must have wounded the heart of Abraham, yet they were but slight wounds compared with this trial, when he was commanded, after having received the promises, to slay his son Isaac; for all the promises were founded on this declaration, ``In Isaac shall thy seed be called,'' (Genesis 21:12;) [227] for when this foundation was taken away, no hope of blessing or of grace remained. Here nothing earthly was the matter at issue, but the eternal salvation of Abraham, yea, of the whole world. Into what straits must the holy man have been brought when it came to his mind, that the hope of eternal life was to be extinguished in the person of his son? And yet by faith he emerged above all these thoughts, so as to execute what he was commanded. Since it was a marvelous fortitude to struggle through so many and so great

[227] The words literally are "In Isaac shall be called to thee a seed." But the Hebrew {{ב and the Greek }ἐν}, mean often by or through, or by the means of: and the Hebrew verb, to be called, as well as the Greek, may sometimes be rendered to be. Hence Macknight seems to have been right in his version of the clause, ``By Isaac a seed shall be thee;'' which is better than that of Stuart, ``After Isaac shall thy seed be named,'' for this is less literal, and the meaning is not conveyed. --- Ed

obstacles, justly is the highest praise awarded to faith, for it was by faith alone that Abraham continued invincibly.

But here arises no small difficulty, How is it that Abraham's faith is praised when it departs from the promise? For as obedience proceeds from faith, so faith from the promise; then when Abraham was without the promise, his faith must have necessarily fallen to the ground. But the death of Isaac, as it has been already said, must have been the death as it were of all the promises; for Isaac is not to be considered as a common man, but as one who had Christ included in him. This question, which would have been otherwise difficult to be solved, the Apostle explains by adding immediately, that Abraham ascribed this honor to God, that he was able to raise his son again from the dead. He then did not renounce the promise given to him, but extended its power and its truth beyond the life of his son; for he did not limit God's power to so narrow bounds as to tie it to Isaac when dead, or to extinguish it. Thus he retained the promise, because he bound not God's power to Isaac's life, but felt persuaded that it would be efficacious in his ashes when dead no less than in him while alive and breathing.

19. From whence also, etc. As though he said, ``Nor did hope disappoint Abraham, for it was a sort of resurrection, when his son was so suddenly delivered from the midst of death. The word figure, which is here used, is variously explained. I take it simply as meaning likeness; for though Isaac did not really rise from the dead, yet he seemed to have in a manner risen, when he was suddenly and wonderfully rescued through the unexpected favor of God. [228] However, I do not dislike what some say, who think that our flesh, which is subject to death, is set forth in the ram which was substituted for Isaac. I also allow that to be true which some have taught, that this sacrifice was a representation of Christ. But I have now to state what the Apostle meant, not what may in truth be said; and the real meaning here, as I think, is, that Abraham did not receive his Son otherwise than if he had been restored from death to new life.

20. By faith Isaac, etc. It was also the work of faith to bless as to future things; for when the thing itself does not exist and the word only appears, faith must necessarily bear rule. But first we must notice of what avail is the blessing of which he speaks. For to bless often means to pray for a blessing. But the blessing of Isaac was very different; for it was as it were an introduction

[228] The meaning given by Stuart and some others is very far fetched, though said to be natural, that "Abraham believed that God could raise Isaac from the dead, because he had, as it were, obtained him from the dead, i.e., he was born of those who were dead as to these things." Hence the rendering given is "comparatively." Abraham had, as to his purpose, sacrificed him, so that he considered him as dead; and he received him back from the dead, not really, but in a way bearing a likeness to such a miracle. This sense is alone compatible with the former clause, which mentions Abraham's faith in God's power to raise his son from the dead; he believed that God was able to do this; and then it is added that Abraham had received back his son as though he had sacrificed him, and as though God had raised him from the dead. What actually took place bore a likeness to the way which he had anticipated. Costallio gives the meaning, "it was the same as though he had sacrificed him, and received him also in a manner he received him." — Ed.

into the possession of the land, which God had promised to him and his posterity. And yet he had nothing in that land but the right of burial. Then strange seemed these high titles, ``Let people serve thee, and tribes bow down to thee,'' (Genesis 27:29;) for what dominion could he have given who himself was hardly a free man? We hence see that this blessing depended on faith; for Isaac had nothing which he could have bestowed on his children but the word of God.

It may, however, be doubted whether there was any faith in the blessing given to Esau, as he was a reprobate and rejected by God. The answer is easy, for faith mainly shone forth, when he distinguished between the two twins born to him, so that he gave the first place to the younger; for following the oracle of God, he took away from the firstborn the ordinary right of nature. And on this depended the condition of the whole nation, that Jacob was chosen by God, and that this choice was sanctioned by the blessing of the father.

21. By faith Jacob, etc. It was the Apostle's object to attribute to faith whatever was worthy of remembrance in the history of the people: as, however, it would have been tedious to recount everything, he selected a few things out of many, such at this. For the tribe of Ephraim was so superior to the rest, that they in a manner did lie down under its shade; for the Scripture often includes the ten tribes under this name. And yet Ephraim was the younger of the two sons of Joseph, and when Jacob blessed him and his brother, they were both young. What did Jacob observe in the younger, to prefer him to the first born? Nay, when he did so, his eyes were dim with age, so that he could not see. Nor did he lay his right hand by chance on the head of Ephraim, but he crossed his hands, so that he moved his right hand to the left side. Besides, he assigned to them two portions, as though he was now the Lord of that land, from which famine had driven him away. There was nothing here agreeable to reason; but faith ruled supreme. If, then, the Jews wish to be anything, they should glory in nothing else, but in faith.

And worshipped on the top, etc. This is one of those places from which we may conclude that the points were not formerly used by the Hebrews; for the Greek translators could not have made such a mistake as to put staff here for a bed, if the mode of writing was then the same as now. No doubt Moses spoke of the head of his couch, when he said {המטה} {ראש} {על{ but the Greek translators rendered the words, ``On the top of his staff'' as though the last word was written, mathaeh. The Apostle hesitated not to apply to his purpose what was commonly received: he was indeed writing to the Jews; but they who were dispersed into various countries, had changed their own language for the Greek. And we know that the Apostles were not so scrupulous in this respect, as not to accommodate themselves to the unlearned, who had as yet need of milk; and in this there is no danger, provided readers are ever brought back to the pure and original text of Scripture. But, in reality, the difference is but little; for the main thing was, that Jacob worshipped, which was an evidence of his gratitude. He was therefore led by faith to submit himself to his son. [229]

[229] Various have been the opinions on this clause. It is clear that the words here refer to a

22. By faith Joseph, etc. This is the last thing which Moses records respecting the patriarchs, and it deserves to be particularly noticed; for wealth, luxuries, and honors, made not the holy man to forget the promise, nor detained him in Egypt; and this was an evidence of no small faith. For whence had he so much greatness of mind, as to look down on whatever was elevated in the world, and to esteem as nothing whatever was precious in it, except that he had ascended up into heaven. In ordering his bones to be exported, he had no regard to himself, as though his grave in the land of Canaan would be sweeter or better than in Egypt; but his only object was to sharpen the desire of his own nation, that they might more earnestly aspire after redemption; he wished also to strengthen their faith, so that they might confidently hope that they would be at length delivered.

Heb 11:23-27

Hebrews Chapter 11:23-27

23. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child; and they were not afraid of the king's commandment.

23. Fide Moses, quum natus esset, occultatus est menses tres a parentibus suis, quia videbant elegantem puellum; et non timuerunt edictum regis.

24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter;

24. Fide Moses jam grandis renuit vocari filius filiae Pharaonis;

25. Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season;

25. Potius eligens malis affici cum populo Dei quam temporales habere peccati delicias;

26. Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.

26. Majores existimans divitias probrum Christi quam Aegypti thesauros; intuebatur enim in remunerationem.

27. By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

27. Fide reliquit Aegyptum, nec timuit furorem regis; quasi enim invisibilem

time different from that mentioned in Genesis 47:31. They are connected in Genesis with the oath which Joseph made to his father to bury him in Canaan; but here with the blessing of his sons recorded in the following chapter, 48:15, 16. These were two separate transactions, and the words only occur in the first; and it seems from the words of the Apostle, that the act and position of Jacob were also the same in the second instance. The points are of no authority; and the Apostle adopted the Septuagint version, and thus sanctioned it: and there is no reason to dispute that sanction. David is said to worship upon his bed, (1 Kings 1:47;) but the word for bed there is different. All the difficulty here vanishes, if we throw aside as we ought to do, the points. The word for worship in Hebrew means to prostrate one's self on the ground, the humblest mode of adoration; but it is used also to designate merely an act of worship. See 1 Samuel 1:3; 2 Kings 5:5, 18. The reason why Jacob is said to have worshipped unable to adopt the usual posture. — Ed.

vidisset, obduraverat.

23. By faith Moses, etc. There have been others, and those heathens, who from no fear of God, but only from a desire of propagating an offspring, preserved their own children at the peril of life; but the Apostle shows that the parents of Moses were inducted to save him for another reason, even for this, --- that as God had promised to them, under their oppression, that there would come some time a deliverer, they relied confidently on that promise, and preferred the safety of the infant to their own.

But he seems to say what is contrary to the character of faith, when he says that they were induced to do this by the beauty of the child; for we know that Jesse was reproved, when he brought his sons to Samuel as each excelled in personal appearance; and doubtless God would not have us to regard what is externally attractive. To this I answer, that the parents of Moses were not charmed with beauty, so as to be induced by pity to save him, as the case is commonly with men; but that there was some mark, as it were, of future excellency imprinted on the child, which gave promise of something extraordinary. There is, then, no doubt but that by his very appearance they were inspired with the hope of an approaching deliverance; for they considered that the child was destined for the performance of great things.

Moreover, it ought to have had a great weight with the Jews, to hear that Moses, the minister of their redemption, had been in an extraordinary manner rescued from death by means of faith. We must, however, remark, that the faith here praised was very weak; for after having disregarded the fear of death, they ought to have brought up Moses; instead of doing so, they exposed him. It is hence evident that their faith in a short time not only wavered, but wholly failed; at least they neglected their duty when they cast forth the infant on the bank of the river. But it behoves us to be more encouraged when we hear that their faith, though weak, was yet so approved by God as to secure that life to Moses, on which depended the deliverance of the Church.

24. By faith Moses, when he was come to years, etc. The example of Moses ought to have been remembered by the Jews, more than that of any other; for through him they were delivered from bondage, and the covenant of God was renewed, with them, and the constitution of the Church established by the publication of the Law. But if faith is to be considered as the main thing in Moses, it would be very strange and unreasonable that he should draw them away to anything else. It hence follows that all they make a poor proficiency in the Law who are not guided by it to faith.

Let us now see what the things are for which he commends the faith of Moses. The first excellency he mentions is, that when grown up, he disregarded the adoption of Pharaoh's daughter. He refers to his age, for had he done this when a boy, it might have been imputed to his levity, or his ignorance; for as understanding and reason are not strong in children, they heedlessly rush headlong into any course of life; young people also are often carried here and there by unreflecting ardor. That we may then know that nothing was done

thoughtlessly, and without a long deliberation, the Apostle says, that he was of mature age, which is also evident from history. [230]

But he is said to have disregarded his adoption; for when he visited his brethren, when he tried to relieve them, when he avenged their wrongs, he fully proved that he preferred to return to his own nation, rather than to remain in the king's court: it was then the same as a voluntary rejection of it. This the Apostle ascribes to faith; for it would have been much better for him to remain in Egypt, had he not been persuaded of the blessing promised to the race of Abraham; and of this blessing, the only witness was God's promise; for he could see nothing of the kind with his eyes. It hence appears, that he beheld by faith what was far removed from his sight.

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches, etc. This clause ought to be carefully noticed; for we here learn that we ought to shun as a deadly poison whatever cannot be enjoyed without offending God; for the pleasures of sin he calls all the allurements of the world which draw us away from God and our calling. But the comforts of our earthly life, which we are allowed by pure conscience, and God's permission to enjoy, are not included here. Let us then ever remember that we ought to know and understand what God allows us. There are indeed some things in themselves lawful, but the use of which is prohibited to us, owing to circumstances as to time, place, or other things. Hence as to all the blessings connected with the present life, what is ever to be regarded is, that they should be to us helps and aids to follow God and not hindrances. And he calls these pleasures of sin temporary or for a time, because they soon vanish away together with life itself. [231]

In opposition to these he sets the reproach of Christ, which all the godly ought willingly to undergo. For those whom God has chosen, he has also foreordained to be conformed to the image of his own son; not that he exercises them all by the same kind of reproaches or by the same cross, but that they are all to be so minded as not to decline to undertake the cross in common with Christ. Let every one then bear in mind, that as he is called to this fellowship he is to throw off all hindrances. Nor must we omit to say, that he reckons among the reproaches of Christ all the ignominious trials which the faithful have had to endure from the beginning of the world; for as they were the member of the same body, so they had nothing different from what we have. As all sorrows are indeed the rewards of sin, so they are also the fruits of the curse pronounced

[230] Literally it is “when he became great,” that is, in age or in years: he was, as it appears from Acts 7:23, about forty years of age. The word “great,” both in Hebrew and Greek, has sometimes this meaning. “When arrived at mature age,” by Stuart, is better than “when he was grown up,” by Doddridge and Macknight. It is said that he refused, that is by his conduct. He acted in such a way as to show that he rejected the honor of being adopted son of Pharoah’s daughter. The verb means to deny, to renounce, to disown. He renounced the privilege offered to him. Others are said to “deny the power” of godliness, that is by their works. 2 Timothy 3:5. — Ed.

[231] This clause is rendered by Doddridge, “than to enjoy the temporary pleasures of sin:” by Macknight, “than to have the temporary fruition of sin,” which is literal rendering; so Beza. Schleusner thinks the “sin” to have been that of idolatry: but the words seem rather to refer to the sin of indulgence in vain and demoralizing pursuits, too commonly prevalent in royal courts.— Ed

on the first man: but whatever wrongs we endure from the ungodly on account of Christ, these he regards as his own. [232] Hence Paul gloried that he made up what was wanting as to the sufferings of Christ. Were we rightly to consider this, it would not be so grievous and bitter for us to suffer for Christ.

He also explains more fully what he means in this clause by the reproach of Christ, by what he has previously declared when he said, that Moses chose to suffer affliction with the people of God. He could not have otherwise avowed himself as one of God's people, except he had made himself a companion to his own nation in their miseries. Since, then, this is the end, let us not separate ourselves from the body of the Church: whatever we suffer, let us know that it is consecrated on account of the head. So on the other hand he calls those things the treasures of Egypt, which no one can otherwise possess than by renouncing and forsaking the Church.

For he had respect unto the recompense of the reward, or for he looked to the remuneration. [233] He proves by the description he gives, that the magnanimity of Moses' mind was owing to faith; for he had his eyes fixed on the promise of God. For he could not have hoped that it would be better for him to be with the people of Israel than with the Egyptians, had he not trusted in the promise and in nothing else.

But if any one hence concludes, that his faith did not recumb on God's mercy alone, because he had respect to the reward; to this I answer, that the question here is not respecting righteousness or the cause of salvation, but that the Apostle generally includes what belongs to faith. Then faith, as to righteousness before God, does not look on reward, but on the gratuitous goodness of God, not on our works but on Christ alone; but faith, apart from justification, since it extends generally to every word of God, has respect to the reward that is promised; yea, by faith we embrace whatever God promises: but he promises reward to works; then faith lays hold on this. But all this has no place in free

[232] The "The reproach of Christ" is differently understood: — The reproach of the anointed, that is the people of Israel, called God's anointed, Psalm 105:15; Hebrews 3:13. — Grotius. The reproach like that of Christ: as Christ, though rich, became poor to redeem mankind, so Moses despised the treasures of Egypt, for the purpose of delivering Israel from bondage. A similar construction is found in 2 Corinthians 1:5. "The sufferings of Christ," that is, like those of Christ. — Stuart. The reproach for Christ, that is, for avowing his expectation of him in common with the distressed people. Macknight, Scott, Bloomfield. For this opinion there is not a particle of evidence from the account we have in Exodus. The Egyptians knew nothing of the redeemer; they therefore could not have reproached the Israelites on his account. The reproach of Christ's people, the word Christ being sometimes taken for his Church, 1 Corinthians 12:12; and this seems to be the view of Calvin. The second view is the most satisfactory, and is confirmed by chapter 13:13, "bearing his reproach," that is, a reproach like his. — Ed.

[233] The words are very striking, "For he looked away," that is, from difficulties or present trials, "unto the retribution," the rendering of the recompose. What was the retribution? It was what corresponded with what he did by faith: he engaged by faith in the work of delivering his brethren from bondage. His retribution in this work was, no doubt, then undertaking for his own nation. What his faith in God's promise enabled him to look to, was the deliverance of his people, which was to be his retribution. In this respect he acted, though in a business infinitely inferior, on the same principle with the Savior, "who for the joy (of redeeming mankind) that was set before him, endured the cross," etc. Chapter 12:2 — Ed.

justification, for no reward for works can be hoped for, except the imputation of gratuitous justification goes before

27. By faith he forsook Egypt, etc. This may be said of his first as well as of his second departure, that is, when he brought out the people with him. He then indeed left Egypt when he fled from the house of Pharaoh. Add to this, that his going out is recorded by the Apostle before he mentions the celebration of the Passover. He seems then to speak of the flight of Moses; nor is what he adds, that he feared not the wrath of the king, any objection to this, though Moses himself relates that he was constrained to do so by fear. For if we look at the beginning of his course he did not fear, that is, when he avowed himself to be the avenger of his people. However, when I consider all the circumstances, I am inclined to regard this as his second departure; for it was then that he bravely disregarded the fierce wrath of the king, being armed with such power by God's Spirit, that he often of his own accord defied the fury of that wild beast. It was doubtless an instance of the wonderful strength of faith, that he brought out a multitude untrained for war and burdened with many incumbrances, and yet hoped that a way would be opened to him by God's hand through innumerable difficulties. He saw a most powerful king in a furious rage, and he knew that he would not cease till he had tried his utmost. But as he knew that God had commanded him to depart, he committed the event to him, nor did he doubt but that he would in due time restrain all the assaults of the Egyptians.

As seeing him who is invisible. Nay, but he had seen God in the midst of the burning bush: this then seems to have been said improperly, and not very suitable to the present subject. I indeed allow, that Moses was strengthened in his faith by that vision, before he took in hand the glorious work of delivering the people; but I do not admit that it was such a view of God, as divested him of his bodily senses, and transferred him beyond the trials of this world. God at that time only showed him a certain symbol of his presence; but he was far from seeing God as he is. Now, the Apostle means, that Moses so endured, as though he was taken up to heaven, and had God only before his eyes; and as though he had nothing to do with men, was not exposed to the perils of this world and had no contests with Pharaoh. And yet, it is certain, that he was surrounded with so many difficulties, that he could not but think sometimes that God was far away from him, or at least, that the obstinacy of the king, furnished as it was with so many means of resistance, would at length overcome him.

In short, God appeared to Moses in such a way, as still to leave room for faith; and Moses, when beset by terrors on every side, turned all his thoughts to God. He was indeed assisted to do this, by the vision which we have mentioned; but yet he saw more in God than what that symbol intimated: for he understood his power, and that absorbed all his fears and dangers. Relying on God's promise, he felt assured that the people, though then oppressed by the tyranny of the Egyptians, were already, as it were, the lords of the promised land. [234]

[234] It is said that he “endured,” rather persevered; for the reference is not to sufferings, but to trials and difficulties: he was made strong by faith in an invisible God to resist

We hence learn, that the true character of faith is to set God always before our eyes; secondly, that faith beholds higher and more hidden things in God than what our senses can perceive; and thirdly, that a view of God alone is sufficient to strengthen our weakness, so that we may become firmer than rocks to withstand all the assaults of Satan. It hence follows, that the weaker and the less resolute any one is, the less faith he has.

Heb 11:28-31

Hebrews Chapter 11:28-31

28. Through faith he kept the Passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the firstborn should touch them.

28. Fide fecit pascha et aspersionem sanguinis, ut qui perdebat primogenita non tangeret eos.

29. By faith they passed through the Red sea as by dry land: which the Egyptians assaying to do were drowned.

29. Fide transierunt mare rubrum quasi per terram siccam; quod quum tentassent Egyptii adsorpti sunt.

30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, after they were compassed about seven days.

30. Fide conciderunt moenia Jericho, circumdata per septem dies.

31. By faith the harlot Rahab perished not with them that believed not, when she had received the spies with peace.

31. Fide Rehab meretrix non periit cum incredulis, quum excepisset exploratores cum pace.

28. Through faith he kept the Passover, etc. This ought to have availed much to commend faith to the Jews; for they held this first sacrifice of the Passover in the highest esteem. But, he says, that it was kept by faith, not because the Paschal lamb was a type of Christ, but because its benefit did not appear, when he sprinkled the doorposts with blood: when therefore the effect was yet hid, it was necessarily looked for by faith. Nay, it might have seemed strange, that Moses should set a few drops of blood, as a remedy, in opposition to God's vengeance; but being satisfied with God's word alone, that the people would be exempt from the scourge that was coming on the Egyptians, he did not hesitate. Hence the Apostle justly commends his faith in this respect.

They who explain that the Passover was by faith celebrated by Moses, because he had respect to Christ, say indeed what is true; but the Apostle here records simply his faith, because he acquiesced in God's word alone, when the effect did not appear: therefore out of place here are philosophical refinements. And the reason why he mentions Moses alone, as celebrating the Passover, seems to be this, that God through him instituted the Passover. [235]

and surmount them all. “He was strengthened,” Doddridge; “he courageously persevered,” Macknight; “he continued steadfast,” Stuart. The word is only found here. — Ed.

[235] Some render the words, “by faith he instituted the Passover.” The verb is properly to make, but like {{עשה in Hebrew, it is used in a variety of senses. Doddridge has ``celebrated;'' Macknight,

29. By faith they passed, etc. It is certain, that many in that multitude were unbelieving; but the Lord granted to the faith of a few, that the whole multitude should pass through the Red Sea dryshod. But in doing the same thing, there was a great difference between the Israelites and the Egyptians; while the former passed through safely, the latter coming after them were drowned. Whence was this difference, but that the Israelites had the word of God, and that the Egyptians were without it. The argument then derives its force from what happened to the contrary; hence, he says, that the Egyptians were drowned. That disastrous event was the punishment of their temerity, as on the other hand, the Israelites were preserved safe, because they relied on God's word, and refused not to march through the midst of the waters.

30. By faith the walls of Jericho fell, etc. As he had before taught us, that the yoke of bondage was by faith broken asunder, so now he tells us, that by the same faith the people gained the possession of the promised land. For at their first entrance the city Jericho stood in their way; it being fortified and almost impregnable, it impeded any farther progress, and they had no means to assail it. The Lord commanded all the menofwar to go round it once every day, and on the seventh day seven times. It appeared to be a work childish and ridiculous; and yet they obeyed the divine command; nor did they do so in vain, for success according to the promise followed. It is evident, that the walls did not fall through the shout of men, or the sound of trumpets; but because the people believed that the Lord would do what he had promised.

We may also apply this event to our benefit and instruction: for it is not otherwise, than by faith, that we can be freed from the tyranny of the Devil, and be brought to liberty; and by the same faith, it is that we can put to flight our enemies, and that all the strongholds of hell can be demolished.

31. By faith the harlot Rahab, etc. Though at the first view, this example may seem, on account of the meanness of the person, hardly entitled to notice, and even unworthy of being recorded, yet it was not unsuitably, nor without reason, adduced by the Apostle. He has hitherto shown that the Patriarchs, whom the Jews most honored and venerated, did nothing worthy of praise except through faith; and that all the benefits conferred on us by God, even the most remarkable, have been the fruits of the same faith: but he now teaches us, that an alien woman, not only of a humble condition among her own people, but also a harlot, had been adopted into the body of the Church through faith.

It hence follows, that those who are most exalted, are of no account before God, unless they have faith; and that, on the other hand, those who are hardly allowed a place among the profane and the reprobate, are by faith introduced into the company of angels.

Moreover, James also bears testimony to the faith of Rahab, (James 2:25,)

``appointed;'' and Stuart, ``observed.'' To make the Passover is, no doubt, to keep or observe it; for such is the meaning of the phrase, as it appears from Numbers :9 ,10 .11 The word }πάσχα} is doubtless a Syriac term, and derived originally from the Hebrew {{פסח which means to pass over; though several of the Greek fathers derived it from }πάσχειν}, to suffer. It sometimes means the paschal feast, Luke 22:11, and sometimes the paschal Lamb, Mark 14:12; 1 Corinthians 5:7 --- Ed

and it may be easily concluded from sacred history, that she was endued with true faith; for she professed her full persuasion of what God had promised to the Israelites; and of those whom fear kept from entering the land, she asked pardon for herself and her friends, as though they were already conquerors; and in all this, she did not consider men, but God himself. The evidence of her faith was, that she received the spies at the peril of her life: then, by means of faith, she escaped safe from the ruin of her own city. She is mentioned as a harlot, in order to amplify the grace of God.

Some, indeed, render {זונה} a hostess, as though she kept a public house, or an inn; but as the word means a harlot everywhere in Scripture, there is no reason why we should explain it otherwise in this place. The Rabbis, thinking it strange and disgraceful to their nation, were it said, that the spies entered into the house of a harlot; have invented this forced meaning. [236] But such a fear was groundless; for in the history of Joshua, this word, harlot, is expressly added, in order that we may know that the spies came into the city Jericho clandestinely, and concealed themselves in a harlot's house. At the same time this must be understood of her past life; for faith is an evidence of repentance.

Heb 11:32-34

Hebrews Chapter 11:32-34

32. And what shall I more say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gedeon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthae; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets:

32. Et quid amplius dicam? deficiet enim me tempus narrantem de Gedeon, Barac, et Samson, et Jephta, et David, et Samuel, et Prophetis;

33. Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions,

33. Qui per fidem expugnaverunt regna operati sunt justitiam, adepti sunt promissiones, obturarunt ora leonum.

34. Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

34. Extinxerunt vim ignis, effugenunt aciem gladii, robusti facti sunt ex infirmatate, fortes redditi sunt in praelio, profligarunt exercitus alienorum.

32. And what shall I say more? etc. As it was to be feared, that by referring to a few examples, he should appear to confine the praises of faith to a few men; he anticipates this, and says, that there would be no end if he was to dwell on every instance; for what he had said of a few extended to the whole Church of God.

He first refers to the time that intervened between Joshua and David, when

[236] And it has been adopted by many of the German divines, who seem in many instances to follow any vagary, Rabbinical or heathen, rather than the word of God. There is nothing in Scripture that countenances this notion. The word is never used in the sense of a hostess: and the ancient versions ever render the Hebrew word by {πόρνη}, a harlot. --- Ed

the Lord raised up judges to govern the people; and such were the four he now mentions, Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah.

It seemed indeed strange in Gideon, with three hundred men to attack an immense host of enemies, and to shake pitchers appeared like a sham alarm. Barak was far inferior to his enemies, and was guided only by the counsel of a woman. Samson was a mere countryman, and had never used any other arms than the implements of husbandry: what could he do against such proved conquerors, by whose power the whole people had been subdued? Who would not at first have condemned the rashness of Jephthah, who avowed himself the avenger of a people already past hope? But as they all followed the guidance of God, and being animated by his promise, undertook what was commanded them, they have been honored with the testimony of the Holy Spirit. [237]

Then the Apostle ascribes all that was praiseworthy in them to faith; though there was not one of them whose faith did not halt. Gideon was slower to take up arms than what he ought to have been; nor did he venture without some hesitation to commit himself to God. Barak at first trembled, so that he was almost forced by the reproofs of Deborah. Samson being overcome by the blandishments of a concubine, inconsiderately betrayed the safety of the whole people. Jephthah, hasty in making a foolish vow, and too obstinate in performing it, marred the finest victory by the cruel death of his own daughter. Thus, in all the saints, something reprehensible is ever to be found; yet faith, though halting and imperfect, is still approved by God. There is, therefore, no reason why the faults we labor under should break us down, or dishearten us, provided we by faith go on in the race of our calling.

Of David, etc. Under David's name he includes all the pious kings, and to them he adds Samuel and the Prophets. He therefore means in short to teach us, that the kingdom of Judah was founded in faith; and that it stood to the last by faith. The many victories of David, which he had gained over his enemies, were commonly known. Known also, was the uprightness of Samuel, and his consummate wisdom in governing the people. Known too were the great favors conferred by God on prophets and kings. The Apostle declares that there are none of these things which ought not to be ascribed to faith.

But it is to some only of these innumerable benefits of God that he refers, in order that the Jews might from them draw a general conclusion, --- that as the Church has always been preserved by God's hand through faith, so at this day there is no other way by which we may know his kindness towards us.

It was by faith that David so many times returned home as a conqueror; that Hezekiah recovered from his sickness; that Daniel came forth safe and untouched from the lions' den, and that his friends walked in a burning furnace as

[237] The history of Gideon we have in Judges 6:11, to the end of the 8th chapter: of Barak, in Judges 4:6, to the end of the 5th: of Samson, in Judges 13:24, to the end of the 16th: and of Jephthah, in Judges 11:1, to the end of the 12th chapter. Thus we see that the order of time in which they lived is not here observed, it being not necessary for the object of the Apostle. Barak was before Gideon, Jephthah before Samson, and Samuel before David. — Ed.

cheerfully as on a pleasant meadow. Since all these things were done by faith, we must feel convinced, that in no other way than by faith is God's goodness and bounty to be communicated to us. And that clause ought especially to be noticed by us, where it is said that they obtained the promises by faith; [238] for though God continues faithful, were we all unbelieving, yet our unbelief makes the promises void, that is, ineffectual to us.

34. Out of weakness were made strong, etc. Chrysostom refers this to the restoration of the Jews from exile, in which they were like men without hope; I do not disapprove of its applications to Hezekiah. We might at the same time extend it wider, that the Lord, by his hand, raised on high his saints, whenever they were cast down; and brought help to their weakness, so as to endue them with full strength.

Heb 11:35-40

Hebrews Chapter 11:35-40

35. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection:

35. Receperunt mulieres resurrectione mortuos suos; alii vero distenti fuerunt, non amplexi redemptionem, ut meliorem resurrectionem obtinerant;

36. And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment:

36. Alii autem lubidbria et flagella experti sunt, praeterea vincula et carceres;

37. They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented;

37. Lapidata sunt, dissecti sunt, tentati sunt, occisione gladii mortui sunt, oberrarunt in pellibus ovillis, in tergoribus caprinis, destituti, afflicti, malis affecti;

38. (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

38. Quibus mundus non erat dignus; in desertis errantes, in montibus et speluncis et cavernis terrae.

39. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise:

39. Et hi omnes testimonium consequuti per fidem, non consequuti sunt promissionem:

40. God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

[238] The previous sentence, “wrought righteousness,” is differently understood. Some refer it to a righteous and upright course of life, and others to the conduct of rulers and judges. The latter is the most suitable meaning here; and the words may be rendered “executed justice.” Samuel was an example of this. To “obtain promises” is to receive the things promised. — Ed.

40. Deo quiddam pro nobis providente, ne sine nobis perficerentur.

35. Women received, etc. He had already mentioned instances in which God had remunerated the faith of his servants, he now refers to examples of a different kind, --- that saints, reduced to extreme miseries, struggled by faith so as to persevere invincible even to death. These instances at the first view widely differ: some triumphed gloriously over vanquished enemies, were preserved by the Lord through various miracles, and were rescued by means new and unusual from the midst of death; while others were shamefully treated, were despised by almost the whole world, were consumed by want, were so hated by all as to be compelled to hide themselves in the coverts of wild beasts, and lastly, were drawn forth to endure savage and cruel tortures: and these last seemed wholly destitute of God's aid, when he thus exposed them to the pride and the cruelty of the ungodly. They seem then to have been very differently treated from the former ones; and yet faith ruled in both, and was alike powerful in both; nay, in the latter its power shone forth in a much clearer light. For the victory of faith appears more splendid in the contempt of death than if life were extended to the fifth generation. It is a more glorious evidence of faith, and worthy of higher praise, when reproaches, want, and extreme troubles are borne with resignation and firmness, than when recovery from sickness is miraculously obtained, or any other benefit from God.

The sum of the whole is, that the fortitude of the saints, which has shone forth in all ages, was the work of faith; for our weakness is such that we are not capable of overcoming evils, except faith sustains us. But we hence learn, that all who really trust in God are endued with power sufficient to resist Satan in whatever way he may assail them, and especially that patience in enduring evils shall never be wanting to us, if faith be possessed; and that, therefore, we are proved guilty of unbelief when we faint under persecutions and the cross. For the nature of faith is the same now as in the days of the holy fathers whom the Apostle mentions. If, then, we imitate their faith, we shall never basely break down through sloth or listlessness.

Others were tortured, etc. As to this verb, {ἐτυμπανίσθησαν}, I have followed Erasmus, though others render it ``imprisoned.'' But the simple meaning is, as I think, that they were stretched on a rack, as the skin of a drum, which is distended. [239] By saying that they were tempted, he seems to have spoken what was superfluous; and I doubt not but that the likeness of the words, {ἐπρίσθησαν} and {ἐπειρὰσθησαν}, was the reason that the word was added by some unskillful transcriber, and thus crept into the text, as also Erasmus has conjectured. [240] By sheepskins and goatskins I do not think that tents made of

[239] The {τύμπανον} was, according to Schleusner, a machine on which the body was stretched; and then cudgels or rods, and whips were used. This appears from the account given in 2 Macc. 6: 19, 30. It is said that Eleasar, rather than transgress the Law, went of his own accord ``to the torment'' --- {ἐπὶ} {τὸ} {τύμπανον}, and in the 30th verse mention is made of stripes or strokes --- {πληγαῖς}, and of being lashed or whipped --- {μαστιγούμενος}. This was to be tympanized or tortured. --- Ed

[240] This conjecture not countenanced by any MSS. that are considered to have much weight. What has led to this conjecture has evidently been a misunderstanding as to the import of the word in this connection. Being a word of general import, it has been viewed as inappropriate

skins are meant, but the mean and rough clothing of the saints which they put on when wandering in deserts.

Now though they say that Jeremiah was stoned, that Isaiah was sawn asunder, and though sacred history relates that Elijah, Elisha, and other Prophets, wandered on mountains and in caves; yet I doubt not but he here points out those persecutions which Antiochus carried on against God's people, and those which afterwards followed.

Not accepting deliverance, etc. Most fitly does he speak here; for they must have purchased a short lease of life by denying God; but this would have been a price extremely shameful. That they might then live forever in heaven, they rejected a life on earth, which would have cost them, as we have said, so much as the denial of God, and also the repudiation of their own calling. But we hear what Christ says, that if we seek to save our lives in this world, we shall lose them for ever. If, therefore, the real love of a future resurrection dwells in our hearts, it will easily lead us to the contempt of death. And doubtless we ought to live only so as to live to God: as soon as we are not permitted to live to God, we ought willingly and not reluctantly to meet death. Moreover, by this verse the Apostle confirms what he had said, that the saints overcome all sufferings by faith; for except their minds had been sustained by the hope of a blessed resurrection, they must have immediately failed. [241]

We may hence also derive a needful encouragement, by which we may fortify ourselves in adversities. For we ought not to refuse the Lord's favor of being connected with so many holy men, whom we know to have been exercised and tried by many sufferings. Here indeed are recorded, not the sufferings of a few individuals, but the common persecutions of the Church, and those not for one or two years, but such as continued sometimes from grandfathers even to their grandchildren. No wonder, then, if it should please God to prove our faith at this day by similar trials; nor ought we to think that we are forsaken by him, who, we know, cared for the holy fathers who suffered the same before us. [242]

here among words of specified meaning: it refers to the temptation or trial to which those who were condemned for their religion were commonly exposed — the offer of life and of favors and recantation: that seems to have been the special temptation here intended. — Ed.

[241] The verse concludes with these words “that they might obtain a better resurrection,” — better than what? Better than the resurrection referred to at the beginning of the verse, when it is said that “women received their dead raised to life again;” or better than the life promised by persecutors to those doomed to die, in case they renounced their religion. The former is the view taken by Scott and Stuart, and the latter by Doddridge: but as deliverance and no deliverance are facts in contrast, the first is the most obvious meaning.—Ed.

[242] The conclusion of the 37th verse is, “being destitute, afflicted, tormented:” this is said of those who “wandered about in sheep skins and goat skins.” They were destitute, they had been oppressed or persecuted and unjustly dealt with. Wrong treatment and oppression or persecution drove them from there homes and destitution followed. This is the way in which things are often stated in Scripture; the effect or the present state first, and then the cause or what led to it. The words are rendered “destitute, afflicted, maltreated,” by Macknight, — and “suffering want, afflicted, injuriously treated,” by Stuart. The second word often means oppression or persecution. The third word is found only here and chapter 13:2 where it is rendered “suffer adversity.” It is found in the Sept., in 1 Kings 2:26, twice and 11:39. It is used by Aqula in Exodus 22:22, and in Job 37:23. Its meaning properly is, to be ill or wrongfully treated. — Ed.

38. Of whom the world was not worthy, etc. As the holy Prophets wandered as fugitives among wild beasts, they might have seemed unworthy of being sustained on the earth; for how was it that they could find no place among men? But the Apostle inverts this sentiment, and says that the world was not worthy of them; for wherever God's servants come, they bring with them his blessing like the fragrance of a sweet odor. Thus the house of Potiphar was blessed for Joseph's sake, (Genesis 39:5;) and Sodom would have been spared had ten righteous men been found in it. (Genesis 18:32.) Though then the world may cast out God's servants as offscourings, it is yet to be regarded as one of its judgments that it cannot bear them; for there is ever accompanying them some blessing from God. Whenever the righteous are taken away from us, let us know that such events are presages of evil to us; for we are unworthy of having them with us, lest they should perish together with us.

At the same time the godly have abundant reasons for consolation, though the world may cast them out as offscourings; for they see that the same thing happened to the prophets, who found more clemency in wild animals than in men. It was with this thought that Hilary comforted himself when he saw the church taken possession of by sanguinary tyrants, who then employed the Roman emperor as their executioner; yea, that holy man then called to mind what the Apostle here says of the Prophets; --- ``Mountains and forests,'' he said, ``and dungeons and prisons, are safer for me than splendid temples; for the Prophets, while abiding or buried in these, still prophesied by the Spirit of God.'' So also ought we to be animated so as boldly to despise the world; and were it to cast us out, let us know that we go forth from a fatal gulf, and that God thus provides for our safety, so that we may not sink in the same destruction.

39. And these all, etc. This is an argument from the less to the greater; for if they on whom the light of grace had not as yet so brightly shone displayed so great a constancy in enduring evils, what ought the full brightness of the Gospel to produce in us? A small spark of light led them to heaven; when the sun of righteousness shines over us, with what pretense can we excuse ourselves if we still cleave to the earth? This is the real meaning of the Apostle. [243]

[243]This is materially the view taken by Beza, Doddridge, Scott and Stuart. The “promise” is deemed to be especially that of Christ. The ancients heard of him, believed in his coming, but did not witness it. The “some better thing” is considered to be the same with the promise, or to be the Gospel as revealed, or in the words of Stuart, “the actual fulfillment of the promise respecting the Messiah.” Still there is something unsatisfactory in this view as to “the promise,” as Stuart seems to intimate. There are two verses, chapter 10:36, and 9:15, which seem to throw light on this subject: by the first we find that “the promise” is future to us as well as to the ancient saints; and by the second, that “the better thing” is the atoning death of Christ, which was to the ancient saints an unfulfilled event, but to us fulfilled and clearly revealed, and yet its benefits extended to them as well as to us. The “promise” throughout this Epistle is that of “the eternal inheritance” and “the promises” in verse 13 include this and others, and especially “the better things,” that is the Gospel, or fulfillment of what was necessary to attain the inheritance, even the death and resurrection of Christ; or we may say that it is “the better hope,” (chapter 7:19) or the “better covenant, which was established on better promises,” (chapter 8:6.) The verses may be thus rendered — “And all these, having obtained a good report through faith, have not received the promise: 40. God having foreordained as to us something more excellent, so that they without us might not be perfected;” that is, in body as well as in soul. The sentiment seems to be this, — “the ancient

I know that Chrysostom and others have given a different explanation, but the context clearly shows, that what is intended here is the difference in the grace which God bestowed on the faithful under the Law, and that which he bestows on us now. For since a more abundant grace is poured on us, it would be very strange that we should have less faith in us. He then says that those fathers who were endued with so remarkable a faith, had not yet so strong reasons for believing as we have. Immediately after he states the reason, because God intended to unite us all into one body, and that he distributed a small portion of grace to them, that he might defer its full perfection to our time, even to the coming of Christ.

And it is a singular evidence of God's benevolence towards us, that though he has shown himself bountifully to his children from the beginning of the world, he yet has so distributed his grace as to provide for the wellbeing of the whole body. What more could any of us desire, than that in all the blessings which God bestowed on Abraham, Moses, David, and all the Patriarchs, on the Prophets and godly kings, he should have a regard for us, so that we might be united together with them in the body of Christ? Let us then know that we are doubly and treble ungrateful to God, if less faith appears in us under the kingdom of Christ than the fathers had under the Law, as proved by so many remarkable examples of patience. By the words, that they received not the promise, is to be understood its ultimate fulfillment, which took place in Christ, on which subject something has been said already.

saints believed God's promise, respecting an eternal inheritance after the resurrection: they died in hope of this, they have not yet obtained it, and for this reason, because God had designed to fulfill to us what he had also promised to them, even the coming of a Redeemer; it is necessary that this more excellent thing than what had in this world been vouchsafed to them, should take place, as on it depended everything connected with the promise of the 'heavenly city:' so that without the more excellent thing fulfilled to us, their perfect state, in body as well as in soul, was not to be attained." Their souls are perfect, for we as Christians are said to have come "to the spirits of just men made perfect," (chapter 12:23;) they who die in the Lord are said to "rest from their labors," and are pronounced blessed or happy. (Rev. 14:13.) But they are not in possession of the inheritance promised them, neither the ancients nor those who now die in the Lord.The promise as to both will not be fulfilled until the glorious day of the resurrection. Then all the saints, whether before or after the coming of Christ, will at the same time, with pure and immortal bodies, united to pure spirits, be together introduced into their eternal inheritance which he promised to Abraham and his seed, when he said that he would be their God. Christ referred to that declaration as an evidence of the resurrection. (Luke 20:37.) Then the Patriarchs believed that there would be a resurrection. — Ed.

Chapter 12

CHAPTER 12

Heb 12:1-3

Hebrews Chapter 12:1-3

1. Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us,

1. Proinde nos quoque quum tanta circumdati simus nube testium, deposito omni onere et peccato quod nos circumstat, per patientiam curramus proposito nobis certamine;

2. Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.

2. Intuentes in principem et perfectorem fidei Iesum, qui pro guidio sibi proposito, pertulit crucem, ignominia contempta, et in dextera throni Dei consedit:

3. For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

3. Ac reputate quis hic fuerit qui tantam in se sustinuit ab impiis contradictionem, ut ne fatigemini animabus vestris soluti.

1. Wherefore, seeing we also, etc. This conclusion is, as it were, an epilogue to the former chapter, by which he shows the end for which he gave a catalogue of the saints who excelled in faith under the Law, even that every one should be prepared to imitate them; and he calls a large multitude metaphorically a cloud, for he sets what is dense in opposition to what is thinly scattered. [244] Had they been a few in number, yet they ought to have roused us by their example; but as they were a vast throng, they ought more powerfully to stimulate us.

He says that we are so surrounded by this dense throng, that wherever we turn our eyes many examples of faith immediately meet us. The word witnesses I do not take in a general sense, as though he called them the martyrs of God, and I apply it to the case before us, as though he had said that faith is sufficiently proved by their testimony, so that no doubt ought to be entertained; for the virtues of the saints are so many testimonies to confirm us, that we, relying on them as our guides and associates, ought to go onward to God with more

[244] A cloud for a large multitude is a classical metaphor, and not scriptural. A cloud of footmen, and a cloud of birds, are used by Homer; and a cloud of footmen and horsemen, by Livy. — Ed.

alacrity.

Let us lay aside every weight, or every burden, etc. As he refers to the likeness of a race, he bids us to be lightly equipped; for nothing more prevents haste than to be encumbered with burdens. Now there are various burdens which delay and impede our spiritual course, such as the love of this present life, the pleasures of the world, the lusts of the flesh, worldly cares, riches also and honors, and other things of this kind. Whosoever, then, would run in the course prescribed by Christ, must first disentangle himself from all these impediments, for we are already of ourselves more tardy than we ought to be, so no other causes of delay should be added.

We are not however bidden to cast away riches or other blessings of this life, except so far as they retard our course for Satan by these as by toils retains and impedes us.

Now, the metaphor of a race is often to be found in Scripture; but here it means not any kind of race, but a running contest, which is wont to call forth the greatest exertions. The import of what is said then is, that we are engaged in a contest, even in a race the most celebrated, that many witnesses stand around us, that the Son of God is the umpire who invites and exhorts us to secure the prize, and that therefore it would be most disgraceful for us to grow weary or inactive in the midst of our course. And at the same time the holy men whom he mentioned, are not only witnesses, but have been associates in the same race, who have beforehand shown the way to us; and yet he preferred calling them witnesses rather than runners, in order to intimate that they are not rivals, seeking to snatch from us the prize, but approves to applaud and hail our victory; and Christ also is not only the umpire, but also extends his hand to us, and supplies us with strength and energy; in short, he prepares and fits us to enter on our course, and by his power leads us on to the end of the race.

And the sin which does so easily beset us, or, stand around us, etc. This is the heaviest burden that impedes us. And he says that we are entangled, in order that we may know, that no one is fit to run except he has stripped off all toils and snares. He speaks not of outward, or, as they say, of actual sin, but of the very fountain, even concupiscence or lust, which so possesses every part of us, that we feel that we are on every side held by its snares. [245]

Let us run with patience, etc. By this word patience, we are ever reminded of what the Apostle meant to be mainly regarded in faith, even that we are in spirit to seek the kingdom of God, which is invisible to the flesh, and exceeds all that our minds can comprehend; for they who are occupied in meditating on this kingdom can easily disregard all earthly things. He thus could not more effectually withdraw the Jews from their ceremonies, than by calling their attention to the real exercises of faith, by which they might learn that Christ's kingdom is spiritual, and far superior to the elements of the world.

2. Who for the joy that was set before him, etc. Though the expression in Latin is somewhat ambiguous, yet according to the words in Greek the Apostle's

[245] See Appendix P 2.

meaning is quite clear; for he intimates, that though it was free to Christ to exempt himself from all trouble and to lead a happy life, abounding in all good things, he yet underwent a death that was bitter, and in every way ignominious. For the expression, for joy, is the same as, instead of joy; and joy includes every kind of enjoyment. And he says, set before him, because the power of availing himself of this joy was possessed by Christ, had it so pleased him. At the same time if any one thinks that the preposition {ἀντὶ} denotes the final cause, I do not much object; then the meaning would be, that Christ refused not the death of the cross, because he saw its blessed issue. I still prefer the former exposition. [246]

But he commends to us the patience of Christ on two accounts, because he endured a most bitter death, and because he despised shame. He then mentions the glorious end of his death, that the faithful might know that all the evils which they may endure will end in their salvation and glory, provided they follow Christ. So also says James, ``Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and ye know the end.'' (James 5:11.) Then the Apostle means that the end of our sufferings will be the same with those of Christ, according to what is said by Paul, ``If we suffer with him, we shall also reign together.'' (Romans 8:17.)

3. For consider him, etc. He enforces his exhortation by comparing Christ with us; for if the Son of God, whom it behoves all to adore, willingly underwent such severe conflicts, who of us should dare to refuse to submit with him to the same? For this one thought alone ought to be sufficient to conquer all temptations, that is, when we know that we are companions or associates of the Son of God, and that he, who was so far above us, willingly came down to our condition, in order that he might animate us by his own example; yea, it is thus that we gather courage, which would otherwise melt away, and turn as it were into despair.

Heb 12:4-8

Hebrews Chapter 12:4-8

4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

4. Nondum ad sanguinem restitistis adversus peccatum certando.

5. And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaketh unto you as unto children, My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:

5. Et obliti estic exhortationis quae vobis tanquam filiis loquitur, Fili mi, ne disciplinam Domini negligas, et ne deficias dum ab eo argueris:

6. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.

6. Quem enim diligit Dominus castigat, flegallat omnem filium quem suscipit.

7. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

[246] See Appendix Q 2.

7. Si disciplinam sustinetis, Deus tanquam filiis offeertur: quis enim est filius quem pater non castiget?

8. But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons.

8. Quod si disciplinae expertes estis, cujus participes sunt omnes, spurii igitur estis, non filii.

4. Ye have not yet, resisted unto blood, etc. He proceeds farther, for he reminds us, that even when the ungodly persecute us for Christ's sake, we are then contending against sin. Into this contest Christ could not enter, for he was pure and free from all sin; in this respect, however, we are unlike him, for sin always dwells in us, and afflictions serve to subdue and put it to flight.

In the first place we know that all the evils which are in the world, and especially death, proceed from sin; but this is not what the Apostle treats of; he only teaches us, that the persecutions which we endure for the Gospel's sake, are on another account useful to us, even because they are remedies to destroy sin; for in this way God keeps us under the yoke of his discipline, lest our flesh should become wanton; he sometimes also thus checks the impetuous, and sometimes punishes our sins, that we may in future be more cautious. Whether then he applies remedies to our sins, or anticipates us before we sin, he thus exercises us in the conflict with sin, referred to by the Apostle. With this honor indeed the Son of God favors us, that he by no means regards what we suffer for his Gospel as a punishment for sin. It behooves us still to acknowledge what we hear from the Apostle in this place, that we so plead and defend the cause of Christ against the ungodly, that at the same time we are carrying on war with sin, our intestine enemy. Thus God's grace towards us is twofold --- the remedies he applies to heal our vices, he employs for the purpose of defending his gospel. [247]

But let us bear in mind whom he is here addressing, even those who had joyfully suffered the loss of their goods and had endured many reproaches; and yet he charges them with sloth, because they were fainting half way in the contest, and were not going on strenuously to the end. There is therefore no reason for us to ask a discharge from the Lord, whatever service we may have performed; for Christ will have no discharged soldiers, but those who have conquered death itself.

5. And ye have forgotten, etc. I read the words as a question; for he asks,

[247] "Striving against sin," or contending or fighting against sin, — the sin of apostasy, says Grotius, — the sin of their persecutors, say Macknight and Stuart, sin being considered here as standing for sinners, the abstract for the concrete. The Apostle says, that they had not yet resisted — resisted what? This he seems to explain by saying, "contending against sin." It was then, the assault of sin that they had not yet resisted unto blood; and that sin was evidently apostasy, the sin plausibly presented to them, or ready to encompass and entangle them, mentioned in the first verse. The phraseology here is similar to what is in the preceding verse; a participle ends the sentence, and that qualifies the foregoing verb — "that ye may not become wearied, being faint in your souls." Faintness or despondency in mind would inevitably be accompanied with weariness. Faith or strength of mind is necessary to prevent fatigue or weariness while engaged in contests and great trials; and as a preventive of despondency, we are directed attentively to consider how our savior bore the extreme trials which he had to endure. — Ed.

whether they had forgotten, intimating that it was not yet time to forget. But he enters here on the doctrine, that it is useful and needful for us to be disciplined by the cross; and he refers to the testimony of Solomon, which includes two parts; the first is, that we are not to reject the Lord's correction; and in the second the reason is given, because the Lord loves those whom he chastises. [248] But as Solomon thus begins, my ``Son'', the Apostle reminds us that we ought to be allured by so sweet and kind a word, as that this exhortation should wholly penetrate into our hearts. [249]

Now Solomon's argument is this: --- If the scourges of God testify his love towards us, it is a shame that they should be regarded with dislike or hatred. For they who bear not to be chastised by God for their own salvation, yea, who reject a proof of his paternal kindness, must be extremely ungrateful.

6. For whom the Lord loveth, etc. This seems not to be a wellfounded reason; for God visits the elect as well as the reprobate indiscriminately, and his scourges manifest his wrath oftener than his love; and so the Scripture speaks, and experience confirms. But yet it is no wonder that when the godly are addressed, the effect of chastisements which they feel, is alone referred to. For however severe and angry a judge God may show himself towards the reprobate, whenever he punishes them; yet he has no other end in view as to the elect, but to promote their salvation; it is a demonstration of his paternal love. Besides, the reprobate, as they know not that they are governed by God's hand, for the most part think that afflictions come by chance. As when a perverse youth, leaving his father's house, wanders far away and becomes exhausted with hunger, cold, and other evils, he indeed suffers a just punishment for his folly, and learns by his sufferings the benefit of being obedient and submissive to his father, but yet he does not acknowledge this as a paternal chastisement; so is the case with the ungodly, who having in a manner removed themselves from God and his family, do not understand that God's hand reaches to them.

Let us then remember that the taste of God's love towards us cannot be had by us under chastisements, except we be fully persuaded that they are fatherly scourges by which he chastises us for our sins. No such thing can occur to the minds of the reprobate, for they are like fugitives. It may also be added, that judgment must begin at God's house; though, then, he may strike aliens and domestics alike, he yet so puts forth his hand as to the latter as to show that they are the objects of his peculiar care. But the previous one is the true solution,

[248] "Correction" is the best word for {παιδεία}, as it stands for {{מוסר and not ``chastening'' or chastisement. ``Despise'' in Hebrew is to regard a thing as trifling or with contempt, and so in Greek it means to regard a thing as little; the meaning is, not stoical; and then the meaning of the next clause is, be not depending. ``Fret not,'' or ``be not faint'' or despairing, ``when reproved'' or ``chastised.'' --- Ed

[249] Beza, Grotius, Macknight and Stuart, agree with Calvin in reading the first words interrogatively — "And have ye forgotten?" etc. Ribera, the Jesuit, in his comment on this verse said, "The Apostle indirectly (tacite) reproves them, because they had no recourse to Scripture in their afflictions; compare Romans 15:4." Capellus, referring to this passage, observed, "I wish the Jesuits were always to speak in this manner, but Ribera ought to have remembered that Paul was addressing the flock rather than the pastors, and that therefore, the Scriptures ought to be read by laymen." The clear intimation of the passage no doubt is, that the Hebrews ought to have attended to the truths contained in Scripture. — Ed.

even that every one who knows and is persuaded that he is chastised by God, must immediately be led to this thought, that he is chastised because he is loved by God. For when the faithful see that God interposes in their punishment, they perceive a sure pledge of his love, for unless he loved them he would not be solicitous about their salvation. Hence the Apostle concludes that God is offered as a Father to all who endure correction. For they who kick like restive horses, or obstinately resist, do not belong to this class of men. In a word, then, he teaches us that God's corrections are then only paternal, when we obediently submit to him. [250]

7. For what son is he, etc. He reasons from the common practice of men, that it is by no means right or meet that God's children should be exempt from the discipline of the cross; for if no one is to be found among us, at least no prudent man and of a sound judgment, who does not correct his children --- for without discipline they cannot be led to a right conduct --- how much less will God neglect so necessary a remedy, who is the best and the wisest Father?

If any one raises an objection, and says that corrections of this kind cease among men as soon as children arrive at manhood: to this I answer, that as long as we live we are with regard to God no more than children, and that this is the reason why the rod should ever be applied to our backs. Hence the Apostle justly infers, that all who seek exemption from the cross do as it were withdraw themselves from the number of his children.

It hence follows that the benefit of adoption is not valued by us as it ought to be, and that the grace of God is wholly rejected when we seek to withdraw ourselves from his scourges; and this is what all they do who bear not their afflictions with patience. But why does he call those who refuse correction bastards rather than aliens? Even because he was addressing those who were members of the Church, and were on this account the children of God. He therefore intimates that the profession of Christ would be false and deceitful if they withdrew themselves from the discipline of the Father, and that they would thus become bastards, and be no more children. [251]

Heb 12:9-11

Hebrews Chapter 12:9-11

9. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?

9. Quum carnis nostrae patres habueerimus castigatores et reveriti simus illos, annon multo magic sujjiciemur patri spirituum et vivemus?

[250] See Appendix R 2.

[251] There is in this verse the word “sons,” to be understood after “all;” that is, “all the sons are partakers:” so Macknight and Stuart. As “sons” conclude the verse, the word is omitted here. Those who have only the name of Christians are called “bastards,” or spurious or illegitimate children, because they are not born of God, being only the children of the flesh. They are not Isaac’s but Ishmael, whatever their professions may be, and though baptized and partakers of all the outward privileges of the gospel. — Ed.

10. For they verily for a few days chastened us after their own pleasure; but he for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness.

10. Et illi quidem ad paucos dies pro suo arbitratu nos castigarunt; hic vero ad utilitatem, ut nobis impertiat sanctimoniam suam.

11. Now no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous: nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.

11. Porro omnis castigation in praesens non videtur gaudii esse sed tristitiae; in posterum tamen fructum pacatum justitiae affert exercitatis.

9. Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh, etc. This comparison has several parts: the first is, that if we showed so much reverence to the fathers from whom we have descended according to the flesh, as to submit to their discipline, much more honor is due to God who is our spiritual Father; another is, that the discipline which fathers use as to their children is only useful for the present life, but that God looks farther, having in view to prepare us for an eternal life; and the third is, that men chastise their children as it seems good to them, but that God regulates his discipline in the best manner, and with perfect wisdom, so that there is nothing in it but what is duly ordered. He then, in the first place, makes this difference between God and men, that they are the fathers of the flesh, but he of the spirit; and on this difference he enlarges by comparing the flesh with the spirit.

But it may be asked, Is not God the Father also of our flesh? For it is not without reason that Job mentions the creation of men as one of the chief miracles of God: hence on this account also he is justly entitled to the name of Father. Were we to say that he is called the Father of spirits, because he alone creates and regenerates our souls without the aid of man, it might be said again that Paul glories in being the spiritual father of those whom he had begotten in Christ by the Gospel. To these things I reply, that God is the Father of the body as well as of the soul, and, properly speaking, he is indeed the only true Father; and that this name is only as it were by way of concession applied to men, both in regard of the body and of the soul. As, however, in creating souls, he does use the instrumentality of men, and as he renews them in a wonderful manner by the power of the Spirit, he is peculiarly called, by way of eminence, the Father of spirits. [252]

When he says, and we gave them reverence, he refers to a feeling implanted in us by nature, so that we honor parents even when they treat us harshly. By saying, in subjection to the Father of spirits, he intimates that it is but just to concede to God the authority he has over us by the right of a Father. By saying,

[252] Here is an instance, among many others, in which men's ingenuity is allowed unnecessarily to involve things in difficulties. The comparison here is founded on two palpable facts: there are fathers of our flesh, i.e., the body, and they have for a short time a duty to perform as such; but God, being the Father of our Spirits, which are to continue forever, deals with us in a way corresponding to our destiny. The question of instrumentality has nothing to do with the subject. Nor can anything be fairly drawn from this passage as to the useless question of the non-traduction of souls, as some have thought; and it may be justly be called useless, as it is a question beyond the range of human inquiry. — Ed.

and live, he points out the cause or the end, for the conjunction ``and'' is to be rendered that, --- ``that we may live.'' Now we are reminded by this word live, that there is nothing more ruinous to us than to refuse to surrender ourselves in obedience to God.

10. For they verily for a few days, etc. The second amplification of the subject, as I have said, is that God's chastisements are appointed to subdue and mortify our flesh, so that we may be renewed for a celestial life. It hence appears that the fruit or benefit is to be perpetual; but such a benefit cannot be expected from men, since their discipline refers to civil life, and therefore properly belongs to the present world. It hence follows that these chastisements bring far greater benefit, as the spiritual holiness conferred by God far exceeds the advantages which belong to the body.

Were any one to object and say, that it is the duty of parents to instruct their children in the fear and worship of God, and that therefore their discipline seems not to be confined to so short a time; to this the answer is, that this is indeed true, but the Apostle speaks here of domestic life, as we are wont commonly to speak of civil government; for though it belongs to magistrates to defend religion, yet we say that their office is confined to the limits of this life, for otherwise the civil and earthly government cannot be distinguished from the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

Moreover when God's chastisements are said to be profitable to make men partners of his holiness, this is not to be so taken as though they made us really holy, but that they are helps to sanctify us, for by them the Lord exercises us in the work of mortifying the flesh.

11. Now no chastening, etc. This he adds, lest we should measure God's chastisements by our present feelings; for he shows that we are like children who dread the rod and shun it as much as they can, for owing to their age they cannot yet judge how useful it may be to them. The object, then, of this admonition is, that chastisements cannot be estimated aright if judged according to what the flesh feels under them, and that therefore we must fix our eyes on the end: we shall thus receive the peaceable fruit of righteousness. And by the fruit of righteousness he means the fear of the Lord and a godly and holy life, of which the cross is the teacher. He calls it peaceable, because in adversities we are alarmed and disquieted, being tempted by impatience, which is always noisy and restless; but being chastened, we acknowledge with a resigned mind how profitable did that become to us which before seemed bitter and grievous. [253]

Heb 12:12-17

Hebrews Chapter 12:12-17

12. Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

12. Quare manus remissas et genua soluta surrigite;

[253] See Appendix S 2.

13. And make straight paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way; but let it rather be healed.

13. Et rectasfacite vias pedibus vestris, ne claudicatio aberret, sed magis sanetur.

14. Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord:

14. Pacem sectamini cum omnibus et sanctimonium, sine qua nemo videbit Dominum:

15. Looking diligently lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up trouble you, and thereby many be defiled;

15. Curam agentes ne quis deficiat a grtia Dei, no quae radix amaritudinis sursum pullulans obturbet et per eam inquinentur multi;

16. Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright.

16. Ne quis scortator vel profanus, ut Esau, quo pro uno edulio vendidit primogenituram suam.

17. For ye know how that afterward, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected: for he found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears.

17. Nostis enim quod quum postea vellet haeriditariam obtinere benedictionem, reprobatus sit, poenitentae enim locum non invenit, etiamsi cum lachrymis quaesiisset eam.

12. Wherefore, lift up, etc. After having taught us that God regards our salvation when he chastises us, he then exhorts us to exert ourselves vigorously; for nothing will more weaken us and more fully discourage us than through the influence of a false notion to have no taste of God's grace in adversities. There is, therefore, nothing more efficacious to raise us up than the intimation that God is present with us, even when he afflicts us, and is solicitous about our welfare. But in these words he not only exhorts us to bear afflictions with courage, but also reminds us that there is no reason for us to be supine and slothful in performing our duties; for we find more than we ought by experience how much the fear of the cross prevents us to serve God as it behooves us. Many would be willing to profess their faith, but as they fear persecution, hands and feet are wanting to that pious feeling of the mind. Many would be ready to contend for God's glory, to defend what is good and just in private and in public, and to do their duties to God and their brethren; but as danger arises from the hatred of the wicked, as they see that troubles, and those many, are prepared for them, they rest idly with their hands as it were folded.

Were then this extreme fear of the cross removed, and were we prepared for endurance, there would be nothing in us not fitted and adapted for the work of doing God's will. This, then, is what the Apostle means here, ``You have your hands,'' he says, ``hanging down and your knees feeble, because ye know not what real consolation there is in adversity; hence ye are slow to do your duty: but now as I have shown how useful to you is the discipline of the cross,

this doctrine ought to put new vigor in all your members, so that you may be ready and prompt, both with your hands and feet, to follow the call of God.'' Moreover, he seems to allude to a passage in Isaiah, (Isaiah 35:3;) and there the Prophet commands godly teachers to strengthen trembling knees and weak hands by giving them the hope of favor; but the Apostle bids all the faithful to do this; for since this is the benefit of the consolation which God offers to us, then as it is the office of a teacher to strengthen the whole Church, so every one ought, by applying especially the doctrine to his own case, to strengthen and animate himself. [254]

13. And make straight paths, etc. He has been hitherto teaching us to lean on God's consolations, so that we may be bold and strenuous in doing what is right, as his help is our only support; he now adds to this another thing, even that we ought to walk prudently and to keep to a straight course; for indiscreet ardor is no less an evil than inactivity and softness. At the same time this straightness of the way which he recommends, is preserved when a man's mind is superior to every fear, and regards only what God approves; for fear is ever very ingenious in finding out byways. As then we seek circuitous courses, when entangled by sinful fear; so on the other hand every one who has prepared himself to endure evils, goes on in a straight way wheresoever the Lord calls him, and turns not either to the right hand or to the left. In short, he prescribes to us this rule for our conduct, --- that we are to guide our steps according to God's will, so that neither fear nor the allurements of the world, nor any other things, may draw us away from it. [255]

Hence be adds, Lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, or, lest halting should go astray; that is, lest by halting ye should at length depart far from the way. He calls it halting, when men's minds fluctuate, and they devote not themselves sincerely to God. So spoke Elijah to the doubleminded who blended their own superstitions with God's worship, ``How long halt ye between two opinions?'' (1 Kings 18:21.) And it is a befitting way of speaking, for it is a worse thing to go astray than to halt. Nor they who begin to halt do not immediately turn from the right way, but by degrees depart from it more and more, until having been led into a diverse path so they remain entangled in the midst of Satan's labyrinth. Hence the apostle warns us to strive for the

[254] The words are neither from the Hebrew nor from the Septuagint, but the order is more according to the former than the latter. The Hebrew is “Brace ye up the relaxed hands, and the tottering knees invigorate;” and the Sept., “Be strong, ye relaxed hands and paralyzed knees.” The literal rendering of this passage is, “Therefore the enfeebled (or relaxed) hands and the paralyzed knees restore; i.e., to their former vigor, so that you may contend with your enemies and your trials and run your race.” They had before acted nobly as it is stated in chapter 10:32-34; he now exhorts them to recover their former vigor and strength. It is rendered by Macknight, “Bring to their right position.” The verb {ἀνορθόω} literally means no doubt to make straight again, and is so used in Luke 13:13; but it has also the meaning of renewing or restoring to a former state, or of rebuilding. See Acts 15:16. And in this sense Schleusner takes it in this passage. It is used in the Sept. in the sense of establishing confirming, making firm or strong. See Jeremiah 10:12. Hence Stuart gives this version,--- ``Strengthen the weak hands and the feeble knees.'' But the idea of repairing, or restoring or reinvigorating, gives the passage the most emphatic meaning. The Apostle in this instance only borrows some of the words from Isaiah, and accommodates them to his own purpose. --- Ed.

[255] Having spoken of strength, he now tells them how to use that strength. Be strong, and take a right course; go along the straight way of duty. See Appendix T 2. — Ed.

removal of this halting in due time; for if we give way to it, it will at length turn us far away from God.

The words may indeed be rendered, ``Lest halting should grow worse,'' or turn aside; but the meaning would remain the same; for what the Apostle intimates is, that those who keep not a straight course, but gradually though carelessly turn here and there, become eventually wholly alienated from God. [256]

14. Follow peace, etc. Men are so born that they all seem to shun peace; for all study their own interest, seek their own ways, and care not to accommodate themselves to the ways of others. Unless then we strenuously labor to follow peace, we shall never retain it; for many things will happen daily affording occasion for discords. This is the reason why the Apostle bids us to follow peace, as though he had said, that it ought not only to be cultivated as far as it may be convenient to us, but that we ought to strive with all care to keep it among us. And this cannot be done unless we forget many offenses and exercise mutual forbearance. [257]

As however peace cannot be maintained with the ungodly except on the condition of approving of their vices and wickedness, the Apostle immediately adds, that holiness is to be followed together with peace; as though he commended peace to us with this exception, that the friendship of the wicked is not to be allowed to defile or pollute us; for holiness has an especial regard to God. Though then the whole world were roused to a blazing war, yet holiness is not to be forsaken, for it is the bond of our union with God. In short, let us quietly cherish concord with men, but only, according to the proverb, as far as conscience allows.

He declares, that without holiness no man shall see the Lord; for with no other eyes shall we see God than those which have been renewed after his image.

15. Looking diligently, or, taking care, or, attentively providing, etc. [258] By these words he intimates that it is easy to fall away from the grace of God; for it is not without reason that attention is required, because as soon as Satan sees us secure or remiss, he instantly circumvents us. We have, in short, need of

[256] This interpretation is given by Grotius, Macknight and Stuart; but Beza, Doddridge and Scott, take the view given in our version regarding the lame or weak person as intended by {τὸ} {χωλὸν}. So is the Vulgate, ``that no one halting may go astray, but rather be healed.'' --- Ed

[257] It has been justly observed that {διώκω} is to follow or pursue one fleeing away from us. It means not only to seek peace but strive to maintain it. Psalm 34, we have pursuing after seeking, ``Seek peace and pursue it,'' i.e., strive earnestly to secure and retain it. Romans 12:18, is an explanation. But this strenuous effort as to peace is to be extended to holiness; not chastity, as Chrysostom and some other fathers have imagined, but holiness in its widest sense, purity of heart and life, universal holiness. The word {ἁγιασμὸς} is indeed taken in a limited sense, and rendered ``sanctification'' 1 Thessalonians 4:3, and it may be so rendered here as it is in those places where it evidently means holiness universally, 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2 Thessalonians 2:13, 1 Peter 1:2. The article is put before it in order to show its connection with what follows, ``and the (or that) holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord.'' --- Ed

[258] It means properly overseeing and is rendered “taking the oversight,” in 1 Peter 5:2, where alone it occurs elsewhere. The word bishop comes from it. It is rendered, “taking heed,” by Erasmus; “Diligently attending,” by Grotius; “Taking care,” by Beza; “Looking to it,” by Doddridge; “carefully observing,” by Macknight; and “Seeing to it.” By Stuart. Considering what follows, “Taking heed” would be the best version. — Ed.

striving and vigilance, if we would persevere in the grace of God.

Moreover, under the word grace, he includes our whole vocation. If any one hence infers that the grace of God is not efficacious, except we of our own selves cooperate with it, the argument is frivolous. We know how great is the slothfulness of our flesh; it therefore wants continual incentives; but when the Lord stimulates us by warning and exhortation, he at the same time moves and stirs up our hearts, that his exhortations may not be in vain, or pass away without effect. Then from precepts and exhortations we are not to infer what man can do of himself, or what is the power of freewill; for doubtless the attention or diligence which the Apostle requires here is the gift of God.

Lest any root, etc. I doubt not but that he refers to a passage written by Moses in Deuteronomy 29:18; for after having promulgated the Law, Moses exhorted the people to beware, lest any root germinating should bear gall and wormwood among them. He afterwards explained what he meant, that is, lest any one, felicitating himself in sin, and like the drunken who are wont to excite thirst, stimulating sinful desires, should bring on a contempt of God through the alluring of hope of impunity. The same is what the Apostle speaks of now; for he foretells what will take place, that is, if we suffer such a root to grow, it will corrupt and defile many; he not only bids every one to irradiate such a pest from their hearts, but he also forbids them to allow it to grow among them. It cannot be indeed but that these roots will ever be found in the Church, for hypocrites and the ungodly are always mixed with the good; but when they spring up they ought to be cut down, lest by growing they should choke the good seed.

He mentions bitterness for what Moses calls gall and wormwood; but both meant to express a root that is poisonous and deadly. Since then it is so fatal an evil, with more earnest effort it behooves us to check it, lest it should rise and creep farther. [259]

16. Lest there be any fornicator or profane person, etc. As he had before exhorted them to holiness, so now, that he might reclaim them from defilements opposed to it, he mentions a particular kind of defilement, and says, ``Lest there be any fornicator.'' But he immediately comes to what is general, and adds, ``or a profane person;'' for it is the term that is strictly contrary to holiness. The Lord calls us for this end, that he may make us holy unto obedience: this is done when we renounce the world; but any one who so delights in his own filth that he continually rolls in it, profanes himself. We may at the same time regard the profane as meaning generally all those who do not value God's grace so much as to seek it and despise the world. But as men become profane in various ways, the more earnest we ought to strive lest an opening be left for Satan to defile us with his corruptions. And as there is no true religion without holiness, we ought to make progress continually in the fear of God, in the mortifying of the flesh, and in the whole practice of piety; for as we are profane until we separate from the world so if we roll again in its filth we renounce holiness.

[259] See Appendix U 2.

As Esau, etc. This example may be viewed as an exposition of the word profane; for when Esau set more value on one meal than on his birthright, he lost his blessing. Profane then are all they in whom the love of the world so reigns and prevails that they forget heaven: as is the case with those who are led away by ambition, or become fond of money or of wealth, or give themselves up to gluttony, or become entangled in any other pleasures; they allow in their thoughts and cares no place, or it may be the last place, to the spiritual kingdom of Christ.

Most appropriate then is this example; for when the Lord designs to set forth the power of that love which he has for his people, he calls all those whom he has called to the hope of eternal life his firstborn. Invaluable indeed is this honor with which he favors us; and all the wealth, all the conveniences, the honors and the pleasures of the world, and everything commonly deemed necessary for happiness, when compared with this honor, are of no more value than a morsel of meat. That we indeed set a high value on things which are nearly worth nothing, arises from this, --- that depraved lust dazzles our eyes and thus blinds us. If therefore we would hold a place in God's sanctuary, we must learn to despise morsels of meat of this kind, by which Satan is wont to catch the reprobate. [260]

17. When he would have inherited the blessing, etc. He at first regarded as a sport the act by which he had sold his birthright, as though it was a child's play; but at length, when too late, he found what a loss he had incurred, when the blessing transferred by his father to Jacob was refused to him. Thus they who are led away by the allurements of this world alienate themselves from God, and sell their own salvation that they may feed on the morsels of this world, without thinking that they lose anything, nay, they flatter and applaud themselves, as though they were extremely happy. When too late their eyes are opened, so that being warned by the sight of their own wickedness, they become sensible of the loss of which they made no account.

While Esau was hungry, he cared for nothing but how he might have his stomach well filled; when full he laughed at his brother, and judged him a fool for having voluntarily deprived himself of a meal. Nay, such is also the stupidity of the ungodly, as long as they burn with depraved lusts or intemperately plunge themselves into sinful pleasures; after a time they understand how fatal to them are all the things which they so eagerly desired. The word ``rejected'' means that he was repulsed, or denied his request.

For he found no place of repentance, etc.; that is, he profited nothing, he

[260] It is said that “for one morsel of meat,” literally, “for one eating,” or, “for one meal,” as rendered by Doddridge, “he sold his birthright,” or according to Macknight, “he gave away his birthrights.” In this reference the Apostle gives the substance without regarding expressions, though he adopts those of the Septuagint in two instances, — the verb, which means to give away, used in the sense of selling, — and birthrights, or the rights of primogeniture. The word in Hebrew means primogeniture, used evidently by metonymy for its rights and privileges. Not only a double portion belonged to the first-born, but also the paternal blessing, which included things temporal and spiritual. The notion that the priesthood at that time and from the beginning of the world belonged to the first-born, has nothing to support it. Abel was a priest as well as Cain, and a better priest too. — Ed.

gained nothing by his late repentance, though he sought with tears the blessing which by his own fault he had lost. [261]

Now as he denounces the same danger on all the despisers of God's grace, it may be asked, whether no hope of pardon remains, when God's grace has been treated with contempt and his kingdom less esteemed than the world? To this I answer, that pardon is not expressly denied to such, but that they are warned to take heed, lest the same thing should happen to them also. And doubtless we may see daily many examples of God's severity, which prove that he takes vengeance on the mockings and scoffs of profane men: for when they promise themselves tomorrow, he often suddenly takes them away by death in a manner new and unexpected; when they deem fabulous what they hear of God's judgment, he so pursues them that they are forced to acknowledge him as their judge; when they have consciences wholly dead, they afterwards feel dreadful agonies as a punishment for their stupidity. But though this happens not to all, yet as there is this danger, the Apostle justly warns all to beware.

Another question also arises, Whether the sinner, endued with repentance, gains nothing by it? For the Apostle seems to imply this when he tells us that Esau's repentance availed him nothing. My reply is, that repentance here is not to be taken for sincere conversion to God; but it was only that terror with which the Lord smites the ungodly, after they have long indulged themselves in their iniquity. Nor is it a wonder that this terror should be said to be useless and unavailing, for they do not in the meantime repent nor hate their own vices, but are only tormented by a sense of their own punishment. The same thing is to be said of tears; whenever a sinner sighs on account of his sins, the Lord is ready to pardon him, nor is God's mercy ever sought in vain, for to him who knocks it shall be opened, (Matthew 7:8;) but as the tears of Esau were those of a man past hope, they were not shed on account of having offended God; so the ungodly, however they may deplore their lot, complain and howl, do not yet knock at God's door for mercy, for this cannot be done but by faith. And the more grievously conscience torments them, the more they war against God and rage against him. They might indeed desire that an access should be given them to God; but as they expect nothing but his wrath, they shun his presence. Thus we often see that those who often say, as in a jest, that repentance is sufficiently

[261] Though many such as Beza, Doddridge, Stuart etc. regard this “repentance” as that of Isaac, yet the phrase seems to favor the views of Calvin, “he found not the place of repentance,” that is the admission of repentance; it was inadmissible, there was no place found for it. The word {τόπος} has this meaning in chapter 8:7, ``there should be no place (or admission) have been sought for the second.'' The same sense is given to the word in Ecclesiasticus 38:12, ``give place'' (or admission) to the physician --- {ἰατρῷ} {δὸς} {τόπον}. We may give this rendering, ``for he found not room for repentance;'' he seemed to repent of his sin and folly, but his repentance availed nothing, for it could not be admitted; there was in his case no repentance allowed, as the account given in Genesis testifies. The difficulty about ``it'' in the following clause is removed, when we consider that here, as in some previous instances, the Apostle arranges his sentences according to the law of parallelism; there are here four clauses; the first and last are connected, and also the middle clauses, --- ``For ye know, That even afterwards wishing to inherit the blessing, He was rejected, For he found no room for repentance, Though with tears he sought it, (i.e., the blessing.)'' Though Macknight gave the other explanation of ``repentance'' yet he considered the blessing as the antecedent to ``it'' in the last line. Though with the tears of repentance he sought the blessing, yet he was rejected: the door to repentance was as it were closed up, and it could not be opened --- Ed.

in time when they are drawing towards their end, do then cry bitterly, amidst dreadful agonies, that the season of obtaining repentance is past; for that they are doomed to destruction because they did not seek God until it was too late. Sometimes, indeed, they break out into such words as these, ``Oh! if --- oh! if;'' but presently despair cuts short their prayers and chokes their voice, so that they proceed no farther.

Heb 12:18-24

Hebrews Chapter 12:18-24

18. For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched, and that burned with fire, nor unto blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

18. Non enim accessistis ad montem qui tangatur vel ignem accensum ac turbinem et caliginem et procellam.

19. And the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words; which voice they that heard intreated that the word should not be spoken to them any more:

19. Et tubae sonitum et vocem verborum, quam qui audierant excusarunt, ne illis proponeretur sermo:

20. (For they could not endure that which was commanded, And if so much as a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned, or thrust through with a dart:

20. Non enim ferebant quod edicebatur, Etiam si bestia tetigerit montem, lapidabitur aut jaculo configatur;

21. And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, I exceedingly fear and quake:)

21. Ac sic terribile erat visum quod apparuit, Moses dixit, Expavefactus sum et tremefactus:

22. But ye are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels,

22. Sed accessistis ad Sion montem, civitatem Dei viventis, Jerusalem coelestem,

23. To the general assembly and church of the firstborn, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

23. Et ad conventum innumerabilium Angelorum, et ecclesiam primogenitorum, qui scripti sunt in coelis, et judicem omnium Deum, et spiritus justorum consecratorum,

24. And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel.

24. Et Mediatorem Novi Testamenti Iesum, et sanguinem aspersionis, meliora loquentem quam loquebatur sanguis Abel.

18. For ye are not come, etc. He fights now with a new argument, for he proclaims the greatness of the grace made known by the Gospel, that we may reverently receive it; and secondly, he commends to us its benign characters that he might allure us to love and desire it. He adds weight to these two things by a comparison between the Law and the Gospel; for the higher the

excellency of Christ's kingdom than the dispensation of Moses, and the more glorious our calling than that of the ancient people, the more disgraceful and the less excusable is our ingratitude, unless we embrace in a becoming manner the great favor offered to us, and humbly adore the majesty of Christ which is here made evident; and then, as God does not present himself to us clothed in terrors as he did formerly to the Jews, but lovingly and kindly invites us to himself, so the sin of ingratitude will be thus doubled, except we willingly and in earnest respond to his gracious invitation. [262]

Then let us first remember that the Gospel is here compared with the Law; and secondly, that there are two parts in this comparison, --- that God's glory displays itself more illustriously in the Gospel than in the Law, --- and that his invitation is now full of love, but that formerly there was nothing but the greatest terrors.

Unto the mount that might be touched, [263] etc. This sentence is variously expounded; but it seems to me that an earthly mountain is set in opposition to the spiritual; and the words which follow show the same thing, that burned with fire, blackness, darkness, tempest, etc.; for these were signs which God manifested, that he might secure authority and reverence to his Law. [264] When considered in themselves they were magnificent and truly celestial; but when we come to the kingdom of Christ, the things which God exhibits to us are far above all the heavens. It hence follows, that all the dignity of the Law appears now earthly: thus mount Sinai might have been touched by hands; but mount Sion cannot be known but by the spirit. All the things recorded in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus were visible things; but those which we have in the kingdom of Christ are hid from the senses of the flesh. [265]

Should any one object and say, that the meaning of all these things was spiritual, and that there are at this day external exercises of religion by which we are carried up to heaven: to this I answer, that the Apostle speaks compar-

[262] The connection of this part has been viewed by some to be the following: — Having exhorted the Hebrews to peace and holiness, and warned them against apostasy and sinful indulgences, the Apostle now enforces his exhortations and warnings by showing the superiority of the Gospel over the Law. This is the view of Doddridge and Stuart. It appears that Scott connected this part with chapter 10:28-31, and that he considered that the object of the apostle was to bring forward an instance, in addition to former ones, of the superiority of the Gospel, in order to show that the neglect of it would involve a greater guilt than that of the Law. And this appears to have been the view of Calvin, which seems to be favored by the concluding part of the chapter. The word {γὰρ} may be rendered ``moreover.'' --- Ed

[263] It has been conjectured that {μὴ} has been omitted before ``touched;'' for in that case the passage would more exactly correspond with the account given in Exodus, for the people were expressly forbidden to touch the mountain. An omission of this kind was surely not impossible. The phrase as it is hardly admits of a grammatical construction: it has been found necessary to give the sense of an adjective to the participle. There would not be this necessity were the words rendered ``To a mount not to be touched and burning with fire, and to,'' etc. --- Ed

[264] The words used here are not taken literally from the Hebrew nor from the Sept. the four things mentioned in this verse, and the two things mentioned in the following verse, are found in the narrative in Exodus 19 and 20; but not consecutively as here; nor are the same terms used. "Blackness" {γνόφῳ}, should be ``a dark or thick cloud,'' Exodus 19:16. ``Tempest,'' {θυέλλη}, is not mentioned in Exodus or in Deuteronomy; but it includes evidently ``the thunders and lightnings'' mentioned twice at least in Exodus, [Ex 19:16,20:18] though not once in Deuteronomy. --- Ed

[265] "The Hebrews," says Grotius, "came in the body to a material mountain, but we in spirit to that which is spiritual."

atively; and no one can doubt but that the Gospel, contrasted with the Law, excels in what is spiritual, but the Law in earthly symbols.

19. They that heard entreated, etc. This is the second clause, in which he shows that the Law was very different from the Gospel; for when it was promulgated there was nothing but terrors on every side. For everything we read of in the nineteenth chapter of Exodus was of this kind, and intended to show to the people that God had ascended his tribunal and manifested himself as a strict judge. If by chance an innocent beast approached, he commanded it to be killed: how much heavier punishment awaited sinners who were conscious of their guilt, nay, who knew themselves to be condemned to eternal death by the Law? But the Gospel contains nothing but love, provided it be received by faith. What remains to be said you may read in the third chapter of the Second Epistle to the Corinthians.

But by the words the people entreated, etc., is not to be understood that they refused to hear God, but that they prayed not to be constrained to hear God himself speaking; for by the interposition of Moses their dread was somewhat mitigated. [266] Yet interpreters are at a loss to know how it is that the Apostle ascribes these words to Moses, I exceedingly fear and quake; for we read nowhere that they were expressed by Moses. But the difficulty may be easily removed, if we consider that Moses spoke thus in the name of the people, whose requests as their delegate he brought to God. It was, then, the common complaint of the whole people; but Moses is included, who was, as it were, the speaker for them all. [267]

22. Unto mount Sion, etc. He alludes to those prophecies in which God had formerly promised that his Gospel should thence go forth, as in Isaiah 2:1-4, and in other places. Then he contrasts mount Sion with mount Sinai; and he further adds, the heavenly Jerusalem, and he expressly calls it heavenly, that the Jews might not cleave to that which was earthly, and which had flourished under the Law; for when they sought perversely to continue under the slavish yoke of the Law, mount Sion was turned into mount Sinai as Paul teaches us in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. Then by the heavenly Jerusalem he understood that which was to be built throughout the whole world, even as the angel, mentioned by Zechariah, extended his line from the east even to the west.

To an innumerable company of angels, etc. He means that we are associated

[266] The words at the end of verse 20, "or thrust through with a dart," are not deemed genuine, being not found in the best MSS., and none of any authority containing them. — Ed.

[267] It is supposed by some that the reference here is to what is found in Exodus 19:16, 17. It is said in the former verse that all the people in the camp trembled; and it is concluded that Moses was at the time with them, for it is said in the next verse that he brought them forth out of the camp. But the passage that seems most evidently to intimate what is here said in the 19th verse, where we are told, that when the trumpet sounded long, and waxed louder and louder. "Moses spake" and that "God answered him by a voice." Now we are not told what he said, nor what the answer was which God gave. It is however, natural to conclude, that under the circumstances mentioned, Moses expressed his fears, and that God removed them. —Ed.

with angels, chosen into the ranks of patriarchs, and placed in heaven among all the spirits of the blessed, when Christ by the Gospel calls us to himself. But it is an incalculable honor, conferred upon us by our heavenly Father, that he should enroll us among angels and the holy fathers. The expression, myriads of angels, in taken from the book of Daniel, though I have followed Erasmus, and rendered it innumerable company of angels. [268]

23. The firstborn, etc. He does not call the children of God indiscriminately the firstborn, for the Scripture calls many his children who are not of this number; but for the sake of honor he adorns with this distinction the patriarchs and other renowned saints of the ancient Church. He adds, which are written in heaven, because God is said to have all the elect enrolled in his book or secret catalogue, as Ezekiel speaks. [269]

The judge of all, etc. This seems to have been said to inspire fear, as though he had said, that grace is in such a way altered to us, that we ought still to consider that we have to do with a judge, to whom an account must be given if we presumptuously intrude into his sanctuary polluted and profane.

The spirits of just men, etc. He adds this to intimate that we are joined to holy souls, which have put off their bodies, and left behind them all the filth of this world; and hence he says that they are consecrated or ``made perfect'', for they are no more subject to the infirmities of the flesh, having laid aside the flesh itself. And hence we may with certainty conclude, that pious souls, separated from their bodies, still live with God, for we could not possibly be otherwise joined to them as companions.

24. And to Jesus the Mediator, etc. He adds this in the last place, because it is he alone through whom the Father is reconciled to us, and who renders his face serene and lovely to us, so that we may come to him without fear. At the same time he shows how Christ becomes our Mediator, even through his own blood, which after the Hebrew mode of speaking he calls the blood of sprinkling, which means sprinkled blood; for as it was once for all shed to make an atonement for us, so our souls must be now cleansed by it through faith. At

[268] Calvin follows the Vulg. And connects {πανηγύρει} with ``angels.'' It means a whole or a general assembly, and occurs in the Sept., and stands for {{מועד often rendered a solemn assembly: it was a solemnity observed by the whole people. Both as to sense construction, it is better to adopt the arrangement of our version. --- Ed

[269] To keep this clause distinct from the next but one, “the spirits of just men,” etc. has been difficult. The distinction which Calvin seems to make as well as Doddridge, Scott and Stuart, is this, — that those mentioned here, “the first-born,” were the most eminent of the ancients; but that “the spirits of just men” include the godly generally. The people of Israel were called “the first born,” Exodus 4:22, because they were God’s chosen people. Ephraim is also called, “the first born,” Jeremiah 31:9, because of the superiority granted to that tribe; and the Messiah is so called, Psalm 89:27, on account of his eminence. The first born is one possessed of peculiar privileges. The word here seems to designate the saints, believers, Christians, as they are God’s chosen people and highly privileged. We hence see the propriety of “the whole assembly,” or the whole number of the faithful, composed of Jews or Gentiles. The Apostle says, “We are part of this whole assembly,” and in order to point out his meaning more distinctly he calls it “the Church.” The reference here seems to be the saints on earth, and at the end of the verse to departed saints. And they are said to be “made perfect,” because freed from guilt, sin, and every pollution, having “washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb.” — Ed.

the same time the Apostle alludes to the ancient rite of the Law, which has been before mentioned.

That speaketh better things, etc. There is no reason why better may not be rendered adverbially in the following manner, --- ``Christ's blood cries more efficaciously, and is better heard by God than the blood of Abel.'' It is, however, preferable to take the words literally: the blood of Christ is said to speak better things, because it avails to obtain pardon for our sins. The blood of Abel did not properly cry out; for it was his murder that called for vengeance before God. But the blood of Christ cries out, and the atonement made by it is heard daily. [270]

Heb 12:25-29

Hebrews Chapter 12:25-29

25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh. For if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven:

25. Videte ne asperenemini loquentem; nam si illi, qui aspeernati sunt eum qui loquebatur in terra, non effugerunt, multo magic nos si aversemur loquentem e coelis;

26. Whose voice then shook the earth: but now he hath promised, saying, Yet once more I shake not the earth only, but also heaven.

26. Cujus vox tune terram concussit, nunc autem denuntiavit, dicens, Adhuc semel ego moveo non solum terram, sed etiam coelum.

27. And this word, Yet once more, signifieth the removing of those things that are shaken, as of things that are made, that those things which cannot be shaken may remain.

27. Illud autem, Adhuc semel, significat eurum quae concutiuntur translationem, ut maneant quae non concutiuntur.

28. Wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be moved, let us have grace, whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear:

28. Quare regnum quod non concutitur apprehendentes, habemus (alias, habeumus) gratiam: per quam colamus Deum, placentes illi cum reverentia et religione:

29. For our God is a consuming fire.

29. Deus enim noster ignis consumens est.

25. See that ye refuse not him that speaketh, etc. He uses the same verb as before, when he said that the people entreated that God should not speak to them; but he means as I think, another thing, even that we ought not to reject the word destined for us. He further shows what he had in view in the last comparison, even that the severest punishment awaits the despisers of the Gospel, since the ancients under the Law did not despise it with impunity. And he pursues the argument from the less to the greater, when he says, that God

[270] See Appendix X 2.

or Moses spoke then on earth, but that the same God or Christ speaks now from heaven. At the same time I prefer regarding God in both instances as the speaker. And he is said to have spoken on earth, because he spoke in a lower strain. Let us ever bear in mind that he refers to the external ministration of the Law, which, as compared with the gospel, partook of what was earthly, and did not lead men's minds above the heavens unto perfect wisdom; for though the Law contained in it the same truth, yet as it was only a training school, perfection could not belong to it. [271]

26. Whose voice then shook the earth, etc. Though God shook the earth when he published his Law, yet he shows that he now speaks more gloriously, for he shakes both earth and heaven. He quotes on the subject the testimony of the Prophet Haggai, though he gives not the words literally; but as the Prophet foretells a future shaking of the earth and the heaven, the Apostle borrows the idea in order to teach us that the voice of the Gospel not only thunders through the earth, but also penetrates above the heavens. But that the Prophet speaks of Christ's kingdom, is beyond any dispute, for it immediately follows in the same passage, ``I will shake all nations; and come shall the desire of all nations, and I will fill this house with glory.'' It is however certain that neither all nations have been gathered into one body, except under the banner of Christ, nor has there been any desire in which we ought to acquiesce but Christ alone, nor was the temple of Solomon exceeded in glory until the magnificence of Christ became known through the whole world. The Prophet then no doubt refers to the time of Christ. But if at the commencement of Christ's kingdom, not only the lower parts of the world were shaken, but his power also reached the heaven, the Apostle justly concludes that the doctrine of the Gospel is sublimer than that of the Law, and ought to be more distinctly heard by all creatures. [272]

[271] By "him that speaketh," is by some understood Christ, but more properly God, as his is the leading subject in the foregoing and the following verses. The words which follow are brief; and the first clause is explained more fully in chapter 10:28, and the second in chapter 1:2. God spake "on earth" by Moses, but "from heaven" by his son, who came from heaven, ascended into heaven and sent his spirit down from heaven. The comparison here is between speaking on earth and speaking from heaven; but included in this, as previously explained in the Epistle, are the agents employed. God in delivering the Law fixed on a place on earth, and then as it were descended and employed an earthly agent, a mere man as his mediator; but in delivering the gospel, he did not descend from heaven, but employed a heavenly agent, his own son; thus manifested the superiority of the Gospel over the law. And that God is meant throughout this verse is evident from the following verse, "Whose voice," etc. The passage may be thus rendered, — "See that ye reject not him who speaketh; for if they escaped not who rejected him when speaking on earth, how much more shall not we, if we turn away from him when speaking from heaven?" We have no single word to express {χρηματίζοντα} --- oraculizing, rendered by Doddridge, ``giving forth oracles;'' by Macknight, ``delivering an oracle;'' and by Stuart, ``warning.'' But the best word we can adopt here is ``speaking.'' --- Ed

[272] The quotation is literally neither from Hebrew nor from the Sept., but is substantially the same. "The earth and the heaven" may be deemed a phrase used to designate the whole state of things, as they include the whole of the visible creation. The whole Jewish polity, civil and religious, is generally supposed to be intended here. But as the shaking of the nations is mentioned in Haggai 2:6, 7, Macknight thought that by "the earth" is meant heathen idolatry, and by "heaven" the Jewish economy, so called because it was divinely appointed. If this be allowed, then we see a reason for the change which the Apostle has made in the words: the original is both in Hebrew and in the Sept., "I shake (or will shake) the heaven and the earth;" but the Apostle says: "I shake not only the earth, but the heaven also." — Ed.

27. And this word, yet once more, etc. The words of the Prophet are these, ``Yet a little while;'' and he means that the calamity of the people would not be perpetual, but that the Lord would succor them. But the Apostle lays no stress on this expression; he only infers from the shaking of the heaven and the earth that the state of the world was to be changed at the coming of Christ; for things created are subject to decay, but Christ's kingdom is eternal; then all creatures must needs be brought into a better state. [273]

He makes hence a transition to another exhortation, that we are to lay hold on that kingdom which cannot be shaken; for the Lord shakes us for this end, that he may really and forever establish us in himself. At the same time I prefer a different reading, which is given by the ancient Latin version, ``Receiving a kingdom, we have grace,'' etc. When read affirmatively, the passage runs best, --- ``We, in embracing the Gospel, have the gift of the Spirit of Christ, that we may reverently and devoutly worship God.'' If it be read as an exhortation, ``Let us have,'' it is a strained and obscure mode of speaking. The Apostle means in short, as I think, that provided we enter by faith into Christ's kingdom, we shall enjoy constant grace, which will effectually retain us in the service of God; for as the kingdom of Christ is above the world, so is the gift of regeneration. [274]

By saying that God is to be served acceptably, {εὐαρέστως}, with reverence and fear, he intimates that though he requires us to serve with promptitude and delight, there is yet no service approved by him except it be united with humility and due reverence. Thus he condemns froward confidence of the flesh, as well as the sloth which also proceeds from it. [275]

29. For our God, etc. As he had before kindly set before us the grace of God, so he now makes known his severity; and he seems to have borrowed this sentence from the fourth chapter of Deuteronomy. Thus we see that God omits nothing by which he may draw us to himself; he begins indeed with love and kindness, so that we may follow him the more willingly; but when by alluring he effects but little, he terrifies us.

And doubtless it is expedient that the grace of God should never be promised to us without being accompanied with threatening; for we are so extremely prone to indulge ourselves, that without the application of these stimulants the milder doctrine would prove ineffectual. Then the Lord, as he is propitious and merciful to such as fear him unto a thousand generations; so he is a jealous God and a just avenger, when despised, unto the third and the fourth generation. [276]

[273] See Appendix Y 2.

[274] See Appendix Z 2.

[275] The Vulgate is, “with fear and reverence;” Beza’s “with modesty and reverence and religious fear;” Schleusner’s, “with reverence and devotion.” Stuart has adopted our version. See Appendix A 3. — Ed.

[276] The conjunction {καὶ} at the beginning of this verse is commonly omitted by translators, but Macknight has retained it, ``For even our God,'' etc. The intimation clearly is, that under the Gospel no less than under the Law God is a consuming fire to apostates; and apostasy or idolatry is the sin especially referred to in Deuteronomy 4:24, from which this passage is taken. --- Ed

Chapter 13

CHAPTER 13

Heb 13:1-6

Hebrews Chapter 13:1-6

1. Let brotherly love continue.

1. Fraterna charitas maneat.

2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

2. Hospitalitatis ne sitis immemores; per hanc enim quosdam latuit quum recipissent Angelos.

3. Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body.

3. Memores estote vinctorum, tanquam ipsi quoque sitis in corpore.

4. Marriage is honourable in all, and the bed undefiled: but whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.

4. Honorabile in omnibus conjugium et thorus impollutus; scortatores auten et adulteros judicabit Deus.

5. Let your conversation be without covetousness; and be content with such things as ye have: for he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

5. Sint mores sine avaritia: contenti sitis iis quae adsunt; ipse enim dixit, Non te desero, neque te derelinquo:

6. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me.

6. Ut fidentes dicamus, Dominus mihi adjutor, neque timebo quid faciat mihi homo.

1. Let brotherly love, etc. Probably he gave this command respecting brotherly love, because a secret hatred arising from the haughtiness of the Jews was threatening to rend the Churches. But still this precept is generally very needful, for nothing flows away so easily as love; when everyone thinks of himself more than he ought, he will allow to others less than he ought; and then many offenses happen daily which cause separations. [277]

He calls love brotherly, not only to teach us that we ought to be mutually united together by a peculiar and an inward feeling of love, but also that we may remember that we cannot be Christians without being brethren; for he speaks of the love which the household of faith ought to cultivate one towards

[277] "Continue" or remain, implies that they had manifested this love, chapter 6:10; as though he had said, "Let the love of the brethren be such as it has been." — Ed.

another inasmuch as the Lord has bound them closer together by the common bond of adoption. It was therefore a good custom in the primitive Church for Christians to call one another brothers; but now the name as well as the thing itself is become almost obsolete, except that the monks have appropriated to themselves the use of it when neglected by others, while at the same time they show by their discords and intestine factions that they are the children of the evil one.

2. Be not forgetful to entertain strangers, etc. This office of humanity has also nearly ceased to be properly observed among men; for the ancient hospitality, celebrated in histories, is unknown to us, and Inns now supply the place of accommodations for strangers. But he speaks not so much of the practice of hospitality as observed then by the rich; but he rather commends the miserable and the needy to be entertained, as at that time many were fugitives who left their homes for the name of Christ.

And that he might commend this duty the more, he adds, that angels had sometimes been entertained by those who thought that they received only men. I doubt not but that this is to be understood of Abraham and Lot; for having been in the habit of showing hospitality, they without knowing and thinking of any such thing, entertained angels; thus their houses were in no common way honored. And doubtless God proved that hospitality was especially acceptable to him, when he rendered such a reward to Abraham and to Lot. Were any one to object and say, that this rarely happened; to this the obvious answer is, --- That not mere angels are received, but Christ himself, when we receive the poor in his name. In the words in Greek there is a beautiful alliteration which cannot be set forth in Latin.

3. Remember them that are in bonds, or, Be mindful of the bound, etc. There is nothing that can give us a more genuine feeling of compassion than to put ourselves in the place of those who are in distress; hence he says, that we ought to think of those in bonds as though we were bound with them. What follows the first clause, As being yourselves also in the body, is variously explained. Some take a general view thus, ``Ye are also exposed to the same evils, according to the common lot of humanity;'' but others give a more restricted sense, ``As though ye were in their body.'' Of neither can I approve, for I apply the words to the body of the Church, so that the meaning would be this, ``Since ye are members of the same body, it behooves you to feel in common for each other's evils, that there may be nothing disunited among you.'' [278]

4. Marriage is honourable in all, etc. Some think this an exhortation to the married to conduct themselves modestly and in a becoming manner, that the husband should live with his wife temperately and chastely, and not defile the conjugal bed by unbeseeming wantonness. Thus a verb is to be understood in

[278] What Beza says of this opinion is, “I by no means reject it, though I regard the other (first mentioned here) as the most obvious.” It has been said that whenever Paul mentions the mystical body, it is in connection with Christ, Romans 12:5, and that “in the body” is to be understood literally, 2 Corinthians 5:6. It is so taken here by Grotius, Doddridge, Scott, and Stuart. — Ed.

the sense of exhorting, ``Let marriage be honorable.'' And yet the indicative is would not be unsuitable; for when we hear that marriage is honorable, it ought to come immediately to our minds that we are to conduct ourselves in it honorably and becomingly. Others take the sentence by way of concession in this way, ``Though marriage is honorable, it is yet unlawful to commit fornication''; but this sense, as all must see, is rigid. I am inclined to think that the Apostle sets marriage here in opposition to fornication as a remedy for that evil; and the context plainly shows that this was his meaning; for before he threatens that the Lord would punish fornicators, he first states what is the true way of escape, even if we live honourable in a state of marriage.

Let this then be the main point, that fornication will not be unpunished, for God will take vengeance on it. And doubtless as God has blessed the union of man and wife, instituted by himself, it follows that every other union different from this is by him condemned and accursed. He therefore denounces punishment not only on adulterers, but also on fornicators; for both depart from the holy institution of God; nay, they violate and subvert it by a promiscuous intercourse, since there is but one legitimate union, sanctioned by the authority and approval of God. But as promiscuous and vagrant lusts cannot be restrained without the remedy of marriage, he therefore commends it by calling it ``honorable''.

What he adds, and the bed undefiled, has been stated, as it seems to me, for this end, that the married might know that everything is not lawful for them, but that the use of the legitimate bed should be moderate, lest anything contrary to modesty and chastity be allowed. [279]

By saying in all men, I understand him to mean, that there is no order of men prohibited from marriage; for what God has allowed to mankind universally, is becoming in all without exception; I mean all who are fit for marriage and feel the need of it.

It was indeed necessary for this subject to have been distinctly and expressly stated, in order to obviate a superstition, the seeds of which Satan was probably even then secretly sowing, even this, --- that marriage is a profane thing, or at least far removed from Christian perfection; for those seducing spirits, forbidding marriage, who had been foretold by Paul, soon appeared. That none then might foolishly imagine that marriage is only permitted to the people in

[279] If the whole verse be rightly considered, the construction of the first part will become evident. Two things are mentioned, “marriage” and “bed” — the conjugal bed. Two characters are afterwards mentioned, “fornicators and adulterers.” The first disregard marriage and the second defile the conjugal bed. Then the first clause speaks of marriage as in itself honorable, in opposition to the dishonor put on it by fornicators, who being unmarried, indulge in illicit intercourse with women; and the second speaks of the conjugal bed as being undefiled, when not contaminated with adultery. This being evidently the meaning, the declarative form seems most suitable. Besides, the particle {δὲ}, ``but'' in the second part, as Beza observes, required this construction. But if {γὰρ} be the reading, as found in some copies, then the perceptive form seems necessary, though even then the sense would be materially the same, --- that marriage ought to be deemed honorable in all, that is in all ranks and orders of men, as Grotius observes, and that the conjugal bed ought to be undefiled. --- ``Let marriage be deemed honorable among all, and the marriage bed be undefiled; for God will condemn fornicator and adulterer.'' Hammond, Macknight, and Stuart adopt the perceptive form; but Beza, Doddridge and Scott, the declarative. --- Ed.

general, but that those who are eminent in the Church ought to abstain from it, the Apostle takes away every exception; and he does not teach us that it is conceded as an indulgence, as Jerome sophistically says, but that it is honourable. It is very strange indeed that those who introduced the prohibition of marriage into the world, were not terrified by this so express a declaration; but it was necessary then to give loose reins to Satan, in order to punish the ingratitude of those who refused to hear God.

5. Let your conversation be without covetousness, etc. While he seeks to correct covetousness, he rightly and wisely bids us at the same time to be content with our present things; for it is the true contempt of money, or at least a true greatness of mind in the right and moderate use of it, when we are content with what the Lord has given us, whether it be much or little; for certainly it rarely happens that anything satisfies an avaricious man; but on the contrary they who are not content with a moderate portion, always seek more even when they enjoy the greatest affluence. It was a doctrine which Paul had declared, that he had learned, so as to know how to abound and how to suffer need. Then he who has set limits to his desire so as to acquiesce resignedly in his lot, has expelled from his heart the love of money. [280]

For he has said, etc. Here he quotes two testimonies; the first is taken, as some think, from the first chapter of Joshua, but I am rather of the opinion that it is a sentence drawn from the common doctrine of Scripture, as though he had said, ``The Lord everywhere promises that he will never be wanting to us.'' He infers from this promise what is found in Psalm 118, that we have the power to overcome fear when we feel assured of God's help. [281]

Here indeed he plucks up the evil by the very roots, as it is necessary when we seek to free from it the minds of men. It is certain that the source of covetousness is mistrust; for whosoever has this fixed in his heart, that he will never be forsaken by the Lord, will not be immoderately solicitous about present things, because he will depend on God's providence. When therefore the Apostle is seeking to cure us of the disease of covetousness, he wisely calls our attention to God's promises, in which he testifies that he will ever be present with us. He hence infers afterwards that as long as we have such a helper there is no cause to fear. For in this way it can be that no depraved desires will importune us; for faith alone is that which can quiet the minds of men, whose disquietude without it is too well known.

Heb 13:7-9

Hebrews Chapter 13:7-9

7. Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.

7. Memores estote praefectorum vestrorum, qui loquuti sunt vobis ser-

[280] See Appendix B 3.
[281] See Appendix C 3.

monem Dei, quorum intuentes exitum conversationis imitamini fidem.

8. Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever.

8. Iesus Christus heri et hodie, idem etiam in secula.

9. Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines. For it is a good thing that the heart be established with grace; not with meats, which have not profited them that have been occupied therein.

9. Doctrinis variis et peregrinis ne circunferamini: bonum enim gratia cor confirmari, non cibis, qui nihil profuerunt iis qui in illis versati sunt.

7. Remember, etc. What follows refers not so much to morals as to doctrine. He first sets before the Jews the example of those by whom they had been taught; and he seems especially to speak of those who had sealed the doctrine delivered by them by their own blood; for he points out something memorable when he says, considering the end of their conversation; though still there is no reason why we should not understand this generally of those who had persevered in the true faith to the end, and had rendered a faithful testimony to sound doctrine through their whole life as well as in death. But it was a matter of no small importance, that he set before them their teachers for imitation; for they who have begotten us in Christ ought to be to us in the place as it were of fathers. Since then they had seen them continuing firm and unmoved in the midst of much persecutions and of various other conflicts, they ought in all reason to have been deeply moved and affected. [282]

8. Jesus Christ the same, etc. The only way by which we can persevere in the right faith is to hold to the foundation, and not in the smallest degree to depart from it; for he who holds not to Christ knows nothing but mere vanity, though he may comprehend heaven and earth; for in Christ are included all the treasures of celestial wisdom. This then is a remarkable passage, from which we learn that there is no other way of being truly wise than by fixing all our thoughts on Christ alone.

Now as he is dealing with the Jews, he teaches them that Christ had ever possessed the same sovereignty which he holds at this day; The same, he says, yesterday, and today, and forever. By which words he intimates that Christ, who was then made known in the world, had reigned from the beginning of the world, and that it is not possible to advance farther when we come to him. Yesterday then comprehends the whole time of the Old Testament; and that no one might expect a sudden change after a short time, as the promulgation of the Gospel was then but recent, he declares that Christ had been lately revealed for this very end, that the knowledge of him might continue the same for ever.

It hence appears that the Apostle is not speaking of the eternal existence of Christ, but of that knowledge of him which was possessed by the godly in all ages, and was the perpetual foundation of the Church. It is indeed certain that Christ existed before he manifested his power; but the question is, what is the subject of the Apostle. Then I say he refers to quality, so to speak, and not to essence; for it is not the question, whether he was from eternity with the Father,

[282] See Appendix D 3.

but what was the knowledge which men had of him. But the manifestation of Christ as to its external form and appearance, was indeed different under the Law from what it is now; yet there is no reason why the Apostle could not say truly and properly that Christ, as regarded by the faithful, is always the same. [283]

9. Diverse doctrines, etc. He concludes that we ought not to fluctuate, since the truth of Christ, in which we ought to stand firm, remains fixed and unchangeable. And doubtless, variety of opinions, every kind of superstition, all monstrous errors, in a word, all corruptions in religion, arise from this, that men abide not in Christ alone; for it is not in vain that Paul teaches us, that Christ is given to us by God to be our wisdom.

The import then of this passage is that in order that the truth of God may remain firm in us, we must acquiesce in Christ alone. We hence conclude that all who are ignorant of Christ are exposed to all the delusions of Satan; for apart from him there is no stability of faith, but innumerable tossings here and there. Wonderful then is the acuteness of the Papists, who have contrived quite a contrary remedy for driving away errors, even by extinguishing or burying the knowledge of Christ! But let this warning of the Holy Spirit be fixed in our hearts, that we shall never be beyond the reach of danger except we cleave to Christ.

Now the doctrines which lead us away from Christ, he says, are divers or various, because there is no other simple and unmixed truth but the knowledge of Christ; and he calls them also strange or foreign, because whatever is apart from Christ is not regarded by God as his own; and we are hereby also reminded how we are to proceed, if we would make a due proficiency in the Scripture, for he who takes not a straight course to Christ, goes after strange doctrines. The Apostle farther intimates that the Church of God will always have to contend with strange doctrines and that there is no other means of guarding against them but by being fortified with the pure knowledge of Christ. [284]

For it is a good thing, etc. He now comes from a general principle to a particular case. The Jews, for instance, as it is well known, were superstitious as to distinctions in meats; and hence arose many disputes and discords; and this was one of the strange doctrines which proceeded from their ignorance of

[283] Stuart takes the same view with Calvin in this point — that the eternal existence of Christ is not what is here taught, but that he as a Mediator is unchangeably the same. See Appendix E 3. — Ed.

[284] "Doctrines" were said to be "various" because of their number; there were then as now many false doctrines; and "strange" because they were new or foreign to the truth, not consistent with the faith, but derived from abroad as it were, borrowed from traditions, ceremonies, or other foreign sources. Stuart gives another meaning to the first word, that is "different" from Christian doctrine; but it has no such meaning. Still less warranted is Macknight in saying that it means what is "discordant." What is meant by "diverse diseases" and "diverse lusts" is that they were of various kinds, or that they were many. The same author gives an unprecedented meaning to the second word. "foreign," that is, taught by unauthorized teachers! Stuart says, that it means "foreign" to Christian doctrine. The word is indeed used in Acts 17:18, and in 1 Peter 4:12, in the sense of "new," a thing unusual, not heard of before; nor is this meaning unsuitable here. See Ephesians 4:14, where the same subject is handled. See also Matthew 15:9. — Ed.

Christ. Having then previously grounded our faith on Christ, he now says that the observance of meats does not conduce to our salvation and true holiness. As he sets grace in opposition to meats, I doubt not but that by grace he means the spiritual worship of God and regeneration. In saying that the heart may be established, he alludes to the word, carried about, as though he had said, ``It is the spiritual grace of God, and not the observance of meats, that will really establish us. [285]

Which have not profited them that have been occupied therein. It is uncertain to whom he here refers; for the fathers who lived under the Law had no doubt a useful training, and a part of it was the distinction as to meats. It seems then that this is to be understood rather of the superstitious, who, after the Gospel had been revealed, still perversely adhered to the old ceremonies. At the same time were we judiciously to explain the words as applied to the fathers, there would be no inconsistency; it was indeed profitable for them to undergo the yoke laid on them by the Lord, and to continue obediently under the common discipline of the godly and of the whole Church; but the Apostle means that abstinence from meats was in itself of no avail. And no doubt it is to be regarded as nothing, except as an elementary instruction at the time when God's people were like children as to their external discipline. To be occupied in meats is to be taken as having a regard to them, so as to make a distinction between clean and unclean. But what he says of meats may be extended to the other rites of the Law.

Heb 13:10-15

Hebrews Chapter 13:10-15

10. We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat which serve the tabernacle.

10. Habemus altare, de quo edendi non habent potestatem qui tabernaculo serviunt.

11. For the bodies of those beasts, whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the high priest for sin, are burned without the camp.

11. Qyiryn ebun abunakuyn ubfertyr sabgyus ori oeccati ub sabcta oer sacerdotem, eorum corpora cremantur extra castra.

12. Wherefore Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people with his own blood, suffered without the gate.

12. Quare et Iesus ut sanctificaret per proprium sanguinem populum, extra portam passus est.

13. Let us go forth therefore unto him without the camp, bearing his reproach.

13. Prinde exeamus ad eum extra castra, probrum ejus ferentes:

14. For here have we no continuing city, but we seek one to come.

14. Non enim habemus hic manentem civitatem, sed futurum inquirimus.

[285] See Appendix F 3.

15. By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.

15. Pere ipsum ergo offeramus semper hostiam laudis Deo, hoc est, fructum labiorum confitentium nomini ejus.

10. We have an altar, etc. This is a beautiful adaptation of an old rite under the Law, to the present state of the Church. There was a kind of sacrifice appointed, mentioned in the sixteenth chapter of Leviticus, no part of which returned to the priests and Levites. This, as he now shows by a suitable allusion, was accomplished in Christ; for he was sacrificed on this condition, that they who serve the tabernacle should not feed on him. But by the ministers of the tabernacle he means all those who performed the ceremonies. Then that we may partake of Christ, he intimates that we must renounce the tabernacle; for as the word altar includes sacrificing and the victim; so tabernacle, all the external types connected with it.

Then the meaning is, ``No wonder if the rites of the Law have now ceased, for this is what was typified by the sacrifice which the Levites brought without the camp to be there burnt; for as the ministers of the tabernacle did eat nothing of it, so if we serve the tabernacle, that is, retain its ceremonies, we shall not be partakers of that sacrifice which Christ once offered, nor of the expiation which he once made by his own blood; for his own blood he brought into the heavenly sanctuary that he might atone for the sin of the world.'' [286]

13. Let us go forth, therefore, etc. That the preceding allegory or mystical similitude might not be frigid and lifeless, he connects with it an important duty required of all Christians. And this mode of teaching is what Paul also usually adopts, that he might show to the faithful what things God would have them to be engaged in, while he was endeavoring to draw them away from vain ceremonies; as though he had said, ``This is what God demands from you, but not that work in which you in vain weary yourselves.'' So now our Apostle speaks; for while he invites us to leave the tabernacle and to follow Christ, he reminds us that a far different thing is required of us from the work of serving God in the shade under the magnificent splendor of the temple; for we must go after him through exiles, flights, reproaches, and all kinds of afflictions. This warfare, in which we must strive even unto blood, he sets in opposition to those shadowy practices of which alone the teachers of ceremonies boasted.

14. For here we have no continuing city, etc. He extends still further the going forth which he had mentioned, even that as strangers and wanderers in this world we should consider that we have no fixed residence but in heaven. Whenever, therefore, we are driven from place to place, or whenever any change happens to us, let us think of what the Apostle teaches us here, that we have no certain shade on earth, for heaven is our inheritance; and when more and more tried, let us ever prepare ourselves for our last end; for they who enjoy a very quiet life commonly imagine that they have a rest in this world: it is hence

[286] The verb {ἁγιάζω} means here expiation, as in chapter 2:11, 10:10, and other places in this Epistle; and so it is taken by Calvin and the rendering of Stuart is ``that he might make expiation,'' etc. --- Ed

profitable for us, who are prone to this kind of sloth, to be often tossed here and there, that we who are too much inclined to look on things below, may learn to turn our eyes up to heaven.

15. By him, therefore, let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God, etc. He returns to that particular doctrine to which he had referred, respecting the abrogation of the ancient ceremonies; and he anticipates an objection that might have been made; for as the sacrifices were attached as appendages to the tabernacle, when this was abolished, it follows that the sacrifices also must have ceased. But the Apostle had taught us that as Christ had suffered without the gate, we are also called thither, and that hence the tabernacle must be forsaken by those who would follow him.

Here a question arises, whether any sacrifices remained for Christians; for this would have been inconsistent, as they had been instituted for the purpose of celebrating God' worship. The Apostle, therefore, in due time meets this objection, and says that another kind of sacrifice remains for us, which no less pleases God, even the offering of the calves of our lips, as the Prophet Hoses says. [287] (Hosea 14:2.) Now that the sacrifice of praise is not only equally pleasing to God, but of more account than all those external sacrifices under the Law, appears evident from the fiftieth Psalm; for God there repudiates all these as things of nought, and bids the sacrifice of praise to be offered to him. We hence see that it is the highest worship of God, justly preferred to all other exercises, when we acknowledge God's goodness by thanksgiving; yea, this is the ceremony of sacrificing which God commends to us now. There is yet no doubt but that under this one part is included the whole of prayer; for we cannot give him thanks except when we are heard by him; and no one obtains anything except he who prays. He in a word means that without brute animals we have what is required to be offered to God, and that he is thus rightly and really worshipped by us.

But as it was the Apostle's design to teach us what is the legitimate way of worshipping God under the New Testament, so by the way he reminds us that God cannot be really invoked by us and his name glorified, except through Christ the mediator; for it is he alone who sanctifies our lips, which otherwise are unclean, to sing the praises of God; and it is he who opens a way for our prayers, who in short performs the office of a priest, presenting himself before God in our name.

Heb 13:16-19

Hebrews Chapter 13:16-19

[287] The words in Hosea are not regimen, but in apposition. “So will we render calves, our lips.” Such is the meaning given by the Targum, though the Vulg. puts the words in construction, “the calves of our lips.” Instead of the calves offered in sacrifices, the promise made was to offer their lips, that is, words which they were required to take, “Take with you words”. The Sept., Syr., and Arab. Render the phrase as here given, “the fruit of our lips,” only the Apostle leaves out “our”. There is the same meaning, though not exactly the same words. — Ed.

16. But to do good and to communicate forget not: for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

16. Beneficentiae autem et communicationis ne sitis immemores: talibus enim hostiis delectatur Deus.

17. Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

17. Parate praefectis vestris ac deferte; ipsi enim vigilant pro animabus vestris tanquam rationem redditurei, ut cum guadio hoc faciant, et non gementes; id enim vobis non expedit.

18. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly.

18. Orate pro nobis; confidimus enim quod bonam habemus conscientam, cupientes in omnibus honeste versari.

19. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner.

19. Magis autem vos hortor ut id faciatis, quo celerius vobis restituar.

16. But to do good, etc. Here he points out even another way of offering a due and regular sacrifice, for all the acts and duties of love are so many sacrifices; and he thereby intimates that they were foolish and absurd in their wishes who thought that something was wanting except they offered beasts to God according to the Law, since God gave them many and abundant opportunities for sacrificing. For though he can derive no benefit from us, yet he regards prayer a sacrifice, and so much as the chief sacrifice, that it alone can supply the place of all the rest; and then, whatever benefits we confer on men he considers as done to himself, and honors them with the name of sacrifices. So it appears that the elements of the Law are now not only superfluous, but do harm, as they draw us away from the right way of sacrificing.

The meaning is, that if we wish to sacrifice to God, we must call on him and acknowledge his goodness by thanksgiving, and further, that we must do good to our brethren; these are the true sacrifices which Christians ought to offer; and as to other sacrifices, there is neither time nor place for them.

For with such sacrifices God is well pleased. There is to be understood here an implied contrast, --- that he no longer requires those ancient sacrifices which he had enjoined until the abrogation of the Law.

But with this doctrine is connected an exhortation which ought powerfully to stimulate us to exercise kindness towards our neighbors; for it is not a common honor that God should regard the benefits we confer on men as sacrifices offered to himself, and that he so adorns our works, which are nothing worth, as to pronounce them holy and sacred things, acceptable to him. When, therefore, love does not prevail among us, we not only rob men of their right, but God himself, who has by a solemn sentence dedicated to himself what he has commanded to be done to men.

The word communicate has a wider meaning than to do good, for it embraces

all the duties by which men can mutually assist one another; and it is a true mark or proof of love, when they who are united together by the Spirit of God communicate to one another. [288]

17. Obey them, etc. I doubt not but that he speaks of pastors and other rulers of the Church, for there were then no Christian magistrates; and what follows, for they watch for your souls, properly belongs to spiritual government. He commands first obedience and then honor to be rendered to them. [289] These two things are necessarily required, so that the people might have confidence in their pastors, and also reverence for them. But it ought at the same time to be noticed that the Apostle speaks only of those who faithfully performed their office; for they who have nothing but the title, nay, who use the title of pastors for the purpose of destroying the Church, deserve but little reverence and still less confidence. And this also is what the Apostle plainly sets forth when he says, that they watched for their souls, --- a duty which is not performed but by those who are faithful rulers, and are really what they are called.

Doubly foolish, then, are the Papists, who from these words confirm the tyranny of their own idol: ``The Spirit bids us obediently to receive the doctrine of godly and faithful bishops, and to obey their wholesome counsels; he bids us also to honor them.'' But how does this favor mere apes of bishops? And yet not only such are all those who are bishops under the Papacy, but they are cruel murderers of souls and rapacious wolves. But to pass by a description of them, this only will I say at present, that when we are bidden to obey our pastors, we ought carefully and wisely to find out those who are true and faithful rulers; for if we render this honor to all indiscriminately, first, a wrong will be done to the good; and secondly, the reason here added, to honor them because they watch for souls, will be rendered nugatory. In order, therefore, that the Pope and those who belong to him may derive support from this passage, they must all of necessity first prove that they are of the number of those who watch for our salvation. If this be made evident, there will then be no question but that they ought to be reverently treated by all the godly. [290]

[288] The words may be thus rendered, "And forget not benevolence (or, literally, well-doing) and liberality." The {δὲ} here should be rendered ``and,'' for this is enjoined in addition to what is stated in the previous verse. The word {εὐποιΐα} means kindness, benevolence, beneficence, the doing of good generally; but {κοινωνία} refers to the distribution of what is needful for the poor. See Romans 15:26, 2 Corinthians 9:13. So that Calvin in this instance has reserved their specific meaning. Stuart's version is ``Forget not kindness also and liberality;'' and he explains the clause thus, ``Beneficence or kindness toward the suffering and liberality toward the needy.'' --- Ed

[289] Grotius renders the second verb, {ὑπείκετε}, ``concede'' to them, that is, the honor due to their office; Beza, ``be compliant,'' (obsecundate;) and the directions of your guides and submit to their admonitions.'' Doddridge gives the sentiment of Calvin, ``Submit yourselves to them with becoming respect.'' The words may be rendered, ``Obey your rulers and be submissive;'' that is cultivate an obedient, compliant and submissive spirit. He speaks first of what they were to do --- to render obedience and then of the spirit with which that obedience was to be rendered; it was not merely to be an outward act, but proceeding from a submissive mind. Schleusner's explanation is similar, ``Obey your rulers and promptly (or willingly) obey them.'' --- Ed.

[290] "The Greek interpreters," says Estius, "teach that obedience is due to a bishop, though he be immoral in his conduct; but not if he perverts the doctrine of faith in his public preaching, for in that case he deprives himself of power, as he declares himself to be an enemy to the church." Poole, who quotes this passage, adds, "Let the Papisticals note this, who vociferously claim blind obedience in behalf of their pastors." — Ed.

For they watch, etc. His meaning is, that the heavier the burden they bear, the more honor they deserve; for the more labor anyone undertakes for our sake, and the more difficulty and danger he incurs for us, the greater are our obligations to him. And such is the office of bishops, that it involves the greatest labor and the greatest danger; if, then, we wish to be grateful, we can hardly render to them that which is due; and especially, as they are to give an account of us to God, it would be disgraceful for us to make no account of them. [291]

He further reminds us in what great a concern their labor may avail us, for, if the salvation of our souls be precious to us, they ought by no means to be deemed of no account who watch for it. He also bids us to be teachable and ready to obey, that what pastors do in consequence of what their office demands, they may also willingly and joyfully do; for, if they have their minds restrained by grief or weariness, though they may be sincere and faithful, they will yet become disheartened and careless, for vigor in acting will fail at the same time with their cheerfulness. Hence the Apostle declares, that it would be unprofitable to the people to cause sorrow and mourning to their pastors by their ingratitude; and he did this, that he might intimate to us that we cannot be troublesome or disobedient to our pastors without hazarding our own salvation.

As hardly one in ten considers this, it is hence evident how great generally is the neglect of salvation; nor is it a wonder how few at this day are found who strenuously watch over the Church of God. For besides, there are very few who are like Paul, who have their mouth open when the people's ears are closed, and who enlarge their own heart when the heart of the people is straitened. The Lord also punishes the ingratitude which everywhere prevails. Let us then remember that we are suffering the punishment of our own perverseness, whenever the pastors grow cold in their duty, or are less diligent than they ought to be.

18. For we trust, etc. After having commended himself to their prayers, in order to excite them to pray, he declares that he had a good conscience. Though indeed our prayers ought to embrace the whole world, as love does, from which they flow; it is yet right and meet that we should be peculiarly solicitous for godly and holy men, whose probity and other marks of excellency have become known to us. For this end, then, he mentions the integrity of his own conscience, that is, that he might move them more effectually to feel an interest for himself. By saying, I am persuaded, or I trust, he thus partly shows his modesty and partly his confidence. In all, may be applied to things as well as to men; and so I leave it undecided. [292]

[291] See Appendix G 3.

[292] The Greek fathers connect it with the preceding clause, “For we trust we have a good conscience towards all,” that is towards Jews and Gentiles; but the Vulg. connects it with the following, “willing in all things to live well;” that is honorably. “Willing in all things to behave well” Macknight; “determined in all things to behave honorable” Doddridge; “being desirous in all things to conduct ourselves uprightly,” Stuart. To keep the alliteration in the text, the words may be rendered thus — “We trust that we have a good conscience, being desirous to maintain a good conduct.” A good conscience is a pure conscience, free from guilt and sinister motives: and to behave or live goodly, as the words are literally, is not to behave honorably or honestly, but to behave or live uprightly according to the rule of God’s word;

19. But I beseech you, etc. He now adds another argument, --- that the prayers they would make for him, would be profitable to them all as well as to himself individually, as though he had said, ``I do not so much consult my own benefit as the benefit of you all; for to be restored to you would be the common good of all.''

A probable conjecture may hence perhaps be gathered, that the author of this Epistle was either beset with troubles or detained by the fear of persecution, so as not to be able to appear among those to whom he was writing. It might however be, that he thus spoke, though he was free and at liberty, for he regarded man's steps as being in God's hand; and this appears probable from the end of the Epistle.

Heb 13:20-25

Hebrews Chapter 13:20-25

20. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant,

20. Porro Deus pacis, qui eduxit ex mortuis Pastorem ovium magnum in sanguine Testamenti aeterni, Dominum nostrum Iesum,

21. Make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

21. Confirmet (alias, aptet, vel, perficiat) vos in omni opere bono, ut faciatis ejus voluntatem, faciens in vobis quod acceptum sit coram ipso, per Iesum Christum, cui gloria in secula seculorum. Amen.

22. And I beseech you, brethren, suffer the word of exhortation: for I have written a letter unto you in few words.

22. Hortar (alias, obsecro) autem vos fratres, suscipite sermonem exhortationis: etenim brevibus verbis scripsi.

23. Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.

23. Scitate (alias, scitis) fratrem Timotheum solutum esse, cum quo, si celerius venerit, videbo vos.

24. Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.

24. Salutate omnes qui praesunt vobis et omnes sanctos: salutant vos Itali.

25. Grace be with you all. Amen.

Gratia cum omnibus vobia. Amen.

Written to the Hebrews from Italy, by Timothy.

Ad Hebroeos scripta ab Italia per Timotheum [293]

so that the best version is, “Willing in all things to live uprightly.” “We trust,” is rendered by Doddridge and Macknight, “we are confident;” but our version is preferable. — Ed.

[293] This forms no part of the Epistle; and the subscriptions to the other Epistles must be viewed the same. Some of them are indeed manifestly erroneous, as the case with this. See verse 23. — Ed.

20. Now the God of peace, etc. To render mutual what he desired them to do, he ends his Epistle with prayer; and he asks of God to confirm, or to fit, or to perfect them in every good work; for such is the meaning of {καταρτίσαι}. We hence conclude, that we are by no means fit to do good until we are made or formed for the purpose by God, and that we shall not continue long in doing good unless he strengthens us; for perseverance is his peculiar gift. Nor is there a doubt but that as no common gifts of the Spirit had already, as it seems, appeared in them, the first impression with which they began, is not what is prayed for, but the polishing, which they were to be made perfect.

That brought again from the dead, etc. This clause was added for the sake of confirmation; for he intimates that God is then only prayed to aright by us, to lead us on to perfection, when we acknowledge his power in the resurrection of Christ, and acknowledge Christ himself as our pastor. He, in short, would have us to look to Christ, in order that we may rightly trust in God for help; for Christ was raised from death for this end, that we might be renewed unto eternal life, by the same power of God; and he is the great pastor of all, in order that we may protect the sheep committed to him by the Father.

Through the blood, etc. I have rendered it, ``In the blood;'' for as {ב{ ``in,'' is often taken in the sense of with, so I prefer to regard it here. For it seems to me, that the Apostle means, that Christ so arose from the dead, that his death was not yet abolished, but that it retains its efficacy forever, as though he had said, ``God raised up his own son, but in such a way that the blood he shed once for all in his death is efficacious after his resurrection for the ratification of the everlasting covenant, and brings forth fruit the same as though it were flowing always.'' [294]

21. To do his will, etc. He now gives a definition of good works by laying down God's will as the rule; for he thus intimates, that no works are to be deemed good, but such as are agreeable to the will of God, as Paul also teaches us in Romans 12:2, and in many other places. Let us then remember, that it is the perfection of a good and holy life, when we live in obedience to his will. The clause which next follows is explanatory, working (or doing) in you what is well pleasing in his sight. He had spoken of that will which is made known in the Law; he now shows, that in vain is obtruded on God what he has not commanded; for he values the decrees of his own will far more than all the inventions of the world.

Through Jesus Christ, etc. This may be explained in two ways, --- ``Working through Jesus Christ'', or, ``Wellpleasing through Jesus Christ.'' Both senses are suitable. For we know that the spirit of regeneration and also all graces are bestowed on us through Christ; and then it is certain, that as nothing can proceed from us absolutely perfect, nothing can be acceptable to God without that pardon which we obtain through Christ. Thus it comes, that our works, performed by the odor of Christ's grace, emit a sweet fragrance in God's presence, while otherwise they would have a fetid smell. I am disposed to include

[294] See Appendix H 3.

both meanings.

To whom be glory, etc. This I refer to Christ. And as he here ascribes to Christ what peculiarly belongs to God alone, he thus bears a clear testimony to his divinity; but still if anyone prefers to explain this of the Father, I do not object; though I embrace the other sense, as being the most obvious.

22. And I beseech you, etc. Some understand this as though he was soliciting them to hear him; but I take another view; for he mentions, as I think, that he had written in a few words, or briefly, in order that he might not appear as though he wished to lessen in any degree the ordinary practice of teaching. Let us hence learn that the Scripture has not been committed to us in order to silence the voice of pastors, and that we are not to be fastidious when the same exhortations often sound in our ears; for the holy Spirit has so regulated the writings which he has dictated to the Prophets and the Apostles, that he detracts nothing from the order instituted by himself; and the order is, that constant exhortations should be heard in the Church from the mouth of pastors. And probably he recommends the word of exhortation for this reason, that though men are by nature anxious to learn, they yet prefer to hear something new rather than to be reminded of things known and often heard before. Besides, as they indulge themselves in sloth, they can ill bear to be stimulated and reproved.

23. Know ye that our brother, etc. Since the termination of the Greek verb {γινώσκετε}, will admit of either renderings, we may read, ``Ye know,'' or, ``Know ye;'' but I prefer the latter reading, though I do not reject the other. [295] The probability is, that he was informing the Jews on the other side of the sea of what they did not know. Now, if this Timothy was the renowned companion of Paul, which I am inclined to think, it is very probable that either Luke or Clement was the author of this Epistle. Paul, indeed, more usually calls him his son; and then what immediately follows does not apply to Paul; for it appears that the writer was at liberty and at his own disposal; and besides, that he was then anywhere rather than at Rome; nay, it is very probable, that he was going round through various cities, and was then preparing to pass over the sea. Now all these particulars might have been suitable to the circumstances either of Luke or of Clement after the death of Paul. [296]

24. Salute, etc. As he writes his Epistle generally to the Hebrews, it is strange that he bids some, separate from the rest, to be saluted; but he sends

[295] The Vulgate Beza and almost all expounders, render it as an imperative, “Know ye.” — Ed.

[296] The words {ἀπολελυμένον} in this verse, has been rendered by Macknight and some others, ``sent away.'' It is no doubt used in the sense of dismissing, dissolving, or sending away an assembly or a multitude, but not of sending away a person on a message. The two things are wholly distinct. The verb means to set loose, to loosen to release and hence to dismiss, to set at liberty, to make free, and never in the sense of sending a person to a place on business, or with an errand or message. The objection that we do not read elsewhere of Timothy's imprisonment is of no weight for the history we have of those times is very brief; and if we judge from the state of things at that period, there is nothing more probable than that Timothy shared the lot of Paul and of others. It is also probable that he was not imprisoned at Rome, where Paul was, but at some other place, for Paul says he expected him soon; and he does not say ``If he returns quickly,'' but ``if he come quickly.'' ---Ed.

this salutation, as I think, more particularly to the rulers, as a mark of honor, that he might conciliate them, and gently lead them to assent to his doctrine. And he adds, ---

And all the saints. He either means the faithful from among the Gentiles, and refers to them that both Jews and Gentiles might learn to cultivate unity among themselves; or his object was to intimate, that they who first received the Epistle, were to communicate it to others.

END OF THE COMMENTARIES ON THE EPISTLE
TO THE HEBREWS

James

James: The Argument

THE ARGUMENT

It appears from the writings of Jerome and Eusebius, that this Epistle was not formerly received by many Churches without opposition. There are also at this day some who do not think it entitled to authority. I, however, am inclined to receive it without controversy, because I see no just cause for rejecting it. For what seems in the second chapter to be inconsistent with the doctrine of free justification, we shall easily explain in its own place. Though he seems more sparing in proclaiming the grace of Christ than it behooved an Apostle to be, it is not surely required of all to handle the same arguments. The writings of Solomon differ much from those of David; while the former was intent on forming the outward man and teaching the precepts of civil life, the latter spoke continually of the spiritual worship of God, peace of conscience, God's mercy and gratuitous promise of salvation. But this diversity should not make us to approve of one, and to condemn the other. Besides, among the evangelists themselves there is so much difference in setting forth the power of Christ, that the other three, compared with John, have hardly sparks of that full brightness which appears so conspicuous in him, and yet we commend them all alike.

It is enough to make men to receive this Epistle, that it contains nothing unworthy of an Apostle of Christ. It is indeed full of instruction on various subjects, the benefit of which extends to every part of the Christian life; for there are here remarkable passages on patience, prayer to God, the excellency and fruit of heavenly truth, humility, holy duties, the restraining of the tongue, the cultivation of peace, the repressing of lusts, the contempt of the world, and the like things, which we shall separately discuss in their own places.

But as to the author, there is somewhat more reason for doubting. It is indeed certain that he was not the Son of Zebedee, for Herod killed him shortly after our Lord's resurrection. The ancients are nearly unanimous in thinking that he was one of the disciples named Oblias and a relative of Christ, who was set over the Church at Jerusalem; and they supposed him to have been the person whom Paul mentioned with Peter and John, who he says were deemed pillars, (Galatians 2:9.) But that one of the disciples was mentioned as one of the three pillars, and thus exalted above the other Apostles, does not seem to me probable. I am therefore rather inclined to the conjecture, that he of whom Paul speaks was the son of Alpheus. I do not yet deny that another was the ruler of the Church at Jerusalem, and one indeed from the college of the disciples; for the Apostles were not tied to any particular place. But whether of the two was the writer of this Epistle, it is not for me to say. That Oblias was actually a man of great authority among the Jews, appears even from this, that as he had

been cruelly put to death by the faction of an ungodly chief-priest, Josephus hesitated not to impute the destruction of the city in part to his death.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

James 1:1-4

James 1:1-4

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting.

1 Jacobus, Dei ac Domini Jesu Christi servus, duodecim tribubus quae in dispersione sunt, salutem.

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

2 Omne gaudium existimate, fratres mei, quum in tentationes varias incideritis;

3 Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience.

3 Scientes quod probatio fidei vestrae, patientiam operatur

4 But let patience have her perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, wanting nothing.

4 Patientia vero opus perfectum habeat, ut sitis perfecti et integri, in nullo deficientes.

1 To the twelve tribes. When the ten tribes were banished, the Assyrian king placed them in different parts. Afterwards, as it usually happens in the revolutions of kingdoms (such as then took place,) it is very probable that they moved here and there in all directions. And the Jews had been scattered almost unto all quarters of the world. He then wrote and exhorted all those whom he could not personally address, because they had been scattered far and wide. But that he speaks not of the grace of Christ and of faith in him, the reason seems to be this, because he addressed those who had already been rightly taught by others; so that they had need, not so much of doctrine, as of the goads of exhortations. [297]

2 All joy. The first exhortation is, to bear trials with a cheerful mind. And it

[297] The salutation is peculiar; but in the same form with the letter sent to Antioch by the Apostles, (of whom James was one,) and the church at Jerusalem, Acts 15:23. It is therefore apostolic, although adopted from a form commonly used by the heathen writers. See Acts 23:26. John in John 2:10 and John 2:11 uses the verb {χαίρειν} in a similar sense; and it means properly to rejoice. It being an infinitive, the verb {λέγω}, to say or to bid, is put before it by John, and is evidently understood here. Hence the salutation may thus be rendered, --- ``James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, bids, (or sends, or wishes) joy to the twelve tribes who are in their dispersion.'' There had been an eastern and a western dispersion, the first at the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity, and the second during the predominancy of the Grecian power, which commenced with Alexander the Great. As this epistle was written in Greek, it was no doubt intended more especially for those of the latter dispersion. But the benefit of the eastern dispersion was soon consulted, as the very first version of the New Testament was made into this language, that is, the Syriac; and this was done at the beginning of the second century.

was especially necessary at that time to comfort the Jews, almost overwhelmed as they were with troubles. For the very name of the nation was so infamous, that they were hated and despised by all people wherever they went; and their condition as Christians rendered them still more miserable, because they held their own nation as their most inveterate enemies. At the same time, this consolation was not so suited to one time, but that it is always useful to believers, whose life is a constant warfare on earth.

But that we may know more fully what he means, we must doubtless take temptations or trials as including all adverse things; and they are so called, because they are the tests of our obedience to God. He bids the faithful, while exercised with these, to rejoice; and that not only when they fall into one temptation, but into many, not only of one kind, but of various kinds. And doubtless, since they serve to mortify our flesh, as the vices of the flesh continually shoot up in us, so they must necessarily be often repeated. Besides, as we labor under diseases, so it is no wonder that different remedies are applied to remove them.

The Lord then afflicts us in various ways, because ambition, avarice, envy, gluttony, intemperance, excessive love of the world, and the innumerable lusts in which we abound, cannot be cured by the same medicine.

When he bids us to count it all joy, it is the same as though he had said, that temptations ought to be so deemed as gain, as to be regarded as occasions of joy. He means, in short, that there is nothing in afflictions which ought to disturb our joy. And thus, he not only commands us to bear adversities calmly, and with an even mind, but shews us that this is a reason why the faithful should rejoice when pressed down by them.

It is, indeed, certain, that all the senses of our nature are so formed, that every trial produces in us grief and sorrow; and no one of us can so far divest himself of his nature as not to grieve and be sorrowful whenever he feels any evil. But this does not prevent the children of God to rise, by the guidance of the Spirit, above the sorrow of the flesh. Hence it is, that in the midst of trouble they cease not to rejoice.

3 Knowing this, that the trying. We now see why he called adversities trials or temptations, even because they serve to try our faith. And there is here a reason given to confirm the last sentence. For it might, on the other hand, be objected, ``How comes it, that we judge that sweet which to the sense is bitter?'' He then shews by the effect that we ought to rejoice in afflictions, because they produce fruit that ought to be highly valued, even patience. If God then provides for our salvation, he affords us an occasion of rejoicing. Peter uses a similar argument at the beginning of his first Epistle, ``That the trial of your faith, more precious than gold, may be,'' etc. [1Peter 1:7.] We certainly dread diseases, and want, and exile, and prison, and reproach, and death, because we regard them as evils; but when we understand that they are turned through God's kindness unto helps and aids to our salvation, it is ingratitude to murmur, and not willingly to submit to be thus paternally dealt

with.

Paul says, in Romans 5:3, that we are to glory in tribulations; and James says here, that we are to rejoice. ``We glory,'' says Paul, ``in tribulations, knowing that tribulation worketh patience.'' What immediately follows seems contrary to the words of James; for he mentions probation in the third place, as the effect of patience, which is here put first as though it were the cause. But the solution is obvious; the word there has an active, but here a passive meaning. Probation or trial is said by James to produce patience; for were not God to try us, but leave us free from trouble, there would be no patience, which is no other thing than fortitude of mind in bearing evils. But Paul means, that while by enduring we conquer evils, we experience how much God's help avails in necessities; for then the truth of God is as it were in reality manifested to us. Hence it comes that we dare to entertain more hope as to futurity; for the truth of God, known by experience, is more fully believed by us. Hence Paul teaches that by such a probation, that is, by such an experience of divine grace, hope is produced, not that hope then only begins, but that it increases and is confirmed. But both mean, that tribulation is the means by which patience is produced.

Moreover, the minds of men are not so formed by nature, that affliction of itself produces patience in them. But Paul and Peter regard not so much the nature of men as the providence of God through which it comes, that the faithful learn patience from troubles; for the ungodly are thereby more and more provoked to madness, as the example of Pharaoh proves. [298]

4 But let patience have her perfect work. As boldness and courage often appear in us and soon fail, he therefore requires perseverance. ``Real patience,'' he says, ``is that which endures to the end.'' For work here means the effort not only to overcome in one contest, but to persevere through life. His perfection may also he referred to the sincerity of the soul, that men ought willingly and not feignedly to submit to God; but as the word work is added, I prefer to explain it of constancy. For there are many, as we have said, who shew at first an heroic greatness, and shortly after grow weary and faint. He therefore bids those who would be perfect and entire, [299] to persevere to the end. But what he means by these two words, he afterwards explains of those who fail not, or become not wearied: for they, who being overcome as to patience, be broken down, must, by degrees, be necessarily weakened, and at length wholly fail.

James 1:5-8

James 1:5-8

5 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him.

[298] The word used by James is {δοχίμιον}, trial, the act of testing, and by Paul {δοχιμὴ}, the result of testing, experience. James speaks of probation, and Paul of the experience gained thereby.

[299] "Perfect, {τέλειοι}," fully grown, mature; ``entire, {ὁλόχληζοι}," complete, no part wanting. The first refers to the maturity of grace; and the second to its completeness, no grace being wanting. They were to be like men full grown, and not maimed or mutilated, but having all their members complete.

5 Porro si quis autem vestrum destituitur sapientia, postulet a Deo, qui dat omnibus simpliciter, nec exprobrat; et dabitur ei.

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed.

6 Postulet autem in fide, nihil haesitans; nam qui haesitat similis est fluctui maris, qui a vento agitur et circumfertur.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

7 non ergo existimet homo ille quod sit quicquam accepturus a Domino.

8 A double minded man is unstable in all his ways.

8 Vir duplici animo, instabilis est in omnibus viis suis.

5 If any of you lack wisdom. As our reason, and all our feelings are averse to the thought that we can be happy in the midst of evils, he bids us to ask of the Lord to give us wisdom. For wisdom here, I confine to the subject of the passage, as though he had said, ``If this doctrine is higher than what your minds can reach to, ask of the Lord to illuminate you by his Spirit; for as this consolation alone is sufficient to mitigate all the bitterness of evils, that what is grievous to the flesh is salutary to us; so we must necessarily be overcome with impatience, except we be sustained by this kind of comfort.'' Since we see that the Lord does not so require from us what is above our strength, but that he is ready to help us, provided we ask, let us, therefore, learn, whenever he commands anything, to ask from him the power to perform it.

Though in this place to be wise is to submit to God in the endurance of evils, under a due conviction that he so orders all things as to promote our salvation; yet the sentence may be generally applied to every branch of right knowledge.

But why does he say If any one, as though all of them did not want wisdom. To this I answer, that all are by nature without it; but that some are gifted with the spirit of wisdom, while others are without it. As, then, all had not made such progress as to rejoice in affliction, but few there were to whom this had been given, James, therefore, referred to such cases; and he reminded those who were not as yet fully convinced that by the cross their salvation was promoted by the Lord, that they were to ask to be endued with wisdom. And yet there is no doubt, but that necessity reminds us all to ask the same thing; for he who has made the greatest progress, is yet far off from the goal. But to ask an increase of wisdom is another thing than to ask for it at first.

When he bids us to ask of the Lord, he intimates, that he alone can heal our diseases and relieve our wants.

That giveth to all men liberally. By all, he means those who ask; for they who seek no remedy for their wants, deserve to pine away in them. However, this universal declaration, by which every one of us is invited to ask, without exception, is very important; hence no man ought to deprive himself of so great a privilege.

To the same purpose is the promise which immediately follows; for as by this command he shews what is the duty of every one, so he affirms that they would not do in vain what he commands; according to what is said by Christ,

``Knock, and it shall be opened.''
(Matthew 7:7; Luke 11:9.)

The word liberally, or freely, denotes promptitude in giving. So Paul, in Romans 12:8, requires simplicity in deacons. And in 2 Corinthians 8 and 2 Corinthians 9, when speaking of charity or love, he repeats the same word several times. The meaning, then, is, that God is so inclined and ready to give, that he rejects none, or haughtily puts them off, being not like the niggardly and grasping, who either sparingly, as with a closed hand, give but little, or give only a part of what they were about to give, or long debate with themselves whether to give or not. [300]

And upbraideth not. This is added, lest any one should fear to come too often to God. Those who are the most liberal among men, when any one asks often to be helped, mention their formal acts of kindness, and thus excuse themselves for the future. Hence, a mortal man, however open-handed he may be, we are ashamed to weary by asking too often. But James reminds us, that there is nothing like this in God; for he is ready ever to add new blessings to former ones, without any end or limitation.

6 But let him ask in faith. He shews here, first the right way of praying; for as we cannot pray without the word, as it were, leading the way, so we must believe before we pray; for we testify by prayer, that we hope to obtain from God the grace which he has promised. Thus every one who has no faith in the promises, prays dissemblingly. Hence, also, we learn what is true faith; for James, after having bidden us to ask in faith, adds this explanation, nothing wavering, or, doubting nothing. Then faith is that which relies on God's promises, and makes us sure of obtaining what we ask. It hence follows, that it is connected with confidence and certainty as to God's love towards us. The verb {διακρίνεσθαι}, which he uses, means properly to inquire into both sides of a question, after the manner of pleaders. He would have us then to be so convinced of what God has once promised, as not to admit a doubt whether he shall be heard or not.

He that wavereth, or doubteth. By this similitude he strikingly expresses how God punishes the unbelief of those who doubt his promises; for, by their own restlessness, they torment themselves inwardly; for there is never any calmness for our souls, except they recumb on the truth of God. He, at length, concludes, that such are unworthy to receive anything from God.

This is a remarkable passage, fitted to disprove that impious dogma which is counted as an oracle under the whole Papacy, that is, that we ought to pray doubtingly, and with uncertainty as to our success. This principle, then, we hold, that our prayers are not heard by the Lord, except when we have a confidence that we shall obtain. It cannot indeed be otherwise, but that through the infirmity of our flesh we must be tossed by various temptations, which are like

[300] The literal meaning of {ἁπλῶς} is simply without any mixture; the noun, {ἁπλότης}, is used in the sense of sincerity, which has no mixture of hypocrisy or fraud, (2 Corinthians 1:12.) and in the sense of liberality, or disposition free from what is sordid or parsimonious, having no mixture of niggardliness, (2 Corinthians 8:2.) This latter is evidently the meaning here, so that ``liberally,'' according to our version, is the best word.

engines employed to shake our confidence; so that no one is found who does not vacillate and tremble according to the feeling of his flesh; but temptations of this kind are at length to be overcome by faith. The case is the same as with a tree, which has struck firm roots; it shakes, indeed, through the blowing of the wind, but is not rooted up; on the contrary, it remains firm in its own place.

8 A double-minded man, or, a man of a double mind. This sentence may be read by itself, as he speaks generally of hypocrites. It seems, however, to me to be rather the conclusion of the preceding doctrine; and thus there is an implied contrast between the simplicity or liberality of God, mentioned before, and the double-mindedness of man; for as God gives to us with a stretched out hand, so it behooves us in our turn to open the bosom of our heart. He then says that the unbelieving, who have tortuous recesses, are unstable; because they are never firm or fixed, but at one time they swell with the confidence of the flesh, at another they sink into the depth of despair. [301]

James 1:9-11

James 1:9-11

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

9 Porro glorietur frater humilis in sublimate sua;

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: because as the flower of the grass he shall pass away.

10 Dives autem in humilitate sua, quia tanquam flos herbae prateteribit.

11 For the sun is no sooner risen with a burning heat, but it withereth the grass, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the fashion of it perisheth: so also shall the rich man fade away in his ways.

11 Nam sol exortus est cum aestu, et exarescit herba, et flos ejus cecidit, et decor aspectus ejus periit; sic et dives in suis viis (vel, copiis) marcescet.

9 Let the brother of low degree. As Paul, exhorting servants submissively to bear their lot, sets before them this consolation, that they were the free-men of God, having been set free by his grace from the most miserable bondage of Satan, and reminds them, though free, yet to remember that they were the servants of God; so here James in the same manner bids the lowly to glory in this, that they had been adopted by the Lord as his children; and the rich, because they had been brought down into the same condition, the world's vanity having been made evident to them. Thus the first thing he would have to do is to be content with their humble and low state; and he forbids the rich to be proud. Since it is incomparably the greatest dignity to be introduced into the company of angels, nay, to be made the associates of Christ, he who estimates this favor of God aright, will regard all other things as worthless. Then neither poverty, nor contempt, nor nakedness, nor famine nor thirst, will make his mind

[301] "The double-minded," or the man with two souls, {δίψυχος}, means here no doubt the man who hesitates between faith and unbelief, because faith is the subject of the passage. When again used, in James 4:8, it means a hesitation between God and the world.

so anxious, but that he will sustain himself with this consolation. ``Since the Lord has conferred on me the principal thing, it behooves me patiently to bear the loss of other things, which are inferior.''

Behold, how a lowly brother ought to glory in his elevation or exaltation; for if he be accepted of God, he has sufficient consolation in his adoption alone, so as not to grieve unduly for a less prosperous state of life.

10 But the rich, in that he is made low, or, in his lowness. He has mentioned the particular for the general; for this admonition pertains to all those who excel in honor; or in dignity, or in any other external thing. He bids them to glory in their lowness or littleness, in order to repress the haughtiness of those who are usually inflated with prosperity. But he calls it lowness, because the manifested kingdom of God ought to lead us to despise the world, as we know that all the things we previously greatly admired, are either nothing or very little things. For Christ, who is not a teacher except of babes, checks by his doctrine all the haughtiness of the flesh. Lest, then, the vain joy of the world should captivate the rich, they ought to habituate themselves to glory in the casting down of their carnal excellency. [302]

As the flower of the grass. Were any one to say that James alludes to the words of Isaiah, I would not much object; but I cannot allow that he quotes the testimony of the Prophet, who speaks not only of the things of this life and the fading character of the world, but of the whole man, both body and soul; [Isaiah 40:6-8;] but here what is spoken of is the pomp of wealth or of riches. And the meaning is, that glorying in riches is foolish and preposterous, because they pass away in a moment. The philosophers teach the same thing; but the song is sung to the deaf, until the ears are opened by the Lord to hear the truth concerning the eternity of the celestial kingdom. Hence he mentions brother; intimating that there is no place for this truth, until we are admitted into the order of God's children.

Though the received reading is {ἐν} {ταῖς} {πορείαις}, yet I agree with Erasmus, and read the last word, {πορίαις}, without the diphthong ``in his riches,'' or, with his riches; and the latter I prefer. [303]

James 1:12-15

James 1:12-15

12 Blessed is the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.

[302] The opinion of Macknight and some others, that the reference is to the lowness to which the rich were reduced by persecution, does not comport with the passage, for the Apostle afterwards speaks of the shortness of man's life and its uncertainty, and not of the fading nature of riches, which would have been most suitable, had he in view to comfort the rich at the loss of property. The Christian state was "lowness" according to the estimation of the world.

[303] The received text is regarded as the best reading; the other is found in very few copies.

12 Beatus vir qui suffert temptationem; quod quum probatus fuerit, accipiet coronam vitae, quam promisit Deus diligentibus ipsum.

13 Let no man say when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man:

13 Nemo quum tentatur dicat, a Deo tentor; Deus enim nec tentari malis potest, nec quenquam tentat.

14 But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed.

14 Sed unusquisque tentatur, dum a sua concupiscentia abstrahitur, et inescatur.

15 Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death.

15 Postquam antum concupiscentia conceperit, parit peccatum vero perfectum generat mortem.

12 Blessed is the man. After having applied consolation, he moderated the sorrow of those who were severely handled in this world, and again humbled the arrogance of the great. He now draws this conclusion, that they are happy who magnanimously endure troubles and other trials, so as to rise above them. The word temptation may indeed be otherwise understood, even for the stings of lusts which annoy the soul within; but which is here commended, as I think, is fortitude of mind in enduring adversities. It is, however, a paradox, that they are not happy to whom all things come according to their wishes, but such as are not overcome with evils.

For when he is tried. He gives a reason for the preceding sentence; for the crown follows the contest. If, then, it be our chief happiness to be crowned in the kingdom of God, it follows, that the contests with which the Lord tries us, are aids and helps to our happiness. Thus the argument is from the end or the effect: hence we conclude, that the faithful are harassed by so many evils for this purpose, that their piety and obedience may be made manifest, and that they may be thus at length prepared to receive the crown of life.

But they reason absurdly who hence infer that we by fighting merit the crown; for since God has gratuitously appointed it for us, our fighting only renders us fit to receive it.

He adds, that it is promised to those who love God. By speaking thus, he means not that the love of man is the cause of obtaining the crown, (for God anticipates us by his gratuitous love;) but he only intimates that the elect who love him are alone approved by God. He then reminds us that the conquerors of all temptations are those who love God, and that we fail not in courage when we are tried, for no other cause than because the love of the world prevails in us.

13 Let no man, when he is tempted. Here, no doubt, he speaks of another kind of temptation. It is abundantly evident that the external temptations, hitherto mentioned, are sent to us by God. In this way God tempted Abraham, (Genesis 22:1,) and daily tempts us, that is, he tries us as to what are we by

laying before us an occasion by which our hearts are made known. But to draw out what is hid in our hearts is a far different thing from inwardly alluring our hearts by wicked lusts.

He then treats here of inward temptations which are nothing else than the inordinate desires which entice to sin. He justly denies that God is the author of these, because they flow from the corruption of our nature.

This warning is very necessary, for nothing is more common among men than to transfer to another the blame of the evils they commit; and they then especially seem to free themselves, when they ascribe it to God himself. This kind of evasion we constantly imitate, delivered down to us as it is from the first man. For this reason James calls us to confess our own guilt, and not to implicate God, as though he compelled us to sin.

But the whole doctrine of scripture seems to be inconsistent with this passage; for it teaches us that men are blinded by God, are given up to a reprobate mind, and delivered over to filthy and shameful lusts. To this I answer, that probably James was induced to deny that we are tempted by God by this reason, because the ungodly, in order to form an excuse, armed themselves with testimonies of Scripture. But there are two things to be noticed here: when Scripture ascribes blindness or hardness of heart to God, it does not assign to him the beginning of this blindness, nor does it make him the author of sin, so as to ascribe to him the blame: and on these two things only does James dwell.

Scripture asserts that the reprobate are delivered up to depraved lusts; but is it because the Lord depraves or corrupts their hearts? By no means; for their hearts are subjected to depraved lusts, because they are already corrupt and vicious. But since God blinds or hardens, is he not the author or minister of evil? Nay, but in this manner he punishes sins, and renders a just reward to the ungodly, who have refused to be ruled by his Spirit. (Romans 1:26.) It hence follows that the origin of sin is not in God, and no blame can be imputed to him as though he took pleasure in evils. (Genesis 6:6.)

The meaning is, that man in vain evades, who attempts to cast the blame of his vices on God, because every evil proceeds from no other fountain than from the wicked lust of man. And the fact really is, that we are not otherwise led astray, except that every one has his own inclination as his leader and impeller. But that God tempts no one, he proves by this, because he is not tempted with evils [304] For it is the devil who allures us to sin, and for this reason, because he wholly burns with the mad lust of sinning. But God does not desire what is evil: he is not, therefore, the author of doing evil in us.

14 When he is drawn away by his own lust. As the inclination and excite-

[304] Literally, "untemptable by evils," that is, not capable of being tempted or seduced by evils, by things wicked and sinful. He is so pure, that he is not influenced by any evil propensities, that he is not subject to any evil suggestions. It hence follows that he tempts or seduces no man to what is sinful. Being himself unassailable by evils, he cannot seduce others to what is evil. As God cannot be tempted to do what is sinful, he cannot possibly tempt others to sin. The words may thus be rendered, — 13. "Let no one, when seduced, say, 'By God I am seduced;' for God is not capable of being seduced by evils, and he himself seduceth no one."

ment to sin are inward, in vain does the sinner seek an cause from an external impulse. At the same time these two effects of lust ought to be noticed --- that it ensnares us by its allurements, and that it does us away; each of which is sufficient to render us guilty. [305]

15 Then when lust hath conceived. He first calls that lust which is not any kind of evil affection or desire, but that which is the fountain of all evil affections; by which, as he shews, are conceived vicious broods, which at length break forth into sins. It seems, however, improper, and not according to the usage of Scripture, to restrict the word sin to outward works, as though indeed lust itself were not a sin, and as though corrupt desires, remaining closed up within and suppressed, were not so many sins. But as the use of a word is various, there is nothing unreasonable if it be taken here, as in many other places, for actual sin.

And the Papists ignorantly lay hold on this passage, and seek to prove from it that vicious, yea, filthy, wicked, and the most abominable lusts are not sins, provided there is no assent; for James does not shew when sin begins to be born, so as to be sin, and so accounted by God, but when it breaks forth. For he proceeds gradually and shews that the consummation of sin is eternal death, and that sin arises from depraved desires, and that these depraved desires or affections have their root in lust. It hence follows that men gather fruit in eternal perdition, and fruit which they have procured for themselves.

By perfected sin, therefore, I understand, not any one act of sin perpetrated, but the completed course of sinning. For though death is merited by every sin whatever, yet it is said to be the reward of an ungodly and wicked life. Hence is the dotage of those confuted who conclude from these words, that sin is not mortal until it breaks forth, as they say, into an external act. Nor is this what James treats of; but his object was only this, to teach that there is in us the root of our own destruction.

James 1:16-18

James 1:16-18

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

16 Ne erretis, fratres mei dilecti:

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.

17 Omnis donatio bona et omne donum perfectum desursum est, descendens a Patre luminum; apud quem non est transmutatio, aut conversionis obumbratio.

[305] The words are very striking, — “But every one is tempted (or, seduced) when, by his own lust, he is drawn away, (that is, from what is good,) and is caught by a bait (or, ensnared.)” He is in the first drawn off from the line of duty, and then he is caught by something that is pleasing and plausible, but like the bait, it has in it a deadly hook.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.

18 Is sua voluntate genuit nos veritatis, ut essemus primitiae quaedam suaram creaturarum.

16 Do not err. This is an argument from what is opposite; for as God is the author of all good, it is absurd to suppose him to be the author of evil. To do good is what properly belongs to him, and according to his nature; and from him all good things come to us. Then, whatever evil he does, is not agreeable to his nature. But as it sometimes happens, that he who quits himself well through life, yet in some things fails, he meets this doubt by denying that God is mutable like men. But if God is in all things and always like himself, it hence follows that well-doing is his perpetual work.

This reasoning is far different from that of Plato, who maintained that no calamities are sent on men by God, because he is good; for though it is just that the crimes of men should be punished by God, yet it is not right, with regard to him, to regard among evils that punishment which he justly inflicts. Plato, indeed, was ignorant; but James, leaving to God his right and office of punishing, only removes blame from him. This passage teaches us, that we ought to be so affected by God's innumerable blessings, which we daily receive from his hand, as to think of nothing but of his glory; and that we should abhor whatever comes to our mind, or is suggested by others, which is not compatible with his praise.

God is called the Father of lights, as possessing all excellency and the highest dignity. And when he immediately adds, that there is in him no shadow of turning, he continues the metaphor; so that we may not measure the brightness of God by the irradiation of the sun which appears to us. [306]

18 Of his own will. He now brings forward a special proof of the goodness of God which he had mentioned, even that he has regenerated us unto eternal life. This invaluable benefit every one of the faithful feels in himself. Then the goodness of God, when known by experience, ought to remove from them all a contrary opinion respecting him.

When he says that God of his own will, or spontaneously, hath begotten us, he intimates that he was induced by no other reason, as the will and counsel of God are often set in opposition to the merits of men. What great thing, indeed, would it have been to say that God was not constrained to do this? But

[306] This verse must be taken in connection with what as gone before. When he mentions "every good gift," it is in opposition to the evil of which he says God is not the author. See Matthew 7:11. And "every perfect free-gift," as {δώρημα} means, has a reference to the correction of the evil which arises from man himself. And he calls free-gift perfect, because it has no mixture of evil, what he throughout denies that God is the author of. Then the latter part of the verse bears a correspondence with the first. He calls God ``the Father of Lights.'' Light in the language of scripture means especially two things, the light of truth, divine knowledge and holiness. God is the father, the parent, the origin, the source of these lights. Hence from him descends every good, useful, necessary gift, to deliver men from evil, from ignorance and delusion, and every perfect free-gift to free men from their evil lusts, and to render them holy and happy. And to shew that God is ever the same, he adds, ``with whom there is no variableness or the shadow (or shade, of the slightest appearance) of a change;'' that is, who never varies in his dealings with men, and shews no symptom of any change, being the author and giver of all good, and the author of no evil, that is, of no sin.

he impresses something more, that God according to his own goodwill hath begotten us, and has been thus a cause to himself. It hence follows that it is natural to God to do good.

But this passage teaches us, that as our election before the foundation of the world was gratuitous, so we are illuminated by the grace of God alone as to the knowledge of the truth, so that our calling corresponds with our election. The Scripture shews that we have been gratuitously adopted by God before we were born. But James expresses here something more, that we obtain the right of adoption, because God does also call us gratuitously. (Ephesians 1:4, 5.) Farther, we hence learn, that it is the peculiar office of God spiritually to regenerate us; for that the same thing is sometimes ascribed to the ministers of the gospel, means no other thing than this, that God acts through them; and it happens indeed through them, but he nevertheless alone doeth the work.

The word begotten means that we become new men, so that we put off our former nature when we are effectually called by God. He adds how God begets us, even by the word of truth, so that we may know that we cannot enter the kingdom of God by any other door.

That we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures. The word {τινὰ}, ``some,'' has the meaning of likeness, as though he had said, that we are in a manner firstfruits. But this ought not to be restricted to a few of the faithful; but it belongs to all in common. For as man excels among all creatures, so the Lord elects some from the whole mass and separates them as a holy offering, to himself. [307] It is no common nobility into which God extols his own children. Then justly are they said to be excellent as firstfruits, when God's image is renewed in them.

James 1:19-21

James 1:19-21

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

19 Itaque, fratres mei dilecti, sit omnis homo celer ad audiendum, tardus autem ad loquendum, tardus ad iram:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

20 Ira enim hominus justitiam Dei non operatur.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls.

21 Quapropter deposita omni inmunditie, et redundantia malitiae, cum mansuetudine suscipite insitum sermonem qui potest servare animas vestras.

19 Let every man. Were this a general sentence, the inference would be farfetched; but as he immediately adds a sentence respecting the word of truth

[307] The firstfruits being a part and a pledge of the coming harvest, to retain the metaphor, we must regard “creatures” here as including all the saved in future ages. Hence their opinion is to be preferred, who regard the first converts, who were Jews, as the firstfruits.

suitable to the last verse, I doubt not but that he accommodates this exhortation peculiarly to the subject in hand. Having then set before us the goodness of God, he shews how it becomes us to be prepared to receive the blessing which he exhibits towards us. And this doctrine is very useful, for spiritual generation is not a work of one moment. Since some remnants of the old man ever abide in us, we must necessarily be through life renewed, until the flesh be abolished; for either our perverseness, or arrogance, or sloth, is a great impediment to God in perfecting in us his work. Hence, when James would have us to be swift to hear, he commends promptitude, as though he had said, ``When God so freely and kindly presents himself to you, you also ought to render yourselves teachable, lest your slowness should cause him to desist from speaking.''

But inasmuch as we do not calmly hear God speaking to us, when we seem to ourselves to be very wise, but by our haste interrupt him when addressing us, the Apostle requires us to be silent, to be slow to speak. And, doubtless, no one can be a true disciple of God, except he hears him in silence. He does not, however, require the silence of the Pythagorean school, so that it should not be right to inquire whenever we desire to learn what is necessary to be known; but he would only have us to correct and restrain our forwardness, that we may not, as it commonly happens, unseasonably interrupt God, and that as long as he opens his sacred mouth, we may open to him our hearts and our ears, and not prevent him to speak.

Slow to wrath. Wrath also, I think, is condemned with regard to the hearing which God demands to be given to him, as though making a tumult it disturbed and impeded him, for God cannot be heard except when the mind is calm and sedate. Hence, he adds, that as long as wrath bears rule there is no place for the righteousness of God. In short, except the heat of contention be banished, we shall never observe towards God that calm silence of which he has just spoken.

21 Wherefore lay apart. He concludes by saying how the word of life is to be received. And first, indeed, he intimates that it cannot be rightly received except it be implanted, or strike roots in us. For the expression, to receive the implanted word, ought to be thus explained, ``to receive it, that it may be really implanted.'' For he alludes to seed often sown on and ground, and not received into the moist bosom of the earth; or to plants, which being cast on the ground, or laid on dead wood, soon wither. He then requires that it should be a living implanting, by which the word becomes as it were united with our heart.

He at the same time shews the way and manner of this reception, even with meekness. By this word he means humility and the readiness of a mind disposed to learn, such as Isaiah describes when he says,

``On whom does my Spirit rest, except on the humble and meek?'' (Isaiah 57:15.)

Hence it is, that so far profit in the school of God, because hardly one in a hundred renounces the stubbornness of his own spirit, and gently submits to God; but almost all are conceited and refractory. But if we desire to be the living plantation of God, we must subdue our proud hearts and be humble, and

labor to become like lambs, so as to suffer ourselves to be ruled and guided by our Shepherd.

But as men are never thus tamed, so as to have a calm and meek heart, except they are purged from depraved affections, so he bids us to lay aside uncleanness and redundancy of wickedness. And as James borrowed a comparison from agriculture, it was necessary for him to observe this order, to begin by rooting up noxious weeds. And since he addressed all, we may hence conclude that these are the innate evils of our nature, and that they cleave to us all; yea, since he addresses the faithful, he shews that we are never wholly cleansed from them in this life, but that they are continually sprouting up, and therefore he requires that care should be constantly taken to eradicate them. As the word of God is especially a holy thing; to be fitted to receive it, we must put off the filthy things by which we have been polluted.

Under the word {κακία}, he comprehends hypocrisy and obstinacy as well as unlawful desires or lusts. Not satisfied with specifying the seat of wickedness as being in the soul of man, he teaches us that so abounding is the wickedness that dwells there, that it overflows, or that it rises up as it were into a heap; and doubtless, whosoever will well examine himself will find that there is within him an immense chaos of evils. [308]

Which is able to save. It is a high eulogy on heavenly truth, that we obtain through it a sure salvation; and this is added, that we may learn to seek and love and magnify the word as a treasure that is incomparable. It is then a sharp goad to chastise our idleness, when he says that the word which we are wont to hear so negligently, is the means of our salvation, though for this purpose the power of saving is not ascribed to the word, as if salvation is conveyed by the external sound of the word, or as if the office of saving is taken away from God and transferred elsewhere; for James speaks of the word which by faith penetrates into the hearts of men, and only intimates that God, the author of salvation, conveys it by his Gospel.

James 1:22-27

James 1:22-27

22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

22 Estote factores sermones, et non auditores solum, fallentes vos ipsos.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man

[308] What renders this passage unsatisfactory is the meaning given to {περισσεία}, rendered by some ``superfluity,'' and by others ``redundancy.'' The verb {περισσεύω} means not only to abound, but also to be a residue, to remain, to be a remnant. See Matthew 14:20; Luke 9:17. And its derivative {περίσσευμα} is used in the sense of a remnant or a remainder, Mark 8:8; and this very word is used in the Sept., for {{יתר which means a residue, a remnant, or what remains, Ezekiel .6:8 Let it have this meaning here, and the sense will not only be clear, but very striking. James was addressing those who were Christians; and he exhorted them to throw away every uncleanness and remnant of wickedness, or evil, as the word }κακία} more properly means. See Acts 8:22; 1 Peter 2:16 ``Every uncleanness,'' or filthiness, means every kind of uncleanness arising from lustful and carnal indulgences; and the ``remnant of wickedness,'' in thought and in deed, most suitably follows.

beholding his natural face in a glass:

23 Nam si quis auditor est sermones, et non factor, hic similis est homini consideranti faciem nativitatis suae in speculo.

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

24 Consideravit enim seipsum, et abiit, et protinus oblitus est qualis sit.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed.

25 Qui vero intuitus fuerit in legem perfectam, quae est libertatis, et permanserit, hic non auditor obliviosus, sed factor operis, beatus in opere suo erit.

26 If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

26 Si quis videtur religiosus esse inter vos, nec refraenat linguam suam, sed decipits cor suum, hujus inanus est religio.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

27 Religio pura et impolluta coram Deo et Patre, haec est, Visitare pupillos et viduas in afflictione ipsorum, inmaculatum servare se a mundo.

22 Be ye doers of the word. The doer here is not the same as in Romans 2:13, who satisfied the law of God and fulfilled it in every part, but the doer is he who from the heart embraces God's word and testifies by his life that he really believes, according to the saying of Christ,

``Blessed are they who hear God's word and keep it,''
(Luke 11:28;)

for he shews by the fruits what that implanting is, before mentioned. We must further observe, that faith with all its works is included by James, yea, faith especially, as it is the chief work which God requires from us. The import of the whole is, that we ought to labor that the word of the Lord should strike root in us, so that it may afterwards fructify. [309]

23 He is like to a man. Heavenly doctrine is indeed a mirror in which God presents himself to our view; but so that we may be transformed unto his image, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 3:18. But here he speaks of the external glance of the eye, not of the vivid and efficacious meditation which penetrates into the heart. It is a striking comparison, by which he briefly intimates, that a doctrine merely heard and not received inwardly into the heart avails nothing, because it soon vanishes away.

25 The perfect law of liberty. After having spoken of empty speculation, he comes now to that penetrating intuition which transforms us to the image of God. And as he had to do with the Jews, he takes the word law, familiarly known

[309] Calvin takes no notice of the last sentence, “deceiving yourselves.” The participle means deceiving by false reasoning.; it may be rendered with Doddridge, “sophistically deceiving yourselves.”

to them, as including the whole truth of God.

But why he calls it a perfect law, and a law of liberty, interpreters have not been able to understand; for they have not perceived that there is here a contrast, which may be gathered from other passages of Scripture. As long as the law is preached by the external voice of man, and not inscribed by the finger and Spirit of God on the heart, it is but a dead letter, and as it were a lifeless thing. It is, then, no wonder that the law is deemed imperfect, and that it is the law of bondage; for as Paul teaches in Galatians 4:24, separated from Christ, it generates to condemn and as the same shews to us in Romans 8:13, it can do nothing but fill us with diffidence and fear. But the Spirit of regeneration, who inscribes it on our inward parts, brings also the grace of adoption. It is, then, the same as though James had said, ``The teaching of the law, let it no longer lead you to bondage, but, on the contrary, bring you to liberty; let it no longer be only a schoolmaster, but bring you to perfection: it ought to be received by you with sincere affection, so that you may lead a godly and a holy life.''

Moreover, since it is a blessing of the Old Testament that the law of God should reform us, as it appears from Jeremiah 31:33, and other passages, it follows that it cannot be obtained until we come to Christ. And, doubtless, he alone is the end and perfection of the law; and James adds liberty, as an inseparable associate, because the Spirit of Christ never regenerates but that he becomes also a witness and an earnest of our divine adoption, so as to free our hearts from fear and trembling.

And continueth. This is firmly to persevere in the knowledge of God; and when he adds, this man shall be blessed in his deed, or work, he means that blessedness is to be found in doing, not in cold hearing. [310]

26 Seem to be religious. He now reproves even in those who boasted that they were doers of the law, a vice under which hypocrites commonly labor, that is, the wantonness of the tongue in detraction. He has before touched on the duty of restraining the tongue, but for a different end; for he then bade silence before God, that we might be more fitted to learn. He speaks now of another thing, that the faithful should not employ their tongue in evil speaking.

It was indeed needful that this vice should be condemned, when the subject was the keeping of the law; for they who have put off the grosser vices, are especially subject to this disease. He who is neither an adulterer, nor a thief, nor a drunkard, but, on the contrary, seems brilliant with some outward shew of sanctity will set himself off by defaming others, and this under the pretense of zeal, but really through the lust of slandering.

The object here, then, was to distinguish between the true worshippers of God and hypocrites, who are so swollen with Pharisaic pride, that they seek praise from the defects of others. If any one, he says, seems to be religious, that is, who has a show of sanctity, and the meantime flatters himself by speaking evil of others, it is hence evident that he does not truly serve God. For by saying

[310] It may be rendered thus, — "The same shall be blessed in (or by) the doing of it," that is, the work. The very doing of the law of liberty, of what the gospel prescribes, makes a man blessed or happy.

that his religion is vain, he not only intimates that other virtues are marred by the stain of evil-speaking, but that the conclusion is, that the zeal for religion which appears is not sincere.

But deceiveth his own heart. I do not approve of the version of Erasmus --- ``But suffers his heart to err;'' for he points out the fountain of that arrogance to which hypocrites are addicted, through which, being blinded by an immoderate love of themselves, they believe themselves to be far better than they really are; and hence, no doubt, is the disease of slandering, because the wallet, as Aesop says in his Apologue, hanging behind, is not seen. Rightly, then, has James, wishing to remove the effect, that is, the lust of evil-speaking, added the cause, even that hypocrites flatter themselves immoderately. For they would be ready to forgive were they in their turn to acknowledge themselves to be in need of forgiveness. Hence the flatteries by which they deceive themselves as to their own vices, make them such supercilious censors of others.

27 Pure religion. As he passes by those things which are of the greatest moment in religion, he does not define generally what religion is, but reminds us that religion without the things he mentions is nothing; as when one given to wine and gluttony boasts that he is temperate, and another should object, and say that the temperate man is he who does not indulge in excess as to wine or eating; his object is not to express the whole of what temperance is, but to refer only to one thing, suitable to the subject in hand. For they are in vain religious of whom he speaks, as they are for the most part trifling pretenders.

James then teaches us that religion is not to be estimated by the pomp of ceremonies; but that there are important duties to which the servants of God ought to attend.

To visit in necessity is to extend a helping hand to alleviate such as are in distress. And as there are many others whom the Lord bids us to succor, in mentioning widows and orphans, he states a part for the whole. There is then no doubt but that under one particular thing he recommends to us every act of love, as though he had said, ``Let him who would be deemed religious, prove himself to be such by self denial and by mercy and benevolence towards his neighbors.''

And he says, before God, to intimate that it appears in deed otherwise to men, who are led astray by external masks, but that we ought to seek what pleases him. By God and Father, we are to understand God who is a father.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

James 2:1-4

James 2:1-4

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons.

1 Fratres mei, ne in acceptionabus personarum fidem habeatis Domini Jesu Christi ex opinione, (vel, gloriae.)

2 For if there come unto your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in also a poor man in vile raiment;

2 Si enim ingressus fuerit in coetum vestrum vir aureos anulos gestans, veste indudus spliendida; ingressus autem fuerit et pauper in sordida veste;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

3 Et respexeritis in cum qui vestem fert splendidam, et ei dixeritis, Tu sede hic honeste, et pauperi dixeritis, Tu sta illic, vel, Sede hic sub scabello pedum meorum;

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

4 An non dijudicati eestis in vobisipsis, et facti judices malarum cogitationum?

This reproof seems at first sight to be hard and unreasonable; for it is one of the duties of courtesy, not to be neglected, to honor those who are elevated in the world. Further, if respect of persons be vicious, servants are to be freed from all subjection; for freedom and servitude are deemed by Paul as conditions of life. The same must be thought of magistrates. But the solution of these questions is not difficult, if what James writes is not separated. For he does not simply disapprove of honor being paid to the rich, but that this should not be done in a way so as to despise or reproach the poor; and this will appear more clearly, when he proceeds to speak of the rule of love.

Let us therefore remember that the respect of persons here condemned is that by which the rich is so extolled, wrong is done to the poor, which also he shews clearly by the context and surely ambitions is that honor, and full of vanity, which is shewn to the rich to the contempt of the poor. Nor is there a doubt but that ambition reigns and vanity also, when the masks of this world are alone in high esteem. We must remember this truth, that he is to be counted

among the heirs of God's kingdom, who disregards the reprobate and honors those who fear God. (Psalm 15:4.)

Here then is the contrary vice condemned, that is, when from respect alone to riches, anyone honors the wicked, and as it has been said, dishonors the good. If then thou shouldest read thus, ``He sins who respects the rich,'' the sentence would be absurd; but if as follows, ``He sins who honors the rich alone and despises the poor, and treats him with contempt,'' it would be a pious and true doctrine.

1 Have not the faith, etc., with respect of persons. He means that the respect of persons is inconsistent with the faith of Christ, so that they cannot be united together, and rightly so; for we are by faith united into one body, in which Christ holds the primacy. When therefore the pomps of the world become preeminent so as to cover over what Christ is, it is evident that faith hath but little vigor.

In rendering {τὼς} {δόξης}, ``on account of esteem,'' (ex opinione,) I have followed Erasmus; though the old interpreter cannot be blamed, who has rendered it ``glory,'' for the word means both; and it may be fitly applied to Christ, and that according to the drift of the passage. For so great is the brightness of Christ, that it easily extinguishes all the glories of the world, if indeed it irradiates our eyes. It hence follows, that Christ is little esteemed by us, when the admiration of worldly glory lays hold on us. But the other exposition is also very suitable, for when the esteem or value of riches or of honors dazzles our eyes, the truth is suppressed, which ought alone to prevail. To sit becomingly means to sit honorably.

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves? or, are ye not condemned in yourselves. This may be read affirmatively as well as interrogatively, but the sense would be the same, for he amplifies the fault by this, that they took delight and indulged themselves in so great a wickedness. If it be read interrogatively, the meaning is, ``Does not your own conscience hold you convicted, so that you need no other judge?'' If the affirmative be preferred, it is the same as though he had said, ``This evil also happens, that ye think not that ye sin, nor know that your thoughts are so wicked as they are.'' [311]

James 2:5-7

James 2:5-7

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, Hath not God chosen the poor of this world

[311] It is commonly admitted to be an interrogatory sentence: “And do ye not make a difference among (or, in) yourselves, and become judges, having evil thoughts?” literally, “judges of evil thoughts,” it being, as they say, the genitive case of possession. Or the words may be rendered, “and become judges of evil (or, false) reasonings?” or as Beza renders the sentence, “and become judges, reasoning falsely,” concluding that the rich man was good and the poor man bad. It is said by Beza and others, that {διακρίνομαι} never means to be judged or condemned, but to distinguish, to discriminate, to make a difference, and also to contend and to doubt. The difference made here was the respect of persons that was shewn, and they made this difference in themselves, in their own minds, through the perverse or false thoughts or reasonings which they entertained. But it appears that these preferences were shewn, not to the members of the Church, but to such strangers as might happen to come to their assemblies.

rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

5 Audite, fratres mei dilecti, nonne Deus elegit pauperes mundi hujus divites in fide et heredes regni quod promisit iis qui diligunt eum?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?

6 Vos autem contemptui habiustis pauperem: nonne divites tyrnnidem in vos exercent et iidem trahunt vos ad tribunalia?

7 Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which ye are called?

7 Et iidem contumelia afficiunt bonum nomen quod invocatum est super vos?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren. He proves now by a two-fold argument, that they acted preposterously, when for the sake of the rich they despised the poor: The first is, that it is unbecoming and disgraceful to cast down those whom God exalts, and to treat reproachfully those whom he honors. As God honors the poor, then every one who repudiates them, reverses the order of God. The other argument is taken from common experience; for since the rich are for the most part vexatious to the good and innocent, it is very unreasonable to render such a reward for the wrongs they do, so that they should be more approved by us than the poor, who aid us more than they wrong us. We shall now see how he proceeds with these two points.

Hath not God chosen the poor of this world? Not indeed alone, but he wished to begin with them, that he might beat down the pride of the rich. This is also what Paul says, that God hath chosen, not many noble, not many mighty in the world, but those who are weak, that he might make ashamed such as are strong (1 Corinthians 1:25.) In short, though God pours forth his grace on the rich in common with the poor, yet his will is to prefer these to those, that the mighty might learn not to flatter themselves, and that the ignoble and the obscure might ascribe in what they are to the mercy of God, and that both might be trained up to meekness and humility.

The rich in faith are not those who abound in the greatness of faith, but such as God has enriched with the various gifts of his Spirit, which we receive by faith. For, doubtless, since the Lord deals bountifully with all, every one becomes partaker of his gifts according to the measure of his own faith. If, then, we are empty or needy, that proves the deficiency of our faith; for if we only enlarge the bosom of faith, God is always ready to fill it.

He says, that a kingdom is promised to those who love God: not that the promise depends on love; but he reminds us that we are called by God unto the hope of eternal life, on this condition and to this end, that we may love him. Then the end, and not the beginning, is here pointed out.

6 Do not the rich. He seems to instigate them to vengeance by bringing forward the unjust rule of the rich, in order that they who were unjustly treated, might render like for like: and yet we are everywhere bid to do good to those who injure us. But the object of James was another; for he only wished to shew that they were without reason or judgment who through ambition honored their

executioners, and in the meantime injured their own friends, at least those from whom they never suffered any wrong. For hence appeared more fully their vanity, that they were induced by no acts of kindness: they only admired the rich, because they were rich; nay, they servilely flattered those whom they found, to their own loss, to be unjust and cruel.

There are, indeed, some of the rich who are just, and meek, and hate all unrighteousness; but few of such men are to be found. James, then, mentions what for the most part usually happens, and what daily experience proves true. For as men commonly exercise their power in doing what is wrong, it hence happens, that the more power any one has, the worse he is, and the more unjust towards his neighbors. The more careful then ought the rich to be, lest they should contract any of the contagion which everywhere prevails among those of their own rank.

7 Worthy, or good name. I doubt not but that he refers here to the name of God and of Christ. And he says, by, or, on, the which ye are called; not in prayer, as Scripture is wont sometimes to speak, but by profession; as the name of a father, in Genesis 48:16, is said to be called on his offspring, and in Isaiah 4:1, the name of a husband is called on the wife. It is, then, the same as though he had said, ``The good name in which ye glory, or which ye deem it an honor to be called by; but if they proudly calumniate the glory of God, how unworthy are they of being honored by Christians!''

James 2:8-11

James 2:8-11

8 If ye fulfill the royal law according to the scripture, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself, ye do well:

8 Si legem quidem regiam perfectis juxta scripturum, Diliges proximum tuum sicut te ipsum, bene facitis. (Leviticus 19:18; Matthew 22:39; Mark 12:31; Romans 13:9; Galatians 5:14.)

9 But if ye have respect to persons, ye commit sin, and are convinced of the law as transgressors.

9 Sin personam respicitis, peccatum committis, et redarguimini a lege veluti transgressores. (Leviticus 19:15; Deuteronomy 1:17, 19.)

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.

10 Quisquis enim totam legem servaverit, offenderit autem in uno, factus est omnium reus.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

11 Nam qui dixit, Ne moecheris, dixit etiam, Ne occidas. Quod si non fueris moechatus, occideris tamen, factus es transgressor legis.

Now follows a plainer declaration; for he expressly points out the cause of

the last reproof, for they were officiously attentive to the rich, not from love, but on the contrary, from a vain desire of attaining their favor: And it is in anticipation, by which he obviated an excuse on the other side; for they might have objected and said, that he ought not to be blamed, who humbly submiteth himself to the unworthy. James, indeed, concedes that this is true, but he shews that it was falsely pretended by them, because they shewed this submission of homage, not from love to their neighbors, but from respect of persons.

In the first clause, then, he acknowledges as right and praiseworthy, as the duties of love which we perform towards our neighbors. In the second, he denies that the ambitious respect of persons ought to be deemed as of this kind, for it widely differs from what the law prescribes. And the hinge of this answer turns on the words ``neighbor'' and ``respect of persons,'' as though he had said, ``If you pretend that there is a sort of love in what you do, this may be easily disproved; for God bids us to love our neighbors, and not to shew respect of persons.'' Besides, this word ``neighbor'' includes all mankind: he, then, who says, that a very few, according to his own fancy, ought to be honored, and others passed by, does not keep the law of God, but yields to the depraved desires of his own heart. God expressly commends to us strangers and enemies, and all, even the most contemptible. To this doctrine the respect of persons is wholly contrary. Hence, rightly does James assert, that respect of persons is inconsistent with love.

8 If ye fulfill the royal law. The law here I take simply as the rule of life; and to fulfill, or perform it, is to keep it with real integrity of heart, and as they say, roundly, (rotunde;) and he sets such a keeping in opposition to a partial observance of it. It is said, indeed, to be a royal law, as it is the royal way, or road; that is, plain, straight, and level, which, by implication, is set in opposition to sinuous by-paths and windings.

Allusion however is made, as I think, to servile obedience which they rendered to the rich, when they might, by serving in sincerity their neighbors, be not only free men, but live as kings.

When, in the second place, he says, that those who had respect of persons were convinced, or reproved by the law, the law is taken according to its proper meaning. For since we are bidden by God's command to embrace all mortals, every one who, with a few exceptions, rejects all the rest, breaks the bond of God, and inverts also his order, and is, therefore, rightly called a transgressor of the law.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law. What alone he means is, that God will not be honored with exceptions, nor will he allow us to cut off from his law what is less pleasing to us. At the first view, this sentence seems hard to some, as though the apostle countenanced the paradox of the Stoics, which makes all sins equal, and as though he asserted that he who offends in one thing ought to be punished equally with him whose whole life has been sinful and wicked. But it is evident from the context that no such thing entered into his mind.

For we must always observe the reason anything is said. He denies that our neighbors are loved when a part only of them is through ambition chosen, and the rest neglected. This he proves, because it is no obedience to God, when it is not rendered equally according to his command. Then as the rule of God is plain and complete or perfect, so we ought to regard completeness; so that none of us should presumptuously separate what he has joined together. Let there be, therefore, a uniformity, if we desire rightly to obey God. As, for instance, were a judge to punish ten thefts, and leave one man unpunished, he would betray the obliquity of his mind, for he would thus shew himself indignant against men rather than against crimes; because what he condemns in one he absolves in another.

We now, then, understand the design of James, that is, that if we cut off from God's law what is less agreeable to us, though in other parts we may be obedient, yet we be come guilty of all, because in one particular thing we violate the whole law. And though he accommodates what is said to the subject in hand, it is yet taken from a general principle, --- that God has prescribed to us a rule of life, which it is not lawful for us to mutilate. For it is not said of a part of the law, ``This is the way, walk ye in it;'' nor does the law promise a reward except to universal obedience.

Foolish, then, are the schoolmen, who deem partial righteousness, as they call it, to be meritorious; for this passage and many others, clearly shew that there is no righteousness except in a perfect obedience to the law.

11 For he that said, or he who hath said. This is a proof of the former verse; because the Lawgiver is to be considered rather than each particular precept apart. The righteousness of God, as an indivisible body, is contained in the law. Whosoever, then, transgresses one article of the Law, destroys, as far as he can, the righteousness of God. Besides, as in one part, so in every part, God's will is to try our obedience. Hence a transgressor of the law is every one who offends as to any one of its commandments according to this saying,

``Cursed is he who fulfills not all things.''
(Deuteronomy 27:26.)

We further see, that the transgressor of the law, and the guilty of all, mean the same according to James.

James 2:12-13

James 2:12-13

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

12 Sic loquimini, et sic facite, ut per legem libertatis judicandi.

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

13 Judicium enim sine misericordia ei qui non praestiterit misericordiam; et gloriatur misericordia adversus judicium.

12 So speak ye. Some give this explanation, that as they flattered themselves

too much, they are summoned to the right tribunal; for men absolve themselves according to their own notions, because they withdraw themselves from the judgment of the divine law. He then reminds them that all deeds and words are there to be accounted for, because God will judge the world according to his law. As, however, such a declaration might have smitten them with immoderate terror, to correct or mitigate what they might have thought severe, he adds, the law of liberty. For we know what Paul says,

``Whosoever are under the law are under a curse.''
(Galatians 3:10.)

Hence the judgment of the law in itself is condemnation to eternal death; but he means by the word liberty, that we are freed from the rigor of the law.

This meaning is not altogether unsuitable, though if one examines more minutely what immediately follows, he will see that James meant another thing; the sense is as though he had said, ``Except ye wish to undergo the rigor of the law, ye must be less rigid towards your neighbors; for the law of liberty is the same as the mercy of God, which delivers us from the curse of the law'' And so this verse ought to be read with what follows, where he speaks of the duty of bearing with infirmities. And doubtless the whole passage thus reads well: ``Since none of us can stand before God, except we be delivered and freed from the strict rigor of the law, we ought so to act, that we may not through too much severity exclude the indulgence or mercy of God, of which we all have need to the last.''

13 For he shall have judgment. This is an application of the last verse to the subject in hand, which confirms altogether the second explanation which I have mentioned: for he shews, that since we stand through God's mercy alone, we ought to shew that to those whom the Lord himself commends to us. It is, indeed, a singular commendation of kindness and benevolence, that God promises that he will be merciful to us, if we be so to our brethren: not that our mercy, how ever great it may be, shewn towards men, merits the mercy of God; but that God would have those whom he has adopted, as he is to them a kind and an indulgent Father, to bear and exhibit his image on the earth, according to the saying of Christ,

``Be ye merciful, as your heavenly Father is merciful.''
(Matthew 5:7.)

We must notice, on the other hand, that he could denounce nothing on them more severe or more dreadful than the judgment of God. It hence follows, that all they are miserable and lost who flee not to the asylum of pardon.

And mercy rejoiceth. As though he had said, ``God's mercy alone is that which delivers us from the dread and terror of judgment.'' he takes rejoicing or glorying in the sense of being victorious or triumphant; for the judgment of condemnation is suspended over the whole world, and nothing but mercy can bring relief.

Hard and forced is the explanation of those who regard mercy as put here for the person, for men cannot properly be said to rejoice or glory against the

judgment of God; but mercy itself in a manner triumphs, and alone reigns when the severity of judgment gives way; though I do not deny but that hence arises confidence in rejoicing, that is, when the faithful know that the wrath of God in a manner yields to mercy, so that being relieved by the latter, they are not overwhelmed by the former.

James 2:14-17

James 2:14-17

14 What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him?

14 Quid prodest, fratres mei, si fidem dicataliquis se habere, opera autem non habeat? nunquid potest fides salvum facere ipsum?

15 If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food,

15 Quod si frater aut soror nudi fuerint, et egentes quotidiano victu,

16 And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit?

16 Dicat autem aliquis vestrum illis, Abite cum pace, calescite et saturamini; non tamen dederitis quae sunt necessaria corpori, quae utilitas?

17 Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

17 Sic et fides, si opera non habuerit, mortua est per se.

14 What doth it profit. He proceeds to commend mercy. And as he had threatened that God would be a severe Judge to us, and at the same time very dreadful, except we be kind and merciful towards our neighbors, and as on the other hand hypocrites objected and said, that faith is sufficient to us, in which the salvation of men consists, he now condemns this vain boasting. The sum, then, of what is said is, that faith without love avails nothing, and that it is therefore wholly dead.

But here a question arises, Can faith be separated from love? It is indeed true that the exposition of this passage has produced that common distinction of the Sophists, between unformed and formed faith; but of such a thing James knew nothing, for it appears from the first words, that he speaks of false profession of faith: for he does not begin thus, ``If any one has faith;'' but, ``If any says that he has faith;'' by which he certainly intimates that hypocrites boast of the empty name of faith, which really does not belong to them.

That he calls it then faith, is a concession, as the Rhetoricians say; for when we discuss a point, it does no harm, nay, it is sometimes expedient, to concede to an adversary what he demands, for as soon as the thing itself is known, what is conceded may be easily taken away from him. James then, as he was satisfied that it was a false pretext by which hypocrites covered themselves, was not disposed to raise a dispute about a word or an expression. Let us, however, remember that he does not speak according to the impression of his own mind when he mentions faith, but that on the contrary he disputes against those who

made a false pretense as to faith, of which they were wholly destitute.

Can faith save him? This is the same as though he had said, that we do not attain salvation by a frigid and bare knowledge of God, which all confess to be most true; for salvation comes to us by faith for this reason, because it joins us to God. And this comes not in any other way than by being united to the body of Christ, so that, living through his Spirit, we are also governed by him. There is no such thing as this in the dead image of faith. There is then no wonder that James denies that salvation is connected with it. [312]

15 If a brother, or, For if a brother. He takes an example from what was connected with his subject; for he had been exhorting them to exercise the duties of love. If any one, on the contrary, boasted that he was satisfied with faith without works, he compares this shadowy faith to the saying of one who bids a famished man to be filled without supplying him with the food of which he is destitute. As, then, he who sends away a poor man with words, and offers him no help, treats him with mockery, so they who devise for themselves faith without works, and without any of the duties of religion, trifle with God. [313]

17 Is dead, being alone. He says that faith is dead, being by itself, that is, when destitute of good works. We hence conclude that it is indeed no faith, for when dead, it does not properly retain the name. The Sophists plead this expression and say, that some sort of faith is found by itself; but this frivolous caviling is easily refuted; for it is sufficiently evident that the Apostle reasons from what is impossible, as Paul calls an angel anathema, if he attempted to subvert the gospel. (Galatians 1:8.)

James 2:18-19

James 2:18-19

18 Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

18 Quin dicat quispam, Tu fidem habes, et ego opera habeo; ostende mihi fidem tuam sine operibus (alias, ex operibus) tuis, et ego tibi ex operibus meis ostendam fidem meam.

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

19 Tu credis quod Deus unus est, bene facis; et daemones credunt, ac contremiscunt.

18 Yea, a man may say. Erasmus introduces here two persons as speakers; one of whom boasts of faith without works, and the other of works without

[312] When he says "Can faith save him?" his meaning is "Can the faith which he says he has save him?" that is, faith which is dead and produces no works; for that is the faith clearly intended here, as it appears from what follows. To make the meaning more evident, Macknight renders the sentence thus, — "Can this faith save him?" that is, the faith that has not works.

[313] This is adduced as an illustration: as the saying of a man to the naked, "Be ye clothed," when he does nothing, effects no good, is wholly useless, so is that faith that produces no works; it being as it were dead, it cannot save.

faith; and he thinks that both are at length confuted by the Apostle. But this view seems to me too forced. He thinks it strange, that this should be said by James, Thou hast faith, who acknowledges no faith without works. But in this he is much mistaken, that he does not acknowledge an irony in these words. Then {ἀλλὰ} I take for ``nay rather;'' and {τὶς} for ``any one;'' for the design of James was to expose the foolish boasting of those who imagined that they had faith when by their life they shewed that they were unbelievers; for he intimates that it would be easy for all the godly who led a holy life to strip hypocrites of that boasting with which they were inflated. [314]

Shew me. Though the more received reading is, ``by works,'' yet the old Latin is more suitable, and the reading is also found in some Greek copies. I therefore hesitated not to adopt it. Then he bids to shew faith without works, and thus reasons from what is impossible, to prove what does not exist. So he speaks ironically. But if any one prefers the other reading, it comes to the same thing, ``Shew me by works thy faith;'' for since it is not an idle thing, it must necessarily be proved by works. The meaning then is, ``Unless thy faith brings forth fruits, I deny that thou hast any faith.'' [315]

But it may be asked, whether the outward uprightness of life is a sure evidence of faith? For James says, ``I will shew thee my faith by my works.'' To this I reply, that the unbelieving sometimes excel in specious virtues, and lead an honorable life free from every crime; and hence works apparently excellent may exist apart from faith. Nor indeed does James maintain that every one who seems good possesses faith. This only he means, that faith, without the evidence of good works, is vainly pretended, because fruit ever comes from the living root of a good tree.

19 Thou believest that there is one God. From this one sentence it appears evident that the whole dispute is not about faith, but of the common knowledge of God, which can no more connect man with God, than the sight of the sun carry him up to heaven; but it is certain that by faith we come nigh to God. Besides, it would be ridiculous were any one to say, that the devils have faith; and James prefers them in this respect to hypocrites. The devil trembles, he says, at the mention of God's name, because when he acknowledges his own

[314] I would render the verse thus: "But one may say, Thou hast faith, I also have works; shew me thy faith that is without works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works." It is the same as though he had said, "Thou hast faith only, I have also works in addition to my faith; now, prove to me that you have true faith without having works connected with it, (which was impossible, hence he is called a 'vain man,' or empty-headed, in James 2:20,) and I will prove my faith by its fruits, even good works.

[315] Griesbach and others regard {χωρὶς} as the true reading, countenanced by most MSS., and found in the Syr. and Vulg. This verse is a key to the meaning of James: faith is to be proved by works; then faith properly justifies and saves, and works prove its genuineness. When he says that a man is justified by works, the meaning according to this verse is, that a man is proved by his works to be justified, his faith thereby being shewn to be a living and not a dead faith. We may well be surprised, as Doddridge was, that any, taking a view of this whole passage, should ever think that there is any contrariety in what is here said to be the teaching of Paul. The doctrine of Paul, that man is justified by faith and not by works, that is, by a living faith, which works by love, is perfectly consistent with what James says, that is, that a man is not justified by a dead faith but by that faith which proves its living power by producing good works, or by rendering obedience to God. The sum of what James says is, that a dead faith cannot save, but a living faith, and that a living faith is a working faith --- a doctrine taught by Paul as well as by James.

judge he is filled with the fear of him. He then who despises an acknowledged God is much worse.

Thou doest well, is put down for the purpose of extenuating, as though he had said, ``It is, forsooth! a great thing to sink down below the devils.'' [316]

James 2:20-26

James 2:20-26

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

20 Vis autem scire, O homo inanis! quod fides absque operibus mortua sit?

21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar?

21 Abraham pater noster, nonne ex operibus justificatus est, quum filium suum Isaac super altare?

22 Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

22 Vides quod fides cooperata fuerit ejus operibus, et ex operibus fides perfecta fuerit?

23 And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.

23 Atque implenta fuit scriptura, quae dicit, Credidit Abraham Deo, et imputatum illi fuit in justitiam, et Amicus Deo vacatus est?

24 Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

24 Videtis igitur quod ex operibus justificatur homo, et non ex fide solum.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?

25 Similiter et Rahab meretrix, nonne ex operibus justificata est, quum excepit nuntios, et alia via ejecit?

26 For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also.

26 Quemadmodum enim corpus sine anima mortuum est, ita et fides sine operibus mortua est.

20 But wilt thou know. We must understand the state of the question, for the dispute here is not respecting the cause of justification, but only what avails a profession of faith without works, and what opinion we are to form of it. Absurdly then do they act who strive to prove by this passage that man is justified by works, because James meant no such thing, for the proofs which he subjoins refer to this declaration, that no faith, or only a dead faith, is without works.

[316] The design of alluding to the faith of devils seems to have been this, to shew that though a good man may believe and tremble, yet if he does not obey God and do good works, he has no true evidence of faith. Obedient faith is that which saves, and not merely that which makes us tremble. The connection with the preceding verse seems to be as follows, — In the former verse the boaster of mere faith is challenged to prove that his faith is right and therefore saving; the challenger would prove by his works. Then, in this verse, a test is applied — the very first article of faith is mentioned: “Be it that you believe this, yet this faith will not save you: the devils have this faith, and instead of being saved they tremble.

No one will ever understand what is said, nor judge wisely of words, except he who keeps in view the design of the writer.

21 Was not Abraham. The Sophists lay hold on the word justified, and then they cry out as being victorious, that justification is partly by works. But we ought to seek out a right interpretation according to the general drift of the whole passage. We have already said that James does not speak here of the cause of justification, or of the manner how men obtain righteousness, and this is plain to every one; but that his object was only to shew that good works are always connected with faith; and, therefore, since he declares that Abraham was justified by works, he is speaking of the proof he gave of his justification.

When, therefore, the Sophists set up James against Paul, they go astray through the ambiguous meaning of a term. When Paul says that we are justified by faith, he means no other thing than that by faith we are counted righteous before God. But James has quite another thing in view, even to shew that he who professes that he has faith, must prove the reality of his faith by his works. Doubtless James did not mean to teach us here the ground on which our hope of salvation ought to rest; and it is this alone that Paul dwells upon. [317]

That we may not then fall into that false reasoning which has deceived the Sophists, we must take notice of the two fold meaning, of the word justified. Paul means by it the gratuitous imputation of righteousness before the tribunal of God; and James, the manifestation of righteousness by the conduct, and that before men, as we may gather from the preceding words, ``Shew to me thy faith,'' etc. In this sense we fully allow that man is justified by works, as when any one says that a man is enriched by the purchase of a large and valuable chest, because his riches, before hid, shut up in a chest, were thus made known.

22 By works was faith made perfect [318] By this he again shews, that the question here is not respecting the cause of our salvation, but whether works necessarily accompany faith; for in this sense it is said to have been perfected by works, because it was not idle. It is said to have been perfected by works, not because it received thence its own perfection, but because it was thus proved to be true. For the futile distinction which the Sophists draw from these words, between formed and unformed faith, needs no labored refutation; for the faith of Abram was formed and therefore perfected before he sacrificed his son. And this work was not as it were the finishing, or last work. Formerly things after-

[317] It is justly observed by Scott, that there is the same difficulty in reconciling James with himself as with Paul. And this difficulty at once vanishes, when we take a view of the whole passage, and not confine ourselves to single expressions.

[318] The previous sentence is hardly intelligible in our version or in Calvin's. "Seest thou how faith wrought (co-operated, by C.) with his works?" The verb is {συνεργέω}, which means properly to work together, to co-operate; and it means also, as the effect of co-operating, to aid, to help. ``Seest thou how faith aided him in his works?'' Schleusner gives this paraphrase, ``Thou sees that Abraham was aided by his faith to do his remarkable works.'' Beza's version is, ``Thou seest that faith was the assistant (administer) of his works.'' Some give the idea of combining to co-operating, ``Thou seest that faith co-operated with his works,'' that is, in justification. It has been said, that if this combination had been intended, it ought to have been said that works co-operated with his faith, as faith, according to the testimony of scripture and the nature of things, is the primary and the principal thing, and as there can be no good works without faith. But the first explanation is the most consonant with the words and with the drift of the passage.

wards followed by which Abraham proved the increase of his faith. Hence this was not the perfection of his faith, nor did it then for the first time put on its form. James then understood no other thing, than that the integrity of his faith then appeared, because it brought forth that remarkable fruit of obedience.

23 And the Scripture was fulfilled. They who seek to prove from this passage of James that the works of Abraham were imputed for righteousness, must necessarily confess that Scripture is perverted by him; for however they may turn and twist, they can never make the effect to be its own cause. The passage is quoted from Moses. (Genesis 15:6.) The imputation of righteousness which Moses mentions, preceded more than thirty years the work by which they would have Abraham to have been justified. Since faith was imputed to Abraham fifteen years before the birth of Isaac, this could not surely have been done through the work of sacrificing him. I consider that all those are bound fast by an indissoluble knot, who imagine that righteousness was imputed to Abraham before God, because he sacrificed his son Isaac, who was not yet born when the Holy Spirit declared that Abraham was justified. It hence necessarily follows that something posterior is pointed out here.

Why then does James say that it was fulfilled? Even because he intended to shew what sort of faith that was which justified Abraham; that is, that it was not idle or evanescent, but rendered him obedient to God, as also we find in Hebrews 11:8. The conclusion, which is immediately added, as it depends on this, has no other meaning. Man is not justified by faith alone, that is, by a bare and empty knowledge of God; he is justified by works, that is, his righteousness is known and proved by its fruits.

25 Likewise also was not Rahab. It seems strange that he connected together those who were so unlike. Why did he not rather choose some one from so large a number of illustrious fathers, and join him to Abraham? Why did he prefer a harlot to all others? he designedly put together two persons so different in their character, in order more clearly to shew, that no one, whatever may have been his or her condition, nation, or class in society, has ever been counted righteous without good works. He had named the patriarch, by far the most eminent of all; he now includes under the person of a harlot, all those who, being aliens, were joined to the Church. Whosoever, then, seeks to be counted righteous, though he may even be among the lowest, must yet shew that he is such by good works.

James, according to his manner of speaking, declares that Rahab was justified by works; and the Sophists hence conclude that we obtain righteousness by the merits of works. But we deny that the dispute here is concerning the mode of obtaining righteousness. We, indeed, allow that good works are required for righteousness; we only take away from them the power of conferring righteousness, because they cannot stand before the tribunal of God. [319]

[319] The last verse is left unnoticed, — James 2:26 “For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works (or, having no works) is dead.” The meaning is not, that works are to faith what the spirit is to the body, for that would make works to be the life of faith, the reverse of the fact; but the meaning is, that faith having no works is like a dead carcass

without life.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

James 3:1-5

James 3:1-5

1 My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

1 Nolite plures magistri fieri, fratres mei; scientes quod majus judicium sumpturi sumus.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body.

2 In multis enim labimur omnes: si quis in sermone non labitur, hic perfectus est vir, ut qui posssit fraeno moderari totum etiam corpus.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

3 Ecce equis fraena in ora injicimus, ut obediant nobis; et totum illorum corpus circumagimus:

4 Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.

4 Ecce etiam naves, cum tantae sint, et a saevis ventis pulsentur, circumagnuntur a minimo gubernaculo, quocunque affectus dirigentis voluerit:

5 Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things.

5 Ita et lingua pusillum membrum est, et magna jactat.

1 Be not many masters. The common and almost universal interpretation of this passage is, that the Apostle discourages the desire for the office of teaching, and for this reason, because it is dangerous, and exposes one to a heavier judgment, in case he transgresses: and they think that he said, Be not many masters, because there ought to have been some. But I take masters not to be those who performed a public duty in the Church, but such as took upon them the right of passing judgment upon others: for such reprovers sought to be accounted as masters of morals. And it has a mode of speaking usual among the Greeks as well as Latins, that they were called masters who superciliously animadverted on others.

And that he forbade them to be many, it was done for this reason, because many everywhere did thrust in themselves; for it is, as it were, an innate disease in mankind to seek reputation by blaming others. And, in this respect, a twofold vice prevails --- though few excel in wisdom, yet all intrude indiscrimi-

nately into the office of masters; and then few are influenced by a right feeling, for hypocrisy and ambition stimulate them, and not a care for the salvation of their brethren. For it is to be observed, that James does not discourage those brotherly admonitions, which the Spirit so often and so much recommends to us, but that immoderate desire to condemn, which proceeds from ambition and pride, when any one exalts himself against his neighbor, slanders, carps, bites, and malignantly seeks for what he may turn to a sinister purpose: for this is usually done when impertinent censors of this kind insolently boast themselves in the work of exposing the vices of others.

From this outrage and annoyance James recalls us; and he adds a reason, because they who are thus severe towards others shall undergo a heavier judgment: for he imposes a hard law on himself, who tries the words and deeds of others according to the rule of extreme rigor; nor does he deserve pardon, who will pardon none. This truth ought to be carefully observed, that they who are too rigid towards their brethren, provoke against themselves the severity of God.

2 For in many things we offend all. This may be taken as having been said by way of concession, as though he had said, ``Be it that thou findest what is blamable in thy brethren, for no one is free from sins; but dost thou think that thou art perfect who usest a slanderous and virulent tongue?'' But James seems to me to exhort us by this argument to meekness, since we are ourselves also surrounded with many infirmities; for he acts unjustly who denies to others the pardon he needs himself. So also Paul says, when he bids the fallen to be reproved kindly, and in the spirit of meekness; for he immediately adds,

``considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.''
(Galatians 6:1.)

For there is nothing which serves more to moderate extreme rigor than the knowledge of our own infirmity.

If any man offend not in word. After having said that there is no one who does not sin in many things, he now shews that the disease of evil-speaking is more odious than other sins; for by saying that he who offends not with his tongue is perfect, he intimates that the restraining of the tongue is a great virtue, and one of the chief virtues. Hence they act most perversely who curiously examine every fault, even the least, and yet so grossly indulge themselves.

He then indirectly touches here on the hypocrisy of censors, because in examining themselves they omitted the chief thing, and that was of great moment even their evil-speaking; for they who reproved others pretended a zeal for perfect holiness, but they ought to have begun with the tongue, if they wished to be perfect. As they made no account of bridling the tongue, but, on the contrary, did bite and tear others, they exhibited only a fictitious sanctity. It is hence evident that they were the most reprehensible of all, because they neglected a primary virtue. This connection renders the meaning of the Apostle plain to us.

3 We put bits in the horses' mouths. By these two comparisons he proves that a great part of true perfection is in the tongue, and that it exercises dominion,

as he has just said, over the whole life. He compares the tongue, first, to a bridle, and then to a helm of a ship. Though a horse be a ferocious animal, yet he is turned about at the will of its rider, because he is bridled; no less can the tongue serve to govern man. So also with regard to the helm of a ship, which guides a large vessel and surmounts the impetuosity of winds. Though the tongue be a small member, yet it avails much in regulating the life of man.

And boasteth great things. The verb {μεγαλαυχεῖν} means to boast one's self, or to vaunt. But James in this passage did not intend to reprove ostentation so much as to show that the tongue is the doer of great things; for in this last clause he applies the previous comparisons to his subject; and vain boasting is not suitable to the bridle and the helm. He then means that the tongue is endued with great power.

I have rendered what Erasmus has translated the impetuosity, the inclination, of the pilot or guide; for {ὀρμὴ} means desire. I indeed allow that among the Greeks it designates those lusts which are not subservient to reason. But here James simply speaks of the will of the pilot.

James 3:5-6

James 3:5-6

5 --- Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

5 Ecce exiguus ignis quantam sylvam incendit.

6 And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell.

6 Et lingua ignis est, et mundus iniquitatis: sic inquam lingua constituta est in membris nostris, inquinans totum corpus, inflammans rotam nativitatis, et inflammatur a gehenna.

He now explains the evils which proceed from the neglect of restraining the tongue, in order that we may know that the tongue may do much good or much evil, --- that if it be modest and well regulated, it becomes a bridle to the whole life, but that if it be petulant and violent, like a fire it destroys all things.

He represents it as a small or little fire, to intimate that this smallness of the tongue will not be a hindrance that its power should not extend far and wide to do harm.

6. By adding that it is a world of iniquity, it is the same as though he had called it the sea or the abyss. And he suitably connects the smallness of the tongue with the vastness of the world; according to this meaning, A slender portion of flesh contains in it the whole world of iniquity.

So is the tongue. He explains what he meant by the term world, even because the contagion of the tongue spreads through every part of life; or rather he shews what he understood by the metaphor fire, even that the tongue pollutes the whole man. He however immediately returns to the fire, and says, that the whole course of nature is set on fire by the tongue. And he compares human life

to a course or a wheel: and {γένεσις}, as before, he takes for nature, (James 1:23.)

The meaning is, that when other vices are corrected by age or by the succession of time, or when at least then do not possess the whole man, the vice of the tongue spreads and prevails over every part of life; except one prefers to take setting on fire as signifying a violent impulse, for we call that fervid which is accompanied with violence. And thus Horace speaks of wheels, for he calls chariots in battle fervid, on account of their rapidity. The meaning then would be, that the tongue is like untamed horses; for as these draw violently the chariots, so the tongue hurries a man headlong by its own wantonness. [320]

When he says that it is set on fire by hell, it is the same as though he had said, that the outrageousness of the tongue is the flame of the infernal fire. [321] For as heathen poets imagined that the wicked are tormented by the torches of the Furies; so it is true, that Satan by the fans of temptations kindles the fire of all evils in the world: but James means, that fire, sent by Satan, is most easily caught by the tongue, so that it immediately burns; in short, that it is a material fitted for receiving or fostering and increasing the fire of hell.

James 3:7-12

James 3:7-12

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

7 Omnis enim natura ferarum et volucrum et serpentium et marinorum, a natura humana domatur et dimota est:

8 But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

8 Linguam vero nullus hominum domare potest, incoercibile malum, plena veneno mortifero.

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

9 Per ipsam benedicimus Deum et Patrem; et per ipsam execramur homines ad similitudinem ejus factos.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

10 Ex eodem ore procedit benedictio et maledictio. Non onvenit, fratres mei, haec ita fieri.

11 Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?

11 An fons ex codem foramine ejicit dulce et amarum?

[320] "The course of nature," or the compass of nature, that is, all that is included in nature, means evidently the same with "the whole body" in the preceding clause. There is no sense, compatible with the passage, in what some have suggested, "the whole course of life;" for what idea is conveyed, when we say that the tongue inflames or sets in a flame the whole course of life? But there is an intelligible meaning, when it is said, that the tongue sets in a flame the whole machinery of our nature, every faculty that belongs to man.

[321] "A bad tongue is the organ of the devil." — Estius.

12 Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.

12 Non potest, fratres mei, ficus oleas proferre; aut vitis ficus; sic nullus fons salsam et dulcem gignere aquam.

7 For every kind of beasts. This is a confirmation of the last clause; for that Satan by the tongue rules most effectively he proves by this --- that it can by no means be brought to due order; and he amplifies this by comparisons. For he says that there is no animal so savage or fierce, which is not tamed by the skill of man, --- that fishes, which in a manner inhabit another world, --- that birds, which are so quick and roving --- and that serpents, which are so inimical to mankind, are sometimes tamed. Since then the tongue cannot be restrained, there must be some secret fire of hell hidden in it.

What he says of wild beasts, of serpents, and of other animals, is not to be understood of them all; it is enough that the skill of man should subdue and tame some of the most ferocious of them, and also that serpents are sometimes tamed. He refers to present and to past time: the present regards power and capacity, and the past, usage or experience. He hence justly concludes that the tongue is full of deadly poison.

Though all these things most suitably refer in the first place to the subject of this passage --- that they claim an unreasonable command over others, who labor under a worse vice; yet a universal doctrine may be understood as taught here, --- that if we desire to form our life aright, we must especially strive to restrain the tongue, for no part of man does more harm.

9 Therewith, or, by it, bless we God. It is a clear instance of its deadly poison, that it can thus through a monstrous levity transform itself; for when it pretends to bless God, it immediately curses him in his own image, even by cursing men. For since God ought to be blessed in all his works, he ought to be so especially as to men, in whom his image and glory peculiarly shine forth. It is then a hypocrisy not to be borne, when man employs the same tongue in blessing God and in cursing men. There can be then no calling on God, and his praises must necessarily cease, when evil-speaking prevails; for it is impious profanation of God's name, which the tongue is virulent towards our brethren and pretends to praise him. That he may therefore rightly praise God, the view of evil speaking as to our neighbor must especially be corrected.

This particular truth ought also to be borne in mind, that severe censors discover their own virulence, which they suddenly vomit forth against their brethren whatever curses they can imagine, after having in sweet strains offered praises to God. Were any one to object and say, that the image of God in human nature has been blotted out by the sin of Adam; we must, indeed, confess that it has been miserably deformed, but in such a way that some of its lineaments still appear. Righteousness and rectitude, and the freedom of choosing what is good, have been lost; but many excellent endowments, by which we excel the brutes, still remain. He, then, who truly worships and honors God, will be afraid to speak slanderously of man.

11 Doth a fountain. He adduces these comparisons in order to shew that a cursing tongue is something monstrous, contrary to all nature, and subverts the order everywhere established by God. For God hath so arranged things which are contrary, that inanimate things ought to deter us from a chaotic mixture, sure as is found in a double tongue. [322]

James 3:13-18

James 3:13-18

13 Who is a wise man and endued with knowledge among you? let him shew out of a good conversation his works with meekness of wisdom.

13 Quis sapiens et intelligens inter vos? ostendat ex honesta conversatione opera sua in mansuetudine sapientiae.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and strife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

14 Si vero aemulationem amaraem habetis, et contentionem in corde vestro, ne gloriemini, et mentiamini adversus veritatem.

15 This wisdom descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish.

15 Non est haec sapientia de sursum veniens, sed terrestris, animalis, daemonica.

16 For where envying and strife is, there is confusion and every evil work.

16 Ubi enim aemulatio et contentio, ibi perturbatio et omne pravum opus.

17 But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

17 Quae autem e sursum est sapientia, primum pura est, deinde pacata, aequa, comis, plena misericordiae et bonorum operum, sine disquisitione, sine simulatione.

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

18 Fructus autem justitiae in pace seminatur facientibus pacem.

13 Who is a wise man. As the lust of slandering arises mostly from pride, and as the false conceit of wisdom for the most part generates pride, he therefore speaks here of wisdom. It is usual with hypocrites to exalt and shew off themselves by criminating all others, as the case was formerly with many of the philosophers, who sought glory for themselves by a bitter abuse of all other orders. Such haughtiness as slanderous men swell with and are blinded by, James checked, by denying that the conceit of wisdom, with which men flatter themselves, has in it anything divine; but, on the contrary, he declares that it proceeds from the devil.

Then the meaning is, that supercilious censors, who largely indulge themselves, and at the same time spare none, seem to themselves to be very wise,

[322] There is a different reading at the end of the James 3:12, adopted by Griesbach, though rejected by Mill and others: {οὕτως} {οὔτε} {ἁλυχὸν} {γλυχὺ} {ποιῶσαι} {ὕδωρ}, ``So neither can salt water produce sweet.'' This reading is favored by the Syr. and Vulg., though the words are somewhat different.

but are greatly mistaken; for the Lord teaches his people far otherwise, even to be meek, and to be courteous to others. They, then, are alone wise in the sight of God, who connect this meekness with an honest conversation; for they who are severe and inexorable, though they may excel others in many virtues, do not yet follow the right way of wisdom. [323]

l4 But if ye have bitter envying. He points out the fruits which proceed from that extreme austerity which is contrary to meekness; for immoderate rigor necessarily begets mischievous emulations, which presently break forth into contentions. It is, indeed, an improper mode of speaking, to place contentions in the heart; but this affects not the meaning; for the object was to shew that the evil disposition of the heart is the fountain of these evils.

He has called envying, or emulation, bitter; for it prevails not, except when minds are so infected with the poison of malignity, that they turn all things into bitterness. [324]

That we may then really glory that we are the children of God, he bids us to act calmly and meekly towards our brethren; otherwise he declares that we are lying in assuming the Christian name. But it is not without reason that he has added the associate of envying, even strife, or contention, for contests and quarrels ever arise from malignity and envy.

15 This wisdom descendeth not. As hypocrites with difficulty give way, he sharply checked their haughtiness, denying that to be true wisdom with which they were inflated, while they were extremely morose in searching out the vices of others. Conceding to them, however, the term wisdom, he shews by the words he applies to it its true character, and says that it is earthly, sensual, devilish, or demoniac, while true wisdom must be heavenly, spiritual, divine; which three things are directly contrary to the three preceding ones. For James takes it as granted, that we are not wise, except when we are illuminated by God from above through his Spirit. However, then, the mind of man may enlarge itself, all its acuteness will be vanity; and not only so, but being at length entangled in the wiles of Satan, it will become wholly delirious. [325]

Sensual, or animal, is in opposition to what is spiritual, as in 1 Corinthians 2:14, where Paul says that the sensual or animal man receives not the things

[323] "Who is wise and intelligent among you?" let him by a good conduct shew his works in meekness of wisdom." The arrangement here is according to what is common in scripture: Wisdom the effect first, then knowledge the cause or what precedes it. In what follows the order is reversed; knowledge distinguishes between good and bad works, and the good ought to be exhibited with that meekness which wisdom dictates.

[324] A similar order as to the words is found here as in the former verse: bitter envying is occasioned by strife of contention. There may be envying without contention, but it is contention that commonly makes it bitter.

[325] Scott considers that this wisdom was called "earthly," because it sought earthly distinctions, and was of earthly origin, — "sensual," or rather "natural," as the word is rendered in 1 Corinthians 2:14, because it was the result of such principles as natural men are actuated by, such as envy and ambition, — "and devilish," because it came first from the devil, and constituted the image of his pride, ambition, malignity, and falsehood. The word "sensual" has led some to suppose that the reference is to sensuality, the gratification of carnal lusts: but there is nothing in the passage that favors this view. The only things mentioned are envy and a contentious spirit, things which belong to natural man.

of God. And the pride of man could not have been more effectually cast down, than when thus is condemned whatever wisdom he has from himself, without the Spirit of God; nay, when from himself a transition is made to the devil. For it is the same as though he had said, that men, following their own sense, or minds, or feelings, soon became a prey to the delusions of Satan.

16 For where envying is. It is an argument from what is contrary; for envying, by which hypocrites are influenced, produces effects contrary to wisdom. For wisdom requires a state of mind that is calm and composed, but envying disturbs it, so that in itself it becomes in a manner tumultuous, and boils up immoderately against others.

Some render {ἀκαταστασία} inconstancy, and sometimes it means this, but as it signifies also sedition and tumult, perturbation seems the most suitable to this passage. For James meant to express something more than levity, even that the malignant and the slanderer does everything confusedly and rashly, as though he were beside himself; and hence he adds, every evil work

17 But the wisdom which is from above. He now mentions the effects of celestial wisdom which are wholly contrary to the former effects. He says first that it is pure; by which term he excludes hypocrisy and ambition. [326] He, in the second place, calls it peaceable, to intimate that it is not contentious. In the third place, he calls it kind or humane, that we may know that it is far away from that immoderate austerity which tolerates nothing in our brethren. He also calls it gentle or tractable; by which he means that it widely differs from pride and malignity. In the last place, he says that it is full of mercy, etc., while hypocrisy is inhuman and inexorable. By good fruits he generally refers to all those duties which benevolent men perform towards their brethren; as though he had said, it is full of benevolence. It hence follows, that they lie who glory in their cruel austerity.

But though he had sufficiently condemned hypocrisy, when he said that wisdom is pure or sincere; he makes it more clear by repeating the same thing at the end. We are hence reminded, that for no other reason are we beyond measure morose or austere, but this, because we too much spare ourselves, and connive at our own vices.

But what he says, without discerning (sine dijudicatione,) seems strange; for the Spirit of God does not take away the difference between good and evil; nor does he render us so senseless as to be so void of judgment as to praise vice, and regard it as virtue. To this I reply, that James here, by discerning or distinguishing refers to that overanxious and overscrupulous inquiry, such as is commonly carried on by hypocrites, who too minutely examine the sayings and doings of their brethren, and put on them the worst construction. [327]

[326] "Pure," {ἁγνή}, is to be understood according to what the context contains. It means what is free from taint or pollution: the kind of taint must be learnt from the passage. The wisdom from above is contrasted with the wisdom from below: the latter has envy and contention; the former is ``pure,'' being free from envy, and is ``peaceable.''

[327] The word {ἀδιάκριτος} is found only here, and has been variously rendered, because the verb from which it comes has various meanings, --- to discern, to make a difference, to judge, to examine, to contend or litigate, and to doubt. It is rendered by the Vulg., as ``not judging'' --- uncensorious; by Beza, ``without

18 And the fruit of righteousness. This admits of two meanings, --- that fruit is sown by the peaceable, which afterwards they gather, --- or, that they themselves, though they meekly tolerate many things in their neighbors, do not yet cease to sow righteousness. It is, however, an anticipation of an objection; for they who are carried away to evil speaking by the lust of slandering, have always this excuse, ``What! can we then remove evil by our courteousness?'' Hence James says, that those who are wise according to God's will, are so kind, meek, and merciful, as yet not to cover vices nor favor them; but on the contrary in such a way as to strive to correct them, and yet in a peaceable manner, that is, in moderation, so that union is preserved. And thus he testifies that what he had hitherto said tends in no degree to do away with calm reproofs; but that those who wish to be physicians to heal vices ought not to be executioners.

He therefore adds, by those who make peace; which ought to be thus explained: they who study peace, are nevertheless careful to sow righteousness; nor are they slothful or negligent in promoting and encouraging good works; but they moderate their zeal with the condiment of peace, while hypocrites throw all things into confusion by a blind and furious violence.

contending'' --- incontroversial; by Erasmus, ``making no difference'' --- impartial; and by Hammond, ``not doubting,'' i.e., as to the faith. ``Uncensorious,'' or, ``impartial;'' seems the most suitable rendering; not given to rashness in judging of others, or not shewing respect of persons, previously condemned in James 2:1. Then follows ``undissembling,'' not saying one thing and meaning another. There seems to be a complete contrast between the two kinds of wisdom. The wisdom from above is not envious, but pure; is not contentious, but peaceable; does not create confusion, but is patient and conciliatory; and instead of producing ``every evil work,'' it is full of mercy or benevolence, and of the fruits of benevolence, being not censorious or partial in judgment, and not dissembling, or acting dishonestly. By this comparison, we see what were some of the things included in ``every evil work;'' they were the reverse of mercy or benevolence, and its fruits, even censoriousness or partiality, and dissimilation. And yet those who exhibited all those evil things thought that they had wisdom! and even gloried in it!

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

James 4:1-3

James 4:1-3

1 From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?

1 Unde bella et pugnae inter vos? nonne hinc, ex voluptatibus vestris, quae militant in membris vestris.

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

2 Concupiscitis et non habetis; invidetis et aemulamini, et non potestis obtinere; pugnatis et belligeramini, non habetis, propterea quod non petitis;

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

3 Petitis, et non accipitis, quia male petitis, ut in voluptates vestras insumatis.

1 From whence come wars. As he had spoken of peace, and had reminded them that vices are to be exterminated in such a way as to preserve peace, he now comes to their contentions, by which they created confusion among themselves; and he shews that these arose from their invidious desires and lusts, rather than from a zeal for what was just and right; for if every one observed moderation, they would not have disturbed and annoyed one another. They had their hot conflicts, because their lusts were allowed to prevail unchecked.

It hence appears, that greater peace would have been among them, had every one abstained from doing wrong to others; but the vices which prevailed among them were so many attendants armed to excite contentions. He calls our faculties members. He takes lusts as designating all illicit and lustful desires or propensities which cannot be satisfied without doing injury to others.

2 Ye lust, or covet, and have not. He seems to intimate that the soul of man is insatiable, when he indulges wicked lusts; and truly it is so; for he who suffers his sinful propensities to rule uncontrolled, will know no end to his lust. Were even the world given to him, he would wish other worlds to be created for him. It thus happens, that men seek torments which exceed the cruelty of all executioners. For that saying of Horace is true:

The tyrants of Sicily found no torment greater than envy. [328]

[328] Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni Majus tormentum. — EPIST. Lib. I. 2:58.

Some copies have {φονεύετε}, ``ye kill;'' but I doubt not but that we ought to read, {φθονεῖτε}, ``ye envy,'' as I have rendered it; for the verb, to kill, does in no way suit the context. [329] Ye fight: he does not mean those wars and fightings, which men engage in with drawn swords, but the violent contentions which prevailed among them. They derived no benefit from contentions of this kind, for he affirms that they received the punishment of their own wickedness. God, indeed, whom they owned not as the author of blessings, justly disappointed them. For when they contended in ways so unlawful, they sought to be enriched through the favor of Satan rather than through the favor of God. One by fraud, another by violence, one by calumnies, and all by some evil or wicked arts, strove for happiness. They then sought to be happy, but not through God. It was therefore no wonder that they were frustrated in their efforts, since no success can be expected except through the blessings of God alone.

3 Ye seek and receive not. He goes farther: though they sought, yet they were deservedly denied; because they wished to make God the minister of their own lusts. For they set no bounds to their wishes, as he had commanded; but gave unbridled license to themselves, so as to ask those things of which man, conscious of what is right, ought especially to be ashamed. Pliny somewhere ridicules this impudence, that men so wickedly abuse the ears of God. The less tolerable is such a thing in Christians, who have had the rule of prayer given them by their heavenly Master.

And doubtless there appears to be in us no reverence for God, no fear of him, in short, no regard for him, when we dare to ask of him what even our own conscience does not approve. James meant briefly this, --- that our desires ought to be bridled: and the way of bridling them is to subject them to the will of God. And he also teaches us, that what we in moderation wish, we ought to seek from God himself; which if it be done, we shall be preserved from wicked contentions, from fraud and violence, and from doing any injury to others.

James 4:4-6

James 4:4-6

4 Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world is the

[329] There is no MS. nor version in favor of {φθονεῖτε}. When it is said, ``ye kill,'' the meaning is, that they did so as to the hatred or envy they entertained, for hatred is the root of murder, and arises often from envy. What has evidently led Calvin and others to conjecture a mistake here, has been the difficulty arising from the order of the words, ``Ye kill and ye envy;'' but this order is wholly consonant with the style of Scripture, where often the greater evil or good is mentioned first, and then that which precedes or leads to it. It is the same here as though the copulative, and, were rendered causatively, ``ye kill because ye envy.'' Envy is murder in the sight of God. The language of the whole passage is highly metaphorical. He calls their contentions ``wars and fightings;'' for the whole tenor of the passage is opposed to the supposition that he refers to actual wars. He adopts a military term as to inward lusts or ambitious desires, that they ``carried on war'' in their members; the expedition for their contests was prepared within, mustered in their hearts. Then the character of this war is more plainly defined, ``Ye covet,'' not, ye lust; ``ye kill,'' or commit murder, for ``ye envy;'' when ye cannot attain your objects, ``ye wage war and fight,'' that is, ye wrangle and quarrel. Avarice and ambition were the two prevailing evils, but especially avarice; and avarice too for the purpose of gratifying the lusts and propensities of their sinful nature, as it appears from the third verse.

enemy of God.

4 Adulteri et adulterae, an nescitis quod amicitia mundi inimictia Dei est? qui ergo voluerit amicus esse mundi, inimicus Dei constituitur.

5 Do ye think that the scripture saith in vain, The spirit that dwelleth in us lusteth to envy?

5 An putatis quod frustra dicat scriptura? An ad invidiam concupiscit spiritus qui habitat in nobis?

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

6 Quin majorem dat gratiam: ---

4 Ye adulterers. I connect this verse with the foregoing verses: for he calls them adulterers, as I think, metaphorically; for they corrupted themselves with the vanities of this world, and alienated themselves from God; as though he had said, that they had become degenerated, or were become bastards. We know how frequent, in Holy Scripture, is that marriage mentioned which God forms with us. He would have us, then, to be like a chaste virgin, as Paul says, (2 Corinthians 11:2.) This chastity is violated and corrupted by all impure affections towards the world. James, then, does not without reason compare the love of the world to adultery.

They, then, who take his words literally, do not sufficiently observe the context: for he goes on still to speak against the lusts of men, which lead away those entangled with the world from God, as it follows, ---

The friendship of the world. He calls it the friendship of the world when men surrender themselves to the corruptions of the world, and become slaves to them. For such and so great is the disagreement between the world and God, that as much as any one inclines to the world, so much he alienates himself from God. Hence the Scripture bids us often to renounce the world, if we wish to serve God.

5 Do ye think. He seems to adduce from Scripture the next following sentence. Hence interpreters toil much, because none such, at least none exactly alike, is found in Scripture. But nothing hinders the reference to be made to what has been already said, that is, that the friendship of the world is adverse to God. Moreover; it has been rightly said, that this is a truth which occurs everywhere in Scripture. And that he has omitted the pronoun, which would have rendered the sentence clearer, is not to be wondered at, for, as it is evident, he is everywhere very concise.

The Spirit, or, Does the Spirit? Some think that the soul of man is meant, and therefore read the sentence affirmatively, and according to this meaning, --- that the spirit of man, as it is malignant, is so infected with envy, that it has ever a mixture of it. They, however, think better who regard the Spirit of God as intended; for it is he that is given to dwell in us. [330] I then take the Spirit as

[330] There are wagon-loads of interpretations, says Erasmus, on this passage. The one given by Calvin, and adopted by Whitby, Doddridge, Scholefield, and others, is the most satisfactory, and what alone enables us to see a meaning in the words, "more grace," in the following verse. The Spirit dwells in God's people, and he dwells there to give more or

that of God, and read the sentence as a question; for it was his object to prove, that because they envied they were not ruled by the Spirit of God; because he teaches the faithful otherwise; and this he confirms in the next verse, by adding that he giveth more grace

For it is an argument arising from what is contrary. Envy is a proof or sign of malignity; but the Spirit of God proves himself to be bountiful by the affluence of his blessings. There is then nothing more repugnant to his nature than envy. In short, James denies that the Spirit of God rules where depraved lusts prevail, which excite to mutual contention; because it is peculiarly the office of the Spirit to enrich men more and more continually with new gifts.

I will not stop to refute other explanations. Some give this meaning that the Spirit lusteth against envy; which is too harsh and forced. Then they say that God gives more grace to conquer and subdue lust. But the meaning I have given is more suitable and simple, --- that he restores us by his bounty from the power of malignant emulation. The continuative particle {δὲ} is to be taken adversatively, for {ἀλλὰ} or {ἀλλά} {γε}; so have I rendered it quin, but.

James 4:7-10

James 4:7-10

7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

7 Subjecti igitur estote Deo; Resistite diabolo, et fugiet a vobis;

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

8 Appropinquate Deo, et appropinquabit vobis; mundate manus, peccatores; purificate corda duplici animo;

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

9 Affligimini, lugete et plorate; risus vester in luctum vertatur et gaudium in moerorem.

10 Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.

10 Humiliamini coram Deo, et eriget vos.

7 Submit yourselves. The submission which he recommends is that of humility; for he does not exhort us generally to obey God, but requires submission; for the Spirit of God rests on the humble and the meek. (Isaiah 57:15.) On this account he uses the illative particle. For as he had declared that God's Spirit is bountiful in increasing his gifts, he hence concludes that we ought to lay aside envy, and to submit to God.

increasing grace, according to the tenor of what is said in Isaiah 57:15, where God is said to "dwell with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit," and for this purpose, "to revive the spirit of the humble," etc. 5, 6 "Do ye think that the scripture speaketh thus in vain? Doth the Spirit who dwells in us lust to envy? nay, but he giveth more (or increasing) grace: he therefore saith, God sets himself in array against the insolent, but gives grace to the humble." The humble are those who are made so by grace; but God promises to give them more grace, to perfect that which had begun.

Many copies have introduced here the following sentence: ``Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.'' But in others it is not found. Erasmus suspects that it was first a note in the margin, and afterwards crept into the text. It may have been so, though it is not unsuitable to the passage. For what some think, that it is strange that what is found only in Peter, should be quoted as Scripture, may be easily disposed of. But I rather conjecture that this sentence which accords with the common doctrine of Scripture, had become then a sort of proverbial saying common among the Jews. And, indeed, it is no more than what is found in Psalm 18:27,

``The humble O Lord, thou wilt save;
and the eyes of the proud wilt thou cast down:''

and similar sentences are found in many other passages. [331]

Resist the devil. He shews what that contention is which we ought to engage in, as Paul says, that our contest is not with flesh and blood, but he stimulates us to a spiritual fight. Then, after having taught us meekness towards men, and submission towards God, he brings before us Satan as our enemy, whom it behooves us to fight against.

However, the promise which he adds, respecting the fleeing of Satan, seems to be refuted by daily experience; for it is certain, that the more strenuously any one resists, the more fiercely he is urged. For Satan, in a manner, acts playfully, when he is not in earnest repelled; but against those who really resist him, he employs all the strength he possesses. And further, he is never wearied with fighting; but when conquered in one battle, he immediately engages in another. To this I reply, that fleeing is to be taken here for putting to flight, or routing. And, doubtless, though he repeats his attacks continually, he yet always departs vanquished.

8 Draw nigh to God. He again reminds us that the aid of God will not be wanting to us, provided we give place to him. For when he bids us to draw nigh to God, that we may know him to be near to us, he intimates that we are destitute of his grace, because we withdraw from him. But as God stands on our side, there is no reason to fear succumbing. But if any one concludes from this passage, that the first part of the work belongs to us, and that afterwards the grace of God follows, the Apostle meant no such thing; for though we ought to do this, yet it does [not] immediately follow that we can. And the Spirit of God, in exhorting us to our duty, derogates nothing from himself, or from his own power; but the very thing he bids us to do, he himself fulfills in us.

In short, James meant no other thing in this passage, than that God is never wanting to us, except when we alienate ourselves from him. He is like one who brings the hungry to a table and the thirsty to a fountain. There is this difference, that our steps must be guided and sustained by the Lord, for our

[331] The passage is found in all MSS. and versions: there is, therefore, no ground to think it an interpolation. And it is taken literally from Proverbs 3:34, according to the Sept.; though the first clause differs from the Hebrew in words, yet it is substantially the same. To “scorn the scorners,” and to “resist (or, to stand in array against) the proud” or insolent, mean the same thing.

feet fail us. But what some cavil at, and say, that God's grace is secondary to our preparation, and as it were the waiting-maid, is only frivolous; for we know that it is no new thing that he adds now to former graces and thus enriches more and more those to whom he has already given much.

Cleanse your hands. He here addresses all those who were alienated from God and he does not refer to two sorts of men, but he calls the same sinners and double-minded Nor does he understand every kind of sinners, but the wicked and those of a corrupt life. It is said in John 9:3,

``God does not hear sinners;''

in the same sense a woman is called a sinner by Luke. (Luke 7:39.) It is said by the same and the other evangelists, ``He drinketh and eateth with sinners.'' He, therefore, does not smite all indiscriminately to that sort of repentance mentioned here, but those who are wicked and corrupt in heart, and whose life is base and flagitious or at least wicked; it is from these he requires a purity of heart and outward cleanliness.

We hence learn what is the true character of repentance. It is not only an outward amendment of life, but its beginning is the cleansing of the heart. It is also necessary on the other hand that the fruits of inward repentance should appear in the brightness of our works. [332]

9 Be afflicted and mourn. Christ denounces mourning on those who laugh, as a curse, (Luke 6:25;) and James, in what shortly follows, alluding to the same words, threatens the rich with mourning. But here he speaks of that salutary mourning or sorrow which leads us to repentance. He addresses those who, being inebriated in their minds, did not perceive God's judgment. Thus it happened that they flattered themselves in their vices. That he might shake off from them this deadly torpor, he admonishes them to learn to mourn, that being touched with sorrow of conscience they might cease to flatter themselves and to exult on the verge of destruction. Then laughter is to be taken as signifying the flattering with which the ungodly deceive themselves, while they are infatuated by the sweetness of their sins and forget the judgment of God.

10 Humble yourselves, or, be ye humbled. The conclusion of what is gone

[332] In the seventh verse he seems still to continue military terms, “Set yourselves, therefore, in array under God: stand up against the devil, and he will flee from you.” It is especially to be observed, that the first thing is to be under the banner and protection of God, and then we can successfully stand up against the devil: apart from God, we have no power to resist him. The order in the following verse, the eighth, is worthy of notice, as an example of what is very common in Scripture. The main thing is first stated, to draw nigh to God: and then the things which are previously necessary, to cleanse their hands and to purify their hearts — an allusion probably to the practice among the priests of the law, of washing themselves before they engaged in the service of the temple. They were to wash their hands as though they had been stained with blood, as the crime of murder had been imputed to them in James 4:2: and they were to purify their hearts from the covetings and ambitious desires which they had entertained. Except those things were done they could not draw nigh to God. And further, to draw nigh to God was necessary before they could set themselves in array under his authority, so that there is a connection between this verse and the former: the ultimate object, stated first, was submission to God, and to be under his protection; and all that follows was necessary for that purpose. The regular order would be, Purify your hearts, cleanse your hands, draw nigh to God, and be subject to him. But this mode of statement, by going backward instead of forward, is to be met with in all parts of Scripture. See on this subject the Preface to the third volume of Calvin’s Commentaries on Jeremiah.

before is, that the grace of God then be ready to raise us up when he sees that our proud spirits are laid aside. We emulate and envy, because we desire to be eminent. This is a way wholly unreasonable, for it is God's peculiar work to raise up the lowly, and especially those who willingly humble themselves. Whosoever, then, seeks a firm elevation, let him be cast down under a sense of his own infirmity, and think humbly of himself. Augustine well observes somewhere, As a tree must strike deep roots downwards, that it may grow upwards, so every one who has not his soul fixed deep in humility, exalts himself to his own ruin.

James 4:11-12

James 4:11-12

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

11 Ne detrahatis invicem, fratres; qui detrahit fratri, aut judicat fratrem suum, detrahit legi, et judicat legem; si autem judicas legem, non es factor legis sed judex.

12 There is one lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy: who art thou that judgest another?

12 Unus est legislator, qui potest servare et perdere: tu, quis es qui judicas alterum?

11 Speak not evil, or, defame not. We see how much labor James takes in correcting the lust for slandering. For hypocrisy is always presumptuous, and we are by nature hypocrites, fondly exalting ourselves by calumniating others. There is also another disease innate in human nature, that every one would have all others to live according to his own will or fancy. This presumption James suitably condemns in this passage, that is, because we dare to impose on our brethren our rule of life. He then takes detraction as including all the calumnies and suspicious works which flow from a malignant and perverted judgment. The evil of slandering takes a wide range; but here he properly refers to that kind of slandering which I have mentioned, that is, when we superciliously determine respecting the deeds and sayings of others, as though our own morosity were the law, when we confidently condemn whatever does not please us.

That such presumption is here reproved is evident from the reason that is immediately added, He that speaketh evil of, or defames his brother, speaketh evil of, or defames the law. He intimates, that so much is taken away from the law as one claims of authority over his brethren. Detraction, then, against the law is opposed to that reverence with which it behooves us to regard it.

Paul handles nearly the same argument in Romans 14, though on a different occasion. For when superstition in the choice of meats possessed some, what they thought unlawful for themselves, they condemned also in others. He then reminded them, that there is but one Lord, according to whose will all must

stand or fall, and at whose tribunal we must all appear. Hence he concludes that he who judges his brethren according to his own view of things, assumes to himself what peculiarly belongs to God. But James reproves here those who under the pretense of sanctity condemned their brethren, and therefore set up their own morosity in the place of the divine law. He, however, employs the same reason with Paul, that is, that we act presumptuously when we assume authority over our brethren, while the law of God subordinates us all to itself without exception. Let us then learn that we are not to judge but according to God's law.

Thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge. This sentence ought to be thus explained: ``When thou claimest for thyself a power to censure above the law of God thou exemptest thyself from the duty of obeying the law.'' He then who rashly judges his brother; shakes off the yoke of God, for he submits not to the common rule of life. It is then an argument from what is contrary; because the keeping of the law is wholly different from this arrogance, when men ascribe to their conceit the power and authority of the law. It hence follows, that we then only keep the law, when we wholly depend on its teaching alone and do not otherwise distinguish between good and evil; for all the deeds and words of men ought to be regulated by it.

Were any one to object and say, that still the saints will be the judges of the world, (1 Corinthians 6:2,) the answer is obvious, that this honor does not belong to them according to their own right, but inasmuch as they are the members of Christ; and that they now judge according to the law, so that they are not to be deemed judges because they only obediently assent to God as their own judge and the judge of all. With regard to God he is not to be deemed the doer of the law, because his righteousness is prior to the law; for the law has flown from the eternal and infinite righteousness of God as a river from its fountain.

12 There is one lawgiver [333] Now he connects the power of saying and destroying with the office of a lawgiver, he intimates that the whole majesty of God is forcibly assumed by those who claim for themselves the right of making a law; and this is what is done by those who impose as a law on others their own nod or will. And let us remember that the subject here is not civil government, in which the edicts and laws of magistrates have place, but the spiritual government of the soul, in which the word of God alone ought to bear rule. There is then one God, who has consciences subjected by right to his own laws, as he alone has in his own hand the power to save and to destroy.

It hence appears what is to be thought of human precepts, which cast the snare of necessity on consciences. Some indeed would have us to shew modesty, when we call the Pope antichrist, who exercises tyranny over the souls of men, making himself a lawgiver equal to God. But we learn from this passage something far more, even that they are the members of Antichrist, who

[333] Griesbach adds {καὶ} {κριτής}, ``and judge,'' a reading favored by many MSS. and the versions; and doubtless it makes the passage more complete, especially as what follows belongs to the judge rather than to the lawgiver, that is, to save or to destroy.

willingly submit to be thus ensnared, and that they thus renounce Christ, when they connect themselves with a man that is not only a mortal, but who also extols himself against him. It is, I say, a prevaricating obedience, rendered to the devil, when we allow any other than God himself to be a lawgiver to rule our souls.

Who art thou. Some think that they are admonished here to become reprovers of their own vices, in order that they might begin to examine themselves, and that by finding out that they were not purer than others, they might cease to be so severe. I think that their own condition is simply suggested to men, so that they may think how much they are below that dignity which they assumed, as Paul also says, ``Who art thou who judgest another?'' (Romans 14:4.)

James 4:13-17

James 4:13-17

13 Go to now, ye that say, To day or to morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain:

13 Age nunc, qui dicitis, Hodie et cras eamus in civitatem, et transigamus illic annum unum, et mercemur et lucremur;

14 Whereas ye know not what shall be on the morrow. For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

14 Qui nescitis quid cras futurum sit; quae enim est vita nostra? vapor est scilicet ad exiguum tempus apparens, deinde evanescens:

15 For that ye ought to say, If the Lord will, we shall live, and do this, or that.

15 Quum dicere debeatis, Si Dominus voluerit, et vixerimus, faciemus hoc vel illud.

16 But now ye rejoice in your boastings: all such rejoicing is evil.

16 Nunc autem gloriamini in superbiis vestris; omnia gloriatio talis, mala est.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin.

17 Qui ergo novit facere bonum, nec facit, peccati reus est.

13 Go to now. He condemns here another kind of presumption, that many, who ought to have depended on God's providence, confidently settled what they were to do, and arranged their plans for a long time, as though they had many years at their own disposal, while they were not sure, no not even of one moment. Solomon also sharply ridicules this kind of foolish boasting, when he says that

``men settle their ways in their heart,
and the Lord in the mean time rules the tongue.''
(Proverbs 16:1.)

And it is a very insane thing to undertake to execute what we cannot pronounce with our tongue. James does not reprove the form of speaking, but

rather the arrogance of mind, that men should forget their own weakness, and speak thus presumptuously; for even the godly, who think humbly of themselves, and acknowledge that their steps are guided by the will of God, may yet sometimes say, without any qualifying clause, that they will do this or that. It is indeed right and proper, when we promise anything as to future time, to accustom ourselves to such words as these, ``If it shall please the Lord,'' ``If the Lord will permit.'' But no scruple ought to be entertained, as though it were a sin to omit them; for we read everywhere in the Scriptures that the holy servants of God spoke unconditionally of future things, when yet they had it as a principle fixed in their minds, that they could do nothing without the permission of God. Then as to the practice of saying, ``If the Lord will or permit,'' it ought to be carefully attended to by all the godly.

But James roused the stupidity of those who disregarded God's providence, and claimed for themselves a whole year, though they had not a single moment in their own power; the gain which was afar off they promised to themselves, though they had no possession of that which was before their feet.

14 For what is your life? He might have checked this foolish license in determining things to come by many other reasons; for we see how the Lord daily frustrates those presumptuous men who promise what great things they will do. But he was satisfied with this one argument, who has promised to thee a life for tomorrow? Canst thou, a dying man, do what thou so confidently resolvest to do? For he who remembers the shortness of his life, will have his audacity easily checked so as not to extend too far his resolves. Nay, for no other reason do ungodly men indulge themselves so much, but because they forget that they are men. By the similitude of vapor, he strikingly shews that the purposes which are founded only on the present life, are altogether evanescent.

15 If the Lord will. A twofold condition is laid down, ``If we shall live so long,'' and, ``If the Lord will;'' because many things may intervene to upset what we may have determined; for we are blind as to all future events. [334] By will he means not that which is expressed in the law, but God's counsel by which he governs all things.

16 But now ye rejoice, or, glory. We may learn from these words that James condemned something more than a passing speech. Ye rejoice, or, glory, he says, in your empty boastings. Though they robbed God of his government, they yet flattered themselves; not that they openly set themselves up as superior to God, though they were especially inflated with confidence in themselves, but that their minds were inebriated with vanity so as to disregard God. And as warnings of this kind are usually received with contempt by ungodly men --- nay, this answer is immediately given, ``known to ourselves is what is offered to us, so that there is no need of such a warning;'' --- he alleges against them this knowledge in which they gloried, and declares that they sinned the more grievously, because they did not sin through ignorance, but through contempt.

[334] The words may be rendered thus, “If the Lord will, we shall both live and do this or that.” So that living and doing are both dependent on God’s will.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

James 5:1-6

James 5:1-6

1 Go to now, ye rich men, weep and howl for your miseries that shall come upon you

1 Agedum nunc divites, plorate, ululantes super miseriis vestris quae advenient vobis.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are motheaten.

2 Divitiae vestrae putrefactae sunt, vestimenta vestra a tineis excesa sunt.

3 Your gold and silver is cankered; and the rust of them shall be a witness against you, and shall eat your flesh as it were fire. Ye have heaped treasure together for the last days.

3 Aurum et argentum vestrum aerugine corruptum est; et aerugo eorum in testimonium vobis erit, et exedet carnes vestras sicut ignis: thesaurum congessistis in extremis diebus.

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

4 Ecce merces operariorum, qui messuerunt regiones vestras, quae fraude aversa est a vobis, clamat; et clamores eorum qui messuerunt, in aures Domini Sabaoth introierunt.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

5 In deliciis vixistis super terram; lacivistis, enutristis corda vestra, sicut in die mactationis.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.

6 Condemnastis et occidistis justum, et non resistit vobis.

1 Go to now. They are mistaken, as I think, who consider that James here exhorts the rich to repentance. It seems to me to be a simple denunciation of God's judgment, by which he meant to terrify them without giving them any hope of pardon; for all that he says tends only to despair. He, therefore, does not address them in order to invite them to repentance; but, on the contrary, he has a regard to the faithful, that they, hearing of the miserable and of the rich, might not envy their fortune, and also that knowing that God would be the avenger of the wrongs they suffered, they might with a calm and resigned

mind bear them. [335]

But he does not speak of the rich indiscriminately, but of those who, being immersed in pleasures and inflated with pride, thought of nothing but of the world, and who, like inexhaustible gulfs, devoured everything; for they, by their tyranny, oppressed others, as it appears from the whole passage.

Weep and howl, or, Lament, howling. Repentance has indeed its weeping, but being mixed with consolation, it does not proceed to howling. Then James intimates that the heaviness of God's vengeance will be so horrible and severe on the rich, that they will be constrained to break forth into howling, as though he had said briefly to them, ``Woe to you!'' But it is a prophetic mode of speaking: the ungodly have the punishment which awaits them set before them, and they are represented as already enduring it. As, then, they were now flattering themselves, and promising to themselves that the prosperity in which they thought themselves happy would be perpetual, he declared that the most grievous miseries were nigh at hand.

2 Your riches. The meaning may be twofold: --- that he ridicules their foolish confidence, because the riches in which they placed their happiness, were wholly fading, yea, that they could be reduced to nothing by one blast from God --- or that he condemns as their insatiable avarice, because they heaped together wealth only for this, that they might perish without any benefit. This latter meaning is the most suitable. It is, indeed, true that those rich men are insane who glory in things so fading as garments, gold, silver, and such things, since it is nothing else than to make their glory subject to rust and moths; and well known is that saying ``What is ill got is soon lost;'' because the curse of God consumes it all, for it is not right that the ungodly or their heirs should enjoy riches which they have snatched, as it were, by violence from the hand of God.

But as James enumerates the vices of which the rich brought on themselves the calamity which he mentions, the context requires, as I think, that we should say, that what he condemns here is the extreme rapacity of the rich, in retaining everything they could lay hold on, that it might rot uselessly in their chests. For thus it was, that what God had created for the use of men, they destroyed, as though they were the enemies of mankind. [336]

But it must be observed, that the vices which he mentions here do not belong

[335] Many commentators, such as Grotius, Doddridge, Macknight, and Scott, consider that the Apostle refers at the beginning of this chapter, not to professing Christians, but to unbelieving Jews. There is nothing said that can lead to such an opinion: and if the two preceding chapters were addressed (as admitted by all) to those who professed the faith, there is no reason why this should not have been addressed to them; the sins here condemned are not worse than those previously condemned. Indeed, we find by the Epistles of Peter, and by that of Jude, that there were men professing religion at that time, who were not a whit better (if not worse) than many who profess religion in our age. Besides, it was not unusual, in addresses to Christians, to address unbelievers. Indeed, Paul expressly says, “What have I to do to judge them that are without?” That there were rich men professing the gospel at that time, is evident from James 1:10.

[336] Reference is made here to three sorts of riches, — stores of corn, which rotted, — garments, which were moth-eaten, — and precious metals, money, and jewels, etc., which rusted.

to all the rich; for some of them indulge themselves in luxury, some spend much in show and display, and some pinch themselves, and live miserably in their own filth. Let us, then, know that he here reproves some vices in some, and some vices in others. However, all those are generally condemned who unjustly accumulate riches, or who foolishly abuse them. But what James now says, is not only suitable to the rich of extreme tenacity, (such as Euclio of Plautus,) but to those also who delight in pomp and luxury, and yet prefer to heap up riches rather than to employ them for necessary purposes. For such is the malignity of some, that they grudge to others the common sun and air.

3 A witness against you. He confirms the explanation I have already given. For God has not appointed gold for rust, nor garments for moths; but, on the contrary, be has designed them as aids and helps to human life. Therefore, even spending without benefit is a witness of inhumanity. The rusting of gold and silver will be, as it were, the occasion of inflaming the wrath of God, so that it will, like fire, consume them.

Ye have heaped treasure together: These words may also admit of two explanations: --- that the rich, as they would always live, are never satisfied, but weary themselves in heaping together what may be sufficient to the end of the world, --- or, that they heap together the wrath and curse of God for the last day; and this second view I embrace. [337]

4 Behold, the hire. He now condemns cruelty, the invariable companion of avarice. But he refers only to one kind, which, above all others, ought justly to be deemed odious. For if a humane and a just man, as Solomon says in Proverbs 12:10, regards the life of his beast, it is a monstrous barbarity, when man feels no pity towards the man whose sweat he has employed for his own benefit. Hence the Lord has strictly forbidden, in the law, the hire of the laborer to sleep with us (Deuteronomy 24:15). Besides, James does not refer to laborers in common, but, for the sake of amplifying, he mentions husbandmen and reapers. For what can be more base than that they, who supply us with bread by their labor should be pined through want? And yet this monstrous thing is common; for there are many of such a tyrannical disposition, that they think that the rest of mankind live only for their benefit alone.

But he says that this hire crieth, for whatever men retain either by fraud or by violence, of what belongs to another; it calls for vengeance as it were by a loud voice. We ought to notice what he adds, that the cries of the poor come to the ears of God, so that we may know that the wrong done to them shall not be unpunished. They, therefore, who are oppressed by the unjust ought

[337] By "last days" are commonly meant the days of the gospel. The day of judgment is often called by John, in his Gospel, "the last day;" and the same seems to be called here "the last days." The reference made by some, to the destruction of Jerusalem, has nothing in the passage to favor it. To "heap treasure," or to lay up a store, has an evident reference to the day of judgment, as Paul makes use of the same expression in Romans 2:5, only he adds "wrath" to it, which is also added here by the Vulg. The whole verse is conminatory, and in this sentence the rich are reminded of the issue, the final issue of their conduct. The character of the store is to be learnt from the preceding part of the verse. In treasuring dishonest wealth, they were treasuring wrath for themselves.

resignedly to sustain their evils, because they will have God as their defender. And they who have the power of doing wrong ought to abstain from injustice, lest they provoke God against them, who is the protector and patron of the poor. And for this reason also he calls God the Lord of Sabaoth, or of hosts, intimating thereby his power and his might, by which he renders his judgment more dreadful.

5 In pleasure. He comes now to another vice, even luxury and sinful gratifications; for they who abound in wealth seldom keep within the bounds of moderation, but abuse their abundance by extreme indulgences. There are, indeed, some rich men, as I have said, who pine themselves in the midst of their abundance. For it was not without reason that the poets have imagined Tantalus to be hungry near a table well furnished. There have ever been Tantalians in the world. But James, as it has been said, does not speak of all rich men. It is enough that we see this vice commonly prevailing among the rich, that they are given too much to luxuries, to pomps and superfluities.

And though the Lord allows them to live freely on what they have, yet profusion ought to be avoided and frugality practiced. For it was not in vain that the Lord by his prophets severely reproved those who slept on beds of ivory, who used precious ointments, who delighted themselves at their feasts with the sound of the harp, who were like fat cows in rich pastures. For all these things have been said for this end, that we may know that moderation ought to be observed, and that extravagance is displeasing to God.

Ye have nourished your hearts. He means that they indulged themselves, not only as far as to satisfy nature, but as far as their cupidity led them. He adds a similitude, as in a day of slaughter, because they were wont in their solemn sacrifices to eat more freely than according to their daily habits. He then says, that the rich feasted themselves every day of their life, because they immersed themselves in perpetual indulgences.

6 Ye have condemned. Here follows another kind of inhumanity, that the rich by their power oppressed and destroyed the poor and weak. He says by a metaphor that the just were condemned and killed; for when they did not kill them by their own hand, or condemn them as judges, they yet employed the authority which they had to do wrong, they corrupted judgments, and contrived various arts to destroy the innocent, that is, really to condemn and kill them. [338]

By adding that the just did not resist them, he intimates that the audac-

[338] Many have thought that what is referred to here is the condemnation of our Savior by the Jewish nation, especially as he is called {ὁ} {δίκαιος}, ``the just one.'' This is true, but the Christian is also called too, in 1 Peter 4:18. James very frequently individualizes the faithful, using the singular for the plural number. The whole context proves that he speaks here of the poor faithful who suffered injustice from the rich, professing the same faith. Besides, the death of Christ is not ascribed to the rich, but to the elders and chief priests. The two first verbs, being aorists, may be rendered in the present tense, especially as the last verb is in that tense. For in the very next verse, the 7th, the aorist is so used. We may then give this version, --- 6. ``Ye condemn, ye kill the righteous; he sets himself not in array against you.'' Probably the aorist is used, as it expresses what was done habitually, or a continued act, like the future tense often in Hebrew. The preceding verse, the 5th, where all the verbs are aorists, would be better rendered in the same way, ``Ye live in pleasure,'' etc.

ity of the rich was greater; because those whom they oppressed were without any protection. He, however, reminds them that the more ready and prompt would be the vengeance of God, when the poor have no protection from men. But though the just did not resist, because he ought to have patiently endured wrongs, I yet think that their weakness is at the same time referred to, that is he did not resist, because he was unprotected and without any help from men.

James 5:7-9

James 5:7-9

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

7 Patienter ergo agite, fratres, usque in adventum Domini. Ecce agricola expectat pretiosum fructum terrae, patienter se gerens erga eum, donec recipiat pluvium matutinam et vespertinam.

8 Be ye also patient; stablish your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

8 Patienter ergo agite et vos; confirmate corda vestra, quonim adventus Domini propinquus est.

9 Grudge not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned: behold, the judge standeth before the door.

9 Ne ingemiscatis alii in alios, fratres, ne condemnemeni: ecce judex stat pro foribus.

7 Be patient therefore. From this inference it is evident that what has hitherto been said against the rich, pertains to the consolation of those who seemed for a time to be exposed to their wrongs with impunity. For after having mentioned the causes of those calamities which were hanging over the rich, and having stated this among others, that they proudly and cruelly ruled over the poor, he immediately adds, that we who are unjustly oppressed, have this reason to be patient, because God would become the judge. For this is what he means when he says, unto the coming of the Lord, that is, that the confusion of things which is now seen in the world will not be perpetual, because the Lord at his coming will reduce things to order, and that therefore our minds ought to entertain good hope; for it is not without reason that the restoration of all things is promised to us at that day. And though the day of the Lord is everywhere called in the Scriptures a manifestation of his judgment and grace, when he succors his people and chastises the ungodly, yet I prefer to regard the expression here as referring to our final deliverance.

Behold, the husbandman. Paul briefly refers to the same similitude in 2 Timothy 2:6, when he says that the husbandman ought to labor before he gathers the fruit; but James more fully expresses the idea, for he mentions the daily patience of the husbandman, who, after having committed the seed to the earth, confidently, or at least patiently, waits until the time of harvest comes; nor does

he fret because the earth does not immediately yield a ripe fruit. He hence concludes, that we ought not to be immoderately anxious, if we must now labor and sow, until the harvest as it were comes, even the day of the Lord.

The precious fruit. He calls it precious, because it is the nourishment of life and the means of sustaining it. And James intimates, that since the husbandman suffers his life, so precious to him, to lie long deposited in the bosom of the earth, and calmly suspends his desire to gather the fruit, we ought not to be too hasty and fretful, but resignedly to wait for the day of our redemption. It is not necessary to specify particularly the other parts of the comparison.

The early and the latter rains. By the two words, early and latter, two seasons are pointed out; the first follows soon after sowing; and the other when the corn is ripening. So the prophets spoke, when they intended to set forth the time for rain, (Deuteronomy 28:12; Joel 2:23; Hosea 6:3.) And he has mentioned both times, in order more fully to shew that husbandmen are not disheartened by the slow progress of time, but bear with the delay.

8 Stablish your hearts. Lest any should object and say, that the time of deliverance was too long delayed, he obviates this objection and says, that the Lord was at hand, or (which is the same thing) that his coming was drawing nigh. In the meantime, he bids us to correct the softness of the heart, which weakens us, so as not to persevere in hope. And doubtless the time appears long, because we are too tender and delicate. We ought, then, to gather strength that we may become hardened and this cannot be better attained than by hope, and as it were by a realizing view of the near approach of our Lord.

9 Grudge not, or, groan not. As the complaints of many were heard, that they were more severely treated than others, this passage is so explained by some, as though James bade each to be contented with his own lot, not to envy others, nor grudge if the condition of others was more tolerable. But I take another view; for after having spoken of the unhappiness of those who distress good and quiet men by their tyranny, he now exhorts the faithful to be just towards one another and ready to pass by offenses. That this is the real meaning may be gathered from the reason that is added: Be not querulous one against another; lest ye be condemned. We may, indeed, groan, when any evil torments us; but he means an accusing groan, when one expostulates with the Lord against another. And he declares that thus they would all be condemned, because there is no one who does not offend his brethren, and afford them an occasion of groaning. Now, if everyone complained, they would all have accused one another; for no one was so innocent, that he did not do some harm to others.

God will be the common judge of all. What, then, will be the case, but that every one who seeks to bring judgment on others, must allow the same against himself; and thus all will be given up to the same ruin. Let no one, then, ask for vengeance on others, except he wishes to bring it on his own head. And lest they should be hasty in making complaints of this kind, he declares that the judge was at the door. For as our propensity is to profane the name of God, in the slightest offenses we appeal to his judgment. Nothing is a fitter bridle to

check our rashness, than to consider that our imprecations vanish not into air, because God's judgment is at hand.

James 5:10-11

James 5:10-11

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

10 Exemplum accipite afflictionis, fratres mei, et tolerentiae, prophetas, qui loquuti sunt in nomine Domini.

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord; that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.

11 Ecce beatos esse ducimus eos qui sustinent: patientiam Job audistis, et finem Domini vidistis, quod multum sit misericors et commiserans.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets. The comfort which he brings is not that which is according to the common proverb, that the miserable hope for like companions in evils. That they set before them associates, in whose number it was desirable to be classed; and to have the same condition with them, was no misery. For as we must necessarily feel extreme grief, when any evil happens to us which the children of God have never experienced, so it is a singular consolation when we know that we suffer nothing different from them; nay, when we know that we have to sustain the same yoke with them.

When Job heard from his friends,

``Turn to the saints, can you find any like to thee?''
(Job 5:1,)

it was the voice of Satan, because he wished to drive him to despair. When, on the other hand, the Spirit by the mouth of James designs to raise us up to a good hope, he shews to us all the fore-going saints, who as it were stretch out their hand to us, and by their example encourage us to undergo and to conquer afflictions.

The life of men is indeed indiscriminately subject to troubles and adversities; but James did not bring forward any kind of men for examples, for it would have availed nothing to perish with the multitude; but he chose the prophets, a fellowship with whom is blessed. Nothing so breaks us down and disheartens us as the feeling of misery; it is therefore a real consolation to know that those things commonly deemed evils are aids and helps to our salvation. This is, indeed, what is far from being understood by the flesh; yet the faithful ought to be convinced of this, that they are happy when by various troubles they are proved by the Lord. To convince us of this, James reminds us to consider the end or design of the afflictions endured by the prophets; for as our own evils we are without judgment, being influenced by grief, sorrow, or some other immoderate feelings, as we see nothing under a foggy sky and in the midst of storms, and being tossed here and there as it were by a tempest, it is therefore necessary

for us to cast our eyes to another quarter, where the sky is in a manner serene and bright. When the afflictions of the saints are related to us, there is no one who will allow that they were miserable, but, on the contrary, that they were happy.

Then James has done well for us; for he has laid before our eyes a pattern, that we may learn to look at it whenever we are tempted to impatience or to despair: and he takes this principle as granted, that the prophets were blessed in their afflictions, for they courageously sustained them. Since it was so, he concludes that the same judgment ought to be formed of us when afflicted.

And he says, the prophets who have spoken in the name of the Lord; by which he intimates that they were accepted and approved by God. If, then, it had been useful for them to have been free from miseries, doubtless God would have kept them free. But it was otherwise. It hence follows that afflictions are salutary to the faithful. He, therefore, bids them to be taken as an example of suffering affliction. But patience also must be added, which is a real evidence of our obedience. Hence he has joined them both together.

11 The patience of Job. Having spoken generally of the prophets, he now refers to an example remarkable above others; for no one, as far as we can learn from histories, has ever been overwhelmed with troubles so hard and so various as Job; and yet he emerged from so deep a gulf. Whosoever, then, will imitate his patience, will no doubt find God's hand, which at length delivered him, to be the same. We see for what end his history has been written. God suffered not his servant Job to sink, because he patiently endured his afflictions. Then he will disappoint the patience of no one.

If, however, it be asked, Why does the Apostle so much commend the patience of Job, as he had displayed many signs of impatience, being carried away by a hasty spirit? To this I reply, that though he sometimes failed through the infirmity of the flesh, or murmured within himself, yet he ever surrendered himself to God, and was ever willing to be restrained and ruled by him. Though, then, his patience was somewhat deficient, it is yet deservedly commended.

The end of the Lord. By these words he intimates that afflictions ought ever to be estimated by their end. For at first God seems to be far away, and Satan in the meantime revels in the confusion; the flesh suggests to us that we are forsaken of God and lost. We ought, then, to extend our view farther, for near and around us there appears no light. Moreover, he has called it the end of the Lord, because it is his work to give a prosperous issue to adversities. If we do our duty in bearing evils obediently, he will by no means be wanting in performing his part. Hope directs us only to the end; God will then shew himself very merciful, how ever rigid and severe he may seem to be while afflicting us. [339]

[339] "The end of the Lord" seems a singular expression; but {τέλος}, properly the end, means also the issue, the upshot, the termination, the conclusion. It is genitive of the efficient cause, ``the end (or issue) given by the Lord.'' See Job 42:12. According to Griesbach there are three MSS which have {ἔλεος}, ``mercy;'' which would be very suitable, --- ``and ye have seen the mercy of the Lord, that the Lord is very full of pity, and compassionate.'' But the authority is not sufficient.

James 5:12-13

James 5:12-13

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

12 Ante omnia vero, fratres mei, Ne juretis, neque per coelum, neque per terram, neque aliud quodvis jusjurandum; sit autem vestrum. Est, est; Non, non: ne in judicium (vel, simulationem) incidatis.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him sing psalms.

13 Afflgitur quis inter vos? oret: hilari est animo? psallat.

12 But above all things. It has been a common vice almost in all ages, to swear lightly and inconsiderately. For so bad is our nature that we do not consider what an atrocious crime it is to profane the name of God. For though the Lord strictly commands us to reverence his name, yet men devise various subterfuges, and think that they can swear with impunity. They imagine, then, that there is no evil, provided they do not openly mention the name of God; and this is an old gloss. So the Jews, when they swore by heaven or earth, thought that they did not profane God's name, because they did not mention it. But while men seek to be ingenious in dissembling with God, they delude themselves with the most frivolous evasions.

It was a vain excuse of this kind that Christ condemned in Matthew 5:34. James, now subscribing to the decree of his master, commands us to abstain from these indirect forms of swearing: for whosoever swears in vain and on frivolous occasions, profanes God's name, whatever form he may give to his words. Then the meaning is, that it is not more lawful to swear by heaven or by the earth, than openly by the name of God. The reason is mentioned by Christ --- because the glory of God is everywhere inscribed, and everywhere shines forth. Nay, men take the words, heaven and earth, in their oaths, in no other sense and for no other purpose, than if they named God himself; for by thus speaking they only designate the Worker by his works.

But he says, above all things; because the profanation of God's name is not a slight offense. The Anabaptists, building on this passage, condemn all oaths, but they only shew their ignorance. For James does not speak of oaths in general, nor does Christ in the passage to which I have referred; but both condemn that evasion which had been devised, when men took the liberty to swear without expressing the name of God, which was a liberty repugnant to the prohibition of the law.

And this is what the words clearly mean, Neither by heaven, neither by the earth. For, if the question had been as to oaths in themselves, to what purpose were these forms mentioned? It then appears evident that both by Christ and by James the puerile astuteness of those is reproved who taught that they could swear with impunity, provided they adopted some circuitous expressions. That

we may, then, understand the meaning of James, we must understand first the precept of the law, ``Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.'' It hence appears clear, that there is a right and lawful use of God's name. Now, James condemns those who did not indeed dare in a direct way to profane God's name, but endeavored to evade the profanation which the law condemns, by circumlocutions.

But let your yea be yea. He brings the best remedy to correct the vice which he condemns, that is, that they were habitually to keep themselves to truth and faithfulness in all their sayings. For whence is the wicked habit of swearing, except that such is the falsehood of men, that their words alone are not believed? For, if they observed faithfulness, as they ought, in their words, there would have been no necessity of so many superfluous oaths. As, then, the perfidy or levity of men is the fountain from which the vice of swearing flows, in order to take away the vice, James teaches us that the fountain ought to be removed; for the right way of healing is to begin with the cause of illness.

Some copies have, ``Let your word (or speech) be, yea, yea; no, no.'' The true reading however, is what I have given, and is commonly received; and what he means I have already explained, that is, that we ought to tell the truth, and to be faithful in our words. To the same purpose is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 1:18, that he was not in his preaching yea and nay, but pursued the same course from the beginning.

Lest ye fall into condemnation. There is a different reading, owing to the affinity of the words {ὑπὸ} {κρίσιν} and {ὑπόκρισιν} [340] If you read, ``into judgment'' or condemnation, the sense will clearly be, that to take God's name in vain will not be unpunished. But it is not unsuitable to say, ``into hypocrisy;'' because when simplicity, as it has been already said, prevails among us, the occasion for superfluous oaths is cut off. If, then, fidelity appears in all we say, the dissimulation, which leads us to swear rashly, will be removed.

13 Is any among you afflicted? he means that there is no time in which God does not invite us to himself. For afflictions ought to stimulate us to pray; prosperity supplies us with an occasion to praise God. But such is the perverseness of men, that they cannot rejoice without forgetting God, and that when afflicted they are disheartened and driven to despair. We ought, then, to keep within due bounds, so that the joy, which usually makes us to forget God, may induce us to set forth the goodness of God, and that our sorrow may teach us to pray. For he has set the singing of psalms in opposition to profane and unbridled joy; and thus they express their joy who are led, as they ought to be, by prosperity to God.

James 5:14-15

James 5:14-15

[340] For {εἰς} {ὑπόκρισιν} there are several MSS., but for {ὑπὸ} {κρίσιν} there are not only several MSS., but the earliest versions, Syr. and Vulg.; so Griesbach takes the latter as the true reading.

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord:

14 Infirmatur quis inter vos? Advocet presbyteros ecclesiae, et orent super eum, unguentes oleo in nomine Domini:

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

15 Et oratio fidei servabit aegrotum, et excitabit eum Dominus; et si peccata admiserit, remittentur illi.

14 Is any sick among you. As the gift of healing as yet continued, he directs the sick to have recourse to that remedy. It is, indeed, certain that they were not all healed; but the Lord granted this favor as often and as far as he knew it would be expedient; nor is it probable that the oil was indiscriminately applied, but only when there was some hope of restoration. For, together with the power there was given also discretion to the ministers, lest they should by abuse profane the symbol. The design of James was no other than to commend the grace of God which the faithful might then enjoy, lest the benefit of it should be lost through contempt or neglect.

For this purpose he ordered the presbyters to be sent for, but the use of the anointing must have been confined to the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Papists boast mightily of this passage, when they seek to pass off their extreme unction. But how different their corruption is from the ancient ordinance mentioned by James I will not at present undertake to shew. Let readers learn this from my Institutes. I will only say this, that this passage is wickedly and ignorantly perverted; when extreme unction is established by it, and is called a sacrament, to be perpetually observed in the Church. I indeed allow that it was used as a sacrament by the disciples of Christ, (for I cannot agree with those who think that it was medicine;) but as the reality of this sign continued only for a time in the Church, the symbol also must have been only for a time. And it is quite evident, that nothing is more absurd than to call that a sacrament which is void and does not really present to us that which it signifies. That the gift of healing was temporary, all are constrained to allow, and events clearly prove: then the sign of it ought not to be deemed perpetual. It hence follows, that they who at this day set anointing among the sacraments, are not the true followers, but the apes of the Apostles, except they restore the effect produced by it, which God has taken away from the world for more than fourteen hundred years. So we have no dispute, whether anointing was once a sacrament; but whether it has been given to be so perpetually. This latter we deny, because it is evident that the thing signified has long ago ceased.

The presbyters, or elders, of the church. I include here generally all those who presided over the Church; for pastors were not alone called presbyters or elders, but also those who were chosen from the people to be as it were censors to protect discipline. For every Church had, as it were, its own senate, chosen from men of weight and of proved integrity. But as it was customary to choose especially those who were endued with gifts more than ordinary, he ordered

them to send for the elders, as being those in whom the power and grace of the Holy Spirit more particularly appeared.

Let them pray over him. This custom of praying over one was intended to shew, that they stood as it were before God; for when we come as it were to the very scene itself, we utter prayers with more feeling; and not only Elisha and Paul, but Christ himself, roused the ardor of prayer and commended the grace of God by thus praying over persons. (2 Kings 4:32; Acts 20:10; John 11:41.)

15. But it must be observed, that he connects a promise with the prayer, lest it should be made without faith. For he who doubts, as one who does not rightly call on God, is unworthy to obtain anything, as we have seen in the first chapter. Whosoever then really seeks to be heard, must be fully persuaded that he does not pray in vain.

As James brings before us this special gift, to which the external rite was but an addition, we hence learn, that the oil could not have been rightly used without faith. But since it appears that the Papists have no certainty as to their anointing, as it is manifest that they have not the gift, it is evident that their anointing is spurious.

And if he have committed sins. This is not added only for the sake of amplifying, as though he had said, that God would give something more to the sick than health of body; but because diseases were very often inflicted on account of sins; and by speaking of their remission he intimates that the cause of the evil would be removed. And we indeed see that David, when afflicted with disease and seeking relief, was wholly engaged in seeking the pardon of his sins. Why did he do this, except that while he acknowledged the effect of his faults in his punishment, he deemed that there was no other remedy, but that the Lord should cease to impute to him his sins?

The prophets are full of this doctrine, that men are relieved from their evils when they are loosed from the guilt of their iniquities. Let us then know that it is the only fit remedy for our diseases and other calamities, when we carefully examine ourselves, being solicitous to be reconciled to God, and to obtain the pardon of our sins.

James 5:16-18

James 5:16-18

16 Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

16 Confitemini invicem peccata vestra, et orate invicem alii pro aliis, ut salvemini: multum valet precatio justi efficax.

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

17 Elias homo erat passionibus similiter obnoxius ut nos; et precatione precatus est, ne plueret; et non pluit super terram annos tres et sex menses.

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

18 Et rursum oravit, et coelum dedit pluviam, et terra protulit fructum suum.

16 Confess your faults one to another. In some copies the illative particle is given, nor is it unsuitable; for though when not expressed, it must be understood. He had said, that sins were remitted to the sick over whom the elders prayed: he now reminds them how useful it is to discover our sins to our brethren, even that we may obtain the pardon of them by their intercession. [341]

This passage, I know, is explained by many as referring to the reconciling of offenses; for they who wish to return to favor must necessarily know first their own faults and confess them. For hence it comes, that hatreds take root, yea, and increase and become irreconcilable, because every one perniciously defends his own cause. Many therefore think that James points out here the way of brotherly reconciliation, that is, by mutual acknowledgment of sins. But as it has been said, his object was different; for he connects mutual prayer with mutual confession; by which he intimates that confession avails for this end, that we may be helped as to God by the prayers of our brethren; for they who know our necessities, are stimulated to pray that they may assist us; but they to whom our diseases are unknown are more tardy to bring us help.

Wonderful, indeed, is the folly or the insincerity of the Papists, who strive to build their whispering confession on this passage. For it would be easy to infer from the words of James, that the priests alone ought to confess. For since a mutual, or to speak more plainly, a reciprocal confession is demanded here, no others are bidden to confess their own sins, but those who in their turn are fit to hear the confession of others; but this the priests claim for themselves alone. Then confession is required of them alone. But since their puerilities do not deserve a refutation, let the true and genuine explanation already given be deemed sufficient by us.

For the words clearly mean, that confession is required for no other end, but that those who know our evils may be more solicitous to bring us help.

Availeth much. That no one may think that this is done without fruit, that is, when others pray for us, he expressly mentions the benefit and the effect of prayer. But he names expressly the prayer of a righteous or just man; because God does not hear the ungodly; nor is access to God open, except through a

[341] The illative {οὖν}, though found in some MSS., is not introduced into the text by Griesbach, there being no sufficient evidence in its favor. Nor does there appear a sufficient reason for the connection mentioned by Calvin. The two cases seem to be different. The elders of the church were in the previous instance to be called in, who were to pray and anoint the sick, and it is said that the prayer of faith (i.e. of miraculous faith) would save the sick, and that his sins would be forgiven him. This was clearly a case of miraculous healing. But what is spoken of in this verse seems to be quite different. Prayer is alone mentioned, not by the elders, but by a righteous man, not saving as in the former case, but availing much. It seems probable then that the sins of the sick miraculously healed were more especially against God; and that the sins which they were to confess to one another were against the brethren, also visited with judgment and the remedy for them was mutual confession, and mutual prayer; but the success in this case was not as sure or as certain as in the former, only we are told that an earnest prayer avails much. Then, to encourage this earnest or fervent prayer, the case of Elias is adduced; but it had nothing to do with miraculous healing.

good conscience: not that our prayers are founded on our own worthiness, but because the heart must be cleansed by faith before we can present ourselves before God. Then James testifies that the righteous or the faithful pray for us beneficially and not without fruit.

But what does he mean by adding effectual or efficacious? For this seems superfluous; for if the prayer avails much, it is doubtless effectual. The ancient interpreter has rendered it ``assiduous;'' but this is too forced. For James uses the Greek participle, {ἐνεργούμεναι}, which means ``working.'' And the sentence may be thus explained, ``It avails much, because it is effectual.'' [342] As it is an argument drawn from this principle, that God will not allow the prayers of the faithful to be void or useless, he does not therefore unjustly conclude that it avails much. But I would rather confine it to the present case: for our prayers may properly be said to be {ἐνεργούμεναι}, working, when some necessity meets us which excites in us earnest prayer. We pray daily for the whole Church, that God may pardon its sins; but then only is our prayer really in earnest, when we go forth to succor those who are in trouble. But such efficacy cannot be in the prayers of our brethren, except they know that we are in difficulties. Hence the reason given is not general, but must be specially referred to the former sentence.

17 Elias was a man. There are innumerable instances in Scripture of what he meant to prove; but he chose one that is remarkable above all others; for it was a great thing that God should make heaven in a manner subject to the prayers of Elias, so as to obey his wishes. Elias kept heaven shut by his prayers for three years and a half; he again opened it, so that it poured down abundance of rain. Hence appeared the wonderful power of prayer. Well known is this remarkable history, and is found in 1 Kings 17 and 1 Kings 18. And though it is not there expressly said, that Elias prayed for drought, it may yet be easily gathered, and that the rain also was given to his prayers.

But we must notice the application of the example. James does not say that drought ought to be sought from the Lord, because Elias obtained it; for we may by inconsiderate zeal presumptuously and foolishly imitate the Prophet. We must then observe the rule of prayer, so that it may be by faith. He, therefore, thus accommodates this example, --- that if Elias was heard, so also we shall be heard when we rightly pray. For as the command to pray is common, and as the promise is common, it follows that the effect also will be common.

Lest any one should object and say, that we are far distant from the dignity of Elias, he places him in our own rank, by saying, that he was a mortal man and subject to the same passions with ourselves. For we profit less by the examples of saints, because we imagine them to have been half gods or heroes, who had

[342] This can hardly be admitted. The word expresses what sort of prayer is that which avails much. Besides, to avail much, and to be effectual, are two distinct things. The word as a verb and as a participle had commonly an active sense. Schleusner gives only one instance in which it has a passive meaning, 2 Corinthians 1:6; to which may be added 2 Corinthians 4:12. If taken passively, it may be rendered, “inwrought,” that is, by the Spirit, according to Macknight. But it has been most commonly taken actively, and in the sense of the verbal adjective {ἐνεργὴς}, energetic, powerful, ardent, fervent.

peculiar intercourse with God; so that because they were heard, we receive no confidence. In order to shake off this heathen and profane superstition, James reminds us that the saints ought to be considered as having the infirmity of the flesh; so that we may learn to ascribe what they obtained from the Lord, not to their merits, but to the efficacy of prayer.

It hence appears how childish the Papists are, who teach men to flee to the protection of saints, because they had been heard by the Lord. For thus they reason, ``Because he obtained what he asked as long as he lived in the world, he will be now after death our best patron.'' This sort of subtle refinement was altogether unknown to the Holy Spirit. For James on the contrary argues, that as their prayers availed so much, so we ought in like manner to pray at this day according to their example, and that we shall not do so in vain.

James 5:19-20

James 5:19-20

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

19 Fratres mei, si quis inter vos erraverit a veritate, et converterit quispiam eum;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

20 Cognoscat quod qui converterit peccatorem ab errore viae suae, servabit animam a morte, et multitudinem operiet peccatorum.

20 Let him know. I doubt whether this ought rather to have been written, {γιςώσκετε}, ``know ye.'' Both ways the meaning however is the same. For James recommends to us the correction of our brethren from the effect produced that we may more assiduously attend to this duty. Nothing is better or more desirable than to deliver a soul from eternal death; and this is what he does who restores an erring brother to the right way: therefore a work so excellent ought by no means to be neglected. To give food to the hungry, and drink to the thirsty, we see how much Christ values such acts; but the salvation of the soul is esteemed by him much more precious than the life of the body. We must therefore take heed lest souls perish through our sloth, whose salvation God puts in a manner in our hands. Not that we can bestow salvation on them; but that God by our ministry delivers and saves those who seem otherwise to be nigh destruction.

Some copies have his soul, which makes no change in the sense. I, however, prefer the other reading, for it has more force in it.

And shall hide a multitude of sins. He makes an allusion to a saying of Solomon, rather than a quotation. (Proverbs 10:12.) Solomon says that love covers sins, as hatred proclaims them. For they who hate burn with the desire of mutual slander; but they who love are disposed to exercise mutual forbearance. Love, then, buries sins as to men. James teaches here something higher, that is, that sins are blotted out before God; as though he had said, Solomon

has declared this as the fruit of love, that it covers sins; but there is no better or more excellent way of covering them than when they are wholly abolished before God. And this is done when the sinner is brought by our admonition to the right way: we ought then especially and more carefully to attend to this duty.

END OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES

First Peter

First Peter: The Argument

THE ARGUMENT

The design of Peter in this Epistle is to exhort the faithful to a denial of the world and a contempt of it, so that being freed from carnal affections and all earthly hindrances, they might with their whole soul aspire after the celestial kingdom of Christ, that being elevated by hope, supported by patience, and fortified by courage and perseverance, they might overcome all kinds of temptations, and pursue this course and practice throughout life.

Hence at the very beginning he proclaims in express words the grace of God made known to us in Christ; and at the same time he adds, that it is received by faith and possessed by hope, so that the godly might raise up their minds and hearts above the world. Hence he exhorts them to holiness, lest they should render void the price by which they were redeemed, and lest they should suffer the incorruptible seed of the Word, by which they had been regenerated into eternal life, to be destroyed or to die. And as he had said, that they had been born again by God's Word, he makes mention of their spiritual infancy. Moreover, that their faith might not vacillate or stagger, because they saw that Christ was despised and rejected almost by the whole world, he reminds them that this was only the fulfillment of what had been written of him, that he would be the stone of stumbling. But he further teaches them that he would be a firm foundation to those who believe in him. Hence he again refers to the great honor to which God had raised them, that they might be animated by the contemplation of their former state, and by the perception of their present benefits, to devote themselves to a godly life.

He afterwards comes to particular exhortations, --- that they were to conduct themselves in humility and obedience under the government of princes, that servants were to be subject to their masters, that wives were to obey their husbands and to be modest and chaste, and that, on the other hand, husbands were to treat their wives with kindness. And then he commands them to observe what was just and right towards one another; and that they might do this the more willingly, he sets before them what would be the fruit --- a peaceable and happy life.

As, however, it happened to Christians, that how much soever they sought peace, they were often harassed by many injuries, and had the world for no just cause inimical to them, he exhorts them calmly to bear their persecutions, which they knew would promote their salvation. For this purpose he brings forward the example of Christ. On the other hand, he reminds them what unhappy end awaits the ungodly, whilst in the meantime God wonderfully delivers his Church from death by death. He still further refers to the example of Christ to

enforce the mortification of the flesh. To this exhortation he adds various and brief sentences; but shortly after he returns to the doctrine of patience, so that the faithful might mingle consolation with their evils, regarding it as good for them to be chastised by the paternal hand of God.

At the beginning of the fifth chapter he reminds the elders of their duty, that they were not to tyrannize over the Church, but to preside under Christ with moderation. He recommends to the young modesty and teachableness. At length, after a short exhortation, he closes the Epistle with a prayer.

As to the place from which he wrote, all do not agree. There is, however, no reason that I see why we should doubt that he was then at Babylon, as he expressly declares. [343] But as the persuasion had prevailed, that he had moved from Antioch to Rome, and that he died at Rome, the ancients, led by this sole argument, imagined that Rome is here allegorically called Babylon. But as without any probable conjecture they rashly believed what they have said of the Roman episcopate of Peter, so also this allegorical figment ought to be regarded as nothing. It is indeed much more probable that Peter, according to the character of his apostleship, traveled over those parts in which most of the Jews resided; and we know that a great number of them were in Babylon and in the surrounding countries.

[343] Horne, in his Introduction, vol. 4, p. 425, mentions four opinions on this subject. According to Bishop Pearson, Mill, and Le Clerc, it was Babylon in Egypt; according to Erasmus, Drusius, Beza, Dr. Lightfoot, Basnage, Beausobre, Dr. Cave, Wetstein, Drs. Benson and A. Clarke, it was Babylon in Assyria; according to Michaelis, it was Babylon in Mesopotamia; and according to Grotius, Drs. Whitby, Lardner, Macknight, and Hales, Bishop Tomline, and all the learned of the Romish communion, it is to be taken figuratively for Rome, according to what was done by John in Revelation 17 and 18.What renders the last opinion very improbable is, that to date an epistle at a place to which a figurative name is given, is without another instance in Scripture, and the thing itself seems quite absurd. The language of prophecy is quite a different matter. Paul wrote several of his epistles at Rome, and in no instance did he do anything of this kind. Such an opinion would have never gained ground, had there not been from early times a foolish attempt to connect Peter with Rome. And it is to be regretted that some learned Protestants have been duped on this subject by a mass of fictitious evidence which has been collected by the partisans of the Romish Church. — Ed.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 Peter 1:1-2

1 Peter 1:1-2

1. Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

1. Petrus, apostolus Jesu Christi, electis inquilinis qui dispersi sunt per Ponturn, Galatiam, Cappadociam, Asiam et Bithyniam,

2. Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace unto you, and peace, be multiplied.

2. Secundum precognitionem Dei Patris in sanctificatione Spiritus, in obedientiam et aspersionem sanguinis Jesu Christi; Gratia vobis et pax multiplicetur.

1 Peter, an apostle What in this salutation is the same with those of Paul, requires no new explanation. When Paul prayed for grace and peace, the verb is left out; but Peter adds it, and says, be multiplied; still the meaning is the same; for Paul did not wish to the faithful the beginning of grace and peace, but the increase of them, that is, that God would complete what he had begun.

To the elect, or the elected. It may be asked, how could this be found out, for the election of God is hid, and cannot be known without the special revelation of the Spirit; and as every one is made sure of his own election by the testimony of the Spirit, so he can know nothing certain of others. To this I answer, that we are not curiously to inquire about the election of our brethren, but ought on the contrary to regard their calling, so that all who are admitted by faith into the church, are to be counted as the elect; for God thus separates them from the world, which is a sign of election. It is no objection to say that many fall away, having nothing but the semblance; for it is the judgment of charity and not of faith, when we deem all those elect in whom appears the mark of God's adoption. And that he does not fetch their election from the hidden counsel of God, but gathers it from the effect, is evident from the context; for afterwards he connects it with the sanctification of the Spirit As far then as they proved that they were regenerated by the Spirit of God, so far did he deem them to be the elect of God, for God does not sanctify any but those whom he has previously elected.

However, he at the same time reminds us whence that election flows, by which we are separated for salvation, that we may not perish with the world; for he says, according to the foreknowledge of God This is the fountain and the

first cause: God knew before the world was created whom he had elected for salvation.

But we ought wisely to consider what this precognition or foreknowledge is. For the sophists, in order to obscure the grace of God, imagine that the merits of each are foreseen by God, and that thus the reprobate are distinguished from the elect, as every one proves himself worthy of this or that lot. But Scripture everywhere sets the counsel of God, on which is founded our salvation, in opposition to our merits. Hence, when Peter calls them elect according to the precognition of God, he intimates that the cause of it depends on nothing else but on God alone, for he of his own free will has chosen us. Then the foreknowledge of God excludes every worthiness on the part of man. We have treated this subject more at large in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and in other places.

As however in our election he assigns the first place to the gratuitous favor of God, so again he would have us to know it by the effects, for there is nothing more dangerous or more preposterous than to overlook our calling and to seek for the certainty of our election in the hidden prescience of God, which is the deepest labyrinth. Therefore to obviate this danger, Peter supplies the best correction; for though in the first place he would have us to consider the counsel of God, the cause of which is alone in himself; yet he invites us to notice the effect, by which he sets forth and bears witness to our election. That effect is the sanctification of the Spirit, even effectual calling, when faith is added to the outward preaching of the gospel, which faith is begotten by the inward operation of the Spirit.

To the sojourners [344] They who think that all the godly are thus called, because they are strangers in the world, and are advancing towards the celestial country, are much mistaken, and this mistake is evident from the word dispersion which immediately follows; for this can apply only to the Jews, not only because they were banished from their own country and scattered here and there, but also because they had been driven out of that land which had been promised to them by the Lord as a perpetual inheritance. He indeed afterwards calls all the faithful sojourners, because they are pilgrims on the earth; but the reason here is different. They were sojourners, because they had been dispersed, some in Pontus, some in Galatia, and some in Bithynia. It is nothing strange that he designed this Epistle more especially for the Jews, for he knew that he was appointed in a particular manner their apostle, as Paul teaches us in Galatians 2:8. In the countries he enumerates, he includes the whole of Asia

[344] Inquilinis; they are those who dwell in a hired house, tenants. The original, {παρεπιδήμοις}, means those who dwell among a people, that is, not their own. Sojourners or pilgrims would be the best word. The sentence literally is, ``To the sojourners of the dispersion of Pontus.'' etc. --- Ed.

Minor, from the Euxine to Cappadocia. [345]

Unto obedience He adds two things to sanctification, and seems to understand newness of life by obedience, and by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ the remission of sins. But if these be parts or effects of sanctification, then sanctification is to be taken here somewhat different from what it means when used by Paul, that is, more generally. God then sanctifies us by an effectual calling; and this is done when we are renewed to an obedience to his righteousness, and when we are sprinkled by the blood of Christ, and thus are cleansed from our sins. And there seems to be an implied allusion to the ancient rite of sprinkling used under the law. For as it was not then sufficient for the victim to be slain and the blood to be poured out, except the people were sprinkled; so now the blood of Christ which has been shed will avail us nothing, except our consciences are by it cleansed. There is then to be understood here a contrast, that, as formerly under the law the sprinkling of blood was made by the hand of the priest; so now the Holy Spirit sprinkles our souls with the blood of Christ for the expiation of our sins.

Let us now state the substance of the whole; which is, that our salvation flows from the gratuitous election of God; but that it is to be ascertained by the experience of faith, because he sanctifies us by his Spirit; and then that there are two effects or ends of our calling, even renewal into obedience and ablution by the blood of Christ; and further, that both are the work of the Holy Spirit. [346] We hence conclude, that election is not to be separated from calling, nor the gratuitous righteousness of faith from newness of life.

1 Peter 1:3-5

1 Peter 1:3-5

3. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

3. Benedictus Deus et Pater Domini nostri Jesu Christi, qui secundum multam suam misericordiam regenuit nos in spem vivare, per resurrectionem Jesu Christi ex mortuis,

[345] On this question both ancient and modern divines have differed. It is to be decided by the contents of the Epistle only. There is nothing decisive in favor of the opinion that it was written only to believing Jews; but there is a passage, 1 Peter 4:3, which seems clearly to shew that Peter included the believing Gentiles; for "the abominable idolatries" could only refer to them, as the Jews, since the Babylonian captivity, had never fallen into idolatry. — Ed.

[346] The meaning would be more clear, were we to make a change in the order of the words, "Elected, according to the foreknowledge of God, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ, through (or, by) the sanctification of the Spirit," that is, they were elected in order that they might obey the gospel, and be cleansed from the guilt of sin by the blood of Christ, through the sanctifying power of the Spirit. It was not their obedience that made them the elect, but they were chosen that they might obey, and thus obey through the influence of the Spirit. This is clearly the doctrine of this passage. See 2 Thessalonians 2:13 — Ed.

4. To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you,

4. In haereditatem incorruptibilem et incontaminatam et immarcescibilem, repositum in caelis erga vos,

5. Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

5. Qui virtute Dei custodimini per fidem in salutem, qut parata est revelari tempore ultimo.

3 Blessed be God We have said that the main object of this epistle is to raise us above the world, in order that we may be prepared and encouraged to sustain the spiritual contests of our warfare. For this end, the knowledge of God's benefits avails much; for, when their value appears to us, all other things will be deemed worthless, especially when we consider what Christ and his blessings are; for everything without him is but dross. For this reason he highly extols the wonderful grace of God in Christ, that is, that we may not deem it much to give up the world in order that we may enjoy the invaluable treasure of a future life; and also that we may not be broken down by present troubles, but patiently endure them, being satisfied with eternal happiness.

Further, when he gives thanks to God, he invites the faithful to spiritual joy, which can swallow up all the opposite feelings of the flesh.

And Father of our Lord Jesus Christ Understand the words thus, --- ``Blessed be God who is the Father of Jesus Christ.'' For, as formerly, by calling himself the God of Abraham, he designed to mark the difference between him and all fictitious gods; so after he has manifested himself in his own Son, his will is, not to be known otherwise than in him. Hence they who form their ideas of God in his naked majesty apart from Christ, have an idol instead of the true God, as the case is with the Jews and the Turks. Whosoever, then, seeks really to know the only true God, must regard him as the Father of Christ; for, whenever our mind seeks God, except Christ be thought of, it will wander and be confused, until it be wholly lost. Peter meant at the same time to intimate how God is so bountiful and kind towards us; for, except Christ stood as the middle person, his goodness could never be really known by us.

Who hath begotten us again He shews that supernatural life is a gift, because we are born the children of wrath; for had we been born to the hope of life according to the flesh, there would have been no necessity of being begotten again by God. Therefore Peter teaches us, that we who are by nature destined to eternal death, are restored to life by God's mercy. And this is, as it were, our second creation, as it is said in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians. Lively or living hope, means the hope of life. [347] At the same time there seems

[347] "This is a Hebraism," says Macknight, "for a hope of life. Accordingly, the Syriac version hath here, in spem vitae — to a hope of life." The begetting again seems not to refer to inward renovation, but to what God did by raising Christ from the dead. To beget, sometimes means to put one in a new state or condition; as the expression, "This day have I begotten thee," means, that God had then constituted his Son a king, publicly invested him, as it were, with that office. Similar is the meaning here: God through the resurrection of Christ restored to the hope of life his desponding followers: hence the import of the word

to be an implied contrast between the hope fixed on the incorruptible kingdom of God, and the fading and transient hopes of man.

According to his abundant mercy He first mentions the efficient cause, and then he points out the mediating cause, as they say. He shews that God was induced by no merits of ours to regenerate us unto a living hope, because he assigns this wholly to his mercy. But that he might more completely reduce the merits of works to nothing, he says, great (multam) mercy. All, indeed, confess that God is the only author of our salvation, but they afterwards invent extraneous causes, which take away so much from his mercy. But Peter commends mercy alone; and he immediately connects the way or manner, by the resurrection of Christ; for God does not in any other way discover his mercy; hence Scripture ever directs our attention to this point. And that Christ's death is not mentioned, but his resurrection, involves no inconsistency, for it is included; because a thing cannot be completed without having a beginning; and he especially brought forward the resurrection, because he was speaking of a new life.

4 To an inheritance [348] The three words which follow are intended to amplify God's grace; for Peter (as I have before said) had this object in view, to impress our minds thoroughly as to its excellency. Moreover, these two clauses, ``to an inheritance incorruptible,'' etc., and ``to salvation ready to be revealed,'' I deem as being in apposition, the latter being explanatory of the former; for he expresses the same thing in two ways.

Every word which follows is weighty. The inheritance is said to be reserved, or preserved, that we may know that it is beyond the reach of danger. For, were it not in God's hand, it might be exposed to endless dangers. If it were in this world, how could we regard it as safe amidst so many changes? That he might then free us from every fear, he testifies that our salvation is placed in safety beyond the harms which Satan can do. But as the certainty of salvation can bring us but little comfort, except each one knows that it belongs to himself, Peter adds, for you For consciences will calmly recumb here, that is, when the Lord cries to them from heaven, ``Behold, your salvation is in my hand and is kept for you.'' But as salvation is not indiscriminately for all, he calls our attention to faith, that all who are endued with faith, might be distinguished from the rest, and that they might not doubt but that they are the true and legitimate heirs of God. For, as faith penetrates into the heavens, so also it appropriates to us the blessings which are in heaven.

5 Who are kept by the power of God We are to notice the connection when he

"again;" though Macknight thinks the reference to be to the covenant of grace made with our first parents after the fall, and that believers were begotten the second time to the same hope by the resurrection of Christ. The word for "begetting again," is only found here, and in a passive sense in the 23d verse, where it has a different meaning, as it evidently refers to the renovation of the heart. — Ed.

[348] Pareus puts, "that is, to an inheritance," making this sentence explanatory of "the hope," as hope here is a metonymy for its object. It is an inheritance "incorruptible," not to be destroyed by a flood or by fire, — "undefiled," not like the land of Canaan, its type, which was defiled by its inhabitants, — "unfading," different from any worldly inheritance, for the world passeth away. — Ed.

says, that we are kept while in the world, and at the same time our inheritance is reserved in heaven; otherwise this thought would immediately creep in, ``What does it avail us that our salvation is laid up in heaven, when we are tossed here and there in this world as in a turbulent sea? What can it avail us that our salvation is secured in a quiet harbour, when we are driven to and fro amidst thousand shipwrecks?'' The apostle, therefore, anticipates objections of this kind, when he shews, that though we are in the world exposed to dangers, we are yet kept by faith; and that though we are thus nigh to death, we are yet safe under the guardianship of faith. But as faith itself, through the infirmity of the flesh, often quails, we might be always anxious about the morrow, were not the Lord to aid us. [349]

And, indeed, we see that under the Papacy a diabolical opinion prevails, that we ought to doubt our final perseverance, because we are uncertain whether we shall be tomorrow in the same state of grace. But Peter did not thus leave us in suspense; for he testifies that we stand by the power of God, lest any doubt arising from a consciousness of our own infirmity, should disquiet us. How weak soever we may then be, yet our salvation is not uncertain, because it is sustained by God's power. As, then, we are begotten by faith, so faith itself receives its stability from God's power. Hence is its security, not only for the present, but also for the future.

Unto salvation As we are by nature impatient of delay, and soon succumb under weariness, he therefore reminds us that salvation is not deferred because it is not yet prepared, but because the time of its revelation is not yet come. This doctrine is intended to nourish and sustain our hope. Moreover, he calls the day of judgment the last time, because the restitution of all things is not to be previously expected, for the intervening time is still in progress. What is elsewhere called the last time, is the whole from the coming of Christ; it is so called from a comparison with the preceding ages. But Peter had a regard to the end of the world.

1 Peter 1:6-9

1 Peter 1:6-9

6. Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season, if need be, ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

6. In quo exultatis, paulisper nunc, si opus esti, contristati in variis tentationibus;

7. That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

7. Ut probatio fidel vestrae multo pretiosior auro, quod perit et tamen per

[349] The meaning would be somewhat different, but the sentence would be more intelligible, were we to render it thus, “Who are kept by faith in the power of God unto salvation.” Salvation here means that of the body as well as of the soul at the resurrection. — Ed.

ignem probatur, reperiatur in laudem et honorem et gloriam, quum revelabitur Jesus Christus:

8. Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see him not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory:

8. Quem quum non videritis, diligitis, in quem nunc credentes, quum eum non aspicitis, exultatis gaudio inenarrabili et glorificato;

9. Receiving the end of your faith, even the salvation of your souls.

9. Reportantes finem fidei vestrae, salutem animarum.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, or, In which ye exult. Though the termination of the Greek verb is doubtful, yet the meaning requires that we read, ``ye exult,'' rather than ``exult ye.'' In which refers to the whole that is said of the hope of salvation laid up in heaven. But he rather exhorts than praises them; for his object was to shew what fruit was to come from the hope of salvation, even spiritual joy, by which not only the bitterness of all evil might be mitigated, but also all sorrow overcome. At the same time to exult is more expressive than to rejoice. [350]

But it seems somewhat inconsistent, when he says that the faithful, who exulted with joy, were at the same time sorrowful, for these are contrary feelings. But the faithful know by experience, how these things can exist together, much better than can be expressed in words. However, to explain the matter in a few words, we may say that the faithful are not logs of wood, nor have they so divested themselves of human feelings, but that they are affected with sorrow, fear danger, and feel poverty as an evil, and persecutions as hard and difficult to be borne. Hence they experience sorrow from evils; but it is so mitigated by faith, that they cease not at the same time to rejoice. Thus sorrow does not prevent their joy, but, on the contrary, give place to it. Again, though joy overcomes sorrow, yet it does not put an end to it, for it does not divest us of humanity. And hence it appears what true patience is; its beginning, and, as it were, its root, is the knowledge of God's blessings, especially of that gratuitous adoption with which he has favored us; for all who raise hither their minds, find it an easy thing calmly to bear all evils. For whence is it that our minds are pressed down with grief, except that we have no participation of spiritual things? But all they who regard their troubles as necessary trials for their salvation, not only rise above them, but also turn them to an occasion of joy.

Ye are in heaviness, or, Ye are made sorrowful. Is not sorrow also the common lot of the reprobate? for they are not free from evils. But Peter meant that the faithful endure sorrow willingly, while the ungodly murmur and perversely contend with God. Hence the godly bear sorrow, as the tamed ox the yoke, or as a horse, broken in, the bridle, though held by a child. God by sorrow afflicts

[350] Some take the verb in a future sense, “At which (time) ye shall exult;” and some as being an imperative, “On account of which exult ye;” but neither of these comports with the context; for the 8th verse proves that he speaks of present joy, and that he states the case as it was among them. It is better with Calvin to refer “wherein,” or, “on account of which,” to the fact stated in the previous verse, that they were kept by God’s power for salvation ready to be revealed. — Ed.

the reprobate, as when a bridle is by force put in the mouth of a ferocious and refractory horse; he kicks and offers every resistance, but all in vain. Then Peter commends the faithful, because they willingly undergo sorrow, and not as though forced by necessity.

By saying, though now for a season, or, a little while, he supplied consolation; for the shortness of time, however hard evils may be, does not a little lessen them; and the duration of the present life is but a moment of time. If need be; the condition is to be taken for a cause; for he purposed to shew, that God does not, without reason, thus try his people; for, if God afflicted us without a cause, to bear it would be grievous. Hence Peter took an argument for consolation from the design of God; not that the reason always appears to us, but that we ought to be fully persuaded that it ought to be so, because it is God's will.

We must notice that he does not mention one temptation, but many; and not temptations of one kind, but manifold temptations It is, however, better to seek the exposition of this passage in the first chapter of James

7. Much more precious than of gold The argument is from the less to the greater; for if gold, a corruptible metal, is deemed of so much value that we prove it by fire, that it may become really valuable, what wonder is it that God should require a similar trial as to faith, since faith is deemed by him so excellent? And though the words seem to have a different meaning, he yet compares faith to gold, and makes it more precious than gold, that hence he might draw the conclusion, that it ought to be fully proved. [351] It is moreover uncertain how far he extends the meaning of the words, ``tried'' {δοκιμάζεσθαι} and ``trial'' {δοκίμιον}

Gold is, indeed, tried twice by fire; first, when it is separated from its dross; and then, when a judgment is to be formed of its purity. Both modes of trial may very suitably be applied to faith; for when there is much of the dregs of unbelief remaining in us, and when by various afflictions we are refined as it were in God's furnace, the dross of our faith is removed, so that it becomes pure and clean before God; and, at the same time, a trial of it is made, as to whether it be true or fictitious. I am disposed to take these two views, and what immediately follows seems to favor this explanation; for as silver is without honor or value before it be refined, so he intimates that our faith is not to be honored and crowned by God until it be duly proved.

At the appearing of Jesus Christ, or, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed. This is added, that the faithful might learn to hold on courageously to the last day. For our life is now hidden in Christ, and will remain hidden, and as it were buried, until Christ shall appear from heaven; and the whole course of our life leads to the destruction of the external man, and all the things we suffer are, as it were, the preludes of death. It is hence necessary, that we should cast our own eyes on Christ, if we wish in our afflictions to behold glory and praise. For trials as to us are full of reproach and shame, and they become glorious in

[351] The seeming difference in meaning referred to, arises from this, that the Apostle uses two nouns (a common thing in Scripture) instead of a noun and an adjective or participle — "the trial of your faith," instead of "your tried faith," or, "your faith when tried." — Ed.

Christ; but that glory in Christ is not yet plainly seen, for the day of consolation is not yet come. [352]

8 Whom having not seen, or, Whom though ye have not seen. He lays down two things, that they loved Christ whom they had not seen, and that they believed on him whom they did not then behold. But the first arises from the second; for the cause of love is faith, not only because the knowledge of those blessings which Christ bestows on us, moves us to love him, but because he offers us perfect felicity, and thus draws us up to himself. He then commends the Jews, because they believed in Christ whom they did not see, that they might know that the nature of faith is to acquiesce in those blessings which are hid from our eyes. They had indeed given some proof of this very thing, though he rather directs what was to be done by praising them.

The first clause in order is, that faith is not to be measured by sight. For when the life of Christians is apparently miserable, they would instantly fail, were not their happiness dependent on hope. Faith, indeed, has also its eyes, but they are such as penetrate into the invisible kingdom of God, and are contented with the mirror of the Word; for it is the demonstration of invisible things, as it is said in Hebrews 11:1. Hence true is that saying of Paul, that

we are absent from the Lord while we are in the flesh;
for we walk by faith and not by sight.
(2 Corinthians 5:6-7.)

The second clause is, that faith is not a cold notion, but that it kindles in our hearts love to Christ. For faith does not (as the sophists prattle) lay hold on God in a confused and implicit manner, (for this would be to wander through devious paths;) but it has Christ as its object. Moreover, it does not lay hold on the bare name of Christ, or his naked essence, but regards what he is to us, and what blessings he brings; for it cannot be but that the affections of man should be led there, where his happiness is, according to that saying,

``Where your treasure is, there is also your heart.'' (Matthew 6:21.)

Ye rejoice, or, Ye exult. He again refers to the fruit of faith which he had mentioned, and not without reason; for it is an incomparable benefit, that consciences are not only at peace before God, but confidently exult in the hope of eternal life. And he calls it joy unspeakable, or unutterable, because the peace of God exceeds all comprehension. What is added, full of glory, or glorified, admits of two explanations. It means either what is magnificent and glorious, or what is contrary to that which is empty and fading, of which men will soon be ashamed. Thus ``glorified'' is the same with what is solid and permanent, beyond the danger of being brought to nothing. [353] Those who are not elevated by this joy above the heavens, so that being content with Christ alone,

[352] The "praise, honor, and glory," refer to tried faith; it will be praised or approved by the Judge, honored before men and angels, and followed by eternal glory. — Ed.

[353] After "unspeakable," "glorified" must mean something greater, or it may be viewed as more specific, it is a joy unspeakable, it being a glorified joy in a measure, or the joy of the glorified in heaven. According to this view the words may be thus rendered, "with joy unspeakable and heavenly." Doddridge gives this paraphrase, "With unutterable and even glorified joy, with such a joy as seems to anticipate that of the saints in glory." — Ed.

they despise the world, in vain boast that they have faith.

9 Receiving the end of your faith He reminds the faithful where they ought to direct all their thoughts, even to eternal salvation. For this world holds all our affections ensnared by is allurements; this life and all things belonging to the body are great impediments, which prevent us from applying our minds to the contemplation of the future and spiritual life. Hence the Apostle sets before us this future life as a subject of deep meditation, and he indirectly intimates that the loss of all other things is to be deemed as nothing, provided our souls be saved. By saying receiving, he takes away all doubt, in order that they might more cheerfully go on, being certain of obtaining salvation. [354] In the meantime, however, he shews what the end of faith is, lest they should be over-anxious, because it is as yet deferred. For our adoption ought now to satisfy us; nor ought we to ask to be introduced before the time into the possession of our inheritance. We may also take the end for reward; but the meaning would be the same. For we learn from the Apostle's words, that salvation is not otherwise obtained than by faith; and we know that faith leans on the sole promise of gratuitous adoption; but if it be so, doubtless salvation is not owing to the merits of works, nor can it be hoped for on their account.

But why does he mention souls only, when the glory of a resurrection is promised to our bodies? As the soul is immortal, salvation is properly ascribed to it, as Paul sometimes is wont to speak, ---

``That the soul may be saved in the day of the Lord.''
(1 Corinthians 5:5.)

But it is the same as though he had said ``Eternal salvation.'' For there is an implied comparison between it and the mortal and fading life which belongs to the body. At the same time, the body is not excluded from a participation of glory when annexed to the soul.

1 Peter 1:10-12

1 Peter 1:10-12

10. Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace that should come unto you:

10. De qua salute exquisierunt et scrutati sunt prophetee, qui de futura erga nos gratia vaticinati sunt;

11. Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

11. Scrutantes in quem aut cujusmodi temporis articulum significaret qui in illis erat Spiritus Christi; prius testificans ventufas in Christum afflictiones, et

[354] It is necessary either to give a future meaning to this participle, “Being about to receive;” or to view the Apostle as speaking of the salvation of the soul now, as distinct from the salvation of the soul and body hereafter. The latter view seems most appropriate to the passage. The soul is now saved by faith. The end of faith, its object and accomplishment, is reconciliation with God, and reconciliation is salvation. — Ed.

quee sequuturae erant glorias;

12. Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

12. Quibus revelatum est quod non sibi ipsis, sed nobis ministrabant haec, quae nunc annunciata sunt vobis per cos qui vobis praedicarunt evangelitum, per Spiritum sanctum missum e coelo; in quae desiderant angeli prospicere.

He hence commends the value of salvation, because the prophets had their minds intensely fixed on it; for it must have been a great matter, and possessing peculiar excellency, which could have thus kindled in the prophets a spirit of inquiry respecting it. But still more clearly does God's goodness toward us shine forth in this case, because much more is now made known to us than what all the prophets attained by their long and anxious inquiries. At the same time he confirms the certainty of salvation by this very antiquity; for from the beginning of the world it had received a plain testimony from the Holy Spirit.

These two things ought to be distinctly noticed: he declares that more has been given to us than to the ancient fathers, in order to amplify by this comparison the grace of the gospel; and then, that what is preached to us respecting salvation, cannot be suspected of any novelty, for the Spirit had formerly testified of it by the prophets. When, therefore, he says that the prophets searched and sedulously inquired, this does not belong to their writings or doctrine, but to the private desire with which every one boiled over. What is said afterwards is to be referred to their public office.

But that each particular may be more evident, the passage must be arranged under certain propositions. Let the first then be this, --- that the Prophets who foretold of the grace which Christ exhibited at his coming, diligently inquired as to the time when full revelation was to be made. The second is, --- that the Spirit of Christ predicted by them of the future condition of Christ's kingdom, such as it is now, and such as it is expected yet to be, even that it is destined that Christ and his whole body should, through various sufferings, enter into glory. The third is, --- that the prophets ministered to us more abundantly than to their own age, and that this was revealed to them from above; for in Christ only is the full exhibition of those things of which God then presented but an obscure image. The fourth is, --- that in the Gospel is contained a clear confirmation of prophetic doctrine, but also a much fuller and plainer explanation; for the salvation which he formerly proclaimed as it were at a distance by the prophets, he now reveals openly to us, and as it were before our eyes. The last proposition is, --- that it hence appears evident how wonderful is the glory of that salvation promised to us in the Gospel, because even angels, though they enjoy God's presence in heaven, yet burn with the desire of seeing it. Now all these things tend to shew this one thing, that Christians, elevated to the height of their felicity, ought to surmount all the obstacles of the world; for what is there which this incomparable benefit does not reduce to nothing?

10 Of which salvation Had not the fathers the same salvation as we have? Why then does he say that the fathers inquired, as though they possessed not what is now offered to us? The answer to this is plain, that salvation is to be taken here for that clear manifestation of it which we have through the coming of Christ. The words of Peter mean no other thing than those of Christ, when he said,

``Many kings and prophets have desired to see the things which ye see, and have not seen them.'' (Matthew 13:17.)

As then the prophets had but a limited knowledge of the grace brought by Christ, as to its revelation they justly desired something more. When Simeon, after seeing Christ, prepared himself calmly and with a satisfied mind for death, he shewed that he was before unsatisfied and anxious. Such was the feeling of all the godly.

11. And what they inquired is pointed out when he adds, Searching what, or what manner of time There was a difference between the law and the gospel, a veil as it were being interposed, that they might not see those things nearer which are now set before our eyes. Nor was it indeed proper, while Christ the Sun of righteousness was yet absent, that the full light should shine as at midday. And though it was their duty to confine themselves within their prescribed limits, yet it was no superstition to sigh with a desire of having a nearer sight. For when they wished that redemption should be hastened, and desired daily to see it, there was nothing in such a wish to prevent them patiently to wait as long as it pleased the Lord to defer the time. Moreover, to seek as to prophecies the particular time, seems to me unprofitable; for what is spoken of here is not what the prophets taught, but what they wished. Where the Latin interpreters render, ``of future grace,'' it is literally, ``of the grace which is to you.'' But as the meaning remains the same, I was not disposed to make any change.

It is more worthy of observation, that he does not say that the prophets searched according to their own understanding as to the time when Christ's kingdom would come, but that they applied their minds to the revelation of the Spirit. Thus they have taught us by their example a sobriety in learning, for they did not go beyond what the Spirit taught them. And doubtless there will be no limits to man's curiosity, except the Spirit of God presides over their minds, so that they may not desire anything else than to speak from him. And further, the spiritual kingdom is a higher subject than what the human mind can succeed in investigating, except the Spirit be the guide. May we also therefore submit to his guidance.

The Spirit of Christ which was in them First, ``who was in them,'' and secondly, ``testifying,'' that is, giving a testimony, by which expression he intimates that the prophets were endued with the Spirit of knowledge, and indeed in no common manner, as those who have been teachers and witnesses to us, and that yet they were not partakers of that light which is exhibited to us. At the same time, a high praise is given to their doctrine, for it was the testimony of the Holy Spirit; the preachers and ministers were men, but he was the teacher.

Nor does he declare without reason that the Spirit of Christ then ruled; and he makes the Spirit, sent from heaven, to preside over the teachers of the Gospel, for he shews that the Gospel comes from God, and that the ancient prophecies were dictated by Christ.

The sufferings of Christ That they might bear submissively their afflictions, he reminds them that they had been long ago foretold by the Spirit. But he includes much more than this, for he teaches us, that the Church of Christ has been from the beginning so constituted, that the cross has been the way to victory, and death a passage to life, and that this had been clearly testified. There is, therefore, no reason why afflictions should above measure depress us, as though we were miserable under them, since the Spirit of God pronounces us blessed.

The order is to be noticed; he mentions sufferings first, and then adds the glories which are to follow. For he intimates that this order cannot be changed or subverted; afflictions must precede glory. So there is to be understood a twofold truth in these words, --- that Christians must suffer many troubles before they enjoy glory, --- and that afflictions are not evils, because they have glory annexed to them. Since God has ordained this connection, it does not behove us to separate the one from the other. And it is no common consolation, that our condition, such as we find it to be, has been foretold so many ages ago.

Hence we learn, that it is not in vain that a happy end is promised to us; secondly, we hence know that we are not afflicted by chance, but through the infallible providence of God; and lastly, that prophecies are like mirrors to set forth to us in tribulations the image of celestial glory.

Peter, indeed, says, that the Spirit had testified of the coming afflictions of Christ; but he does not separate Christ from his body. This, then, is not to be confined to the person of Christ, but a beginning is to be made with the head, so that the members may in due order follow, as Paul also teaches us, that we must be conformed to him who is the first-born among his brethren. In short, Peter does not speak of what is peculiar to Christ, but of the universal state of the Church. But it is much fitted to confirm our faith, when he sets forth our afflictions as viewed in Christ, for we thereby see better the connection of death and life between us and him. And, doubtless, this is the privilege and manner of the holy union, that he suffers daily in his members, that after his sufferings shall be completed in us, glory also may have its completion. See more on this subject in the third chapter of the Epistle to the Colossians, and in the fourth of the first Epistle to Timothy.

12 Unto whom it was revealed This passage has been strangely perverted by fanatics, so as to exclude the fathers who lived under the law from the hope of eternal salvation. For it does not deny that the prophets usefully ministered to their own age, and edified the church, but teaches us that their ministry is more useful to us, because we are fallen on the ends of the world. We see how highly they extolled the kingdom of Christ, how assiduous they were in adorning it, how diligently they stimulated all to seek it; but they were by death deprived

of the privilege of seeing it as it now is. What else then was this, but that they spread the table, that others might afterwards feed on the provisions laid on it. They indeed tasted by faith of those things which the Lord has by their hands transmitted to be enjoyed by us; and they also partook of Christ as the real food of their souls. But what is spoken of now is the exhibition of this blessing, and we know that the prophetic office was confined as it were within limits, in order that they might support themselves and others with the hope of Christ, who was to come. They therefore possessed him as one hidden, and as it were absent --- absent, I say, not in power or grace, but because he was not yet manifested in the flesh. Therefore his kingdom also was as yet hid as it were under coverings. At length descending on earth, he in a manner opened heaven to us, so that we might have a near view of those spiritual riches, which before were under types exhibited at a distance. This fruition then of Christ as manifested, forms the difference between us and the prophets. Hence we learn how they ministered to us rather than to themselves.

But though the prophets were admonished from above that the grace which they proclaimed would be deferred to another age, yet they were not slothful in proclaiming it, so far were they from being broken down with weariness. But if their patience was so great, surely we shall be twice and thrice ungrateful, if the fruition of the grace denied to them will not sustain us under all the evils which are to be endured.

Which are now reported to you, or announced to you. He again marks the difference between the ancient doctrine and the preaching of the gospel. For as the righteousness of God is revealed in the gospel, having a testimony from the law and the prophets, so also the glory of Christ, of which the Spirit testified formerly, is now openly proclaimed. And at the same time he hence proves the certainty of the gospel, because it contains nothing but what had been long ago testified by the Spirit of God. He further reminds them, that under the banner of the same Spirit, by his dictation and guidance, the gospel was preached, lest they might think of anything human in this case.

Which things the angels desire to look into It is indeed the highest praise to the gospel, that it contains treasures of wisdom, as yet concealed and hidden from angels. But some one may object, and say that it is not reasonable that things should be open and known to us which are hidden from angels, who always see the face of God, and are his ministers in ruling the church, and in the administration of all his blessings. To this I answer, that things are open to us as far as we see them in the mirror of the word; but our knowledge is not said to be higher than that of angels; Peter only means that such things are promised to us as angels desire to see fulfilled. Paul says that by the calling of the Gentiles the wonderful wisdom of God was made known to angels. for it was a spectacle to them, when Christ gathered into one body the lost world, alienated for so many ages from the hope of life. Thus daily they see with admiration the magnificent works of God in the government of his church. How much greater will their admiration be, at witnessing the last display of divine

justice, when the kingdom of Christ shall be completed! This is as yet hidden, the revelation of which they still expect and justly wish to see.

The passage indeed admits of a twofold meaning; either that the treasure we have in the gospel fills the angels with a desire to see it, as it is a sight especially delightful to them; or that they anxiously desire to see the kingdom of Christ, the living image of which is set forth in the gospel. But the last seems to me to be the most suitable meaning.

1 Peter 1:13-16

1 Peter 1:13-16

13. Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

13. Quare succincti lumbis mentis vestrae, sobrii, perfecte sperate in eam quae ad vos defertur gratiam, in revelatione Jesu Christi;

14. As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance:

14. Tanquam filii obedientes, non conformati pristinis, quae in ignorantia vestra regnarunt, cupiditatibus:

15. But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

15. Sed quaemadmodum is qui vos vocavit sanctus est, ita ipsi sancti in tota conversatione reddamini;

16. Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.

16. Propterea quòd scriptum est, Sancti estote, quia ego sanctus sum. (Leviticus 11:44; 19:2; 20:7.)

From the greatness and excellency of grace he draws an exhortation, that it surely behoved them the more readily to receive the grace of God, as the more bountifully he bestowed it upon them. And we must notice the connection: he had said, that so elevated was the kingdom of Christ, to which the gospel calls us, that even angels in heaven desire to see it; what then ought to be done by us who are in the world? Doubtless, as long as we live on earth, so great is the distance between us and Christ, that in vain he invites us to himself. It is hence necessary for us to put off the image of Adam and to cast aside the whole world and all hinderances, that being thus set at liberty we may rise upwards to Christ. And he exhorted those to whom he wrote, to be prepared and sober, and to hope for the graces offered to them, and also to renounce the world and their former life, and to be conformed to the will of God. [355]

Then the first part of the exhortation is, to gird up the loins of their mind

[355] Pareus observes, that the Apostle, in this part of the chapter, exhorted the faithful to sobriety, holiness, humility, and brotherly love, by five reasons: 1, because they were the children of God, ver. 14; 2, because God is holy, and requires holiness, ver. 15; 3, because God is no respecter of persons, ver. 17; 4, because of the value of the price for their redemption, ver. 18; and 5, because they had been born again of an immortal seed, ver. 23. — Ed.

and to direct their thoughts to the hope of the grace presented to them. In the second par, he prescribes the manner, that having their minds changed, they were to be formed after the image of God.

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind It is a similitude taken from an ancient custom; for when they had long garments, they could not make a journey, nor conveniently do any work, without being girded up. Hence these expressions, to gird up one's-self for a work or an undertaking. He then bids them to remove all impediments, that being set at liberty they might go on to God. Those who philosophize more refinedly about the loins, as though he commanded lusts to be restrained and checked, depart from the real meaning of the Apostle, for these words mean the same with those of Christ,

``Let your loins be girded about, and burning lamps in your hands,''
(Luke 12:35,)

except that Peter doubles the metaphor by ascribing loins to the mind. And he intimates that our minds are held entangled by the passing cares of the world and by vain desires, so that they rise not upward to God. Whosoever, then, really wishes to have this hope, let him learn in the first place to disentangle himself from the world, and gird up his mind that it may not turn aside to vain affections. And for the same purpose he enjoins sobriety, which immediately follows; for he commends not temperance only in eating and drinking, but rather spiritual sobriety, when all our thoughts and affections are so kept as not to be inebriated with the allurements of this world. For since even the least taste of them stealthily draws us away from God, when one plunges himself into these, he must necessarily become sleepy and stupid, and he forgets God and the things of God.

Hope to the end, or, Perfectly hope. He intimates that those who let their minds loose on vanity, did not really and sincerely hope for the grace of God; for though they had some hope, yet as they vacillated and were tossed to and fro in the world, there was no solidity in their hope. Then he says, for the grace which will be brought to you, in order that they might be more prompt to receive it. God ought to be sought, though far off; but he comes of his own will to meet us. How great, then, must be our ingratitude if we neglect the grace that is thus set before us! This amplification, then, is especially intended to stimulate our hope.

What he adds, At the revelation of Jesus Christ, may be explained in two ways: that the doctrine of the Gospel reveals Christ to us; and that, as we see him as yet only through a mirror and enigmatically, a full revelation is deferred to the last day. The first meaning is approved by Erasmus, nor do I reject it. The second seems, however, to be more suitable to the passage. For the object of Peter was to call us away beyond the world; for this purpose the fittest thing was the recollection of Christ's coming. For when we direct our eyes to this event, this world becomes crucified to us, and we to the world. Besides, according to this meaning, Peter used the expression shortly before. Nor is it a new thing for the apostles to employ the preposition {ἐν} in the sense of {εἰς}. Thus, then,

I explain the passage, --- ``You have no need to make a long journey that you may attain the grace of God; for God anticipates you; inasmuch as he brings it to you.'' But as the fruition of it will not be until Christ appears from heaven, in whom is hid the salvation of the godly, there is need, in the meantime, of hope; for the grace of Christ is now offered to us in vain, except we patiently wait until the coming of Christ.

14 As obedient children He first intimates that we are called by the Lord to the privilege and honor of adoption through the Gospel; and, secondly, that we are adopted for this end, that he might have us as his obedient children. For though obedience does not make us children, as the gift of adoption is gratuitous, yet it distinguishes children from aliens. How far, indeed, this obedience extends, Peter shews, when he forbids God's children to conform to or to comply with the desires of this world, and when he exhorts them, on the contrary, to conform to the will of God. The sum of the whole law, and of all that God requires of us, is this, that his image should shine forth in us, so that we should not be degenerate children. But this cannot be except we be renewed and put off the image of old Adam.

Hence we learn what Christians ought to propose to themselves as an object throughout life, that is, to resemble God in holiness and purity. But as all the thoughts and feelings of our flesh are in opposition to God, and the whole bent of our mind is enmity to him, hence Peter begins with the renunciation of the world; and certainly, whenever the Scripture speaks of the renewal of God's image in us, it begins here, that the old man with his lusts is to be destroyed.

In your ignorance The time of ignorance he calls that before they were called into the faith of Christ. We hence learn that unbelief is the fountain of all evils. For he does not use the word ignorance, as we commonly do; for that Platonic dogma is false, that ignorance alone is the cause of sin. But yet, how much soever conscience may reprove the unbelieving, nevertheless they go astray as the blind in darkness, because they know not the right way, and they are without the true light. According to this meaning, Paul says,

``Ye henceforth walk not as the Gentiles, in the vanity of their mind, who have the mind darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them.''
(Ephesians 4:17.)

Where the knowledge of God is not, there darkness, error, vanity, destitution of light and life, prevail. These things, however, do not render it impossible that the ungodly should be conscious of doing wrong when they sin, and know that their judge is in heaven, and feel an executioner within them. In short, as the kingdom of God is a kingdom of light, all who are alienated from him must necessarily be blind and go astray in a labyrinth.

We are in the meantime reminded, that we are for this end illuminated as to the knowledge of God, that we may no longer be carried away by roving lusts. Hence, as much progress any one has made in newness of life, so much progress has he made in the knowledge of God.

Here a question arises, --- Since he addressed the Jews, who were acquainted with the law, and were brought up in the worship of the only true God, why did he charge them with ignorance and blindness, as though they were heathens? To this I answer, that it hence appears how profitless is all knowledge without Christ. When Paul exposed the vain boasting of those who wished to be wise apart from Christ, he justly said in one short sentence, that they did not hold the head. (Colossians 2:19.) Such were the Jews; being otherwise imbued with numberless corruptions, they had a veil over the eyes, so that they did not see Christ in the Law. The doctrine in which they had been taught was indeed a true light; but they were blind in the midst of light, as long as the Sun of Righteousness was hid to them. But if Peter declares that the literal disciples even of the Law were in darkness like the heathens, as long as they were ignorant of Christ, the only true wisdom of God, with how much greater care it behoves us to strive for the knowledge of him!

15 He who hath called you is holy He reasons from the end for which we are called. God sets us apart as a peculiar people for himself; then we ought to be free from all pollutions. And he quotes a sentence which had been often repeated by Moses. For as the people of Israel were on every side surrounded by heathens, from whom they might have easily adopted the worst examples and innumerable corruptions, the Lord frequently recalled them to himself, as though he had said, ``Ye have to do with me, ye are mine; then abstain from the pollutions of the Gentiles.'' We are too ready to look to men, so as to follow their common way of living. Thus it happens, that some lead others in troops to all kinds of evil, until the Lord by his calling separates them.

In bidding us to be holy like himself, the proportion is not that of equals; but we ought to advance in this direction as far as our condition will bear. And as even the most perfect are always very far from coming up to the mark, we ought daily to strive more and more. And we ought to remember that we are not only told what our duty is, but that God also adds, ``I am he who sanctify you.''

It is added, In all manner of conversation, or, in your whole conduct. There is then no part of our life which is not to be redolent with this good odour of holiness. For we see that in the smallest things and almost insignificant, the Lord accustomed his people to the practice of holiness, in order that they might exercise a more diligent care as to themselves.

1 Peter 1:17-22

1 Peter 1:17-22

17. And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

17. Et si Patrem invocatis, eum qui sine personae acceptione secundum cujusque opus judicat, in timore conversantes, tempus incolatus vestri transigite;

18. Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible

things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

18. Scientes quòd non corruptibilibus, argento vel auro, redempti sitis à vana conversatione à patribus tradita;

19. But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

19. Sed pretioso sanguine velut agni immaculati et incontaminati Christi;

20. Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

20. Qui praeordinatus quidem fuerat ante conditum mundum, manifestatus autem est extremis temporibus propter vos;

21. Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.

21. Qui per ipsum creditis in Deum, qui eum suscitavit ex mortuis, et gloriam illi dedit, ut fides vestra et spes sit in Deum;

22. Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit unto unfeigned love of the brethren, see that ye love one another with a pure heart fervently:

22. Purificantes animas vestras in obedientia veritatis per Spiritum, in fraternam charitatem non fictam, ex puro corde diligite vos mutuò impensè.

17 And if ye call on the Father They are said here to call on God the Father, who professed themselves to be his children, as Moses says, that the name of Jacob was called on Ephraim and Manasseh, that they might be counted his children. (Genesis 48:16.) According to this meaning also, we say in French reclamer But he had a regard to what he had said before, ``as obedient children.'' And from the character of the Father himself, he shews what sort of obedience ought to be rendered. He judges, he says, without looking on the person, that is, no outward mask is of any account with him, as the case is with men, but he sees the heart, (1 Samuel 16:7;) and his eyes look on faithfulness. (Jeremiah 5:3.) This also is what Paul means when he says that God's judgment is according to truth, (Romans 2:2;) for he there inveighs against hypocrites, who think that they deceive God by a vain pretense. The meaning is, that we by no means discharge our duty towards God, when we obey him only in appearance; for he is not a mortal man, whom the outward appearance pleases, but he reads what we are inwardly in our hearts. He not only prescribes laws for our feet and hands, but he also requires what is just and right as to the mind and spirit.

By saying, According to every man's work, he does not refer to merit or to reward; for Peter does not speak here of the merits of works, nor of the cause of salvation, but he only reminds us, that there will be no looking to the person before the tribunal of God, but that what will be regarded will be the real sincerity of the heart. In this place faith also is included in the work. It hence appears evident how foolish and puerile is the inference that is drawn, --- ``God is such that he judges every one of us by the integrity of his conscience,

not by the outward appearance; then we obtain salvation by works.''

The fear that is mentioned, stands opposed to heedless security, such as is wont to creep in, when there is a hope of deceiving with impunity. For, as God's eyes are such that they penetrate into the hidden recesses of the heart, we ought to walk with him carefully and not negligently. He calls the present life a sojourning, not in the sense in which he called the Jews to whom he was writing sojourners, at the beginning of the Epistle, but because all the godly are in this world pilgrims. (Hebrews 11:13,38.)

18 Forasmuch as ye know, or, knowing. Here is another reason, drawn from the price of our redemption, which ought always to be remembered when our salvation is spoken of. For to him who repudiates or despises the grace of the gospel, not only his own salvation is worthless, but also the blood of Christ, by which God has manifested its value. But we know how dreadfully sacrilegious it is to regard as common the blood of the Son of God. There is hence nothing which ought so much to stimulate us to the practice of holiness, as the memory of this price of our redemption.

Silver and gold For the sake of amplifying he mentions these things in contrast, so that we may know that the whole world, and all things deemed precious by men, are nothing to the excellency and value of this price.

But he says that they had been redeemed from their vain conversation, [356] in order that we might know that the whole life of man, until he is converted to Christ, is a ruinous labyrinth of wanderings. He also intimates, that it is not through our merits that we are restored to the right way, but because it is God's will that the price, offered for our salvation, should be effectual in our behalf. Then the blood of Christ is not only the pledge of our salvation, but also the cause of our calling.

Moreover, Peter warns us to beware lest our unbelief should render this price void or of no effect. As Paul boasts that he worshipped God with a pure conscience from his forefathers, (2 Timothy 1:3,) and as he also commends to Timothy for his imitation the piety of his grandmother Lois, and of his mother Eunice, (2 Timothy 1:5,) and as Christ also said of the Jews that they knew whom they worshipped (John 4:22,) it may seem strange that Peter should assert that the Jews of his time learnt nothing from their fathers but mere vanity. To this I answer, that Christ, when he declared that the way or the knowledge of true religion belonged to the Jews, referred to the law and the commandments of God rather than to the people; for the temple had not to no purpose been built at Jerusalem, nor was God worshipped there according to the fancies of men, but according to what was prescribed in the Law; he, therefore, said that the Jews were not going astray while observing the Law. As to Paul's forefathers, and as to Lois, Eunice, and similar cases, there is no doubt but that God ever had at least a small remnant among that people, in whom sincere piety continued, while the body of the people had become wholly corrupt, and had plunged

[356] ''The verb {λυτρόω} means properly to redeem by a price from tyranny or bondage, but its meaning here, and in Luke 24:21, and Titus 2:14, is merely to deliver. ``Vain conversation'' signifies a useless, profitless mode of living. --- Ed.

themselves into all kinds of errors. Innumerable superstitions were followed, hypocrisy prevailed, the hope of salvation was built on the merest trifles; they were not only imbued with false opinions, but also fascinated with the grossest dotages; and they who had been scattered to various parts of the world, were implicated in still greater corruptions. In short, the greater part of that nation had either wholly fallen away from true religion, or had much degenerated. When, therefore, Peter condemned the doctrine of the fathers, he viewed it as unconnected with Christ, who is the soul and the truth of the Law.

But we hence learn, that as soon as men depart from Christ, they go fatally astray. In vain is pretended in this case the authority of the Fathers or an ancient custom. For the Prophet Ezekiel cried to the Jews,

``Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers.''
(Ezekiel 20:18.)

This ought also to be no less attended to by us in the present day; for, in order that the redemption of Christ may be effectual and useful to us, we must renounce our former life, though derived from the teaching and practice of our fathers. Thrice foolish, then, are the Papists, who think that the name of Fathers is a sufficient defense for all their superstitions, so that they boldly reject whatever is brought forward from the Word of God.

19 As of a lamb He means by this similitude, that we have in Christ whatever had been shadowed forth by the ancient sacrifices, though he especially alludes to the Paschal lamb. But let us hence learn what benefit the reading of the Law brings us in this respect; for, though the rite of sacrificing is abolished, yet it assists our faith not a little, to compare the reality with the type, so that we may seek in the former what the latter contains. Moses ordered a whole or perfect lamb, without blemish, to be chosen for the Passover. The same thing is often repeated as to the sacrifices, as in Leviticus 23; in Numbers 28; and in other places. Peter, by applying this to Christ, teaches us that he was a suitable victim, and approved by God, for he was perfect, without any blemish; had he had any defect in him, he could not have been rightly offered to God, nor could he pacify his wrath.

20 Who verily was foreordained He again by a comparison amplifies the grace of God, with which he had peculiarly favored the men of that age. For it was not a common or a small favor that God deferred the manifestation of Christ to that time, when yet he had ordained him in his eternal council for the salvation of the world. At the same time, however, he reminds us, that it was not a new or a sudden thing as to God that Christ appeared as a Savior; and this is what ought especially to be known. For, in addition to this, that novelty is always suspicious, what would be the stability of our faith, if we believed that a remedy for mankind had suddenly occurred at length to God after some thousands of years? In short, we cannot confidently recumb on Christ, except we are convinced that eternal salvation is in him, and always has been in him. Besides, Peter addressed the Jews, who had heard that he had already been long ago promised; and though they understood nothing true or clear or certain

respecting his power and office, yet there remained among them a persuasion, that a Redeemer had been promised by God to the fathers.

It may yet be asked, As Adam did not fall before the creation of the world, how was it that Christ had been appointed the Redeemer? for a remedy is posterior to the disease. My reply is, that this is to be referred to God's foreknowledge; for doubtless God, before he created man, foresaw that he would not stand long in his integrity. Hence he ordained, according to his wonderful wisdom and goodness, that Christ should be the Redeemer, to deliver the lost race of man from ruin. For herein shines forth more fully the unspeakable goodness of God, that he anticipated our disease by the remedy of his grace, and provided a restoration to life before the first man had fallen into death. If the reader wishes for more on this subject, he may find it in my Institutes.

But was manifest, or manifested. Included in these words, as I think, is not only the personal appearance of Christ, but also the proclamation of the Gospel. For, by the coming of Christ, God executed what he had decreed; and what he had obscurely indicated to the fathers is now clearly and plainly made known to us by the Gospel. He says that this was done in these last times, meaning the same as when Paul says,

``In the fullness of time,'' (Galatians 4:4;)

for it was the mature season and the full time which God in his counsel had appointed.

For you He does not exclude the fathers, to whom the promise had not been useless; but as God has favored us more than them, he intimates that the greater the amplitude of grace towards us, the more reverence and ardor and care are required of us.

21 Who believe The manifestation of Christ refers not to all indiscriminately, but belongs to those only on whom he by the Gospel shines. But we must notice the words, Who by him believe in God: here is shortly expressed what faith is. For, since God is incomprehensible, faith could never reach to him, except it had an immediate regard to Christ. Nay, there are two reasons why faith could not be in God, except Christ intervened as a Mediator: first, the greatness of the divine glory must be taken to the account, and at the same time the littleness of our capacity. Our acuteness is doubtless very far from being capable of ascending so high as to comprehend God. Hence all knowledge of God without Christ is a vast abyss which immediately swallows up all our thoughts. A clear proof of this we have, not only in the Turks and the Jews, who in the place of God worship their own dreams, but also in the Papists. Common is that axiom of the schools, that God is the object of faith. Thus of hidden majesty, Christ being overlooked, they largely and refinedly speculate; but with what success? They entangle themselves in astounding dotages, so that there is no end to their wanderings. For faith, as they think, is nothing else but an imaginative speculation. Let us, therefore, remember, that Christ is not in vain called the image of the invisible God, (Colossians 1:15;) but this name is given to him for this reason, because God cannot be known except in him.

The second reason is, that as faith unites us to God, we shun and dread every access to him, except a Mediator comes who can deliver us from fear. For sin, which reigns in us, renders us hateful to God and him to us. Hence, as soon as mention is made of God, we must necessarily be filled with dread; and if we approach him, his justice is like fire, which will wholly consume us.

It is hence evident that we cannot believe in God except through Christ, in whom God in a manner makes himself little, that he might accommodate himself to our comprehension; and it is Christ alone who can tranquillize consciences, so that we may dare to come in confidence to God.

That raised him up from the dead He adds, that Christ had been raised up from the dead, in order that their faith and hope, by which they were supported, might have a firm foundation. And hereby again is confuted the gloss respecting universal and indiscriminate faith in God; for had there been no resurrection of Christ, still God would remain in heaven. But Peter says that he would not have been believed in, except Christ had risen. It is then evident, that faith is something else than to behold the naked majesty of God. And rightly does Peter speak in this manner; for it belongs to faith to penetrate into heaven, that it may find the Father there: how could it do so, except it had Christ as a leader?

``By him,'' says Paul, ``we have confidence of access.''
(Ephesians 3:12.)

It is said also, in Hebrews 4:16, that relying on our high priest, we can come with confidence to the throne of grace. Hope is the anchor of the soul, which enter into the inner part of the sanctuary; but not without Christ going before. (Hebrews 6:19.) Faith is our victory against the world, (1 John 5:4) and what is it that makes it victorious, except that Christ, the Lord of heaven and earth, has us under his guardianship and protection?

As, then, our salvation depends on the resurrection of Christ and his supreme power, faith and hope find here what can support them. For, except he had by rising again triumphed over death, and held now the highest sovereignty, to protect us by his power, what would become of us, exposed to so great a power as that of our enemies, and to such violent attacks? Let us, therefore, learn to what mark we ought to direct our aim, so that we may really believe in God.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls, or, Purifying your souls. Erasmus badly renders the words, ``Who have purified,'' etc. For Peter does not declare what they had done, but reminds them of what they ought to do. The participle is indeed in the past tense, but it may be rendered as a gerund, ``By purifying, etc.'' The meaning is, that their souls would not be capable of receiving grace until they were purified, and by this our uncleanness is proved. [357] But that he

[357] It is better to keep the tense of the participle, — "Having purified (or, since ye have purified) your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit to an unfeigned love of the brethren, love ye one another fervently from a pure heart; having been born again," etc. The order here is similar to what is often found in Scripture; purification is mentioned before regeneration, as being the most visible and the effect; then what goes before it as being in a manner the cause. — Ed.

might not seem to ascribe to us the power of purifying our souls, he immediately adds, through the Spirit; as though he had said, ``Your souls are to be purified, but as ye cannot do this, offer them to God, that he may take away your filth by his Spirit.'' He only mentions souls, though they needed to be cleansed also from the defilements of the flesh, as Paul bids the Corinthians, (2 Corinthians 7:1;) but as the principal uncleanness is within, and necessarily draws with it that which is outward, Peter was satisfied with mentioning only the former, as though he had said, that not outward actions only ought to be corrected, but the very hearts ought to be thoroughly reformed.

He afterwards points out the manner, for purity of soul consists in obedience to God. Truth is to be taken for the rule which God prescribes to us in the Gospel. Nor does he speak only of works, but rather faith holds here the primacy. Hence Paul specially teaches us in the first and last chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, that faith is that by which we obey God; and Peter in Acts, the fifteenth chapter, bestows on it this eulogy, that God by it purifies the heart.

Unto love of the brethren, or, Unto brotherly love. He briefly reminds us what God especially requires in our life, and the mark to which all our endeavors should be directed. So Paul in the first chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, when speaking of the perfection of the faithful, makes it to consist in love. And this is what we ought the more carefully to notice, because the world makes its own sanctity to consist of the veriest trifles, and almost overlooks this the chief thing. We see how the Papists weary themselves beyond measure with thousand invented superstitions: in the meantime, the last thing is that love which God especially commends. This, then, is the reason why Peter calls our attention to it, when speaking of a life rightly formed.

He had before spoken of the mortification of the flesh, and of our conformity with the will of God; but he now reminds us of what God would have us to cultivate through life, that is, mutual love towards one another; for by that we testify also that we love God; and by this evidence God proves who they are who really love him.

He calls it unfeigned, ({ἀνυπόκριτον}), as Paul calls faith in 1 Timothy 1:5; for nothing is more difficult than to love our neighbors in sincerity. For the love of ourselves rules, which is full of hypocrisy; and besides, every one measures his love, which he shews to others, by his own advantage, and not by the rule of doing good. He adds, fervently; for the more slothful we are by nature, the more ought every one to stimulate himself to fervor and earnestness, and that not only once, but more and more daily.

1 Peter 1:23-25

1 Peter 1:23-25

23. Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.

23. Regeniti non ex semine corruptibili, sed incorruptibili, per sermonem viventis Dei et manentis in aeternum.

24. For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

24. Quandoquidem omnis caro tanquam herba, et omnis gloria ejus tanquam flos herbae; exaruit herba et flos ejus decidit:

25. But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

25. Verbum autem Domini manet in aeternum; hoc autem est verbum quod annuntiatum est vobis.

23 Being born again Here is another reason for an exhortation, --- that since they were new men and born again of God, it behoved them to form a life worthy of God and of their spiritual regeneration. And this seems to be connected with a verse in the next chapter respecting the milk of the word, which they were to seek, that their way of living might correspond with their birth. It may, however, be extended wider, so as to be connected also with what has gone before; for Peter collected together those things which may lead us to an upright and a holy life. The object, then, of Peter was to teach us that we cannot be Christians without regeneration; for the Gospel is not preached, that it may be only heard by us, but that it may, as a seed of immortal life, altogether reform our hearts. [358] Moreover, the corruptible seed is set in opposition to God's word, in order that the faithful might know that they ought to renounce their former nature, and that it might be more evident how much is the difference between the children of Adam who are born only into the world, and the children of God who are renewed into a heavenly life. But as the construction of the Greek text is doubtful, we may read, ``the living word of God,'' as well as, ``the word of the living God.'' As, however, the latter reading is less forced, I prefer it; though it must be observed, that the term is applied to God owing to the character of the passage. For, as in Hebrews 4:12, because God sees all things, and nothing is hid from him, the apostle argues that the word of God penetrates into the inmost marrow, so as to discern thoughts and feelings; so, when Peter in this place calls him the living God, who abides for ever, he refers to the word, in which the perpetuity of God shines forth as in a living mirror.

24 For all flesh He aptly quotes the passage from Isaiah to prove both clauses; that is, to make it evident how fading and miserable is the first birth of man, and how great is the grace of the new birth. For as the Prophet there

[358] Most commentators, like Calvin, represent the seed as the word; but the construction does not admit this; the words are, “Having been begotten from a seed, not corruptible, but incorruptible, through the living word of God, and for-ever abiding.” The “seed” denotes evidently the vital principle of grace, the new nature, the restored image of God; it is the same with what John means when he says, “His seed (that is, of God) remaineth in him.” (1 John 3:9.) Then “the word” is set forth as the means or instrument by which this seed is implanted. The “living” here does not mean life-giving, as some interpret it, but stands opposed to what ceases to be valid: and “for-ever abiding” more fully expresses its meaning. The metaphor in the parable of the sower is quite different: the word there is compared to a seed sown on bad or good ground; but here the turning of a bad into a good ground is the subject; and in this process the word is employed as an instrument. — Ed.

speaks of the restoration of the Church, to prepare the way for it, he reduces men to nothing lest they should flatter themselves. I know that the words are wrongly turned by some to another sense; for some explain them of the Assyrians, as though the Prophet said, that there was no reason for the Jews to fear so much from flesh, which is like a fading flower. Others think that the vain confidence which the Jews reposed in human aids, is reproved. But the Prophet himself disproves both these views, by adding, that the people were as grass; for he expressly condemns the Jews for vanity, to whom he promised restoration in the name of the Lord. This, then, is what I have already said, that until their own emptiness has been shewn to men, they are not prepared to receive the grace of God. In short, such is the meaning of the Prophet: as exile was to the Jews like death, he promised them a new consolation, even that God would send prophets with a command of this kind. The Lord, he says, will yet say, ``Comfort ye my people;'' and that in the desert and the waste, the prophetic voice would yet be heard, in order that a way might be prepared for the Lord. (Isaiah 40:6.)

And as the obstinate pride which filled them, must have been necessarily purged from their minds, in order that an access might be open for God, the Prophet added what Peter relates here respecting the vanishing glory of the flesh. What is man? he says --- grass; what is the glory of man? the flower of the grass. For as it was difficult to believe that man, in whom so much excellency appears, is like grass, the Prophet made a kind of concession, as though he had said, ``Be it, indeed, that flesh has some glory; but lest that should dazzle your eyes, know that the flower soon withers.'' He afterwards shews how suddenly everything that seems beautiful in men vanishes, even through the blowing of the Spirit of God; and by this he intimates, that man seems to be something until he comes to God, but that his whole brightness is as nothing in his presence; that, in a word, his glory is in this world, and has no place in the heavenly kingdom.

The grass withereth, or, has withered. Many think that this refers only to the outward man; but they are mistaken; for we must consider the comparison between God's word and man. For if he meant only the body and what belongs to the present life, he ought to have said, in the second place, that the soul was far more excellent. But what he sets in opposition to the grass and its flower, is the word of God. It then follows, that in man nothing but vanity is found. Therefore, when Isaiah spoke of flesh and its glory, he meant the whole man, such as he is in himself; for what he ascribed as peculiar to God's word, he denied to man. In short, the Prophet speaks of the same thing as Christ does in John 3:3, that man is wholly alienated from the kingdom of God, that he is nothing but an earthly, fading, and empty creature, until he is born again.

25 But the word of God The Prophet does not shew what the word of God is in itself, but what we ought to think of it; for since man is vanity in himself, it remains that he ought to seek life elsewhere. Hence Peter ascribes power and efficacy to God's word, according to the authority of the Prophet, so that it can

confer on us what is real, solid, and eternal. For this was what the Prophet had in view, that there is no permanent life but in God, and that this is communicated to us by the word. However fading, then, is the nature of man, yet he is made eternal by the word; for he is re-moulded and becomes a new creature.

This is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you, or, which has been declared to you. He first reminds us, that when the word of God is mentioned, we are very foolish if we imagine it to be remote from us in the air or in heaven; for we ought to know that it has been revealed to us by the Lord. What, then, is this word of the Lord, which gives us life? Even the Law, the Prophets, the Gospel. Those who wander beyond these limits of revelation, find nothing but the impostures of Satan and his dotages, and not the word of the Lord. We ought the more carefully to notice this, because impious and Luciferian men, craftily allowing to God's word its own honor, at the same time attempt to draw us away from the Scriptures, as that unprincipled man, Agrippa, who highly extols the eternity of God's word, and yet treats with scurrility the Prophets, and thus indirectly laughs to scorn the Word of God.

In short, as I have already reminded you, no mention is here made of the word which lies hid in the bosom of God, but of that which has proceeded from his mouth, and has come to us. So again it ought to be borne in mind, that God designed by the Apostles and Prophets to speak to us, and their mouths is the mouth of the only true God.

Then, when Peter says, Which has been announced, or declared, to you, he intimates that the word is not to be sought elsewhere than in the Gospel preached to us; and truly we know not the way of eternal life otherwise than by faith. But there can be no faith, except we know that the word is destined for us.

To the same purpose is what Moses said to the people,

``Say not in thine heart, Who shall ascend into heaven, etc.; nigh is the word, in thy mouth and in thy heart.''
(Deuteronomy 30:12.)

That these words agree with what Peter says, Paul shews Romans 10:6, where he teaches us that it was the word of faith which he preached.

There is here, besides, no common eulogy on preaching; for Peter declares that what is preached is the life-giving word. God alone is indeed he who regenerates us; but for that purpose he employs the ministry of men; and on this account Paul glories that the Corinthians had been spiritually begotten by him. (1 Corinthians 4:15.) It is indeed certain that those who plant and those who water, are nothing; but whenever God is pleased to bless their labor, he makes their doctrine efficacious by the power of his Spirit; and the voice which is in itself mortal, is made an instrument to communicate eternal life.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 Peter 2:1-5

1 Peter 2:1-5

1. Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings,

1. Proinde deposita omni malitia et omni dolo et simulationibus et invidiis et omnibus obtrectationibus,

2. As newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

2. Tanquam modò geniti infantes, lac rationale et dolo vacuum appetite, ut per illud subolescatis:

3. If so be ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious.

3. Si quidem gustastis quòd benignus sit Dominus;

4. To whom coming, as unto a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, and precious,

4. Ad quem accedentes, qui est lapis vivus, ab hominibus quidera reprobatus, apud Deum vero electus ac pretiosus;

5. Ye also, as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

5. Ipsi quoque tanquam vivi lapides, aedificamini, domus spirituales, sacerdotium sanctum, ad offerendas spirituales hostias, acceptas Deo per Jesum Christum.

After having taught the faithful that they had been regenerated by the word of God, he now exhorts them to lead a life corresponding with their birth. For if we live in the Spirit, we ought also to walk in the Spirit, as Paul says. (Galatians 5:25.) It is not, then, sufficient for us to have been once called by the Lord, except we live as new creatures. This is the meaning. But as to the words, the Apostle continues the same metaphor. For as we have been born again, he requires from us a life like that of infants; by which he intimates that we are to put off the old man and his works. Hence this verse agrees with what Christ says,

``Except ye become like this little child,
ye shall not enter into the kingdom of God.''
(Matthew 18:3.)

Infancy is here set by Peter in opposition to the ancientness of the flesh, which leads to corruption; and under the word milk, he includes all the feel-

ings of spiritual life. For there is also in part a contrast between the vices which he enumerates and the sincere milk of the word; as though he had said, ``Malice and hypocrisy belong to those who are habituated to the corruptions of the world; they have imbibed these vices: what pertains to infancy is sincere simplicity, free from all guile. Men, when grown up, become imbued with envy, they learn to slander one another, they are taught the arts of mischief; in short, they become hardened in every kind of evil: infants, owing to their age, do not yet know what it is to envy, to do mischief, or the like things.'' He then compares the vices, in which the oldness of the flesh indulges, to strong food; and milk is called that way of living suitable to innocent nature and simple infancy.

1. All malice There is not here a complete enumeration of all those things which we ought to lay aside; but when the Apostles speak of the old man, they lay down as examples some of those vices which mark his whole character.

``Known,'' says Paul, ``are the works of the flesh, which are these,'' (Galatians 5:19;)

and yet he does not enumerate them all; but in those few things, as in a mirror, we may see that immense mass of filth which proceeds from our flesh. So also in other passages, where he refers to the new life, he touches only on a few things, by which we may understand the whole character.

What, then, he says amounts to this, --- ``Having laid aside the works of your former life, such as malice, deceit, dissimulations, envyings, and other things of this kind, devote yourselves to things of an opposite character, cultivate kindness, honesty,'' etc. He, in short, urges this, that new morals ought to follow a new life.

2. The sincere milk of the word This passage is commonly explained according to the rendering of Erasmus, ``Milk not for the body but for the soul;'' as though the Apostle reminded us by this expression that he spoke metaphorically. I rather think that this passage agrees with that saying of Paul,

``Be ye not children in understanding, but in malice.''
(1 Corinthians 14:20.)

That no one might think that infancy, void of understanding and full of fatuity, was commended by him, he in due time meets this objection; so he bids them to desire milk free from guile, and yet mixed with right understanding. We now see for what purpose he joins these two words, rational and guileless, ({λογικὸν} {καὶ} {ἄδολος}.) For simplicity and quickness of understanding are two things apparently opposite; but they ought to be mixed together, lest simplicity should become insipid, and lest malicious craftiness should creep in for want of understanding. This mingling, well regulated, is according, to what Christ says,

``Be ye wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.''
(Matthew 10:16.)

And thus is solved the question which might have been otherwise raised. [359]

[359] Our version here seems to convey the most suitable meaning, by taking {λογικὸν} for {τοῦ} {λόγου}; see similar instances in ver. 13 and 1 Peter 3:7. It is the wordy milk, or milk made up of

Paul reproves the Corinthians because they were like children, and therefore they could not take strong food, but were fed with milk. (1 Corinthians 3:1.) Almost the same words are found in Hebrews 5:12. But in these passages those are compared to children who remain always novices and ignorant scholars in the doctrine of religion, who continued in the first elements, and never penetrated into the higher knowledge of God. Milk is called the simpler mode of teaching, and one suitable to children, when there is no progress made beyond the first rudiments. Justly, then, does Paul charge this as a fault, as well as the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews. But milk, here, is not elementary doctrine, which one perpetually learns; and never comes to the knowledge of the truth, but a mode of living which has the savor of the new birth, when we surrender ourselves to be brought up by God. In the same manner infancy is not set in opposition to manhood, or full age in Christ, as Paul calls it in Ephesians 4:13, but to the ancientness of the flesh and of former life. Moreover, as the infancy of the new life is perpetual, so Peter recommends milk as a perpetual aliment, for he would have those nourished by it to grow.

3 If so be that ye have tasted; or, If indeed ye have tasted. He alludes to Psalm 34:8,

``Taste and see that the Lord is good.''

But he says that this taste is to be had in Christ, as, doubtless, our souls can find no rest anywhere but in him. But he has drawn the ground of his exhortation from the goodness of God, because his kindness, which we perceive in Christ, ought to allure us; for what follows,

To whom coming, is not to be referred simply to God, but to him as he is revealed to us in the person of Christ. Now, it cannot be but that the grace of God must powerfully draw us to himself and inflame us with the love of him by whom we obtain a real perception of it. If Plato affirmed this of his Beautiful, of which a shadowy idea only he beheld afar off, much more true is this with regard to God.

Let it then be noticed, that Peter connects an access to God with the taste of his goodness. For as the human mind necessarily dreads and shuns God, as long as it regards him as rigid and severe; so, as soon as he makes known his paternal love to the faithful, it immediately follows that they disregard all things and even forget themselves and hasten to him. In short, he only makes progress in the Gospel, who in heart comes to God.

But he also shews for what end and to what purpose we ought to come to Christ, even that we may have him as our foundation. For since he is constituted a stone, he ought to be so to us, so that nothing should be appointed for him by the Father in vain or to no purpose. But he obviates an offense when he

the word; the word is the milk. Then {ἄδολον} is to be taken in its secondary meaning: when applied to persons, it means undeceitful, or guileless; but when to things, genuine, pure, unadulterated, unmixed with anything deleterious. We may, therefore, render the words, ``Desire the pure milk of the word.'' It is a milk not adulterated by water or by anything poisonous. There is no contrast here between milk and strong food; but it includes all that is necessary as an aliment for the soul, when renewed. The Word had before been represented as the instrument of the new birth; it is now spoken of as the food and aliment of the new-born. --- Ed.

allows that Christ is rejected by men; for, as a great part of the world reject him, and even many abhor him, he might for this reason be despised by us; for we see that some of the ignorant are alienated from the Gospel, because it is not everywhere popular, nor does it conciliate favor to its professors. But Peter forbids us to esteem Christ the less, however despised he may be by the world, because he, notwithstanding, retains his own worth and honor before God.

5. Ye also, as lively or living stones, are built up The verb may be in the imperative as well as in the indicative mood, for the termination in Greek is ambiguous. But in whatever way it is taken, Peter no doubt meant to exhort the faithful to consecrate themselves as a spiritual temple to God; for he aptly infers from the design of our calling what our duty is. We must further observe, that he constructs one house from the whole number of the faithful. For though every one of us is said to be the temple of God, yet all are united together in one, and must be joined together by mutual love, so that one temple may be made of us all. Then, as it is true that each one is a temple in which God dwells by his Spirit, so all ought to be so fitted together, that they may form one universal temple. This is the case when every one, content with his own measure, keeps himself within the limits of his own duty; all have, however, something to do with regard to others.

By calling us living stones and spiritual building, as he had before said that Christ is a living stone, he intimates a comparison between us and the ancient temple; and this serves to amplify divine grace. For the same purpose is what he adds as to spiritual sacrifices For by how much the more excellent is the reality than the types, by so much the more all things excel in the kingdom of Christ; for we have that heavenly exemplar, to which the ancient sanctuary was conformable, and everything instituted by Moses under the Law.

A holy priesthood It is a singular honor, that God should not only consecrate us as a temple to himself, in which he dwells and is worshipped, but that he should also make us priests. But Peter mentions this double honor, in order to stimulate us more effectually to serve and worship God. Of the spiritual sacrifices, the first is the offering of ourselves, of which Paul speaks in Romans 12:1; for we can offer nothing, until we offer to him ourselves as a sacrifice; which is done by denying ourselves. Then, afterwards follow prayers, thanksgiving, almsdeeds, and all the duties of religion.

Acceptable to God. It ought also to add not a little to our alacrity, when we know that the worship we perform to God is pleasing to him, as doubt necessarily brings sloth with it. Here, then, is the third thing that enforces the exhortation; for he declares that what is required is acceptable to God, lest fear should make us slothful. Idolaters are indeed under the influence of great fervor in their fictitious forms of worship; but it is so, because Satan inebriates their minds, lest they should come to consider their works; but whenever their consciences are led to examine things, they begin to stagger. It is, indeed, certain that no one will seriously and from the heart devote himself to God, until he is fully persuaded that he shall not labor in vain.

But the Apostle adds, through Jesus Christ There is never found in our sacrifices such purity, that they are of themselves acceptable to God; our self-denial is never entire and complete, our prayers are never so sincere as they ought to be, we are never so zealous and so diligent in doing good, but that our works are imperfect, and mingled with many vices. Nevertheless, Christ procures favor for them. Then Peter here obviates that want of faith which we may have respecting the acceptableness of our works, when he says, that they are accepted, not for the merit of their own excellency, but through Christ. And it ought to kindle the more the ardor of our efforts, when we hear that God deals so indulgently with us, that in Christ he sets a value on our works, which in themselves deserve nothing. At the same time, the words, by or through Christ, may be fitly connected with offering; for a similar phrase is found in Hebrews 13:15,

``Through him let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God.''

The sense, however, will remain the same; for we offer sacrifices through Christ, that they may be acceptable to God.

1 Peter 2:6-8

1 Peter 2:6-8

6. Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

6. Propterea etiam continet scriptura, Ecce pono in Sion lapidem angularem, electum, pretiosum, et qui crediderit in illo, non pudefiet.

7. Unto you therefore which believe he is precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner,

7. Vobis ergo qui creditis, pretiosus; incredulis vero, Lapis quem reprobaverunt aedificantes, hic positus est in caput anguli;

8. And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed.

8. Et Lapis impactionis, et petra offendiculi iis qui impingunt in Sermonem, nec credunt; in quod etiam ordinati fuerant.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in Scripture; or, Wherefore also the Scripture contains [360] They who refer the verb ``contain'' ({περιέχειν}) to Christ, and render it ``embrace,'' because through him all these unite together, wholly depart from the meaning of the Apostle. No better is another exposition, that Christ excels others; for Peter simply intended to quote the testimony of Scripture. [361] He then shews what had been taught by the Holy Spirit in the Scriptures, or, which is the same thing, that what he adds is contained in them. Nor is it an unsuitable confirmation of the preceding verse. For we see for what

[360] Several copies have {ἡ} {γραφὴ} instead of {ἐν} {τῶ} {γραφὴ}; and this reading Calvin has followed. But the verb {περιέχω} is used by Josephus and others in a passive sense. --- Ed.

[361] The quotation is not exactly either from the Hebrew or from the Sept. The Apostle seems to have taken what was suitable to his purpose. — Ed.

slight reasons, and almost for none, many reject Christ, and some fall away from him; but this is a stumblingblock which above all other things stands in the way of some; they are drawn away, because not only the common people despise and reject Christ, but also those who are high in dignity and honor, and seem to excel others. This evil has almost ever prevailed in the world, and at this day it prevails much; for a great part of mankind judge of Christ according to the false opinion of the world. Moreover, such is the ingratitude and impiety of men, that Christ is everywhere despised. Thus it is, that while they regard one another, few pay him his due honor. Hence Peter reminds us of what had been foretold of Christ, lest the contempt or the rejection of him should move us from the faith.

Now, the first passage, which he adduces, is taken from Isaiah 28:16; where the Prophet, after having inveighed against the desperate wickedness of his own nation, at length adds,

``Your perfidy shall not prevent God from restoring his church, which now through you lies wholly in a ruinous state.''
(Isaiah 28:16)

The manner of restoration he thus describes, ``I will lay in Sion a stone.'' We hence learn that there is no building up of the Church without Christ; for there is no other foundation but he, as Paul testifies, (1 Corinthians 3:11.) This is no matter of wonder, for all our salvation is found only in him. Whosoever, then, turns away from him in the least degree, will find his foundation a precipice.

Therefore the Prophet not only calls him a corner-stone, which connects the whole edifice, but also a stone of trial, according to which the building is to be measured and regulated; and farther, he calls him a solid foundation, which sustains the whole edifice. He is thus, then, a corner-stone, that he might be the rule of the building, as well as the only foundation. But Peter took from the words of the Prophet what was especially suitable to his argument, even that he was a chosen stone, and in the highest degree valuable and excellent, and also that on him we ought to build. This honor is ascribed to Christ, that how much soever he may be despised by the world, he may not be despised by us; for by God he is regarded as very precious. But when he calls him a corner-stone, he intimates that those have no concern for their salvation who do not recumb on Christ. What some have refined on the word ``corner,'' as though it meant that Christ joins together Jews and Gentiles, as two distinct walls, is not well founded. Let us, then, be content with a simple explanation, that he is so called, because the weight of the building rests on him.

We must further observe, that the Prophet introduces God as the speaker, for he alone forms and plans his own Church, as it is said in Psalm 78:69, that his hand had founded Sion. He, indeed, employs the labor and ministry of men in building it; but this is not inconsistent with the truth that it is his own work. Christ, then, is the foundation of our salvation, because he has been ordained for this end by the Father.

And he says in Sion, because there God's spiritual temple was to have its

beginning. That our faith, therefore, may firmly rest on Christ, we must come to the Law and to the Prophets. For though this stone extends to the extreme parts of the world, it was yet necessary for it to be located first in Sion, for there at that time was the seat of the Church. But it is said to have been then set, when the Father revealed him for the purpose of restoring his Church. In short, we must hold this, that those only rest on Christ, who keep the unity of the Church, for he is not set as a foundation-stone except in Sion. As from Sion the Church went forth, which is now everywhere spread, so also from Sion our faith has derived its beginning, as Isaiah says,

``From Sion shall go forth the law,
and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.'' (Isaiah 2:3.)

Corresponding with this is what is said in the Psalms,

``The scepter of thy power will the Lord send forth from Sion.'' (Psalm 110:2.)

He that believeth The Prophet does not say in him, but declares generally, ``He that believeth shall not make haste.'' As, however, there is no doubt but that God sets forth Christ there as the object of our faith, the faith of which the Prophet speaks must look on him alone. And, doubtless, no one can rightly believe, but he who is fully convinced that in Christ he ought wholly to trust.

But the words of the Prophet may be taken in two ways, either as a promise or as an exhortation. The future time is referred to, ``He shall not make haste;'' but in Hebrew the future is often to be taken for an imperative, ``Let him not make haste.'' Thus the meaning would be, ``Be ye not moved in your minds, but quietly entertain your desires, and check your feelings, until the Lord will be pleased to fulfill his promise.'' So he says in another place,

``In silence and in quietness shall be your strength,''
(Isaiah 30:15.)

But as the other reading seems to come nearer to Peter's interpretation, I give it the preference. Then the sense would not be unsuitable, ``He who believeth shall not waver'' or vacillate; for he has a firm and permanent foundation. And it is a valuable truth, that relying on Christ, we are beyond the danger of falling. Moreover, to be ashamed (pudefieri) means the same thing. Peter has retained the real sense of the Prophet, though he has followed the Greek version. [362]

7. Unto you therefore which believe God having pronounced Christ to be a precious and a chosen stone, Peter draws the inference that he is so to us. For, no doubt, Christ is there described such as we apprehend him by faith, and such as he proves himself to be by real evidences. We ought, then, carefully to notice this inference: Christ is a precious stone in the sight of God; then he is such to the faithful. It is faith alone which reveals to us the value and excellency of Christ.

[362] As to this verb he has, but in the previous parts he comes nearer to the Hebrew than to the Sept. Paul quotes this sentence twice, Romans 9:33; 10:11, and follows the Sept. as Peter does. Indeed, the difference between {{יחיש he shall make haste, and ,{יבש} he shall be ashamed, is very small; and further, the former verb admits of a similar meaning with the latter. --- Ed.

But as the design of the Apostle was to obviate the offense which the multitude of the ungodly creates, he immediately adds another clause respecting the unbelieving, that by rejecting Christ, they do not take away the honor granted him by the Father. For this purpose a verse in Psalm 118:22, is quoted, that the stone which the builders rejected, is become, nevertheless, the head of the corner. It hence follows, that Christ, though opposed by his enemies, yet continues in that dignity to which he has been appointed by the Father. But we must take notice of the two things here said, --- the first is, that Christ was rejected by those who bore rule in the Church of God; and the other, that their efforts were all in vain, because necessarily fulfilled must have been what God had decreed, that is, that he, as the corner-stone, should sustain the edifice.

Moreover, that this passage ought properly to be understood of Christ, not only the Holy Spirit is a witness, and Christ himself, who has thus explained it, (Matthew 21:42;) but it appears also evident from this, that it was thus commonly understood before Christ came into the world; nor is there a doubt but this exposition had been delivered as it were from hand to hand from the fathers. We hence see that this was, as it were, a common saying even among children respecting the Messiah. I shall, therefore, no longer discuss this point. We may take it as granted, that David was thus rejected by his own age, that he might typify Christ.

Let us now, then, return to the first clause: Christ was rejected by the builders. This was first shadowed forth in David; for they who were in power counted him as condemned and lost. The same was fulfilled in Christ; for they who ruled in the Church, rejected him as far as they could. It might have greatly disturbed the weak, when they saw that Christ's enemies were so many, even the priests, the elders, and teachers, in whom alone the Church was conspicuously seen. In order to remove this offense, Peter reminded the faithful that this very thing had been predicted by David. He especially addressed the Jews, to whom this properly applied; at the same time, this admonition is very useful at this day. For they who arrogate to themselves the first place of authority in the Church, are Christ's most inveterate enemies, and with diabolical fury persecute his Gospel.

The Pope calls himself the vicar of Christ, and yet we know how fiercely he opposes him. This spectacle frightens the simple and ignorant. Why is this? even because they consider not that what David has predicted happens now. Let us, then, remember that not those only were by this prophecy warned who saw Christ rejected by the Scribes and Pharisees; but that we are also by it fortified against daily offenses, which might otherwise upset our faith. Whenever then, we see those who glory in the title of prelates, rising up against Christ, let it come to our minds, that the stone is rejected by the builders, according to the prediction of David. And as the metaphor of building is common, when political or spiritual government is spoken of, so David calls them builders, to whom is committed the care and power of governing; not because they build rightly, but because they have the name of builders, and possess the ordinary

power. It hence follows, that those in office are not always God's true and faithful ministers. It is, therefore, extremely ridiculous in the Pope and his followers to arrogate to themselves supreme and indubitable authority on this sole pretense, that they are the ordinary governors of the Church. In the first place, their vocation to govern the Church is in no way more just or more legitimate than that of Heliogabalus to govern the empire. But though we should allow them what they unblushingly claim, that they are rightly called, yet we see what David declares respecting the ordinary rulers of the Church, that they rejected Christ, so that they built a stye for swine rather than a temple for God. The other part follows, that all the great, proud of their power and dignity, shall not prevail, so that Christ should not continue in his own place.

And a stone of stumbling After having comforted the faithful, that they would have in Christ a firm and permanent foundation, though the greater part, and even the chief men, allowed him no place in the building, he now denounces the punishment which awaits all the unbelieving, in order that they might be terrified by their example. For this purpose he quotes the testimony of Isaiah 8:14. The Prophet there declares that the Lord would be to the Jews a stone of stumbling and rock of offense. This properly refers to Christ, as it may be seen from the context; and Paul applies it to Christ, (Romans 9:32.) For in him the God of hosts has plainly manifested himself.

Here, then, the terrible vengeance of God is denounced on all the ungodly, because Christ would be to them an offense and a stumbling, inasmuch as they refused to make him their foundation. For as the firmness and stability of Christ is such that it can sustain all who by faith recumb on him; so his hardness is so great that it will break and tear in pieces all who resist him. For there is no medium between these two things, --- we must either build on him, or be dashed against him. [363]

8 Which stumble at the word He points out here the manner in which Christ becomes a stumbling, even when men perversely oppose the word of God. This the Jews did; for though they professed themselves willing to receive the Messiah, yet they furiously rejected him when presented to them by God. The Papists do the same in the present day; they worship only the name of Christ, while they cannot endure the doctrine of the Gospel. Here Peter intimates that all who receive not Christ as revealed in the Gospel, are adversaries to God, and resist his word, and also that Christ is to none for destruction, but to those who, through headstrong wickedness and obstinacy, rush against the word of God.

And this is especially what deserves to be noticed, lest our fault should be

[363] There are in this verse two quotations, one from Psalm 118:22, and the other from Isaiah 8:14. That from the Psalms is literally the Sept., and is the same as quoted in Matthew 21:42; Mark 12:10; and Luke 20:17. In all these instances it is {λίθον}, and not {λίθος} according to the Hebrew. It is therefore necessary to consider {κατὰ} as to, or, with respect to, as understood, a thing not uncommon in Greek. With regard to {ἡ} {τιμὴ}, a noun for an adjective, it refers to the stone, or to him, in the preceding verse; but as the metaphor of stone is still continued in this verse, it is better to retain it here, ``it is precious,'' that is, the stone; and especially as Christ is represented before, in verse 4, a stone ``precious'' in the sight of God. --- Ed.

imputed to Christ; for, as he has been given to us as a foundation, it is as it were an accidental thing that he becomes a rock of offense. In short, his proper office is to prepare us for a spiritual temple to God; but it is the fault of men that they stumble at him, even because unbelief leads men to contend with God. Hence Peter, in order to set forth the character of the conflict, said that they were the unbelieving.

Whereunto also they were appointed, or, to which they had been ordained. This passage may be explained in two ways. It is, indeed, certain that Peter spoke of the Jews; and the common interpretation is, that they were appointed to believe, for the promise of salvation was destined for them. But the other sense is equally suitable, that they had been appointed to unbelief; as Pharaoh is said to have been set up for this end, that he might resist God, and all the reprobate are destined for the same purpose. And what inclines me to this meaning is the particle {καὶ} (also) which is put in. [364] If, however, the first view be preferred, then it is a vehement upbraiding; for Peter does hence enhance the sin of unbelief in the people who had been chosen by God, because they rejected the salvation that had been peculiarly ordained for them. And no doubt this circumstance rendered them doubly inexcusable, that having been called in preference to others, they had refused to hear God. But, by saying that they were appointed to believe, he refers only to their outward call, even according to the covenant which God had made generally with the whole nation. At the same time their ingratitude, as it has been said, was sufficiently proved, when they rejected the word preached to them.

1 Peter 2:9-10

1 Peter 2:9-10

9. But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

9. Vos autem genus electum, regale sacerdotium, gens sancta, populus in acquisitionem, ut virtutes enarretis ejus qui vos ex tenebris vocavit in admirabile lumen suum:

10. Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

10. Qui aliquando non populus, nunc autem populus Dei, qui non consequuti eratis misericordiam, nunc misericordiam consequuti estis.

[364] The most obvious meaning is, to consider the phrase, "who stumble at the word," as the antecedent to {εἰς} {ὃ} ``to which:'' they being disobedient or unbelieving were destined to stumble at the word, and thereby to fall and to be broken. (Isaiah 8:14,15.) To the believing it was precious, but to the unbelieving it became the stone of stumbling; and this stumbling is a judgment to which all the unpersuaded (literally) or the unbelieving, are destined. I would render the two verses thus, --- ``To you then who believe it is precious; but to the unbelieving (with regard to the stone which the builders have rejected, the same which has become the head of the corner) even a stone of stumbling and rock of offense; that is, to those who stumble at the word, being unbelieving; to which also they have been appointed:'' that is, according to the testimony of Scripture. --- Ed.

9 But ye are a chosen generation, or race. He again separates them from the unbelieving, lest driven by their example (as it is often the case) they should fall away from the faith. As, then, it is unreasonable that those whom God has separated from the world, should mix themselves with the ungodly, Peter here reminds the faithful to what great honor they had been raised, and also to what purpose they had been called. But with the same high titles which he confers on them, Moses honored the ancient people, (Exodus 19:6;) but the Apostle's object was to shew that they had recovered again, through Christ, the great dignity and honor from which they had fallen. It is at the same time true, that God gave to the fathers an earthly taste only of these blessings, and that they are really given in Christ.

The meaning then is, as though he had said,

``Moses called formerly your fathers a holy nation, a priestly kingdom, and God's peculiar people: all these high titles do now far more justly belong to you; therefore you ought to beware lest your unbelief should rob you of them.'' (Exodus 19:6)

In the meantime, however, as the greater part of the nation was unbelieving, the Apostle indirectly sets the believing Jews in opposition to all the rest, though they exceeded them in number, as though he had said, that those only were the children of Abraham, who believed in Christ, and that they only retained possession of all the blessings which God had by a singular privilege bestowed on the whole nation.

He calls them a chosen race, because God, passing by others, adopted them as it were in a special manner. They were also a holy nation; for God had consecrated them to himself, and destined that they should lead a pure and holy life. He further calls them a peculiar people, or, a people for acquisition, that they might be to him a peculiar possession or inheritance; for I take the words simply in this sense, that the Lord hath called us, that he might possess us as his own, and devoted to him. This meaning is proved by the words of Moses,

``If ye keep my covenant, ye shall be to me a peculiar treasure beyond all other nations.'' (Exodus 19:5.)

There is in the royal priesthood a striking inversion of the words of Moses; for he says, ``a priestly kingdom,'' but the same thing is meant. So what Peter intimated was this, ``Moses called your fathers a sacred kingdom, because the whole people enjoyed as it were a royal liberty, and from their body were chosen the priests; both dignities were therefore joined together: but now ye are royal priests, and, indeed, in a more excellent way, because ye are, each of you, consecrated in Christ, that ye may be the associates of his kingdom, and partakers of his priesthood. Though, then, the fathers had something like to what you have; yet ye far excel them. For after the wall of partition has been pulled down by Christ, we are now gathered from every nation, and the Lord bestows these high titles on all whom he makes his people.''

There is further, as to these benefits, a contrast between us and the rest

of mankind, to be considered: and hence it appears more fully how incomparable is God's goodness towards us; for he sanctifies us, who are by nature polluted; he chose us, when he could find nothing in us but filth and vileness; he makes his peculiar possession from worthless dregs; he confers the honor of the priesthood on the profane; he brings the vassals of Satan, of sin, and of death, to the enjoyment of royal liberty.

That ye should shew forth, or declare. He carefully points out the end of our calling, that he might stimulate us to give the glory to God. And the sum of what he says is, that God has favored us with these immense benefits and constantly manifests them, that his glory might by us be made known: for by praises, or virtues, he understands wisdom, goodness, power, righteousness, and everything else, in which the glory of God shines forth. And further, it behoves us to declare these virtues or excellencies not only by our tongue, but also by our whole life. This doctrine ought to be a subject of daily meditation, and it ought to be continually remembered by us, that all God's blessings with which he favors us are intended for this end, that his glory may be proclaimed by us.

We must also notice what he says, that we have been called out of darkness into God's marvellous or wonderful light; for by these words he amplifies the greatness of divine grace. If the Lord had given us light while we were seeking it, it would have been a favor; but it was a much greater favor, to draw us out of the labyrinth of ignorance and the abyss of darkness. We ought hence to learn what is man's condition, before he is translated into the kingdom of God. And this is what Isaiah says,

``Darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the people; but over thee shall the Lord be seen, and his glory shall in thee shine forth.'' (Isaiah 60:2.)

And truly we cannot be otherwise than sunk in darkness, after having departed from God, our only light. See more at large on this subject in the second chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians.

10 Which in time past were not a people He brings for confirmation a passage from Hosea, and well accommodates it to his own purpose. For Hosea, after having in God's name declared that the Jews were repudiated, gives them a hope of a future restoration. Peter reminds us that this was fulfilled in his own age; for the Jews were scattered here and there, as the torn members of a body; nay, they seemed to be no longer God's people, no worship remained among them, they were become entangled in the corruptions of the heathens; it could not then be said otherwise of them, but that they were repudiated by the Lord. But when they are gathered in Christ, from no people they really become the people of God. Paul, in Romans 9:26, applies also this prophecy to the Gentiles, and not without reason; for from the time the Lord's covenant was broken, from which alone the Jews derived their superiority, they were put on a level with the Gentiles. It hence follows, that what God had promised, to make a people of no people, belongs in common to both.

Which had not obtained mercy This was added by the Prophet, in order that the gratuitous covenant of God, by which he takes them to be his people, might be more clearly set forth; as though he had said, ``There is no other reason why the Lord counts us his people, except that he, having mercy on us, graciously adopts us.'' It is then God's gratuitous goodness, which makes of no people a people to God, and reconciles the alienated. [365]

1 Peter 2:11-12

1 Peter 2:11-12

11. Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul;

11. Amici, adhortor vos tanquam inquilinos et peregrinos, ut abstineatis à carnalibus desideriis, que militant adversus animam;

12. Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that, whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

12. Conversationem vestram inter gentes bonam habentes, ut in quo detrahunt de vobis tanquam maleficis, ex bonis operibus aestimantes (vel, considerantes) glorificent Deum in die visitationis.

11 As strangers, or sojourners. There are two parts to this exhortation, --- that their souls were to be free within from wicked and vicious lusts; and also, that they were to live honestly among men, and by the example of a good life not only to confirm the godly, but also to gain over the unbelieving to God.

And first, to call them away from the indulgence of carnal lusts, he employs this argument, that they were sojourners and strangers. And he so calls them, not because they were banished from their country, and scattered into various lands, but because the children of God, wherever they may be, are only guests in this world. In the former sense, indeed, he called them sojourners at the beginning of the Epistle, as it appears from the context; but what he says here is common to them all. For the lusts of the flesh hold us entangled, when in our minds we dwell in the world, and think not that heaven is our country; but when we pass as strangers through this life, we are not in bondage to the flesh.

By the lusts or desires of the flesh he means not only those gross concupiscences which we have in common with animals, as the Sophists hold, but also all those sinful passions and affections of the soul, to which we are by nature guided and led. For it is certain that every thought of the flesh, that is, of unrenewed nature, is enmity against God. (Romans 8:7.)

Which war against the soul Here is another argument, that they could not comply with the desires of the flesh, except to their own ruin. For he refers not

[365] This verse is a quotation from Hosea 2:23, only the two clauses are inverted. The same is quoted by Paul in Romans 9:25, in the same inverted form, and with this difference, that Peter follows the Hebrew, and Paul the Septuagint. The Hebrew is, “I will have mercy upon her that had not obtained mercy;” but according to the Septuagint, “I will love her that had not been loved.” The meaning is the same, though the words are different. — Ed.

here to the contest described by Paul in the seventh chapter of Romans, and in the fifth of the Galatians, as he makes the soul to be an antagonist to the flesh: but what he says here is, that the desires of the flesh, whenever the soul consents to them, lead to perdition. He proves our carelessness in this respect, that while we anxiously shun enemies from whom we apprehend danger to the body, we willingly allow enemies hurtful to the soul to destroy us; nay, we as it were stretch forth our neck to them.

12 Your conversation The second part of the exhortation is, that they were to conduct themselves honestly towards men. What, indeed, precedes this in order is, that their minds should be cleansed before God; but a regard should also be had to men, lest we should become a hindrance to them. And he expressly says among the Gentiles; for the Jews were not only hated everywhere, but were also almost abhorred. The more carefully, therefore, ought they to have labored to wipe off the odium and infamy attached to their name by a holy life and a well-regulated conduct. [366] For that admonition of Paul ought to be attended to, ``To give no occasion to those who seek occasion.'' Therefore the evil speakings and the wicked insinuations of the ungodly ought to stimulate us to lead an upright life; for it is no time for living listlessly and securely, when they sharply watch us in order to find out whatever we do amiss.

That they --- may glorify God He intimates that we ought thus to strive, not for our own sake, that men may think and speak well of us; but that we may glorify God, as Christ also teaches us. And Peter shews how this would be effected, even that the unbelieving, led by our good works, would become obedient to God, and thus by their own conversion give glory to him; for this he intimates by the words, in the day of visitation. I know that some refer this to the last coming of Christ; but I take it otherwise, even that God employs the holy and honest life of his people, as a preparation, to bring back the wandering to the right way. For it is the beginning of our conversion, when God is pleased to look on us with a paternal eye; but when his face is turned away from us, we perish. Hence the day of visitation may justly be said to be the time when he invites us to himself.

1 Peter 2:13-16

1 Peter 2:13-16

13. Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

13. Subditi ergo estote omni humanae ordinationi propter Dominum; sive regi tanquam supereminenti;

14. Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers, and for the praise of them that do well.

[366] Neither “conversation” nor “honest” are suitable words. It is difficult to find a proper word in English for {ἀναστροπὴ} which means deportment, behavior, carriage, conduct, manner of live: perhaps life would be the best word, ``Having your life good among the Gentiles;'' that is, morally good ({καλὴν}) right, or upright. --- Ed.

14. Sive praesidibus, tanquam iis qui per ipsum mittuntur, in vindictam quidem maleficorum, laudem verò benè agentium.

15. For so is the will of God, that with well doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

15. Sic enim est voluntas Dei, ut benefaciendo obstruatis ignorantiam stultorum hominum:

16. As free, and not using your liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

16. Ut liberi, et non quasi praetextum habentes malitiae, libertatem; sed tanquam servi Dei.

13 Submit yourselves He now comes to particular exhortations: and as obedience with regard to magistrates is a part of honest or good conversation, he draws this inference as to their duty, ``Submit yourselves,'' or, Be ye subject; for by refusing the yoke of government, they would have given to the Gentiles no small occasion for reproaching them. And, indeed, the Jews were especially hated and counted infamous for this reason, because they were regarded on account of their perverseness as ungovernable. And as the commotions which they raised up in the provinces, were causes of great calamities, so that every one of a quiet and peaceable disposition dreaded them as the plague, --- this was the reason that induced Peter to speak so strongly on subjection. Besides, many thought the gospel was a proclamation of such liberty, that every one might deem himself as free from servitude. It seemed an unworthy thing that God's children should be servants, and that the heirs of the world should not have a free possession, no, not even of their own bodies. Then there was another trial, --- All the magistrates were Christ's adversaries; and they used their own authority, so that no representation of God, which secures the chief reverence, appeared in them. We now perceive the design of Peter: he exhorted the Jews, especially for these reasons, to shew respect to the civil power.

To every ordinance of man Some render the words, ``to every creature;'' and from a rendering so obscure and ambiguous, much labor has been taken to elicit some meaning. But I have no doubt but that Peter meant to point out the distinct manner in which God governs mankind: for the verb {κτίζειν} in Greek, from which {κτίσις} comes, means to form and to construct a building. Suitable, then, is the word ``ordination;'' by which Peter reminds us, that God the maker of the world has not left the human race in a state of confusion, that they might live after the manner of beasts, but as it were in a building regularly formed, and divided into several compartments. And it is called a human ordination, not because it has been invented by man, but because a mode of living, well arranged and duly ordered, is peculiar to men. [367]

[367] The words literally are, “Submit ye to every human creation:” but, as Calvin says, the Greek verb means sometimes to form, to construct; and so does {{ברא to create, in Hebrew. The noun may hence be rendered ``institution,'' what is formed. As in the second verse, so here, the Apostle, in a way almost peculiar to himself, and the reverse of what is commonly done in Scripture, uses an adjective for a noun, ``human'' for ``of man;'' and he does the same in 1 Peter ,3:7 ``the womanish weaker vessel,'' instead of ``the woman (or wife) the weaker vessel.'' We may then render the words, ``Submit ye to every institution of man.'' The reference is clearly to government. The ostensible agent in the formation of all governments is man; but God is the

Whether it be to the king So he calls Caesar, as I think, whose empire extended over all those countries mentioned at the beginning of the Epistle. For though ``king'' was a name extremely hated by the Romans, yet it was in use among the Greeks. They, indeed, often called him autocrat, ({αὐτοκράτορα}) but sometimes he was also called by them king, ({βασιλεὺς}.) But as he subjoins a reason, that he ought to be obeyed because he excelled, or was eminent or supreme, there is no comparison made between Caesar and other magistrates. He held, indeed, the supreme power; but that eminence which Peter extols, is common to all who exercise public authority. And so Paul, in Romans 13:1, extends it to all magistrates. Now the meaning is, that obedience is due to all who rule, because they have been raised to that honor not by chance, but by God's providence. For many are wont to inquire too scrupulously by what right power has been attained; but we ought to be satisfied with this alone, that power is possessed and exercised. And so Paul cuts off the handle of useless objections when he declares that there is no power but from God. And for this reason it is that Scripture so often says, that it is God who girds kings with a sword, who raises them on high, who transfers kingdoms as he pleases.

As Peter referred especially to the Roman Emperor, it was necessary to add this admonition; for it is certain that the Romans through unjust means rather than in a legitimate way penetrated into Asia and subdued these countries. Besides, the Caesars, who then reigned, had possessed themselves of the monarchy by tyrannical force. Hence Peter as it were forbids these things to be controverted, for he shews that subjects ought to obey their rulers without hesitation, because they are not made eminent, unless elevated by God's hand.

14 Or unto governors, or, Whether to presidents. He designates every kind of magistrates, as though he had said, that there is no kind of government to which we ought not to submit. He confirms this by saying that they are God's ministers; for they who apply him to the king, are greatly mistaken. There is then a common reason, which extols the authority of all magistrates, that they rule by the command of God, and are sent by him. It hence follows (as Paul also teaches us) that they resist God, who do not obediently submit to a power ordained by him.

For the punishment This is the second reason why it behoves us reverently to regard and to respect civil authority, and that is, because it has been appointed by the Lord for the common good of mankind; for we must be extremely barbarous and brutal, if the public good is not regarded by us. This, then, in short, is what Peter means, that since God keeps the world in order by the ministry of magistrates, all they who despise their authority are enemies to mankind.

Now he assumes these two things, which belong, as Plato says, to a commonwealth, that is, reward to the good and punishment to the wicked; for, in ancient times, not only punishment was allotted to evil-doers, but also rewards to the doers of good. But though it often happens that honors are not rightly distributed, nor rewards given to the deserving, yet it is an honor, not to be

overruler of all things. --- Ed.

despised, that the good are at the least under the care and protection of magistrates, that they are not exposed to the violence and injuries of the ungodly, that they live more quietly under laws and better retain their reputation, than if every one, unrestrained, lived as he pleased. In short, it is a singular blessing of God, that the wicked are not allowed to do what they like.

It may, however, be objected here and said, that kings and magistrates often abuse their power, and exercise tyrannical cruelty rather than justice. Such were almost all the magistrates, when this Epistle was written. To this I answer, that tyrants and those like them, do not produce such effects by their abuse, but that the ordinance of God ever remains in force, as the institution of marriage is not subverted though the wife and the husband were to act in a way not becoming them. However, therefore, men may go astray, yet the end fixed by God cannot be changed.

Were any one again to object and say, that we ought not to obey princes who, as far as they can, pervert the holy ordinance of God, and thus become savage wild beasts, while magistrates ought to bear the image of God. My reply is this, that government established by God ought to be so highly valued by us, as to honor even tyrants when in power. There is yet another reply still more evident, --- that there has never been a tyranny, (nor can one be imagined,) however cruel and unbridled, in which some portion of equity has not appeared; and further, some kind of government, however deformed and corrupt it may be, is still better and more beneficial than anarchy.

15 For so is the will of God He returns to his former doctrine, lest an occasion should be given to the unbelieving to speak evil, though he expresses less than what he had said before; for he says only that the mouths of the foolish ought to be stopped. The phrase which he adopts, ``to stop up ignorance,'' though it may seem harsh on account of its novelty, does not yet obscure the sense. [368] For he not only calls the unbelieving foolish, but also points out the reason why they slandered, even because they were ignorant of God. But inasmuch as he makes the unbelieving to be without understanding and reason, we hence conclude, that a right understanding cannot exist without the knowledge of God. How much soever, then, the unbelieving may boast of their own acuteness, and may seem to themselves to be wise and prudent, yet the Spirit of God charges them with folly, in order that we may know that, apart from God, we cannot be really wise, as without him there is nothing perfect.

But he prescribes the way in which the evil-speaking of the unbelieving is to be restrained, even by well-doing, or, by doing good. In this expression he includes all the duties of humanity and kindness which we ought to perform towards our neighbors. And in these is included obedience to magistrates, without which concord among men cannot be cultivated. Were any one to object and say, that the faithful can never be so careful to do good, but that they will be evil-spoken of by the unbelieving: to this the obvious answer is, that the Apostle

[368] The word properly means to muzzle; "that ye, by doing good, should muzzle the ignorance of foolish men;" according to what is done to savage animals, in order to prevent them to do harm. — Ed.

here does not in any degree exempt them from calumnies and reproaches; but he means that no occasion of slandering ought to be given to the unbelieving, however much they may desire it. And lest any one should further object and say, that the unbelieving are by no means worthy of so much regard that God's children should form their life to please them, Peter expressly reminds us that we are bound by God's command to shut up their mouths.

16 As free This is said by way of anticipation, that he might obviate those things which are usually objected to with regard to the liberty of God's children. For as men are naturally ingenious in laying hold on what may be for their advantage, many, at the commencement of the Gospel, thought themselves free to live only for themselves. This doting opinion, then, is what Peter corrects; and he briefly shews how much the liberty of Christians differed from unbridled licentiousness. And, in the first place, he denies that there is any veil or pretext for wickedness, by which he intimates, that there is no liberty given us to hurt our neighbors, or to do any harm to others. True liberty, then, is that which harms or injures no one. To confirm this, he declares that those are free who serve God. It is obvious, hence, to conclude, that we obtain liberty, in order that we may more promptly and more readily render obedience to God; for it is no other than a freedom from sin; and dominion is taken away from sin, that men may become obedient to righteousness.

In short, it is a free servitude, and a serving freedom. For as we ought to be the servants of God, that we may enjoy this benefit, so moderation is required in the use of it. In this way, indeed, our consciences become free; but this prevents us not to serve God, who requires us also to be subject to men.

1 Peter 2:17

1 Peter 2:17

17. Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

17. Omnes honorate, fraternitatem diligite, Deum timete, regem honorate.

This is a summary of what is gone before; for he intimates that God is not feared, nor their just right rendered to men, except civil order prevails among us, and magistrates retain their authority. That he bids honor to be rendered to all, I explain thus, that none are to be neglected; for it is a general precept, which refers to the social intercourse of men. [369] The word honor has a wide meaning in Hebrew, and we know that the apostles, though they wrote in Greek, followed the meaning of words in the former language. Therefore, this word conveys no other idea to me, than that a regard ought to be had for all, since we ought to cultivate, as far as we can, peace and friendship with all; there is, indeed, nothing more adverse to concord than contempt.

What he adds respecting the love of brethren is special, as contrasted with

[369] It is better to take it in this wide sense, than to limit it, as some have done, to rulers or magistrates, because honor to magistrates is included in the last clause, “Honour the king.” — Ed.

the first clause; for he speaks of that particular love which we are bidden to have towards the household of faith, because we are connected with them by a closer relationship. And so Peter did not omit this connection; but yet he reminds us, that though brethren are to be specially regarded, yet this ought not to prevent our love from being extended to the whole human race. The word fraternity, or brotherhood, I take collectively for brethren.

Fear God I have already said that all these clauses are applied by Peter to the subject he was treating. For he means, that honor paid to kings proceeds from the fear of God and the love of man; and that, therefore, it ought to be connected with them, as though he had said, ``Whosoever fears God, loves his brethren and the whole human race as he ought, and will also give honor to kings.'' But, at the same time, he expressly mentions the king, because that form of government was more than any other disliked; and under it other forms are included.

1 Peter 2:18-20

1 Peter 2:18-20

18. Servants, be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

18. Famuli, subjecti sint cum omni timore dominis suis, non solum bonis et humanis, sed etiam pravis.

19. For this is thankworthy, if a man for conscience towards God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

19. Haec enim est gratia, si propter conscientiam Dei quispiam molestias ferat patiens injustè.

20. For what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, when ye do well, and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.

20. Qualis enim gloria, si quum peccantes alapis caedemini, suffertis? sed si bene facientes et in aliis affecti suffertis, haec gratia apud Deum.

18 Servants, be subject Though this is a particular admonition, yet it is connected with what is gone before, as well as the other things which follow; for the obedience of servants to masters, and of wives also to their husbands, forms a part of civil or social subjection. [370]

He first would have servants to be subject with all fear; by which expression he means that sincere and willing reverence, which they acknowledge by their office to be due. He then sets this fear in opposition to dissimulation as well as to forced subjection; for an eye-service ({ὀφθαλμοδουλεία}, Colossians 3:22,) as Paul calls it, is the opposite of this fear; and further, if servants clamor against severe treatment, being ready to throw off the yoke if they could, they cannot be said properly to fear. In short, fear arises from a right knowledge of

[370] The word for “servants,” {οἰκέται} properly means ``domestics,'' or household servants. They are mentioned as they came more in contact with their masters, and were more liable to be ill-treated. --- Ed.

duty. And though no exception is added in this place, yet, according to other places, it is to be understood. For subjection due to men is not to be so far extended as to lessen the authority of God. Then servants are to be subject to their masters, only as far as God permits, or as far as the altars, as they say. But as the word here is not {δοῦλοι}, slaves, but {οἰκέται}, domestics, we may understand the free as well as the bond servants to be meant, though it be a difference of little moment.

Not only to the good Though as to the duty of servants to obey their masters, it is wholly a matter of conscience; if, however, they are unjustly treated, as to themselves, they ought not to resist authority. Whatever, then, masters may be, there is no excuse for servants for not faithfully obeying them. For when a superior abuses his power, he must indeed hereafter render an account to God, yet he does not for the present lose his right. For this law is laid on servants, that they are to serve their masters, though they may be unworthy. For the froward he sets in opposition to the equitable or humane; and by this word he refers to the cruel and the perverse, or those who have no humanity and kindness. [371]

It is a wonder what could have induced an interpreter to change one Greek word for another, and render it ``wayward.'' I should say nothing of the gross ignorance of the Sorbons, who commonly understand by wayward, (dyscolos,) the dissolute or dissipated, were it not that they seek by this absurd rendering to build up for us an article of faith, that we ought to obey the Pope and his horned wild beasts, however grievous and intolerable a tyranny they may exercise. This passage, then, shews how boldly they trifle with the Word of God.

19 For this is thankworthy The word grace or favor, has the meaning of praise; for he means that no grace or praise shall be found before God, if we bear the punishment which we have by our faults deserved; but that they who patiently bear injuries and wrongs are worthy of praise and accepted by God. [372] To testify that it was acceptable to God, when any one from conscience towards God persevered in doing his duty, though unjustly and unworthily treated, was at that time very necessary; for the condition of servants was very hard: they were counted no better than cattle. Such indignity might have driven them to despair; the only thing left for them was to look to God.

For conscience towards God means this, that one performs his duty, not from a regard to men, but to God. For, when a wife is submissive and obedient to her husband, in order to please him, she has her reward in this world, as Christ says of the ambitious, who looked to the praise of men, (Matthew 6:16.) The same view is to be taken of other cases: When a son obeys his father in order to secure

[371] "Good," {ἀγαθοῖς}, the kind, benevolent; ``gentle,'' {ἐπιεικέσιν}, the yielding, mild, patient; ``froward,'' {σκολιοῖς} the crooked, perverse, untoward, those of a cross disposition, self-willed, and hence cruel, being neither kind nor meek. --- Ed.

[372] Literally, "this is favor," that is, with God, as at the end of the next verse. To "find favor with God" is a similar phrase, Luke 1:30, which means to find acceptance with him. We may render the words, "This is acceptable:" with whom acceptable, is afterwards explained. So the word {{ɾn in Hebrew means a favorable acceptance, or approbation. See Genesis ;6:8 32:5 --- Ed.

his favor and bounty, he will have his reward from his father, not from God. It is, in short, a general truth, that what we do is approved by God, if our object be to serve him, and if we are not influenced by a regard to man alone. Moreover, he who considers that he has to do with God, must necessarily endeavor to overcome evil with good. For, God not only requires that we should be such to every one as he is to us, but also that we should be good to the unworthy and to such as persecute us.

It is not, however, an assertion without its difficulty, when he says, that there is nothing praiseworthy in him who is justly punished; for, when the Lord punishes our sins, patience is certainly a sacrifice of sweet odour to him, that is, when we bear with a submissive mind our punishment. But to this I reply, that Peter does not here speak simply but comparatively; for it is a small and slender praise to bear with submission a just punishment, in comparison with that of an innocent man, who willingly bears the wrongs of men, only because he fears God. At the same time he seems indirectly to refer to the motive; because they who suffer punishment for their faults, are influenced by the fear of men. But the reply already given is sufficient.

1 Peter 2:21-23

1 Peter 2:21-23

21. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps:

21. In hoc enim vocati estis; quoniam Christus quoque passus est pro vobis, relinquens vobis exemplum, ut sequeremini vestigia ejus:

22. Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

22. Qui quum peccatum non fecisset, nec inventus esset dolus in ore ejus;

23. Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously:

23. Quum probro afficeretur, non regerebat; quum pateretur, non comminabatur; causam vero commendabat ei qui juste judicat.

21 For even hereunto were ye called For though his discourse was respecting servants, yet this passage ought not to be confined to that subject. For the Apostle here reminds all the godly in common as to what the condition of Christianity is, as though he had said, that we are called by the Lord for this end, patiently to bear wrongs; and as he says in another place that we are appointed to this. Lest, however, this should seem grievous to us, he consoles us with the example of Christ. Nothing seems more unworthy, and therefore less tolerable, than undeservedly to suffer; but when we turn our eyes to the Son of God, this bitterness is mitigated; for who would refuse to follow him going before us?

But we must notice the words, Leaving us an example [373] For as he treats of

[373] Calvin has “you” instead of “us,” and has also “you” after “suffered.” The authority as to MSS. is nearly equal; but the verse reads better with having “you” in both instances, as the verb “follow” is in the second person plural, “that ye may follow in his footsteps.” The word for “example” is {ὑπογραμμὸν}, a copy set before scholars to be imitated, and may be rendered ``a

imitation, it is necessary to know what in Christ is to be our example. He walked on the sea, he cleansed the leprous, he raised the dead, he restored sight to the blind: to try to imitate him in these things would be absurd. For when he gave these evidences of his power, it was not his object that we should thus imitate him. It has hence happened that his fasting for forty days has been made without reason an example; but what he had in view was far otherwise. We ought, therefore, to exercise in this respect a right judgment; as also Augustine somewhere reminds us, when explaining the following passage,

``Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart.''
(Matthew 11:29.)

And the same thing may be learnt from the words of Peter; for he marks the difference by saying that Christ's patience is what we ought to follow. This subject is handled more at large by Paul in Romans 8:29, where he teaches us that all the children of God are foreordained to be made conformable to the image of Christ, in order that he might be the first-born among many brethren. Hence, that we may live with him, we must previously die with him.

22 Who did no sin This belongs to the present subject; for, if any one boasts of his own innocence, he must know that Christ did not suffer as a malefactor. He, at the same time, shews how far we come short of what Christ was, when he says, that there was no guile found in his mouth; for he who offends not by his tongue, says James, is a perfect man. (James 3:2.) He then declares that there was in Christ the highest perfection of innocency, such as no one of us can dare claim for himself. It hence appears more fully how unjustly he suffered beyond all others. There is, therefore, no reason why any one of us should refuse to suffer after his example, since no one is so conscious of having acted rightly, as not to know that he is imperfect.

23 When he was reviled, or, reproached. Here Peter points out what we are to imitate in Christ, even calmly to bear wrongs, and not to avenge wrongs. For such is our disposition, that when we receive injuries, our minds immediately boil over with revengeful feelings; but Christ abstained from every kind of retaliation. Our minds, therefore, ought to be bridled, lest we should seek to render evil for evil.

But committed himself, or, his cause. The word cause is not expressed, but it is obviously understood. And Peter adds this for the consolation of the godly, that is, that if they patiently endured the reproaches and violence of the wicked, they would have God as their defender. For it would be a very hard thing for us, to be subjected to the will of the ungodly, and not to have God caring for our wrongs. Peter, therefore, adorns God with this high attribute, that he judgeth righteously, as though he had said, ``It behoves us calmly to bear evils; God in the meantime will not neglect what belongs to him, but will shew himself to be a righteous judge.'' However wanton then the ungodly may be for a time, yet they shall not be unpunished for the wrongs done now to the children of God. Nor is there any cause for the godly to fear, as though they were without any

pattern.'' --- Ed.

protection; for since it belongs to God to defend them and to undertake their cause, they are to possess their souls in patience.

Moreover, as this doctrine brings no small consolation, so it avails to allay and subdue the inclinations of the flesh. For no one can recumb on the fidelity and protection of God, but he who in a meek spirit waits for his judgment; for he who leaps to take vengeance, intrudes into what belongs to God, and suffers not God to perform his own office. In reference to this Paul says, ``Give place to wrath,'' (Romans 12:19;) and thus he intimates that the way is closed up against God that he might not himself judge, when we anticipate him. He then confirms what he had said by the testimony of Moses, ``Vengeance is mine.'' (Deuteronomy 32:35.) Peter in short meant this, that we after the example of Christ shall be more prepared to endure injuries, if we give to God his own honor, that is, if we, believing him to be a righteous judge, refer our right and our cause to him.

It may however be asked, How did Christ commit his cause to the Father; for if he required vengeance from him, this he himself says is not lawful for us; for he bids us to do good to those who injure us, to pray for those who speak evil of us. (Matthew 5:44.) To this my reply is, that it appears evident from the gospel-history, that Christ did thus refer his judgment to God, and yet did not demand vengeance to be taken on his enemies, but that, on the contrary, he prayed for them, ``Father,'' he said, ``forgive them.'' (Luke 23:34.) And doubtless the feelings of our flesh are far from being in unison with the judgment of God. That any one then may commit his cause to him who judgeth righteously, it is necessary that he should first lay a check on himself, so that he may not ask anything inconsistent with the righteous judgment of God. For they who indulge themselves in looking for vengeance, concede not to God his office of a judge, but in a manner wish him to be an executioner. He then who is so calm in his spirit as to wish his adversaries to become his friends, and endeavors to bring them to the right way, rightly commits to God his own cause, and his prayer is, ``Thou, O Lord, knowest my heart, how I wish them to be saved who seek to destroy me: were they converted, I should congratulate them; but if they continue obstinate in their wickedness, for I know that thou watchest over my safety, I commit my cause to thee.'' This meekness was manifested by Christ; it is then the rule to be observed by us.

1 Peter 2:24-25

1 Peter 2:24-25

24. Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

24. Qui peccata nostra ipse pertulit in corpore suo super lignum, ut peccatis mortui, justitiae vivamus: cujus livori sanati estis.

25. For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shep-

herd and Bishop of your souls.

25. Eratis enim tanquam oves errantes; sed conversi estis nunc ad Pastorem et Episcopum animarum vestrarum.

Had he commended nothing in Christ's death except as an example, it would have been very frigid: he therefore refers to a fruit much more excellent. There are then three things to be noticed in this passage. The first is, that Christ by his death has given us an example of patience; the second, that by his death he restored us to life; it hence follows, that we are so bound to him, that we ought cheerfully to follow his example. In the third place, he refers to the general design of his death, that we, being dead to sins, ought to live to righteousness. And all these things confirm his previous exhortation.

24 Who his own self bare our sins This form of speaking is fitted to set forth the efficacy of Christ's death. For as under the Law, the sinner, that he might be released from guilt, substituted a victim in his own place; so Christ took on himself the curse due to our sins, that he might atone for them before God. And he expressly adds, on the tree, because he could not offer such an expiation except on the cross. Peter, therefore, well expresses the truth, that Christ's death was a sacrifice for the expiation of our sins; for being fixed to the cross and offering himself a victim for us, he took on himself our sin and our punishment. Isaiah, from whom Peter has taken the substance of his doctrine, employs various forms of expression, --- that he was smitten by God's hand for our sins, that he was wounded for our iniquities, that he was afflicted and broken for our sake, that the chastisement of our peace was laid on him. But Peter intended to set forth the same thing by the words of this verse, even that we are reconciled to God on this condition, because Christ made himself before his tribunal a surety and as one guilty for us, that he might suffer the punishment due to us.

This great benefit the Sophists in their schools obscure as much as they can; for they prattle that by the sacrifice of the death of Christ we are only freed after baptism from guilt, but that punishment is redeemed by satisfactions. But Peter, when he says that he bore our sins, means that not only guilt was imputed to him, but that he also suffered its punishment, that he might thus be an expiatory victim, according to that saying of the Prophet, ``The chastisement of our peace was upon him.'' If they object and say, that this only avails before baptism, the context here disproves them, for the words are addressed to the faithful.

But this clause and that which follows, by whose stripes ye were healed, may be also applied to the subject in hand, that is, that it behoves us to bear on our shoulders the sins of others, not indeed to expiate for them, but only to bear them as a burden laid on us.

Being dead to sins [374] He had before pointed out another end, even an ex-

[374] Or, “Being freed from sins:” {ἀπογενόμενοι}, being away from, having departed from, or, being removed from. Beza renders it ``being separated from.'' Freedom from the power or dominion of sin seems more expressly to be intended, as the end of this freedom is, that we may live to righteousness; the end of forgiveness on the other hand is, that we may have peace with God. Beza, Estius, Grotis, and Scott, take this view of the sentence. The subject in hand is not the removal of guilt, but holiness of life, and Christ in his

ample of patience; but here, as it has been stated, it is made more manifest, that we are to live a holy and righteous life. The Scripture sometimes mentions both, that is, that the Lord tries us with troubles and adversities, that we might be conformed to the death of Christ, and also that the old man has been crucified in the death of Christ, that we might walk in newness of life. (Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:4.) At the same time, this end of which he speaks, differs from the former, not only as that which is general from what is particular; for in patience there is simply an example; but when he says that Christ suffered, that we being dead to sins should live to righteousness, he intimates that there is power in Christ's death to mortify our flesh, as Paul explains more fully in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. For he has not only brought this great benefit to us, that God justifies us freely, by not imputing to us our sins; but he also makes us to die to the world and to the flesh, that we may rise again to a new life: not that one day makes complete this death; but wherever it is, the death of Christ is efficacious for the expiation of sins, and also for the mortification of the flesh.

25 For ye were as sheep This also has Peter borrowed from Isaiah, except that the Prophet makes it a universal statement,

``All we like sheep have gone astray.'' (Isaiah 53:6.)

But on the word sheep there is no particular stress; he indeed compares us to sheep, but the emphasis is on what the Prophet adds, when he says that every one had turned to his own way. The meaning then is, that we are all going astray from the way of salvation, and proceeding in the way of ruin, until Christ brings us back from this wandering.

And this appears still more evident from the clause which follows, but are now returned to the Shepherd, etc.; [375] for all who are not ruled by Christ, are wandering like lost sheep in the ways of error. Thus, then, is condemned the whole wisdom of the world, which does not submit to the government of Christ. But the two titles given here to Christ are remarkable, that he is the Shepherd and Bishop of souls There is then no cause to fear, but that he will faithfully watch over the safety of those who are in his fold and under his care. And it is his office to keep us safe both in body and soul; yet Peter mentions only souls, because this celestial Shepherd keeps us under his own spiritual protection unto eternal life.

sufferings is set forth as the pattern to us. Then in what follows, our diseased state and our wandering from the right way, are the things referred to. Christ's death was intended to answer two great ends, --- to remove guilt and to remove or to destroy sin in us. The latter is the subject of this passage. --- Ed.

[375] I would render the clause thus, “But you have been now restored,” that is, from your wandering, “to the shepherd and the bishop (or, overseer) of your souls.” Macknight thinks, that our Lord took the title of shepherd in order to shew that he is the person foretold in Ezekiel 34:23, and that Peter alludes, in calling him bishop or overseer, to the eleventh verse of that chapter, the latter clause of which, according to the Sept. is, “I will oversee them,” ({ἐπισκέψομαι}.) --- Ed.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 Peter 3:1-4

1 Peter 3:1-4

1. Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives;

1. Similiter mulieres subjectae sint propriis maritis; ut etiam siqui sunt increduli sermoni, per uxorum conversationem absque sermone lucrifiant;

2. While they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear.

2. Considerantes puram (vel, castam) vestram in timore conversationem;

3. Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel;

3. Quarum ornatus sit non externus, in plicatura capillorum et circumpositione auri, aut palliorum amictu;

4. But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

4. Sed interior cordis homo, qui in incorruptione situs est placidi et quieti spiritus, qui spiritus coram Deo pretiosus est (vel, quod est coram Deo pretiosum.)

He proceeds now to another instance of subjection, and bids wives to be subject to their husbands. And as those seemed to have some pretense for shaking off the yoke, who were united to unbelieving men, he expressly reminds them of their duty, and brings forward a particular reason why they ought the more carefully to obey, even that they might by their probity allure their husbands to the faith. But if wives ought to obey ungodly husbands, with much more promptness ought they to obey, who have believing husbands.

But it may seem strange that Peter should say, that a husband might be gained to the Lord without the word; for why is it said, that ``faith cometh by hearing?'' Romans 10:17. To this I reply, that Peter's words are not to be so understood as though a holy life alone could lead the unbelieving to Christ, but that it softens and pacifies their minds, so that they might have less dislike to religion; for as bad examples create offenses, so good ones afford no small help. Then Peter shews that wives by a holy and pious life could do so much as to prepare their husbands, without speaking to them on religion, to embrace the faith of Christ.

2 While they behold For minds, however alienated from the true faith, are subdued, when they see the good conduct of believers; for as they understood not the doctrine of Christ, they form an estimate of it by our life. It cannot, then, be but that they will commend Christianity, which teaches purity and fear.

3 Whose adorning The other part of the exhortation is, that wives are to adorn themselves sparingly and modestly: for we know that they are in this respect much more curious and ambitious than they ought to be. Then Peter does not without cause seek to correct in them this vanity. And though he reproves generally sumptuous or costly adorning, yet he points out some things in particular, --- that they were not artificially to curl or wreath their hair, as it was usually done by crisping-pins, or otherwise to form it according to the fashion; nor were they to set gold around their head: for these are the things in which excesses especially appear.

It may be now asked, whether the Apostle wholly condemns the use of gold in adorning the body. Were any one to urge these words, it may be said, that he prohibits precious garments no less than gold; for he immediately adds, the putting on of apparel, or, of clothes. But it would be an immoderate strictness wholly to forbid neatness and elegance in clothing. If the material is said to be too sumptuous, the Lord has created it; and we know that skill in art has proceeded from him. Then Peter did not intend to condemn every sort of ornament, but the evil of vanity, to which women are subject. Two things are to be regarded in clothing, usefulness and decency; and what decency requires is moderation and modesty. Were, then, a woman to go forth with her hair wantonly curled and decked, and make an extravagant display, her vanity could not be excused. They who object and say, that to clothe one's-self in this or that manner is an indifferent thing, in which all are free to do as they please, may be easily confuted; for excessive elegance and superfluous display, in short, all excesses, arise from a corrupted mind. Besides, ambition, pride, affectation of display, and all things of this kind, are not indifferent things. Therefore they whose minds are purified from all vanity, will duly order all things, so as not to exceed moderation.

4 But let it be the hidden, man of the heart The contrast here ought to be carefully observed. Cato said, that they who are anxiously engaged in adorning the body, neglect the adorning of the mind: so Peter, in order to restrain this desire in women, introduces a remedy, that they are to devote themselves to the cultivation of their minds. The word heart, no doubt means the whole soul. He at the same time shews in what consists the spiritual adorning of women, even in the incorruptness of a meek and quiet spirit ``Incorruptness,'' as I think, is set in opposition to things which fade and vanish away, things which serve to adorn the body. Therefore the version of Erasmus departs from the real meaning. In short, Peter means that the ornament of the soul is not like a fading flower, nor consists in vanishing splendor, but is incorruptible. By mentioning quiet and a tranquil spirit, he marks out what especially belongs to women; for

nothing becomes them more than a placid and a sedate temper of mind. [376] For we know how outrageous a being is an imperious and a self-willed woman. And further, nothing is more fitted to correct the vanity of which Peter speaks than a placid quietness of spirit.

What follows, that it is in the sight of God of great price, may be referred to the whole previous sentence as well as to the word spirit; the meaning indeed will remain the same. For why do women take so much care to adorn themselves, except that they may turn the eyes of men on themselves? But Peter, on the contrary, bids them to be more anxious for what is before God of a great price.

1 Peter 3:5-6

1 Peter 3:5-6

5. For after this manner in the old time the holy women also, who trusted in God, adorned themselves, being in subjection unto their own husbands:

5. Sic enim aliquando et sanctae mulieres quae sperabant in Deum, ornabant seipsas, subjectae propriis maritis:

6. Even as Sara obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whose daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

6. Quemadmodum et Sara obediebat Abrahae, dominum ipsum appellans, cujus filiae estis factae, si benefeceritis, et non terreamini ullo pavore.

He sets before them the example of pious women, who sought for spiritual adorning rather than outward meretricious ornaments. But he mentions Sarah above all others, who, having been the mother of all the faithful, is especially worthy of honor and imitation on the part of her sex. Moreover, he returns again to subjection, and confirms it by the example of Sarah, who, according to the words of Moses, called her husband Lord. (Genesis 18:12.) God, indeed, does not regard such titles; and it may sometimes be, that one especially petulant and disobedient should use such a word with her tongue; but Peter means, that Sarah usually spoke thus, because she knew that a command had been given her by the Lord, to be subject to her husband. Peter adds, that they who imitated her fidelity would be her daughters, that is, reckoned among the faithful.

6 And are not afraid The weakness of the sex causes women to be suspicious and timid, and therefore morose; for they fear lest by their subjection, they should be more reproachfully treated. It was this that Peter seems to have had in view in forbidding them to be disturbed by any fear, as though he had said, ``Willingly submit to the authority of your husbands, nor let fear prevent your obedience, as though your condition would be worse, were you to obey.'' The

[376] The best construction is to regard “adorning,” or ornament, as understood after “incorruptible:” “But the hidden man of the heart, clothed in (or with) the incorruptible adorning of a mild and quiet spirit.” “Mild” or meek, not given to passion or wrath, patient, not proud nor arrogant; quiet, peaceable, not garrulous, not turbulent, nor given to strife and contention. — Ed.

words may be more general, ``Let them not raise up commotions at home.'' For as they are liable to be frightened, they often make much of a little thing, and thus disturb themselves and the family. Others think that the timidity of women, which is contrary to faith, is generally reproved, as though Peter exhorted them to perform the duties of their calling with a courageous and intrepid spirit. However, the first explanation is what I prefer, though the last does not differ much from it. [377]

1 Peter 3:7

1 Peter 3:7

7. Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

7. Viri similiter cohabitent secundum scientiam, tanquam infirmiori vasi, muliebri impertientes honorem, tanquam etiam cohaeredes gratiae vitae (vel, multiplicis gratiae et vitae,) ne preces vestrae interrumpantur.

7 Likewise, ye husbands, dwell with them. From husbands he requires prudence; for dominion over their wives is not given them, except on this condition, that they exercise authority prudently. Then let husbands remember that they need prudence to do rightly their duty. And doubtless many foolish things must be endured by them, many unpleasant things must be borne with; and they must at the same time beware lest their indulgence should foster folly. Hence the admonition of Peter is not in vain, that the husbands ought to cohabit with them as with a weaker vessel. Part of the prudence which he mentions, is, that the husbands honor their wives. For nothing destroys the friendship of life more than contempt; nor can we really love any but those whom we esteem; for love must be connected with respect.

Moreover, he employs a twofold argument, in order to persuade husbands to treat their wives honourably and kindly. The first is derived from the weakness of the sex; the other, from the honor with which God favors them. These things seem indeed to be in a manner contrary, --- that honor ought to be given to wives, because they are weak, and because they excel; but these things well agree together where love exists. It is evident, that God is despised in his gifts, except we honor those on whom he has conferred any excellency. But when we consider that we are members of the same body, we learn to bear with one another, and mutually to cover our infirmities. This is what Paul means when he says that greater honor is given to the weaker members, (1 Corinthians 12:23;) even because we are more careful in protecting them from shame. Then Peter does not without reason command that women should be cared for, and that

[377] The words are, “Whose daughters ye become, when ye do well and fear no terror.” Terror here stands for what terrifies. The paraphrase of Macknight seems to give the real and simple meaning of the passage, “Whose daughters ye Christian women have become, by behaving well towards your husbands, and not being frightened to actions contrary to your religion through fear of displeasing them.”

they should be honored with a kind treatment, because they are weak. And then as we more easily forgive children, when they offend through inexperience of age; so the weakness of the female sex ought to make us not to be too rigid and severe towards our wives.

The word vessel, as it is well known, means in Scripture any sort of instrument.

Being heirs together (or co-heirs) of the grace of life Some copies have ``of manifold grace;'' others, instead of ``life,'' have the word ``living.'' Some read ``co-heirs'' in the dative case, which makes no difference in the sense. A conjunction is put by others between manifold grace and life; which reading is the most suitable. [378] For since the Lord is pleased to bestow in common on husbands and wives the same graces, he invites them to seek an equality in them; and we know that those graces are manifold in which wives are partakers with their husbands. For some belong to the present life, and some to God's spiritual kingdom. He afterwards adds, that they are co-heirs also of life, which is the chief thing. And though some are strangers to the hope of salvation, yet as it is offered by the Lord to them no less than to their husbands, it is a sufficient honor to the sex.

That your prayers be not hindered For God cannot be rightly called upon, unless our minds be calm and peaceable. Among strifes and contentions there is no place for prayer. Peter indeed addresses the husband and the wife, when he bids them to be at peace one with another, so that they might with one mind pray to God. But we may hence gather a general doctrine --- that no one ought to come to God except he is united to his brethren. Then as this reason ought to restrain all domestic quarrels and strifes, in order that each one of the family may pray to God; so in common life it ought to be as it were a bridle to check all contentions. For we are more than insane, if we knowingly and wilfully close up the way to God's presence by prayer, since this is the only asylum of our salvation.

Some give this explanation, that an intercourse with the wife ought to be sparing and temperate, lest too much indulgence in this respect should prevent attention to prayer, according to that saying of Paul,

``Defraud not one another, unless by consent for a time, that ye may give yourselves to fasting and prayer.'' (1 Corinthians 7:5.)

But the doctrine of Peter extends wider: and then Paul does not mean that prayers are interrupted by mutual cohabitation. Therefore the explanation which I have given ought to be retained.

1 Peter 3:8-9

1 Peter 3:8-9

8. Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another; love as

[378] The received text is the most approved, and there is no different reading of any importance. — Ed.

brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:

8. Denique sitis omnes idem sentientes, compatientes, fraternè vos diligentes, misericordes, humiles;

9. Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

9. Non reddentes malum pro malo, vel convitium pro convitio; imo potius benedicentes, scientes quod in hoc vocati sitis, ut benedictionem hereditate consequamini.

Now follow general precepts which indiscriminately belong to all. [379] Moreover he summarily mentions some things which are especially necessary to foster friendship and love. The first is, Be ye all of one mind, or, think ye all the same thing. For though friends are at liberty to think differently, yet to do so is a cloud which obscures love; yea, from this seed easily arises hatred. Sympathy ({συμπάθεια}) extends to all our faculties, when concord exists between us; so that every one condoles with us in adversity as well as rejoices with us in prosperity, so that every one not only cares for himself, but also regards the benefit of others.

What next follows, Love as brethren, belongs peculiarly to the faithful; for where God is known as a Father, there only brotherhood really exists. Be pitiful, or merciful, which is added, means that we are not only to help our brethren and relieve their miseries, but also to bear with their infirmities. In what follows there are two readings in Greek; but what seems to me the most probable is the one I have put as the text; for we know that it is the chief bond to preserve friendship, when every one thinks modestly and humbly of himself; as there is nothing on the other hand which produces more discords than when we think too highly of ourselves. Wisely then does Peter bid us to be humble-minded ({ταπεινόφρονες},) lest pride and haughtiness should lead us to despise our neighbors. [380]

[379] In the previous statements of particular duties belonging to various relations in life, the duty of masters towards their servants is omitted. Some have hence inferred that there were no masters who were Christians among those to whom Peter wrote. But this could not have been the ease, and for this reason, because Paul, in his Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians, expressly specifies the duty of masters towards their servants; and Ephesus and Colosse were included in Asia Minor, and it was to Christians scattered throughout that country that Peter wrote his Epistle. But this omission is somewhat singular. At the same time, though the master's duty is not specifically mentioned, we may yet consider this verse as having a special reference to masters, as sympathy, brotherly love, and compassion or commiseration, are here inculcated. The construction of the whole passage, beginning at the 17th verse of the last chapter, and ending at the 12th of this (for at the 13th of this, he resumes the subject he left off at the end of the 16th of the last) deserves to be noticed. "Honour all," is the injunction which he afterwards exemplifies as to servants, wives, and husbands; for the construction is "Honour all — the servants being subject, etc. — in like manner, the wives being subject, etc. — in like manner, the husbands, cohabiting according to knowledge, giving honor, etc." Then follows this verse in the same form, "And finally, all being of one mind, sympathizing, loving the brethren, compassionate, friendly-minded (or humble-minded,) not rendering, etc." And thus he proceeds to the end of the 12th verse. Afterwards he resumes the subject respecting the treatment the Christians met with from the world. May we not then conclude, that as the duty of masters does not come under the idea of honoring, he did not specifically mention them, but referred only to the spirit and temper they ought to have exhibited? — Ed.

[380] Griesbach has given the preference to {ταπεινόφρονες} and has introduced it into the text. ---

9 Not rendering evil for evil In these words every kind of revenge is forbidden; for in order to preserve love, we must bear with many things. At the same time he does not speak here of mutual benevolence, but he would have us to endure wrongs, when provoked by ungodly men. And though it is commonly thought that it is an instance of a weak and abject mind, not to avenge injuries, yet it is counted before God as the highest magnanimity. Nor is it indeed enough to abstain from revenge; but Peter requires also that we should pray for those who reproach us; for to bless here means to pray, as it is set in opposition to the second clause. But Peter teaches us in general, that evils are to be overcome by acts of kindness. This is indeed very hard, but we ought to imitate in this case our heavenly Father, who makes his sun to rise on the unworthy. What the sophists imagine to be the meaning, is a futile evasion; for when Christ said, ``Love your enemies,'' he at the same time confirmed his own doctrine by saying, ``That ye might be the children of God.''

Knowing that ye are thereunto called He means that this condition was required of the faithful when they were called by God, that they were not only to be so meek as not to retaliate injuries, but also to bless those who cursed them; and as this condition may seem almost unjust, he calls their attention to the reward; as though he had said, that there is no reason why the faithful should complain, because their wrongs would turn to their own benefit. In short, he shews how much would be the gain of patience; for if we submissively bear injuries, the Lord will bestow on us his blessing.

The verb, {κληρονόμειν}, to inherit, seems to express perpetuity, as though Peter had said, that the blessing would not be for a short time, but perpetual, if we be submissive in bearing injuries. But God blesses in a way different, from men; for we express our wishes to him, but he confers a blessing on us. And on the other hand, Peter intimates that they who seek to revenge injuries, attempt what will yield them no good, for they thus deprive themselves of God's blessing.

1 Peter 3:10-15

1 Peter 3:10-15

10. For he that will love life, and see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they speak no guile:

10. Qui enim vult vitam diligere, et videre dies bonos, contineat linguam suam à malo, et labia sua, ne loquantur dolum;

11. Let him eschew evil, and do good; let him seek peace, and ensue it.

11. Declinet à malo et faciat bonum, quaerat pacem et persequatur eam:

12. For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open, unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil.

12. Quoniam oculi Domini super justos, et aures ejus in preces eorum; vultus autem Domini super facientes mala.

Ed.

13. And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?

13. Et quis est qui vobis malè faciat, si boni aemuli sitis?

14. But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy are ye: and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

14. Verum etiam si patiamini propter justitiam, beati; timorem vero eorum ne timeatis neque turbemini;

15. But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts:

15. Sed Dominum exercituum sanctificate in cordibus vestris.

10 For he He confirms the last sentence by the testimony of David. The passage is taken from the thirty-fourth Psalm, [Psalm 34:12-16,] where the Spirit testifies that it will be well with all who keep themselves from all evil-doing and wrong-doing. The common feeling indeed favors what is very different; for men think that they expose themselves to the insolence of enemies, if they do not boldly defend themselves. But the Spirit of God promises a happy life to none except to the meek, and those who endure evils; and we cannot be happy except God prospers our ways; and it is the good and the benevolent, and not the cruel and inhuman, that he will favor.

Peter has followed the Greek version, though the difference is but little. David's words are literally these, --- ``He who loves life and desires to see good days,'' etc. It is indeed a desirable thing, since God has placed us in this world, to pass our time in peace. Then, the way of obtaining this blessing is to conduct ourselves justly and harmlessly towards all.

The first thing he points out are the vices of the tongue; which are to be avoided, so that we may not be contumelious and insolent, nor speak deceitfully and with duplicity. Then he comes to deeds, that we are to injure none, or cause loss to none, but to endeavor to be kind to all, and to exercise the duties of humanity.

11 Let him seek peace It is not enough to embrace it when offered to us, but it ought to be followed when it seems to flee from us. It also often happens, that when we seek it as much as we can, others will not grant it to us. On account of these difficulties and hindrances, he bids us to seek and pursue it.

12 For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, or, on the righteous. It ought to be a consolation to us, sufficient to mitigate all evils, that we are looked upon by the Lord, so that he will bring us help in due time. The meaning then is, that the prosperity which he has mentioned depends on the protection of God; for were not the Lord to care for his people, they would be like sheep exposed to wolves. And that we for little reason raise a clamor, that we suddenly kindle unto wrath, that we burn with the passion of revenge, all this, doubtless, happens, because we do not consider that God cares for us, and because we do not acquiesce in his aid. Thus in vain we shall be taught patience, except our minds are first imbued with this truth, that God exercises such care over us, that he will in due time succor us. When, on the contrary, we are fully persuaded that God defends the cause of the righteous, we shall first attend simply to innocence, and then, when molested and hated by the ungodly, we

shall flee to the protection of God. And when he says, that the ears of the Lord are open to our prayers, he encourages us to pray.

But the face of the Lord By this clause he intimates that the Lord will be our avenger, because he will not always suffer the insolence of the ungodly to prevail; and at the same time he shews how it will be, if we seek to defend our life from injuries, even that God will be an adversary to us. But it may, on the other hand, be objected and said, that we experience it daily far otherwise, for the more righteous any one is, and the greater lover of peace he is, the more he is harassed by the wicked. To this I reply, that no one is so attentive to righteousness and peace, but that he sometimes sins in this respect. But it ought to be especially observed, that the promises as to this life do not extend further than as to what is expedient for us to be fulfilled. Hence, our peace with the world is often disturbed, that our flesh may be subdued, in order that we may serve God, and also for other reasons; so that nothing may be a loss to us.

13 Who is he that will harm you He further confirms the previous sentence by an argument drawn from common experience. For it happens for the most part, that the ungodly disturb us, or are provoked by us, or that we do not labor to do them good as it behoves us; for they who seek to do good, do even soften minds which are otherwise hard as iron. This very thing is mentioned by Plato in his first book on the Republic, ``Injustice,'' he says, ``causes seditions and hatreds and fightings one with another; but justice, concord and friendship.'' [381] However, though this commonly happens, yet it is not always the case; for the children of God, how much soever they may strive to pacify the ungodly by kindness, and shew themselves kind towards all, are yet often assailed undeservedly by many.

14. Hence Peter adds, But if ye suffer for righteousness' sake The meaning is, that the faithful will do more towards obtaining a quiet life by kindness, than by violence and promptitude in taking revenge; but that when they neglect nothing to secure peace, were they to suffer, they are still blessed, because they suffer for the sake of righteousness. Indeed, this latter clause differs much from the judgment of our flesh; but Christ has not without reason thus declared; nor has Peter without reason repeated the sentence from his mouth; for God will at length come as a deliverer, and then openly will appear what now seems incredible, that is, that the miseries of the godly have been blessed when endured with patience.

To suffer for righteousness, means not only to submit to some loss or disadvantage in defending a good cause, but also to suffer unjustly, when any one is innocently in fear among men on account of the fear of God.

Be not afraid of their terror He again points out the fountain and cause of impatience, that we are beyond due measure troubled, when the ungodly rise up against us. For such a dread either disheartens us, or degrades us, or kindles

[381] {Στάσεις} {γάρ} {που} {ἤγε} {ἀδικία} {καὶ} {μίσεα} {καὶ} {μάχας} {ἐν} {ἀλλήλοις} {παρέχει}, {ἡδὲ} {δικαιοσύνη} {ὁμόνοιαν} {καὶ} {φιλίαν}. --- Rep. lib. 1.

within us a desire for revenge. In the meantime, we do not acquiesce in the defense of God. Then the best remedy for checking the turbulent emotions of our minds will be, to conquer immoderate terrors by trusting in the aid of God.

But Peter no doubt meant to allude to a passage in the eighth chapter of Isaiah; [Isaiah 8:12-17;] for when the Jews against the prohibition of God sought to fortify themselves by the aid of the Gentile world, God warned his Prophet not to fear after their example. Peter at the same time seems to have turned ``fear'' into a different meaning; for it is taken passively by the Prophet, who accused the people of unbelief, because, at a time when they ought to have relied on the aid of God and to have boldly despised all dangers, they became so prostrate and broken down with fear, that they sent to all around them for unlawful help. But Peter takes fear in another sense, as meaning that terror which the ungodly are wont to fill us with by their violence and cruel threatenings. He then departs from the sense in which the word is taken by the Prophet; but in this there is nothing unreasonable; for his object was not to explain the words of the Prophet; he wished only to shew that, nothing is fitter to produce patience than what Isaiah prescribes, even to ascribe to God his honor by recumbing in full confidence on his power.

I do not, however, object, if any one prefers to render Peter's words thus, Fear ye not their fear; as though he had said, ``Be ye not afraid as the unbelieving, or the children of this world are wont to be, because they understand nothing of God's providence.'' But this, as I think, would be a forced explanation. There is, indeed, no need for us to toil much on this point, since Peter here did not intend to explain every word used by the Prophet, but only referred to this one thing, that the faithful will firmly stand, and can never be moved from a right course of duty by any dread or fear, if they will sanctify the Lord.

But this sanctification ought to be confined to the present case. For whence is it that we are overwhelmed with fear, and think ourselves lost, when danger is impending, except that we ascribe to mortal man more power to injure us than to God to save us? God promises that he will be the guardian of our salvation; the ungodly, on the other hand, attempt to subvert it. Unless God's promise sustain us, do we not deal unjustly with him, and in a manner profane him? Then the Prophet teaches us that we ought to think honourably of the Lord of hosts; for how much soever the ungodly may contrive to destroy us, and whatever power they may possess, he alone is more than sufficiently powerful to secure our safety. [382] Peter then adds, in your hearts. For if this conviction takes full possession of our minds, that the help promised by the Lord is sufficient for us, we shall be well fortified to repel all the fears of unbelief.

[382] "Sanctify" here, seems to have the same meaning as in our Lord's prayer, "Hallowed," or sanctified "be thy name;" where it means honored or glorified. And to honor or glorify God in our hearts is what Calvin very correctly explains. — Ed.

1 Peter 3:15-16

1 Peter 3:15-16

15. And be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear:

15 Parati autem sitis ad responsionem cuivis poscenti à vobis rationem ejus quae in vobis est spei;

16. Having a good conscience; that, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation in Christ.

16. Cum mansuetudine et timore, conscientiam habentes bonam; ut in quo de vobis obtrectant, tanquam maleficis, pudefiant dum infamant bonam vestram in Christo conversationem.

Though this is a new precept, it yet depends on what is gone before, for he requires such constancy in the faithful, as boldly to give a reason for their faith to their adversaries. And this is a part of that sanctification which he had just mentioned; for we then really honor God, when neither fear nor shame hinders us from making a profession of our faith. But Peter does not expressly bid us to assert and proclaim what has been given us by the Lord everywhere, and always and among all indiscriminately, for the Lord gives his people the spirit of discretion, so that they may know when and how far and to whom it is expedient to speak. He bids them only to be ready to give an answer, lest by their sloth and the cowardly fear of the flesh they should expose the doctrine of Christ, by being silent, to the derision of the ungodly. The meaning then is, that we ought to be prompt in avowing our faith, so as to set it forth whenever necessary, lest the unbelieving through our silence should condemn the religion we follow.

But it ought to be noticed, that Peter here does not command us to be prepared to solve any question that may be mooted; for it is not the duty of all to speak on every subject. But it is the general doctrine that is meant, which belongs to the ignorant and the simple. Then Peter had in view no other thing, than that Christians should make it evident to unbelievers that they truly worshipped God, and had a holy and good religion. And in this there is no difficulty, for it would be strange if we could bring nothing to defend our faith when any one made inquiries respecting it. For we ought always to take care that all may know that we fear God, and that we piously and reverently regard his legitimate worship.

This was also required by the state of the times: the Christian name was much hated and deemed infamous; many thought the sect wicked and guilty of many sacrileges. It would have been, therefore, the highest perfidy against God, if, when asked, they had neglected to give a testimony in favor of their religion. And this, as I think, is the meaning of the word apology, which Peter uses, that is, that the Christians were to make it evident to the world that they were far off from every impiety, and did not corrupt true religion, on which account they were suspected by the ignorant.

Hope here is by a metonymy to be taken for faith. Peter, however, as it has been said, does not require them to know how to discuss distinctly and refinedly every article of the faith, but only to shew that their faith in Christ was consistent with genuine piety. And hence we learn how all those abuse the name of Christians, who understand nothing certain respecting their faith, and have nothing to give as an answer for it. But it behoves us again carefully to consider what he says, when he speaks of that hope that is in you; for he intimates that the confession which flows from the heart is alone that which is approved by God; for except faith dwells within, the tongue prattles in vain. It ought then to have its roots within us, so that it may afterwards bring forth the fruit of confession.

16 With meekness This is a most necessary admonition; for unless our minds are endued with meekness, contentions will immediately break forth. And meekness is set in opposition to pride and vain ostentation, and also to excessive zeal. To this he justly adds fear; for where reverence for God prevails, it tames all the ferocity of our minds, and it will especially cause us to speak calmly of God's mysteries. For contentious disputes arise from this, because many think less honourably than they ought of the greatness of divine wisdom, and are carried away by profane audacity. If, then, we would render approved of God the confession of our faith, all boasting must be put aside, all contention must be relinquished.

Having a good conscience What we say without a corresponding life has but little weight; hence he joins to confession a good conscience. For we see that many are sufficiently ready with their tongue, and prate much, very freely, and yet with no fruit, because the life does not correspond. Besides, the integrity of conscience alone is that which gives us confidence in speaking as we ought; for they who prattle much about the gospel, and whose dissolute life is a proof of their impiety, not only make themselves objects of ridicule, but also expose the truth itself to the slanders of the ungodly. For why did he before bid us to be ready to defend the faith, should any one require from us a reason for it, except that it is our duty to vindicate the truth of God against those false suspicions which the ignorant entertain respecting it. But the defense of the tongue will avail but little, except the life corresponds with it.

He therefore says, that they may be ashamed, who blame your good conversation in Christ, and who speak against you as evil-doers; as though he had said, ``If your adversaries have nothing to allege against you, except that you follow Christ, they will at length be ashamed of their malicious wickedness, or at least, your innocence will be sufficient to confute them.''

1 Peter 3:17-18

1 Peter 3:17-18

17. For it is better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well doing, than for evil doing.

17. Praestat enim benefaciendo (si ita fert voluntas Dei) pati quàm malefaciendo:

18. For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

18. Quia et Christus semel pro peccatis passus est, justus pro injustis, ut nos adduceret Deo; mortificatus quidem carne, vivificatus autem spiritu.

17 For it is better This belongs not only to what follows but to the whole context. He had spoken of the profession of faith, which at that time was attended with great danger; he says now that it is much better, if they sustained any loss in defending a good cause, to suffer thus unjustly than to be punished for their evil deeds. This consolation is understood rather by secret meditation, than by many words. It is what indeed occurs everywhere in profane authors, that there is a sufficient defense in a good conscience, whatever evils may happen, and must be endured. These have spoken courageously; but then the only really bold man is he who looks to God. Therefore Peter added this clause, If the will of God be so For in these words he reminds us, that if we suffer unjustly, it is not by chance, but according to the divine will; and he assumes, that God wills nothing or appoints nothing but for the best reason. Hence the faithful have always this comfort in their miseries, that they know that they have God as their witness, and that they also know that they are led by him to the contest, in order that they may under his protection give a proof of their faith.

18 For Christ also It is another comfort, that if in our afflictions we are conscious of having done well, we suffer according to the example of Christ; and it hence follows that we are blessed. At the same time he proves, from the design of Christ's death, that it is by no means consistent with our profession that we should suffer for our evil deeds. For he teaches us that Christ suffered in order to bring us to God. What does this mean, except that we have been thus consecrated to God by Christ's death, that we may live and die to him?

There are, then, two parts in this sentence; the first is, that persecutions ought to be borne with resignation, because the Son of God shews the way to us; and the other is, that since we have been consecrated to God's service by the death of Christ, it behoves us to suffer, not for our faults, but for righteousness' sake.

Here, however, a question may be raised, Does not God chastise the faithful, whenever he suffers them to be afflicted? To this I answer, that it indeed often happens, that God punishes them according to what they deserve; and this is not denied by Peter; but he reminds us what a comfort it is to have our cause connected with God. And how God does not punish sins in them who endure persecution for the sake of righteousness, and in what sense they are said to be innocent, we shall see in the next chapter.

Being put to death in the flesh Now this is a great thing, that we are made conformable to the Son of God, when we suffer without cause; but there is added another consolation, that the death of Christ had a blessed issue; for

though he suffered through the weakness of the flesh, he yet rose again through the power of the Spirit. Then the cross of Christ was not prejudicial, nor his death, since life obtained the victory. This was said (as Paul also reminds us in 2 Corinthians 4:10) that we may know that we are to bear in our body the dying of Christ, in order that his life may be manifested in us. Flesh here means the outward man; and Spirit means the divine power, by which Christ emerged from death a conqueror.

1 Peter 3:19-22

1 Peter 3:19-22

19. By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison;

19. In quo et iis qui in specula (vel, in excubiis, vel, carcere) erant spiritibus, profectus prædicavit;

20. Which sometime were disobedient, when once the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls were saved by water.

20. Quum inereduli fuissent olim, quum semel expectabatur Dei patientia in diebus Noe; dum apparabatur arca, in qua paucae, hoc est, octo animae servatae sunt per aquam.

21. The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

21. Cujus figura respondens baptismus, nos quoque salvos reddit, non abjectio sordium carnis, sed bonae conscientiae examen apud Deum, per resurrectionem Jesu Christi:

22. Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels and authorities and powers being made subject unto him.

22. Qui est in dextera Dei profectus in coelum, subjectis sibi angelis, et potestatibus et virtutibus.

19 By which also Peter added this, that we might know that the vivifying power of the Spirit of which he spoke, was not only put forth as to Christ himself, but is also poured forth with regard to us, as Paul shews in Romans 5:5. He then says, that Christ did not rise only for himself, but that he made known to others the same power of his Spirit, so that it penetrated to the dead. It hence follows, that we shall not less feel it in vivifying whatever is mortal in us.

But as the obscurity of this passage has produced, as usual, various explanations, I shall first disprove what has been brought forward by some, and secondly, we shall seek its genuine and true meaning.

Common has been the opinion that Christ's descent into hell is here referred to; but the words mean no such thing; for there is no mention made of the soul of Christ, but only that he went by the Spirit: and these are very different things, that Christ's soul went, and that Christ preached by the power of the Spirit. Then Peter expressly mentioned the Spirit, that he might take away the notion

of what may be called a real presence.

Others explain this passage of the apostles, that Christ by their ministry appeared to the dead, that is, to unbelievers. I, indeed, allow that Christ by means of his apostles went by his Spirit to those who were kept as it were in prison; but this exposition appears incorrect on several accounts: First, Peter says that Christ went to spirits, by which he means souls separated from their bodies, for living men are never called spirits; and secondly, what Peter repeats in the fourth chapter on the same subject, does not admit of such an allegory. Therefore the words must be properly understood of the dead. Thirdly, it seems very strange, that Peter, speaking of the apostles, should immediately, as though forgetting himself, go back to the time of Noah. Certainly this mode of speaking would be most unsuitable. Then this explanation cannot be right.

Moreover, the strange notion of those who think that unbelievers as to the coming of Christ, were after his death freed from their sin, needs no long refutation; for it is an indubitable doctrine of Scripture, that we obtain not salvation in Christ except by faith; then there is no hope left for those who continue to death unbelieving. They speak what is somewhat more probable, who say, that the redemption obtained by Christ availed the dead, who in the time of Noah were long unbelieving, but repented a short time before they were drowned by the deluge. They then understood that they suffered in the flesh the punishment due to their perverseness, and yet were saved by Christ, so that they did not perish for ever. But this interpretation cannot stand; it is indeed inconsistent with the words of the passage, for Peter ascribes salvation only to the family of Noah, and gives over to ruin all who were not within the ark.

I therefore have no doubt but Peter speaks generally, that the manifestation of Christ's grace was made to godly spirits, and that they were thus endued with the vital power of the Spirit. Hence there is no reason to fear that it will not flow to us. But it may be inquired, Why he puts in prison the souls of the godly after having quitted their bodies? It seems to me that {φυλακὴ} rather means a watchtower in which watchmen stand for the purpose of watching, or the very act of watching, for it is often so taken by Greek authors; and the meaning would be very appropriate, that godly souls were watching in hope of the salvation promised them, as though they saw it afar off. Nor is there a doubt but that the holy fathers in life, as well as after death, directed their thoughts to this object. But if the word prison be preferred, it would not be unsuitable; for, as while they lived, the Law, according to Paul, (Galatians 3:23,) was a sort of prison in which they were kept; so after death they must have felt the same desire for Christ; for the spirit of liberty had not as yet been fully given. Hence this anxiety of expectation was to them a kind of prison.

Thus far the Apostle's words seem to agree together, and with the thread of the argument; but what follows is attended with some difficulty; for he does not mention the faithful here, but only the unbelieving; and this seems to overturn the preceding exposition. Some have for this reason been led to think that no other thing is said here, but that the unbelieving, who had formerly persecuted

the godly, found the Spirit of Christ an accuser, as though Peter consoled the faithful with this argument, that Christ, even when dead, punished them. But their mistake is discovered by what we shall see in the next chapter, that the Gospel was preached to the dead, that they might live according to God in the spirit, which peculiarly applies to the faithful. And it is further certain that he repeats there what he now says. Besides, they have not considered that what Peter meant was especially this, that as the power of the Spirit of Christ shewed itself to be vivifying in him, and was known as such by the dead, so it will be towards us.

Let us, however, see why it is that he mentions only the unbelieving; for he seems to say, that Christ in spirit appeared to those who formerly were unbelieving; but I understand him otherwise, that then the true servants of God were mixed together with the unbelieving, and were almost hidden on account of their number. I allow that the Greek construction is at variance with this meaning, for Peter, if he meant this, ought to have used the genitive case absolute. But as it was not unusual with the Apostles to put one case instead of another, and as we see that Peter here heaps together many things, and no other suitable meaning can be elicited, I have no hesitation in giving this explanation of this intricate passage; so that readers may understand that those called unbelieving are different from those to whom he said the Gospel was preached.

After having then said that Christ was manifested to the dead, he immediately adds, When there were formerly unbelievers; by which he intimated, that it was no injury to the holy fathers that they were almost hidden through the vast number of the ungodly. For he meets, as I think, a doubt, which might have harassed the faithful of that day. They saw almost the whole world filled with unbelievers, that they enjoyed all authority, and that life was in their power. This trial might have shaken the confidence of those who were shut up, as it were, under the sentence of death. Therefore Peter reminds them, that the condition of the fathers was not different, and that though the multitude of the ungodly then covered the whole earth, their life was yet preserved in safety by the power of God.

He then comforted the godly, lest they should be cast down and destroyed because they were so few; and he chose an example the most remarkable in antiquity, even that of the world drowned by the deluge; for then in the common ruin of mankind, the family of Noah alone escaped. And he points out the manner, and says that it was a kind of baptism. There is then in this respect also nothing unsuitable.

The sum of what is said is this, that the world has always been full of unbelievers, but that the godly ought not to be terrified by their vast number; for though Noah was surrounded on every side by the ungodly, and had very few as his friends, he was not yet drawn aside from the right course of his faith. [383]

[383] The most satisfactory explanation of this passage is that of Beza, Doddridge, Macknight, and Scott; that the reference is to what was done in the time of Noah, that is, that Christ

When once the long-suffering of God waited This ought to be applied to the ungodly, whom God's patience rendered more slothful; for when God deferred his vengeance and did not immediately execute it, the ungodly boldly disregarded all threatenings; but Noah, on the contrary, being warned by God, had the deluge for a long time before his eyes. Hence his assiduity in building the ark; for being terrified by God's judgment, he shook off all torpidity.

21 The like figure whereunto I fully think that the relative ought to be read in the dative case, and that it has happened, through a mistake, that {ὃ} is put, and not {ᾧ}. The meaning, however, is not ambiguous, that Noah, saved by water, had a sort of baptism. And this the Apostle mentions, that the likeness between him and us might appear more evident. It has already been said that the design of this clause is to shew that we ought not to be led away by wicked examples from the fear of God, and the right way of salvation, and to mix with the world. This is made evident in baptism, in which we are buried together with Christ, so that, being dead to the world, and to the flesh, we may live to God. On this account, he says that our baptism is an antitype ({ἀντίτυπον}) to the baptism of Noah, not that Noah's baptism was the first pattern, and ours an inferior figure, as the word is taken in the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the ceremonies of the law are said to be antitypes of heavenly things, (Hebrews 9:9,10.) Greek writers apply the same word to sacraments, so that, when they speak of the mystical bread of the holy Supper, they call it the antitype. But here there is no comparison made between the greater and the less; the Apostle only means that there is a likeness, and as they commonly say, a correspondence. Perhaps it might more properly be said to be correspondency, ({ἀντίστροφον},) as Aristotle makes Dialectics to be the antistrophè of Rhetoric. But we need not labor about words, when there is an agreement about the thing itself. As Noah, then, obtained life through death, when in the ark, he was enclosed not otherwise than as it were in the grave, and when the whole world perished, he was preserved together with his small family; so at this day, the death which is set forth in baptism, is to us an entrance into life, nor can salvation be hoped for, except we be separated from the world.

Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh This was added, because it might be that the greatest part of men would profess the name of Christ; and so it is with us, almost all are introduced into the church by baptism. Thus, what he had said before would not be appropriate, that few at this day are saved by

by his Spirit employed him as a preacher of righteousness, though with no success, as the spirits of the men to whom he preached were then in prison, reserved, as the fallen angels are represented to be, for the judgment of the last day. The Apostle had before said that Christ's Spirit was in the prophets who foretold his coming, 1 Peter 1:11. The passage may be thus rendered, — 19. "By which also he, having gone, preached to the spirits who are in prison, formerly disobedient, when the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah," etc.; or, according to Mackight, "to the spirits now in prison, who formerly were disobedient," etc. The word "formerly" seems to require "now" in the previous clause, or, "who are," as rendered by Beza. "He, having gone, preached," is similar to a phrase in Ephesians 2:17, "And came and preached," etc.; or, literally, "And having come he preached," etc. Paul does not speak of his coming personally, but by his ministers: and Peter evidently speaks of his going in the same sense. For {ἅπαξ} {ἐξεδέχετο}, Griesbach substitutes {ἀπεξεδέχετο} as being the most approved reading. --- Ed.

baptism, as God saved only eight by the ark. This objection Peter anticipates, when he testifies that he speaks not of the naked sign, but that the effect must also be connected with it, as though he had said, that what happened in the age of Noah would always be the case, that mankind would rush on to their own destruction, but that the Lord would in a wonderful way deliver His very small flock.

We now see what this connection means; for some one might object and say, ``Our baptism is widely different from that of Noah, for it happens that most are at this day baptized.'' To this he replies, that the external symbol is not sufficient, except baptism be received really and effectually: and the reality of it will be found only in a few. It hence follows that we ought carefully to see how men commonly act when we rely on examples, and that we ought not to fear though we may be few in number.

But the fanatics, such as Schuencfeldius, absurdly pervert this testimony, while they seek to take away from sacraments all their power and effect. For Peter did not mean here to teach that Christ's institution is vain and inefficacious, but only to exclude hypocrites from the hope of salvation, who, as far as they can, deprave and corrupt baptism. Moreover, when we speak of sacraments, two things are to be considered, the sign and the thing itself. In baptism the sign is water, but the thing is the washing of the soul by the blood of Christ and the mortifying of the flesh. The institution of Christ includes these two things. Now that the sign appears often inefficacious and fruitless, this happens through the abuse of men, which does not take away the nature of the sacrament. Let us then learn not to tear away the thing signified from the sign. We must at the same time beware of another evil, such as prevails among the Papists; for as they distinguish not as they ought between the thing and the sign, they stop at the outward element, and on that fix their hope of salvation. Therefore the sight of the water takes away their thoughts from the blood of Christ and the power of the Spirit. They do not regard Christ as the only author of all the blessings therein offered to us; they transfer the glory of his death to the water, they tie the secret power of the Spirit to the visible sign.

What then ought we to do? Not to separate what has been joined together by the Lord. We ought to acknowledge in baptism a spiritual washing, we ought to embrace therein the testimony of the remission of sin and the pledge of our renovation, and yet so as to leave to Christ his own honor, and also to the Holy Spirit; so that no part of our salvation should be transferred to the sign. Doubtless when Peter, having mentioned baptism, immediately made this exception, that it is not the putting off of the filth of the flesh, he sufficiently shewed that baptism to some is only the outward act, and that the outward sign of itself avails nothing.

But the answer of a good conscience The word question, or questioning, is to be taken here for ``answer,'' or testimony. Now Peter briefly defines the efficacy and use of baptism, when he calls attention to conscience, and expressly requires that confidence which can sustain the sight of God and can stand be-

fore his tribunal. For in these words he teaches us that baptism in its main part is spiritual, and then that it includes the remission of sins and renovation of the old man; for how can there be a good and pure conscience until our old man is reformed, and we be renewed in the righteousness of God? and how can we answer before God, unless we rely on and are sustained by a gratuitous pardon of our sins? In short, Peter intended to set forth the effect of baptism, that no one might glory in a naked and dead sign, as hypocrites are wont to do.

But we must notice what follows, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ By these words he teaches us that we are not to cleave to the element of water, and that what is thereby typified flows from Christ alone, and is to be sought from him. Moreover, by referring to the resurrection, he has regard to the doctrine which he had taught before, that Christ was vivified by the Spirit; for the resurrection was victory over death and the completion of our salvation. We hence learn that the death of Christ is not excluded, but is included in his resurrection. We then cannot otherwise derive benefit from baptism, than by having all our thoughts fixed on the death and the resurrection of Christ.

22 Who is on the right hand of God. He recommends to us the ascension of Christ unto heaven, lest our eyes should seek him in the world; and this belongs especially to faith. He commends to our notice his session on the Father's right hand, lest we should doubt his power to save us. And what his sitting at the right hand of the Father means, we have elsewhere explained, that is, that Christ exercises supreme power everywhere as God's representative. And an explanation of this is what follows, angels being made subject to him; and he adds powers and authorities only for the sake of amplification, for angels are usually designated by such words. It was then Peter's object to set forth by these high titles the sovereignty of Christ.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Peter 4:1-5

1 Peter 4:1-5

1. Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

1. Christo igitur passo pro nobis carne, vos quoque eadem cogitatione armamini; quod scilicet qui passus est in carne, destitit à peccato;

2. That he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

2. Ne amplius hominum concupiscentiis, sed voluntati Dei, quod residuum est temporis in carne, vivat.

3. For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

3. Satis enim nobis est quod anteacto vitae tempore voluntatem gentium patraverimus, quum ambularemus in lasciviis, concupiscentiis, comessationibus, potationibus et nefariis idololatriis:

4. Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you:

4. Quod illis videtur insolens, quòd non concurratis in eandem luxus profusionem, ideoque malè loquuntur;

5. Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

5. Qui reddituri sunt rationem ei qui paratus est judicare vivos et mortuos.

1 Forasmuch then as Christ When he had before set forth Christ before us, he only spoke of the suffering of the cross; for sometimes the cross means mortification, because the outward man is wasted by afflictions, and our flesh is also subdued. But he now ascends higher; for he speaks of the reformation of the whole man. The Scripture recommends to us a twofold likeness to the death of Christ, that we are to be conformed to him in reproaches and troubles, and also that the old man being dead and extinct in us, we are to be renewed to a spiritual life. (Philippians 3:10; Romans 6:4.) Yet Christ is not simply to be viewed as our example, when we speak of the mortificaion of the flesh; but it is by his Spirit that we are really made conformable to his death, so that it becomes effectual to the crucifying of our flesh. In short, as Peter at the end of the

last chapter exhorted us to patience after the example of Christ, because death was to him a passage to life; so now from the same death he deduces a higher doctrine, that we ought to die to the flesh and to the world, as Paul teaches us more at large in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans. He therefore says, arm yourselves, or be ye armed, intimating that we are really and effectually supplied with invincible weapons to subdue the flesh, if we partake as we ought of the efficacy of Christ's death.

For he that hath suffered The particle {ὅτι} does not, I think, denote here the cause, but is to be taken as explanatory; for Peter sets forth what that thought or mind is with which Christ's death arms us, even that the dominion of sin ought to be abolished in us, so that God may reign in our life. Erasmus has incorrectly, as I think, rendered the word ``he who did suffer,'' (patiebatur) applying it to Christ. For it is an indefinite sentence, which generally extends to all the godly, and has the same meaning with the words of Paul in Romans 6:7,

``He who is dead is justified or freed from sin;''

for both the Apostles intimate, that when we become dead to the flesh, we have no more to do with sin, that it should reign in us, and exercise its power in our life. [384]

It may, however, be objected, that Peter here speaks unsuitably in making us to be conformable to Christ in this respect, that we suffer in the flesh; for it is certain that there was nothing sinful in Christ which required to be corrected. But the answer is obvious, that it is not necessary that a comparison should correspond in all its parts. It is then enough that we should in a measure be made conformable to the death of Christ. In the same way is also explained, not unfitly, what Paul says, that we are planted in the likeness of his death, (Romans 6:5;) for the manner is not altogether the same, but that his death is become in a manner the type and pattern of our mortification.

We must also notice that the word flesh is put here twice, but in a different sense; for when he says that Christ suffered in the flesh, he means that the human nature which Christ had taken from us was made subject to death, that is, that Christ as a man naturally died. In the second clause, which refers to us, flesh means the corruption, and the sinfulness of our nature; and thus suffering

[384] The subject of this passage, from 1 Peter 3:14 to 1 Peter 4:6, is suffering unjustly, or for righteousness' sake, and Christ is brought as an example, he being just, suffered for the unjust. After a digression at the 19th verse of the third chapter, the Apostle returns here to his former subject, the example of Christ suffering in the flesh or in his body and in order to retain still the idea that he was just when he suffered, this clause seems to have been put in parenthetically, "For he who suffered ceased from sin," that is, had no sin, but was just. And hence in the following verses he exhorts them to lead a holy life whatever might be the opposition from the world, so that they might be like their Savior, suffering unjustly, they themselves being innocent. 1. "Christ then having suffered for us in the flesh, arm ye also yourselves with the same mind, (for he who suffered in the flesh ceased from sin;) 2. so as to live no longer the remaining time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God." They were exhorted to resolve to follow the example of Christ, but in such a way as not to suffer for their sins, but for righteousness' sake. It is implied that they had been evil-doers, but they were no longer to be so, otherwise their suffering in the flesh would not be like that of Christ. To suffer as well-doers, and not as evil-doers, was to suffer as Christ did. — Ed.

in the flesh signifies the denying of ourselves. We now see what is the likeness between Christ and us, and what is the difference; that as he suffered in the flesh taken from us, so the whole of our flesh ought to be crucified.

2 That he no longer Here he sets forth the way of ceasing from sin, that renouncing the covetings of men we should study to form our life according to the will of God. And thus he includes here the two things in which renovation consists, the destruction of the flesh and the vivification of the spirit. The course of good living is thus to begin with the former, but we are to advance to the latter.

Moreover, Peter defines here what is the rule of right living, even when man depends on the will of God. It hence follows, that nothing is right and well ordered in man's life as soon as he wanders from this rule. We ought further to notice the contrast between God's will and the covetings or lusts of men We hence understand how great is our depravity, and how we ought to strive to become obedient to God. When he says, the rest of time in the flesh, the word flesh means the present life, as in Hebrews 5:7

3 For the time past of our life may suffice Peter does not mean that we ought to be wearied with pleasures, as those are wont to be who are filled with them to satiety; but that on the contrary the memory of our past life ought to stimulate us to repentance. And doubtless it ought to be the sharpest goad to make us run on well, when we recollect that we have been wandering from the right way the greatest part of our life. And Peter reminds us, that it would be most unreasonable were we not to change the course of our life after having been enlightened by Christ. For he makes a distinction here between the time of ignorance and the time of faith, as though he had said that it was but right that they should become new and different men from the time that Christ had called them. But instead of the lusts or covetings of men, he now mentions the will of the Gentiles, by which he reproves the Jews for having mixed with the Gentiles in all their pollutions, though the Lord had separated them from the Gentiles.

In what follows he shews that those vices ought to be put off which prove men to be blind and ignorant of God. And there is a peculiar emphasis in the words, the time past of our life, for he intimates that we ought to persevere to the end, as when Paul says, that Christ was raised from the dead, to die no more. (Romans 6:6.) For we have been redeemed by the Lord for this end, that we may serve him all the days of our life.

In lasciviousness He does not give the whole catalogue of sins, but only mentions some of them, by which we may briefly learn what those things are which men, not renewed by God's Spirit, desire and seek, and to which they are inclined. And he names the grosser vices, as it is usually done when examples are adduced. I shall not stop to explain the words, for there is no difficulty in them.

But here a question arises, that Peter seems to have done wrong to many, in making all men guilty of lasciviousness, dissipation, lusts, drunkenness, and revellings; for it is certain that all were not involved in these vices; nay, we know

that some among the Gentiles lived honourably and without a spot of infamy. To this I reply, that Peter does not so ascribe these vices to the Gentiles, as though he charged every individual with all these, but that we are by nature inclined to all these evils, and not only so, but that we are so much under the power of depravity, that these fruits which he mentions necessarily proceed from it as from an evil root. There is indeed no one who has not within him the seed of all vices, but all do not germinate and grow up in every individual. Yet the contagion is so spread and diffused through the whole human race, that the whole community appears infected with innumerable evils, and that no member is free or pure from the common corruption.

The last clause may also suggest another question, for Peter addressed the Jews, and yet he says that they had been immersed in abominable idolatries; but the Jews then living in every part of the world carefully abstained from idols. A twofold answer may be adduced here, either that by mentioning the whole for a part, he declares of all what belonged to a few, (for there is no doubt but the Churches to which he wrote were made up of Gentiles as well as of Jews,) or that he calls those superstitions in which the Jews were then involved, idolatries; for though they professed to worship the God of Israel, yet we know that no part of divine worship was genuine among them. And how great must have been the confusion in barbarous countries and among a scattered people, when Jerusalem itself, from whose rays they borrowed their light, had fallen into extreme impiety! for we know that dotages of every kind prevailed with impunity, so that the high-priesthood, and the whole government of the Church, were in the power of the Sadducees.

4 Wherein they think it strange The words of Peter literally are these, ``In which they are strangers, you not running with them into the same excess of riot, blaspheming.'' But the word, to be strangers, means to stop at a thing as new and unusual. This is a way of speaking which the Latins also sometimes use, as when Cicero says that he was a stranger in the city, because he knew not what was carried on there. But in this place, Peter fortifies the faithful, lest they should suffer themselves to be disturbed or corrupted by the perverse judgments or words of the ungodly. For it is no light temptation, when they among whom we live, charge us that our life is different from that of mankind in general. ``These,'' they say, ``must form for themselves a new world, for they differ from all mankind.'' Thus they accuse the children of God, as though they attempted a separation from the whole world.

Then the Apostle anticipated this, and forbade the faithful to be discouraged by such reproaches and calumnies; and he proposed to them, as a support, the judgment of God: for this it is that can sustain us against all assaults, that is, when we patiently wait for that day, in which Christ will punish all those who now presumptuously condemn us, and will shew that we and our cause are approved by Him. And he expressly mentions the living and the dead, lest we should think that we shall suffer any loss, if they remain alive when we are dead; for they shall not, for this reason, escape the hand of God. And in what

sense he calls them the living and the dead, we may learn from the fifteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the Corinthians

1 Peter 4:6-11

1 Peter 4:6-11

6. For for this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the spirit.

6. In hoc enim et mortuis evangelizatus fuit (vel, praedicatum fuit evangelium,) ut judicentur quidem secundum homines carne, vivant autem secundum Deum spiritu.

7. But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and watch unto prayer.

7. Porro omnium finis propinquus est: sobrii itaque estote, et vigilantes ad precandum.

8. And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

8. Ante omnia vero charitatem inter vos intentam habentes; quia charitas operiet multitudinem peccatorum.

9. Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

9. Invicem hospitales sine murmurationibus.

10. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10. Ut quisque aecepit donum, ministrantes illud inter vos, tanquam boni dispensatores multiplicis gratiae Dei.

11. If any speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth: that God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

11. Siquis loquitur, loquatur tanquam eloquia Dei; siquis ministrat, tanquam ex virtute quam suppeditat Deus; ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus per Jesum Christum; cui est gloria et imperium in secula seculorum. Amen.

6 For this cause was the gospel preached also to them that are dead, or, He has been evangelized to the dead. We see in what sense he takes the former passage in the third chapter, even that death does not hinder Christ from being always our defender. It is then a remarkable consolation to the godly, that death itself brings no loss to their salvation. Though Christ, then, may not appear a deliverer in this life, yet his redemption is not void, or without effect; for his power extends to the dead. But as the Greek word is doubtful, it may be rendered in the masculine, or in the neuter gender; but the meaning is almost the same, that is, that Christ had been made known as a redeemer to the dead, or that salvation had been made known to them by the gospel. But if the grace of Christ once penetrated to the dead, there is no doubt but that we shall partake

of it when dead. We then set for it limits much too narrow, if we confine it to the present life.

That they might be judged I omit the explanations of others, for they seem to me to be very remote from the Apostle's meaning. This has been said, as I think, by way of anticipation, for it might have been objected, that the gospel is of no benefit to the dead, as it does not restore them to life. Peter concedes a part of this objection, and yet in such a way, that they are not deprived of the salvation obtained by Christ. Therefore, in the first clause, when he says, ``that they might be judged in the flesh, according to men,'' it is a concession; and ``judged'' means here, as often elsewhere, condemned; and flesh is the outward man. So that the meaning is, that though according to the estimation of the world the dead suffer destruction in their flesh, and are deemed condemned as to the outward man, yet they cease not to live with God, and that in their spirit, because Christ quickens them by his Spirit.

But we ought to add what Paul teaches us in Romans 8:10, that the Spirit is life; and hence it will be, that he will at length absorb the relics of death which still cleave to us. The sum of what he says is, that though the condition of the dead in the flesh is worse, according to man, yet it is enough that the Spirit of Christ revives them, and will eventually lead them to the perfection of life. [385]

7 But, or, moreover, the end of all things is at hand Though the faithful hear that their felicity is elsewhere than in the world, yet, as they think that they should live long, this false thought renders them careless, and even slothful, so that they direct not their thoughts to the kingdom of God. Hence the Apostle, that he might rouse them from the drowsiness of the flesh, reminds them that the end of all things was nigh; by which he intimates that we ought not to sit still in the world, from which we must soon remove. He does not, at the same time, speak only of the end of individuals, but of the universal renovation of the world; as though he had said, ``Christ will shortly come, who will put an end

[385] Whitby, Doddridge, and Mackight, regard the dead here as the dead in sins, according to Ephesians 2:1. The first thus paraphrases what follows, "That they might condemn their former life, and live a better;" the second, "That they might be brought to such a state of life as their carnal neighbors will look upon it as a kind of condemnation and death;" and the third, "That although they might be condemned, indeed, by men in the flesh, yet they might live eternally by God in the Spirit." Beza, Hammond, and Scott, consider that the dead were those already dead, that is, when the Apostle wrote, and even before the coming of Christ, taking the dead in the same sense as in the former verse: but they differ as to the clause which follows. The two first interpret it as signifying the same as dying to sin and living to God, a meaning which the former part of the clause can hardly bear: but the view of Scott is, that the gospel had been preached to those at that time dead, that they might be condemned by carnal men, or in the flesh, as evildoers, but live to God through the Holy Spirit. The only fault, perhaps, with this rendering is as to the word flesh, which seems to mean here the same as flesh in 1 Peter 3:18, that is, the body; and the word spirit is also in the same form, for Griesbach in that verse regards the article {τῷ} as spurious. Then the rendering would be, ``That they might be condemned in the flesh by men, but live as to God through the Spirit.'' There are two previous instances of the word spirit, when denoting the Holy Spirit, being without the article, that is, in 1 Peter 1:2 and 22 It seems an objection, that the gospel had been preached to them for this end, that they might be condemned to die by wicked men; but this had been expressly stated before, in 1 Peter 2:21: ``For even hereunto, (that is, suffering, mentioned in the former verse) were ye called;'' or, ``For to this end ye have been called.'' Then Christ in his suffering is mentioned as one whom they ought to follow. There is no other view so consistent with the whole tenor of the Apostle's argument. --- Ed.

to all things.''

It is, then, no wonder that the cares of this world overwhelm us, and make us drowsy, if the view of present things dazzles our eyes: for we promise, almost all of us, an eternity to ourselves in this world; at least, the end never comes to our mind. But were the trumpet of Christ to sound in our ears, it would powerfully rouse us and not suffer us to lie torpid.

But it may be objected and said, that a long series of ages has passed away since Peter wrote this, and yet that the end is not come. My reply to this is, that the time seems long to us, because we measure its length by the spaces of this fleeting life; but if we could understand the perpetuity of future life, many ages would appear to us like a moment, as Peter will also tell us in his second epistle. Besides, we must remember this principle, that from the time when Christ once appeared, there is nothing left for the faithful, but with suspended minds ever to look forward to his second coming. [386]

The watchfulness and the sobriety to which he exhorted them, belong, as I think, to the mind rather than to the body. The words are similar to those of Christ:

``Watch ye, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.'' (Matthew 25:13.)

For as an indulgence in surfeiting and sleep renders the body unfit for its duties, so the vain cares and pleasures of the world inebriate the mind and render it drowsy.

By adding prayer, he points out an exercise especially necessary, in which the faithful ought to be particularly occupied, since their whole strength depends on the Lord; as though he had said, *``Since* ye are in yourselves extremely weak, seek of the Lord to strengthen you.'' He yet reminds them that they were to pray earnestly, not formally.

8 And above all things He commends charity or love as the first thing, for it is the bond of perfection. And he bids it to be fervent, or intense, or vehement, which is the same thing; for whosoever is immoderately fervent in self-love, loves others coldly. And he commends it on account of its fruit, because it buries innumerable sins, than which nothing is more desirable. But the sentence is taken from Solomon, whose words are found in Proverbs 10:12,

``Hatred discovers reproaches, but love covers a multitude of sins.''

What Solomon meant is sufficiently clear, for the two clauses contain things which are set in contrast the one with the other. As then he says in the first clause that hatred is the cause why men traduce and defame one another, and spread whatever is reproachful and dishonorable; so it follows that a contrary effect is ascribed to love, that is, that men who love one another, kindly and courteously forgive one another; hence it comes that, willingly burying each

[386] There is no ground to suppose, as Hammond, Macknight, and some others have supposed, that “the end of all things” was the end of the Jews as a nation, the destruction of the temple and its worship. And it is strange that such a notion should be entertained, especially when we consider that the Apostle refers to the same subject in his Second Epistle, where the end of the world is plainly spoken of. — Ed.

other's vices, one seeks to preserve the honor of another. [387] Thus Peter confirms his exhortation, that nothing is more necessary than to cherish mutual love. For who is there that has not many faults? Therefore all stand in need of forgiveness, and there is no one who does not wish to be forgiven.

This singular benefit love brings to us when it exists among us, so that innumerable evils are covered in oblivion. On the other hand, where loose reins are given to hatred, men by mutual biting and tearing must necessarily consume one another, as Paul says (Galatians 5:15.)

And it ought to be noticed that Solomon does not say that only a few sins are covered, but a multitude of sins, according to what Christ declares, when he bids us to forgive our brethren seventy times seven, (Matthew 18:22.) But the more sins love covers, the more evident appears its usefulness for the wellbeing of mankind.

This is the plain meaning of the words. It hence appears how absurd are the Papists, who seek to elicit from this passage their own satisfactions, as though almsgiving and other duties of charity were a sort of a compensation to God for blotting out their sins. [388] It is enough to point out by the way their gross ignorance, for in a matter so clear it would be superfluous to add many words.

9 Use hospitality, or, Be hospitable. After having generally exhorted them to love one another, he specially mentions one of the duties of love. At that time hospitality was commonly used, and it was deemed in a manner a sacred kind of humanity, as we have stated elsewhere. He then bids them mutually to exercise it, so that no one might require more from others than what he himself was prepared to render. He adds, without murmurings, for it is a rare example that one spends himself and his own on his neighbor without any disparaging reflection. Then the Apostle would have us to show kindness willingly and with a cheerful mind.

10 As every one hath received He reminds us what we ought to bear in mind when we do good to our neighbors; for nothing is more fitted to correct our murmurings than to remember that we do not give our own, but only dispense what God has committed to us. When therefore he says, ``Minister the gift which every one has received,'' he intimates that to each had been distributed what they had, on this condition, that in helping their brethren they might be the ministers of God. And thus the second clause is an explanation of the first, for instead of ministry he mentions stewardship; and for what he had said, ``as every one hath received the gift,'' he mentions the manifold graces which God variously distributes to us, so that each might confer in common his own portion. If then we excel others in any gift, let us remember that we are as to this the stewards of God, in order that we may kindly impart it to our neighbors

[387] The quotation is from the Hebrew, and the sentence in the Sept. is evidently different. The same words are found also in James 5:20.

[388] "Though charity, or benevolence, hides the faults of others from the severity of our censure, yet charity or almsgiving is totally unable to conceal our own from the observance of our all-righteous Judge. Indeed, the only cover for these, or to speak more properly, the discharge of all their stains, is faith, — is the blood of Christ, working with repentance towards God." — Bishop Warburton, quoted by Bloomfield. — Ed.

as their necessity or benefit may require. Thus we ought to be disposed and ready to communicate.

But this consideration is also very important, that the Lord hath so divided his manifold graces, that no one is to be content with one thing and with his own gifts, but every one has need of the help and aid of his brother. This, I say, is a bond which God hath appointed for retaining friendship among men, for they cannot live without mutual assistance. Thus it happens, that he who in many things seeks the aid of his brethren, ought to communicate to them more freely what he has received. This bond of unity has been observed and noticed by heathens. But Peter teaches us here that God had designedly done this, that he might bind men one to another.

11 If any man speak As he had spoken of the right and faithful use of gifts, he specifies two things as examples, and he has chosen those which are the most excellent or the most renowned. The office of teaching in the Church is a remarkable instance of God's favor. He then expressly commands those called to this office to act faithfully; though he does not speak here only of what we owe to men, but also of what we owe to God, so that we may not deprive him of his glory.

He who speaks, then, that is, who is rightly appointed by public authority, let him speak as the oracles of God; that is, let him reverently in God's fear and in sincerity perform the charge committed to him, regarding himself as engaged in God's work, and as ministering God's word and not his own. For he still refers to the doctrine, that when we confer any thing on the brethren, we minister to them by God's command what he has bestowed on us for that purpose. And truly, were all those who profess to be teachers in the Church duly to consider this one thing, there would be in them much more fidelity and devotedness. For how great a thing is this, that in teaching the oracles of God, they are representatives of Christ! Hence then comes so much carelessness and rashness, because the sacred majesty of God's word is not borne in mind but by a few; and so they indulge themselves as in a worldly stewardship.

In the meantime, we learn from these words of Peter, that it is not lawful for those who are engaged in teaching to do anything else, but faithfully to deliver to others, as from hand to hand, the doctrine received from God; for he forbids any one to go forth, except he who is instructed in God's word, and who proclaims infallible oracles as it were from his mouth. He, therefore, leaves no room for human inventions; for he briefly defines the doctrine which ought to be taught in the Church. Nor is the particle of similitude introduced here for the purpose of modifying the sentence, as though it were sufficient to profess that it is God's word that is taught. This was, indeed, commonly the case formerly with false prophets; and we see at this day how arrogantly the Pope and his followers cover with this pretense all their impious traditions. But Peter did not intend to teach pastors such hypocrisy as this, to pretend that they had from God whatever doctrine it pleased them to announce, but, he took an argument from the subject itself, that he might exhort them to sobriety and meekness, to

a reverence for God, and to an earnest attention to their work.

If any man minister This second clause extends wider, it includes the office of teaching. But as it would have been too long to enumerate each of the ministerial works, he preferred summarily to speak of them all together, as though he had said, ``Whatever part of the burden thou bearest in the Church, know that thou canst do nothing but what has been given time by the Lord, and that thou art nothing else but an instrument of God: take heed, then, not to abuse the grace of God by exalting thyself; take heed not to suppress the power of God, which puts forth and manifests itself in the ministry for the salvation of the brethren.'' Let him then minister as by God's power, that is, let him regard nothing as his own, but let him humbly render service to God and his Church.

That God in all things may be glorified When he says, In all, the word may be in the masculine or in the neuter gender; and thus men or gifts may be meant, and both meanings are equally suitable. The sense is, that God does not adorn us with his gifts, that he may rob himself and make himself as it were an empty idol by transferring to us his own glory, but that, on the contrary, his own glory may everywhere shine forth; and that it is therefore a sacrilegious profanation of God's gifts when men propose to themselves any other object than to glorify God. He says through Jesus Christ, because whatever power we have to minister, he alone bestows it on us; for he is the head, with which the whole body is connected by joints and bindings, and maketh increase in the Lord, according as he supplieth strength to every member.

To whom be praise, or glory. Some refer this to Christ; but the context requires that it should be rather applied to God; for he confirms the last exhortation, because God justly claims all the glory; and, therefore, men wickedly take away from him what is his own, when they obscure in anything, or in any part, his glory.

1 Peter 4:12-17

1 Peter 4:12-17

12. Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

12. Dilecti, ne miramini quum exploramini per ignem ad probationem vestri, perinde ac si novum aliquid vobis obtingat:

13. But rejoice, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.

13. Sed quatenus consortes estis passionum Christi gaudere; ut in revelatione quoque glorie ejus gaudeatis exultantes.

14. If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you: on their part he is evil spoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

14. Si probris afficimini in nomine Christi, beati estis, quoniam Spiritus glorite et Dei super vos requiescit; secundum ipsos quidem contumelia afficitur,

secundun vos aut em glorificatur.

15. But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or as a thief, or as an evildoer, or as a busybody in other men's matters.

15. Ne quis enim vestrum patiatur, ut homicida, aut fur, aut maleficus, aut cupidè rebus alienis inhians.

16. Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

16. Si autem ut Christianus, ne pudefiat, imo glorificet Deum in hac parte.

17. For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: ---

17. Quandoquidem et tempus est, ut judicium incipiat a domo Dei:---

12 Beloved, think it not strange, or, wonder not. There is a frequent mention made in this Epistle of afflictions; the cause of which we have elsewhere explained. But this difference is to be observed, that when he exhorts the faithful to patience, he sometimes speaks generally of troubles common to man's life; but here he speaks of wrongs done to the faithful for the name of Christ. And first, indeed, he reminded them that they ought not to have deemed it strange as for a thing sudden and unexpected; by which he intimates, that they ought by a long mediation to have been previously prepared to bear the cross. For whosoever has resolved to fight under Christ's banner, will not be dismayed when persecution happens, but, as one accustomed to it, will patiently bear it. That we may then be in a prepared state of mind when the waves of persecutions roll over us, we ought in due time to habituate ourselves to such an event by meditating continually on the cross.

Moreover, he proves that the cross is useful to us by two arguments, --- that God thus tries our faith, --- and that we become thus partakers with Christ. Then, in the first place, let us remember that the trial of our faith is most necessary, and that we ought thus willingly to obey God who provides for our salvation. However, the chief consolation is to be derived from a fellowship with Christ. Hence Peter not only forbids us to think it strange, when he sets this before us, but also bids us to rejoice. It is, indeed, a cause of joy, when God tries our faith by persecution; but the other joy far surpasses it, that is, when the Son of God allots to us the same course of life with himself, that he might lead us with himself to a blessed participation of heavenly glory. For we must bear in mind this truth, that we have the dying of Christ in our flesh, that his life may be manifested in us. The wicked also do indeed bear many afflictions; but as they are separated from Christ, they apprehend nothing but God's wrath and curse: thus it comes that sorrow and dread overwhelm them.

Hence, then, is the whole consolation of the godly, that they are associates with Christ, that hereafter they may be partakers of his glory; for we are always to bear in mind this transition from the cross to the resurrection. But as this world is like a labyrinth, in which no end of evils appears, Peter refers to the future revelation of Christ's glory, as though he had said, that the day of its revelation is not to be overlooked, but ought to be expected. But he mentions a twofold joy, one which we now enjoy in hope, and the other the full fruition of

which the coming of Christ shall bring to us; for the first is mingled with grief and sorrow, the second is connected with exultation. For it is not suitable in the midst of afflictions to think of joy, which can free us from all trouble; but the consolations of God moderate evils, so that we can rejoice at the same time.

14 If ye be reproached He mentions reproaches, because there is often more bitterness in them than in the loss of goods, or in the torments or agonies of the body; there is therefore nothing which is more grievous to ingenuous minds. For we see that many who are strong to bear want, courageous in torments, nay, bold to meet death, do yet succumb under reproach. To obviate this evil, Peter pronounces those blessed, according to what Christ says, (Mark 8:35,) who are reproached for the sake of the Gospel. This is very contrary to what men commonly think and feel; but he gives a reason, Because the Spirit of God, called also the Spirit of glory, rests on them. Some read the words separately, ``that which belongs to glory,'' as though the words were, *``glory* and the Spirit of God.'' But the former reading is more suitable as to the sense, and, as to language, more simple. Then Peter shews, that it is no hindrance to the happiness of the godly, that they sustain reproach for the name of Christ, because they nevertheless retain a complete glory in the sight of God, while the Spirit, who has glory ever connected with him, dwells in them. So, what seems to the flesh a paradox, the Spirit of God makes consistent by a sure perception in their minds.

On their part This is a confirmation of the last sentence; for he intimates that it is enough for the godly, that the Spirit of God testifies that the reproaches endured for the sake of the Gospel, are blessed and full of glory. The wicked, however, attempted to effect a far different object; as though he had said, ``Ye can boldly despise the insolence of the ungodly, because the testimony respecting your glory, which God's Spirit gives you, remains fixed within.'' And he says that the Spirit of God was reproached, because the unbelieving expose to ridicule whatever he suggests and dictates for our consolation. But this is by anticipation; for however the world in its blindness may see nothing but what is disgraceful in the reproaches of Christ, he would not have the eyes of the godly to be dazzled with this false opinion; but on the contrary they ought to look up to God. Thus he does not conceal what men commonly think; but he sets the hidden perception of faith, which God's children possess in their own hearts, in opposition to their presumption and insolence. Thus Paul boasted that he had the marks of Christ, and he gloried in his bonds. (Galatians 6:17.) He had at the same time sufficiently found out what was the judgment formed of them by the world; and yet he intimates that it thought foolishly, and that those are blind together with the world, who esteem the slanders of the flesh glorious.

15. But (or, For) let one of you Here also he anticipates an objection. He had exhorted the faithful to patience, if it happened to them to be persecuted for the cause of Christ; he now adds the reason why he had only spoken of that kind of trouble, even because they ought to have abstained from all evil-doing. Here, then, is contained another exhortation, lest they should do anything for

which they might seem to be justly punished. Therefore the causal particle is not, here superfluous, since the Apostle wished to give a reason why he so much exhorted the faithful to a fellowship with the sufferings of Christ, and at the same time to remind them by the way to live justly and harmlessly, lest they should bring on themselves a just punishment through their own faults; as though he had said, that it behoved Christians to deserve well of all, even when they were badly and cruelly treated by the world.

Were any one to object and say, that no one can be found to be so innocent but that he deserves for many faults to be chastised by God; to this I reply, that Peter here speaks of sins from which we ought to be entirely freed, such as thefts and murders; and I give further this reply, that the Apostle commands Christians to be such as they ought to be. It, is, then, no wonder, that he points out a difference between us and the children of this world, who being without God's Spirit, abandon themselves to every kind of wickedness. He would not have God's children to be in the same condition, so as to draw on themselves by a wicked life the punishment allotted by the laws. But we have already said elsewhere, that though there are always many sins in the elect, which God might justly punish, yet according to his paternal indulgence he spares his own children, so that he does not inflict the punishment they deserve, and that in the meantime, for honour's sake, he adorns them with his own tokens and those of his Christ, when he suffers them to be afflicted for the testimony of the Gospel.

The word {ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος} seems to me to designate one who covets what belongs to another. For they who gape after plunder or fraud, inquire into affairs of others with tortuous or crooked eyes, as Horace says; [389] but the despiser of money, as the same says elsewhere, looks on vast heaps of gold with a straight eye. [390]

16 Yet if any man suffer as a Christian After having forbidden the Christians to do any hurt or harm, lest for their evil deeds, like the unbelieving, they should become hateful to the world, he now bids them to give thanks to God, if they suffered persecutions for the name of Christ. And truly it is no common kindness from God, that he calls us, freed and exempted from the common punishment of our sins, to so honorable a warfare as to undergo for the testimony of his Gospel either exiles, or prisons, or reproaches, or even death itself. Then he intimates that those are ungrateful to God, who clamor or murmur on account of persecutions, as though they were unworthily dealt with, since on the contrary they ought to regard it as gain and to acknowledge God's favor.

But when he says, as a Christian, he regards not so much the name as the cause. It is certain that the adversaries of Christ omitted nothing in order to degrade the Gospel. Therefore, whatever reproachful words they made use of,

[389] Sic tamen ut limis rapias quid prima secundo Cera velit versu. Sat. lib. 2:5, 53.

[390] Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto Spectat acervos. — Carm. lib. it. Od. 2:23. The sin here referred to must have some public act, punishable by law. The word means an observer of other people's affairs, but he must have done so for some sinister purpose. He was probably a pryer into matters of state or government in order to create discontent and to raise commotions; and this was an evil which prevailed much at the time among the Jews. Hence "seditions," or factions, would convey probably the right meaning. — Ed.

it was enough for the faithful, that they suffered for nothing else but for the defense of the Gospel.

On this behalf, or, In this respect. For since all afflictions derive their origin from sin, this thought ought to occur to the godly, ``I am indeed worthy to be visited by the Lord with this and even with greater punishment for my sins; but now he would have me to suffer for righteousness, as though I were innocent.'' For how much soever the saints may acknowledge their own faults, yet as in persecutions they regard a different end, such as the Lord sets before them, they feel that their guilt is blotted out and abolished before God. On this behalf, then, they have reason to glorify God.

17 For the time is come, or, Since also the time is come. He amplifies the consolation, which the goodness of the cause for which we suffer brings to us, while we are afflicted for the name of Christ. For this necessity, he says, awaits the whole Church of God, not only to be subject to the common miseries of men, but especially and mainly to be chastised by the hand of God. Then, with more submission, ought persecutions for Christ to be endured. For except we desire to be blotted out from the number of the faithful, we must submit our backs to the scourges of God. Now, it is a sweet consolation, that God does not execute his judgments on us as on others, but that he makes us the representatives of his own Son, when we do not suffer except for his cause and for his name.

Moreover, Peter took this sentence from the common and constant teaching of Scripture; and this seems more probable to me than that a certain passage, as some think, is referred to. It was formerly usual with the Lord, as all the prophets witness, to exhibit the first examples of his chastisements in his own people, as the head of a family corrects his own children rather than those of strangers. (Isaiah 10:12.) For though God is the judge of the whole world, yet he would have his providence to be especially acknowledged in the government of his own Church. Hence, when he declares that he would rise up to be the judge of the whole world, he adds that this would be after he had completed his work on Mount Sion. He indeed puts forth his hand indifferently against his own people and against strangers; for we see that both are in common subjected to adversities; and if a comparison be made, he seems in a manner to spare the reprobate, and to be severe towards the elect. Hence the complaints of the godly, that the wicked pass their life in continual pleasures, and delight themselves with wine and the harp, and at length descend without pains in an instant into the grave --- that fatness covers their eyes --- that they are exempt from troubles --- that they securely and joyfully spend their life, looking down with contempt on others, so that they dare to set their mouth against heaven. (Job 21:13; Psalm 73:3-9.) In short, God so regulates his judgments in this world, that he fattens the wicked for the day of slaughter. He therefore passes by their many sins, and, as it were, connives at them. In the meantime, he restores by corrections his own children, for whom he has a care, to the right way, whenever they depart from it.

In this sense it is that Peter says that judgment begins at the house of God;

for judgment includes all those punishments which the Lord inflicts on men for their sins, and whatever refers to the reformation of the world.

But why does he say that it was now the time? He means, as I think, what the prophets declare concerning his own time, that it especially belonged to Christ's kingdom, that the beginning of the reformation should be in the Church. Hence Paul says that Christians, without the hope of a resurrection, would of all men be the most miserable, (1 Corinthians 15:19;) and justly so, because, while others indulge themselves without fear, the faithful continually sigh and groan; while God connives at the sins of others, and suffers them to continue torpid, he deals rigidly with his own people, and subjects them to the discipline of the cross.

1 Peter 4:17-19

1 Peter 4:17-19

17. --- And if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God?

17. --- Si autem primum a nobis, quis finis eorum qui non obediunt evangelio Dei?

18. And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

18. Et si justus vix servatur, impius et peccator ubi apparebunt?

19. Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

19. Itaque qui patiuntur secundum Dei voluntatem, tanquam fideli possessori commendent animas suas benefaciendo.

When the faithful see that it is well with the wicked, they are necessarily tempted to be envious; and this is a very dangerous trial; for present happiness is what all desire. Hence the Spirit of God carefully dwells on this, in many places, as well as in the thirty-seventh Psalm, lest the faithful should envy the prosperity of the ungodly. The same is what Peter speaks of, for he shews that afflictions ought to be calmly borne by the children of God, when they compare the lot of others with their own. But he takes it as granted that God is the judge of the world, and that, therefore, no one can escape his hand with impunity. He hence infers, that a dreadful vengeance will soon overtake those whose condition seems now favorable. The design of what he says, as I have already stated, is to shew that the children of God should not faint under the bitterness of present evils, but that they ought, on the contrary, calmly to bear their afflictions for a short time, as the issue will be salvation, while the ungodly will have to exchange a fading and fleeting prosperity for eternal perdition.

But the argument is from the less to the greater; for if God spares not his own children whom he loves and who obey him, how dreadful will be his severity against enemies and such as are rebellious! There is, then, nothing better than to obey the Gospel, so that God may kindly correct us by his paternal hand for

our salvation.

18 And if the righteous It has been thought that this sentence is taken from Proverbs 11:31; for the Greek translators have thus rendered what Solomon says,

``Behold, the just shall on the earth be recompensed; how much more the ungodly and the sinner?''

Now, whether Peter intended to quote this passage, or repeated a common and a proverbial saying, (which seems to me more probable,) [391] the meaning is, that God's judgment would be dreadful against the ungodly, since the way to salvation was so thorny and difficult to the elect. And this is said, lest we should securely indulge ourselves, but carefully proceed in our course, and lest we should also seek the smooth and easy road, the end of which is a terrible precipice.

But when he says, that a righteous man is scarcely saved, he refers to the difficulties of the present life, for our course in the world is like a dangerous sailing between many rocks, and exposed to many storms and tempests; and thus no one arrives at the port, except he who has escaped from [a] thousand deaths. It is in the meantime certain that we are guided by God's hand, and that we are in no danger of shipwreck as long as we have him as our pilot.

Absurd, then, are those interpreters who think that we shall be hardly and with difficulty saved, when we shall come before God in judgment; for it is the present and not the future time that Peter refers to; nor does he speak of God's strictness or rigour, but shews how many and what arduous difficulties must be surmounted by the Christian before he reaches the goal. Sinner here means a wicked man [392] and the righteous are not those who are altogether perfect in righteousness, but who strive to live righteously.

19 Wherefore let them that suffer He draws this conclusion, that persecutions ought to be submissively endured, for the condition of the godly in them is much happier than that of the unbelieving, who enjoy prosperity to their utmost wishes. He, however, reminds us that we suffer nothing except according to the permission of God, which tends much to comfort us; when he says, Let them commit themselves to God, it is the same as though he had said, ``Let them deliver themselves and their life to the safe keeping of God.'' And he calls him a faithful possessor, because he faithfully keeps and defends whatever is under his protection or power. Some render the word ``Creator;'' and the term

[391] It certainly appears as a quotation, as the words are literally the same. It is to be observed that the Hebrew has “on earth,” which seems to confirm the view that saved here refers to deliverances from the troubles, trials, and persecutions, which the righteous have to go through during life; and that scarcely, or hardly, or with difficulty, as rendered by Doddridge and Macknight, is to be limited to the time of the Christian’s course in this world; for, as Macknight observes, the Apostle speaks in his Second Epistle of an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom being vouchsafed to all faithful Christians. See 2 Peter 1:11 — Ed.

[392] The two words, “ungodly,” {ἀσεβὴς}, and ``sinner,'' {ἁμαρτωλὸς}, exactly correspond with {{רשע and {חוטא} in Hebrew; the first is he who is not pious, not a worshipper of God, having neither fear nor love towards him; and the second is the wicked, and open and shameless transgressor, who regards not what is just and right. Grotius says, that the first is he who shews no piety towards God; and that the second is one who observes no justice towards man. --- Ed.

{κτίστης} means both; but the former meaning I prefer, for by bidding us to deposit our life with God, he makes him its safe keeper. He adds, in well-doing, lest the faithful should retaliate the wrongs done to them, but that they might on the contrary contend with the ungodly, who injured them, by well-doing.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 Peter 5:1-4

1 Peter 5:1-4

1. The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed:

1. Presbyteros qui inter vos sunt, hortor ego qui simul sum presbyter, et testis passionum Christi, et gloriae qum revelabitur particeps:

2. Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

2. Pascite, quantum in vobis est, gregem Dei (vel, Christi, vel, Domini,) episcopatu fungentes, non coactè, sed voluntariè; neque turpis lucri causâ, sed liberaliter;

3. Neither as being lords over God's heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

3. Nec tanquam dominium exercentes adversus cleros, sed ut sitis exemplaria gregis.

4. And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

4. Et quum apparuerit Princeps pastorum, reportabitis immarcescibilem gloriae coronam.

In exhorting pastors to their duty, he points out especially three vices which are found to prevail much, even sloth, desire of gain, and lust for power. In opposition to the first vice he sets alacrity or a willing attention; to the second, liberality; to the third, moderation and meekness, by which they are to keep themselves in their own rank or station.

He then says that pastors ought not to exercise care over the flock of the Lord, as far only as they are constrained; for they who seek to do no more than what constraint compels them, do their work formally and negligently. Hence he would have them to do willingly what they do, as those who are really devoted to their work. To correct avarice, he bids them to perform their office with a ready mind; for whosoever has not this end in view, to spend himself and his labor disinterestedly and gladly in behalf of the Church, is not a minister of Christ, but a slave to his own stomach and his purse. The third vice which he condemns is a lust for exercising power or dominion. But it may be asked, what kind of power does he mean? This, as it seems to me, may be gathered from

the opposite clause, in which he bids them to be examples to the flock. It is the same as though he had said that they are to preside for this end, to be eminent in holiness, which cannot be, except they humbly subject themselves and their life to the same common rule. What stands opposed to this virtue is tyrannical pride, when the pastor exempts himself from all subjection, and tyrannizes over the Church. It was for this that Ezekiel condemned the false prophets, that is, that they ruled cruelly and tyrannically. (Ezekiel 34:4.) Christ also condemned the Pharisees, because they laid intolerable burdens on the shoulders of the people which they would not touch, no, not with a finger. (Matthew 23:4.) This imperious rigour, then, which ungodly pastors exercise over the Church, cannot be corrected, except their authority be restrained, so that they may rule in such a way as to afford an example of a godly life.

1 The elders By this name he designates pastors and all those who are appointed for the government of the Church. But they called them presbyters or elders for honor's sake, not because they were all old in age, but because they were principally chosen from the aged, for old age for the most part has more prudence, gravity, and experience. But as sometimes hoariness is not wisdom, according to a Greek proverb, and as young men are found more fit, such as Timothy, these were also usually called presbyters, after having been chosen into that order. Since Peter calls himself in like manner a presbyter, it appears that it was a common name, which is still more evident from many other passages. Moreover, by this title he secured for himself more authority, as though he had said that he had a right to admonish pastors, because he was one of themselves, for there ought to be mutual liberty between colleagues. But if he had the right of primacy he would have claimed it; and this would have been most suitable on the present occasion. But though he was an Apostle, he yet knew that authority was by no means delegated to him over his colleagues, but that on the contrary he was joined with the rest in the participation of the same office.

A witness of the sufferings of Christ This may be explained of doctrine, yet I prefer to regard it as referring to his own life. At the same time both may be admitted; but I am more disposed to embrace the latter view, because these two clauses will be more in harmony, --- that Peter speaks of the sufferings of Christ in his own flesh, and that he would be also a partaker of his glory. For the passage agrees with that of Paul, ``If we suffer together, we shall also reign together.'' Besides, it avails much to make us believe his words, that he gave a proof of his faith by enduring the cross. For it hence appears evident that he spoke in earnest; and the Lord, by thus proving his people, seals as it were their ministry, that it might have more honor and reverence among men. Peter, then, had probably this in view, so that he might be heard as the faithful minister of Christ, a proof of which he gave in the persecutions he had suffered, and in the hope which he had of future life. [393]

[393]The most obvious meaning is, that Peter had been an eye-witness of Christ's sufferings. So the word "witness" is taken by Grotius, Macknight, Doddridge, and Scott. — Ed.

But we must observe that Peter confidently declares that he would be a partaker of that glory which was not yet revealed; for it is the character of faith to acquiesce in hidden blessings.

2 Feed the flock of God We hence learn what the word presbyter imports, even that it includes the office of feeding. It is for a far different end that the Pope makes presbyters, even that they may daily slay Christ, there being no mention made of feeding in their ordination. Let us then remember to distinguish between the institution of Christ and the confusion of the Pope, it being as different as light is from darkness. Let us also bear in mind the definition given of the word; for the flock of Christ cannot be fed except with pure doctrine, which is alone our spiritual food.

Hence pastors are not mute hypocrites, nor those who spread their own figments, which, like deadly poison, destroy the souls of men.

The words, as much as it is in you, mean the same as though he had said, ``Apply all your strength to this very thing, and whatever power God has conferred on you.'' The old interpreter has given this rendering, ``Which is among you;'' and this may be the sense of the words: more correct, however, is the rendering of Erasmus, which I have followed, though I do not reject nor disapprove of the other. [394]

The flock of God, or, of the Lord, or, of Christ: it matters little which you take, for the three readings are found in different copies. [395]

Taking the oversight, or, discharging the office of a bishop. Erasmus renders the words, ``Taking care of it,'' (curam illius agentes;) but as the Greek word is {ἐπισκοποῦντες} I doubt not but that Peter meant to set forth the office and title of the episcopate. We may learn also from other parts of Scripture that these two names, bishop and presbyter, are synonymous. He then shews how they were rightly to perform the pastoral office, though the word {ἐπισκοπεῖν} generally means to preside or to oversee. What I have rendered ``not constraintally,'' is literally, ``not necessarily;'' for when we act according to what necessity prescribes, we proceed in our work slowly and frigidly, as it were by constraint.

3 Neither as being lords, or, as exercising dominion. The preposition {κατὰ} in Greek is taken, for the most part, in a bad sense: then Peter here condemns unreasonable exercise of power, as the case is with those who consider not themselves to be the ministers of Christ and his Church, but seek something higher. And he calls particular churches ``lots,'' (cleros;) for as the whole body of the Church is the Lord's heritage, so the churches, scattered through towns and villages, were as so many farms, the culture of which he assigns to each presbyter. Some very ignorantly think that those called clergy are meant here. It was, indeed, an ancient way of speaking, to call the whole order of ministers, clergy; but I wish that it had never occurred to the Fathers to speak thus; for

[394] The Vulgate, called here and elsewhere, “the old interpreter,” seems to be the most correct, as viewed by most critics. The same form of words is found in the first verse, “The elders who are among you.” — Ed.

[395] By far the most approved reading is “of God.” — Ed.

what Scripture ascribes in common to the whole Church, it was by no means right to confine to a few men. And this way of speaking was spurious, at least it was a departure from apostolic usage.

Peter, indeed, expressly gives the churches this title, in order that we may know that whatever men ascribe to themselves is taken away from the Lord, as in many places he calls the Church his peculiar treasure, and the rod of his heritage, when he intends to claim his entire dominion over it; for he never delivers to pastors the government, but only the care, so that his own right remains still complete.

4 When the chief Shepherd shall appear Except pastors retain this end in view, it can by no means be that they will in good earnest proceed in the course of their calling, but will, on the contrary, become often faint; for there are innumerable hindrances which are sufficient to discourage the most prudent. They have often to do with ungrateful men, from whom they receive an unworthy reward; long and great labors are often in vain; Satan sometimes prevails in his wicked devices. Lest, then, the faithful servant of Christ should be broken down, there is for him one and only one remedy, --- to turn his eyes to the coming of Christ. Thus it will be, that he, who seems to derive no encouragement from men, will assiduously go on in his labors, knowing that a great reward is prepared for him by the Lord. And further, lest a protracted expectation should produce languor, he at the same time sets forth the greatness of the reward, which is sufficient to compensate for all delay: An unfading crown of glory, he says, awaits you.

It ought also to be observed, that he calls Christ the chief Pastor; for we are to rule the Church under him and in his name, in no other way but that he should be still really the Pastor. So the word chief here does not only mean the principal, but him whose power all others ought to submit to, as they do not represent him except according to his command and authority.

1 Peter 5:5-7

1 Peter 5:5-7

5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

5. Similiter juniores, subjecti estote senioribus; sic et omnes, alii allis subjiciamini; humilitatem animi induite; propterea quod Deus superbis resistit, humilibus vero dat gratiam.

6. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

6. Humiliamini ergo sub potenti manu Dei, ut vos extollat quum erit opportunum;

7. Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.

7. Omni cura vestra in eum conjecta; quoniam illi cura est vestri.

5 Likewise, ye younger The word elder is put here in a sense different from what it had before; for it is necessary, when a contrast is made between them and the younger, that the two clauses should correspond. Then he refers to the elders in age, having before spoken of the office; and thus he comes from the particular to the general. And in short, he bids every one that is inferior in age to obey the counsels of the elders, and to be teachable and humble; for the age of youth is inconstant, and requires a bridle. Besides, pastors could not have performed their duty, except this reverential feeling prevailed and was cultivated, so that the younger suffered themselves to be ruled; for if there be no subjection, government is overturned. When they have no authority who ought by right or order of nature to rule, all will immediately become insolently wanton.

Yea, all He shews the reason why the younger ought to submit to the elder, even that there might be an equable state of things and due order among them. For, when authority is granted to the elders, there is not given them the right or the liberty of throwing off the bridle, but they are also themselves to be under due restraint, so that there may be a mutual subjection. So the husband is the head of the wife, and yet he in his turn is to be in some things subject to her. So the father has authority over his children, and still he is not exempt from all subjection, but something is due to them. The same thing, also, is to be thought of others. In short, all ranks in society have to defend the whole body, which cannot be done, except all the members are joined together by the bond of mutual subjection. Nothing is more adverse to the disposition of man than subjection. For it was formerly very truly said, that every one has within him the soul of a king. Until, then, the high spirits, with which the nature of men swells, are subdued, no man will give way to another; but, on the contrary, each one, despising others, will claim all things for himself.

Hence the Apostle, in order that humility may dwell among us, wisely reproves this haughtiness and pride. And the metaphor he uses is very appropriate, as though he had said, ``Surround yourselves with humility on every side, as with a garment which covers the whole body.'' He yet intimates that no ornament is more beautiful or more becoming, than when we submit one to another.

For, or, because. It is a most grievous threatening, when he says, that all who seek to elevate themselves, shall have God as their enemy, who will lay them low. But, on the contrary, he says of the humble, that God will be propitious and favorable to them. We are to imagine that; God has two hands; the one, which like a hammer beats down and breaks in pieces those who raise up themselves; and the other, which raises up the humble who willingly let down themselves, and is like a firm prop to sustain them. Were we really convinced of this, and had it deeply fixed in our minds, who of us would dare by pride to urge war with God? But the hope of impunity now makes us fearlessly to raise up our horn to heaven. Let, then, this declaration of Peter be as a celestial thunderbolt to make men humble.

But he calls those humble, who being emptied of every confidence in their own power, wisdom, and righteousness, seek every good from God alone. Since there is no coming to God except in this way, who, having lost his own glory, ought not willingly to humble himself?

6 Humble yourselves therefore. We must ever bear in mind for what end he bids us to be humble before God, even that we may be more courteous and kind to our brethren, and not refuse to submit to them as far as love demands. Then they who are haughty and refractory towards men, are, he says, acting insolently towards God. He therefore exhorts all the godly to submit to God's authority; and he calls God's power his hand, that he might make them to fear the more. For though hand is often applied to God, yet it is to be understood here according to the circumstances of the passage. But as we are wont commonly to fear, lest our humility should be a disadvantage to us, and others might for this reason grow more insolent, Peter meets this objection, and promises eminency to all who humble themselves.

But he adds, in due time, that he might at the same time obviate too much haste. He then intimates that it is necessary for us to learn humility now, but that the Lord well knows when it is expedient for us to be elevated. Thus it behoves us to yield to his counsel.

7 Casting all our care He more fully sets forth here the providence of God. For whence are these proverbial sayings, ``We shall have to howl among wolves,'' and, ``They are foolish who are like sheep, exposing themselves to wolves to be devoured,'' except that we think that by our humility we set loose the reins to the audacity of the ungodly, so that they insult us more wantonly? But this fear arises from our ignorance of divine providence. Now, on the other hand, as soon as we are convinced that God cares for us, our minds are easily led to patience and humility. Lest, then, the wickedness of men should tempt us to a fierceness of mind, the Apostle prescribes to us a remedy, and also David does in the thirty-seventh Psalm, so that having cast our care on God, we may calmly rest. For all those who recumb not on God's providence must necessarily be in constant turmoil and violently assail others. We ought the more to dwell on this thought, that God cares for us, in order, first, that we may have peace within; and, secondly, that we may be humble and meek towards men.

But we are not thus bidden to cast all our care on God, as though God wished us to have strong hearts, and to be void of all feeling; but lest fear or anxiety should drive us to impatience. In like manner, the knowledge of divine providence does not free men from every care, that they may securely indulge themselves; for it ought not to encourage the torpidity of the flesh, but to bring rest to faith.

1 Peter 5:8-11

1 Peter 5:8-11

8. Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour:

8. Sobrii estote, vigilate, quia adversarius vester diabolus, tanquam leo rugiens, circuit, quaerens quem devoret (vel, quempiam devorare;)

9. Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

9. Cui resistite firmi fide, scientes easdem passiones, vestrae quae in mundo fraternitati adimpleri.

10. But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you:

10. Deus autera omnis gratiae, qui nos vocavit in aeternam suam gloriam per Christum Jesum, paulisper afflictos ipse vos perficiat, confirmet, corroboret, stabiliat:

11. To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

11. Ei gloria et imperium in secula seculorum. Amen.

8 Be sober This explanation extends wider, that as we have war with a most fierce and most powerful enemy, we are to be strenuous in resisting him. But he uses a twofold metaphor, that they were to be sober, and that they were to exercise watchfulness. Surfeiting produces sloth and sleep; even so they who indulge in earthly cares and pleasures, think of nothing else, being under the power of spiritual lethargy.

We now perceive what the meaning of the Apostle is. We must, he says, carry on a warfare in this world; and he reminds us that we have to do with no common enemy, but one who, like a lion, runs here and there, ready to devour. He hence concludes that we ought carefully to watch. Paul stimulates us with the same argument in the sixth chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians, where he says that we have a contest not with flesh and blood, but with spiritual wickedness, etc. But we too often turn peace into sloth, and hence it comes that the enemy then circumvents and overwhelms us; for, as though placed beyond the reach of danger, we indulge ourselves according to the will of the flesh.

He compares the devil to a lion, as though he had said, that he is a savage wild beast. He says that he goes round to devour, in order to rouse us to wariness. He calls him the adversary of the godly, that they might know that they worship God and profess faith in Christ on this condition, that they are to have continual war with the devil, for he does not spare the members who fights with the head.

9 Whom resist As the power of an enemy ought to stimulate us and make us more careful, so there would be danger lest our hearts failed through immoderate fear, except the hope of victory were given us. This then is what the Apostle speaks of; he shows that the issue of the war will be prosperous, if we indeed fight under the banner of Christ; for whosoever comes to this contest, endued with faith, he declares that he will certainly be a conqueror.

Resist, he says; but some one may ask, how? To this he answers, there is suf-

ficient strength in faith. Paul, in the passage which I have already quoted, enumerates the various parts of our armor, but the meaning is the same, (Ephesians 6:13,) for John testifies that faith alone is our victory over the world.

Knowing that the same afflictions, or sufferings. It is another consolation, that we have a contest in common with all the children of God; for Satan dangerously tries us, when he separates us from the body of Christ. We have heard how he attempted to storm the courage of Job,

``Look to the saints, has any one of them suffered such a thing?''
--- Job 5:1.

The Apostle on the other hand, reminds us here that nothing happens to us but what we see does happen to other members of the Church. Moreover a fellowship, or a similar condition, with all the saints, ought by no means to be refused by us.

By saying that the same sufferings are accomplished, he means what Paul declares in Colossians 1:24, that what remains of the sufferings of Christ is daily fulfilled in the faithful.

The words, that are in the world, may be explained in two ways, either that God proves his faithful people indiscriminately everywhere in the world, or that the necessity of fighting awaits us as long as we are in the world. But we must observe that having said before that we are assailed by Satan, he then immediately refers to every kind of afflictions. We hence gather that we have always to do with our spiritual enemy, however adversities may come, or whatever they may be, whether diseases oppress us, or the barrenness of the land threatens us with famine, or men persecute us.

10 But the God of all grace After having sufficiently dwelt on admonitions, he now turns to prayer; for doctrine is in vain poured forth into the air, unless God works by his Spirit. And this example ought to be followed by all the ministers of God, that is, to pray that he may give success to their labors; for otherwise they effect nothing either by planting or by watering.

Some copies have the future tense, as though a promise is made; but the other reading is more commonly received. At the same time, the Apostle, by praying God, confirms those to whom he was writing, for when he calls God the author of all grace, and reminds them that they were called to eternal glory, his purpose no doubt was, to confirm them in the conviction, that the work of their salvation, which he had begun, would be completed.

He is called the God of all grace from the effect, from the gifts he bestows, according to the Hebrew manner. [396] And he mentions expressly all grace, first that they might learn that every blessing is to be ascribed to God; and secondly, that one grace is connected with another, so that they might hope in future for the addition of those graces in which they were hitherto wanting.

Who hath called us This, as I have said, serves to increase confidence, because God is led not only by his goodness, but also by his gracious benevo-

[396] We read in 1 Peter 4:10, of "the manifold grace of God," which may be viewed as explanatory of "the God of all grace." — Ed.

lence, to aid us more and more. He does not simply mention calling, but he shews wherefore they were called, even that they might obtain eternal glory. He further fixes the foundation of calling in Christ. Both these things serve to give perpetual confidence, for if our calling is founded on Christ, and refers to the celestial kingdom of God and a blessed immortality, it follows that it is not transient nor fading.

It may also be right, by the way, to observe that when he says that we are called in Christ, first, our calling is established, because it is rightly founded; and secondly, that all respect to our worthiness and merit is excluded; for that God, by the preaching of the gospel, invites us to himself, it is altogether gratuitous; and it is still a greater grace that he efficaciously touches our hearts so as to lead us to obey his voice. Now Peter especially addresses the faithful; he therefore connects the efficacious power of the Spirit with the outward doctrine.

As to the three words which follow, some copies have them in the ablative case, which may be rendered in Latin by gerunds (fulciendo, roborando, stabiliendo) by supporting, by strengthening, by establishing. [397] But in this there is not much importance with regard to the meaning. Besides, Peter intends the same thing by all these words, even to confirm the faithful; and he uses these several words for this purpose, that we may know that to follow our course is a matter of no common difficulty, and that therefore we need the special grace of God. The words suffered a while, inserted here, shew that the time of suffering is but short, and this is no small consolation.

11 To him be glory That he might add more confidence to the godly, he breaks out into thanksgiving. Though this be read in the indicative as well as in the optative mood, still the meaning is nearly the same.

1 Peter 5:12-14

1 Peter 5:12-14

12. By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose, I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

12. Per Silvanum vobis fidum fratrem (ut arbitror) paucis scripsi, exhortans et testificans hanc esse veram gratiam in qua statis.

13. The church that is at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you; and so doth Marcus my son.

[397] It seems that the preponderance as to readings is in favor of this construction, for Griesbach has introduced into his text these three words as nouns, {στηρίξει}, {σθενώσει}, {θεμελιώσει}, but it is a harsh construction. The probability is, that this reading has been introduced because of the sense, as it was not seen how these words could come after ``make perfect.'' But the order is according to the usual style of the prophets, examples of which are also found in the New Testament: the ultimate object is mentioned first, and then what leads to it. The writer, as it were, retrogrades instead of going forward. See on this subject the preface to the third volume of Calvin's Commentaries on Jeremiah. Divested of this peculiarity, the words would run thus: ``may he establish, strengthen, confirm, perfect you;'' that is, to give the words more literally, ``may he put you on a solid foundation, render you strong, render you firm, make you perfect.'' --- Ed.

13. Salutat vos quae in Babylone est Ecclesia, simul vobiscum electa, et Marcus filius meus.

14. Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

14. Salutate vos invicem in osculo charitatis. Gratia vobis omnibus qui estis in Christo Jesu.

12 By Silvanus He exhorts them at the conclusion of the Epistle to constancy in the faith: yea, he declares that his design in writing, was to retain them in obedience to the doctrine which they had embraced. But he first commends the brevity of his Epistle, lest the reading of it should be tedious to them; and, secondly, he adds a short commendation of his messenger, that the living voice might be added to what was written; for this was the design of the testimony he bears to his fidelity. But the exception, as I suppose, or think, was added, either as token of modesty or to let them surely know, that he spoke according to the conviction of his own mind; and it was unreasonable for them not to assent to the judgment of so great an apostle.

Exhorting and testifying How difficult it is to continue in the faith! evidences of this are the daily defections of many: nor, indeed, is such a thing to be wondered at, when we consider how great is the levity and inconsistency of men, and how great is their inclination to vanity. But as no doctrine can strike firm and perpetual roots in men's hearts, if it be accompanied with any doubt, he testifies that God's truth, in which they had been taught, was certain. And, doubtless, except its certainty appears to our minds, we must at all times necessarily vacillate, and be ready to turn at every wind of new doctrine. By the grace of God, he means faith with all its effects and fruits.

13 That is at Babylon Many of the ancients thought that Rome is here enigmatically denoted. This comment the Papists gladly lay hold on, that Peter may appear to have presided over the Church of Rome: nor does the infamy of the name deter them, provided they can pretend to the title of an apostolic seat; nor do they care for Christ, provided Peter be left to them. Moreover, let them only retain the name of Peter's chair, and they will not refuse to set Rome in the infernal regions. But this old comment has no color of truth in its favor; nor do I see why it was approved by Eusebius and others, except that they were already led astray by that error, that Peter had been at Rome. Besides, they are inconsistent with themselves. They say that Mark died at Alexandria, in the eighth year of Nero; but they imagine that Peter, six years after this, was put to death at Rome by Nero. If Mark formed, as they say, the Alexandrian Church, and had been long a bishop there, he could never have been at Rome with Peter. For Eusebius and Jerome extend the time of Peter's presidency at Rome to twenty-five years; but this may be easily disproved by what is said in the first and the second chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians.

Since, then, Peter had Mark as his companion when he wrote this Epistle, it is very probable that he was at Babylon: and this was in accordance with his calling; for we know that he was appointed an apostle especially to the Jews.

He therefore visited chiefly those parts where there was the greatest number of that nation.

In saying that the Church there was a partaker of the same election, his object was to confirm others more and more in the faith; for it was a great matter that the Jews were gathered into the Church, in so remote a part of the world.

My son So he calls Mark for honor's sake; the reason, however, is, because he had begotten him in the faith, as Paul did Timothy.

Of the kiss of love we have spoken elsewhere. Now he bids this to be the kiss of love, [398] so that the sincerity of the heart might correspond with the external act.

END OF THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

[398] See a Note in the Epistle to the Romans, p. 547. — Ed.

Second Peter

Second Peter: The Argument

THE ARGUMENT

The doubts respecting this Epistle mentioned by Eusebius, ought not to keep us from reading it. For if the doubts rested on the authority of men, whose names he does not give, we ought to pay no more regard to it than to that of unknown men. And he afterwards adds, that it was everywhere received without any dispute. What Jerome writes influences me somewhat more, that some, induced by a difference in the style, did not think that Peter was the author. For though some affinity may be traced, yet I confess that there is that manifest difference which distinguishes different writers. There are also other probable conjectures by which we may conclude that it was written by another rather than by Peter. At the same time, according to the consent of all, it has nothing unworthy of Peter, as it shews everywhere the power and the grace of an apostolic spirit. If it be received as canonical, we must allow Peter to be the author, since it has his name inscribed, and he also testifies that he had lived with Christ: and it would have been a fiction unworthy of a minister of Christ, to have personated another individual. So then I conclude, that if the Epistle be deemed worthy of credit, it must have proceeded from Peter; not that he himself wrote it, but that some one of his disciples set forth in writing, by his command, those things which the necessity of the times required. For it is probable that he was now in extreme old age, for he says, that he was near his end. And it may have been that at the request of the godly, he allowed this testimony of his mind to be recorded shortly before his death, because it might have somewhat availed, when he was dead, to support the good, and to repress the wicked. Doubtless, as in every part of the Epistle the majesty of the Spirit of Christ appears, to repudiate it is what I dread, though I do not here recognize the language of Peter. But since it is not quite evident as to the author, I shall allow myself the liberty of using the word Peter or Apostle indiscriminately.

I shall now come to the argument, which may be briefly stated.

The design is to shew, that those who have once professed the true faith of Christ, ought to respond to their calling to the last. After having then extolled, in high terms, the grace of God, he recommends to them holiness of life, because God usually punishes in hypocrites a false profession of his name, with dreadful blindness, and on the other hand he increases his gifts to those who truly and from the heart embrace the doctrine of religion. He, therefore, exhorts them to prove their calling by a holy life. And, to give a greater weight to his admonitions, he says that he is already near his end, and at the same time, excuses himself that he so often repeated the same things, his object being that they who should remain alive on the earth after his death, might have what he,

when alive, wrote, more deeply fixed in their minds.

And as the foundation of true religion is the certainty or the truth of the gospel, he shews, first, how indubitable is its truth by this fact, --- that he himself had been an eyewitness of all things which it contains, and especially that he had heard Christ proclaimed from heaven to be the Son of God; and, in the second place, it was God's will that it should be borne witness to, and approved by the oracles of the prophets.

He, however, predicts, at the same time, that danger was approaching from false teachers, who would spread impious inventions, as well as from the despisers of God, who would mock all religion; and he did this, that the faithful might learn to be watchful, and that they might be fortified. And he seems to have spoken thus designedly, lest they expected that the course of truth in the kingdom of Christ would be tranquil and peaceable, and free from all contention. He afterwards, as on a tablet, describes the character and manners of those who would, by their corruptions, pollute Christianity. But the description which he presents, especially suits the present age, as it will be more evident by a comparison. For he especially draws his pen against Lucianic men, who abandon themselves to every wickedness, and take a profane license to shew contempt to God, yea, and treat with ridicule the hope of a better life; and at this day we see that the world is everywhere full of such rabble.

He further exhorts the faithful, not only to look always for the coming of Christ with suspended and expectant minds, but also to regard that day as present before their eyes, and in the meantime to keep themselves unpolluted for the Lord: in which doctrine he makes Paul as his associate and approver; and to defend his writings from the calumnies of the ungodly, he severely reproves all those who pervert them.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

2 Peter 1:1-4

2 Peter 1:1-4

1. Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

1. Simeon Petrus, et servus et apostolus Jesu Christi, iis quid aequè pretiosam nobiscum sortiti sunt fidem, per justitiam Dei nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christí,

2. Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2. Gratia vobis et pax multiplicetur per cognitionem (vel, cum cognitione) Dei et Jesu Domini nostri;

3. According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

3. Quemadmodum divina ejus potentia omnia nobis quae spectant ad vitam et pietatem dedit per cognitionem ejus qui vocavit nos propria gloria et virtute (vel, per gloriam virtutem):

4. Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

4. Quibus et maximae pretiosae promissiones nobis donatae sunt, ut per Haec fieretis divinae consortes naturae, ubi fugeritis corruptionem quae in mundo est in concupiscentia.

1. Simon Peter. Prayer takes the first place at the beginning of this Epistle, and then follows thanksgiving, by which he excites the Jews to gratitude, lest they should forget what great benefits they had already received from God's hand. Why he called himself the servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, we have elsewhere stated, even because no one is to be heard in the Church, except he speaks as from the mouth of Christ. But the word servant has a more general meaning, because it includes all the ministers of Christ, who sustain any public office in the Church. There was in the apostleship a higher rank of honor. He then intimates, that he was not one from the rank of ministers, but was made by the Lord an apostle, and therefore superior to them. [399]

[399] Simeon, and not Simon, is the name as here given, though a few copies and the Vulg.

Like precious faith. This is a commendation of the grace which God had indiscriminately shewed to all his elect people; for it was no common gift, that they had all been called to one and the same faith, since faith is the special and chief good of man. But he calls it like or equally precious, not that it is equal in all, but because all possess by faith the same Christ with his righteousness, and the same salvation. Though then the measure is different, that does not prevent the knowledge of God from being common to all, and the fruit which proceeds from it. Thus we have a real fellowship of faith with Peter and the Apostles.

He adds, through the righteousness of God, in order that they might know that they did not obtain faith through their own efforts or strength, but through God's favor alone. For these things stand opposed the one to the other, the righteousness of God (in the sense in which it is taken here) and the merit of man. For the efficient cause of faith is called God's righteousness for this reason, because no one is capable of conferring it on himself. So the righteousness that is to be understood, is not that which remains in God, but that which he imparts to men, as in Romans 3:22. Besides, he ascribes this righteousness in common to God and to Christ, because it flows from God, and through Christ it flows down to us. [400]

2. Grace and peace. By grace is designated God's paternal favor towards us. We have indeed been once for all reconciled to God by the death of Christ, and by faith we come to the possession of this so great a benefit; but as we perceive the grace of God according to the measure of our faith, it is said to increase according to our perception when it becomes more fully known to us.

Peace is added; for as the beginning of our happiness is when God receives us into favor; so the more he confirms his love in our hearts, the richer blessing he confers on us, so that we become happy and prosperous in all things,

Through the knowledge, literally, in the knowledge; but the preposition {ἐν} often means ``through'' or ``with:'' yet both senses may suit the context. I am, however, more disposed to adopt the former. For the more any one advances in the knowledge of God, every kind of blessing increases also equally with the sense of divine love. Whosoever then aspires to the full fruition of the blessed life which is mentioned by Peter, must remember to observe the right way. He connects together at the same time the knowledge of God and of Christ; because God cannot be rightly known except in Christ, according to that saying,

``No one knoweth the Father but the Son, and he to whom
the Son will reveal him.'' (Matthew 11:27)

3. According as his divine power. He refers to the infinite goodness of God which they had already experienced, that they might more fully understand it

have Simon. His name is given both ways elsewhere; see Luke 5:8, and Acts 15:14. Why he called himself Peter in the first Epistle, and Simeon Peter here, does not appear. — Ed.

[400] It has been maintained by many, that the rendering of these words ought to be, “of our God and Savior Jesus Christ,” In this case the {ἐν} before ``righteousness'' would be rendered ``in;'' for it is more suitable to say that faith is in than through the righteousness of Christ. Christ is thus called here God as well as Savior; and so he is called ``our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ'' in chapter 3:18, the article being used in the same manner. --- Ed.

for the future. For he continues the course of his benevolence perpetually to the end, except when we ourselves break it off by our unbelief; for he possesses exhaustless power and an equal will to do good. Hence the Apostle justly animates the faithful to entertain good hope by the consideration of the former benefits of God. [401] For the same purpose is the amplification which he makes; for he might have spoken more simply, ``As he has freely given us all things.'' But by mentioning ``divine power,'' he rises higher, that is, that God has copiously unfolded the immense resources of his power. But the latter clause may be referred to Christ as well as to the Father, but both are suitable. It may however be more fitly applied to Christ, as though he had said, that the grace which is conveyed to us by him, is an evidence of divinity, because it could not have done by humanity.

That pertain to life and godliness, or, as to life and godliness. Some think that the present life is meant here, as godliness follows as the more excellent gift; as though by those two words Peter intended to prove how beneficent and bountiful God is towards the faithful, that he brought them to light, that he supplies them with all things necessary for the preservation of an earthly life, and that he has also renewed them to a spiritual life by adorning them with godliness. But this distinction is foreign to the mind of Peter, for as soon as he mentioned life, he immediately added godliness, which is as it were its soul; for God then truly gives us life, when he renews us unto the obedience of righteousness. So Peter does not speak here of the natural gifts of God, but only mentions those things which he confers peculiarly on his own elect above the common order of nature. [402]

That we are born men, that we are endued with reason and knowledge, that our life is supplied with necessary support, --- all this is indeed from God. As however men, being perverted in their minds and ungrateful, do not regard these various things, which are called the gifts of nature, among God's benefits, the common condition of human life is not here referred to, but the peculiar endowments of the new and Spiritual life, which derive their origin from the kingdom of Christ. But since everything necessary for godliness and salvation is to be deemed among the supernatural gifts of God, let men learn to arrogate nothing to themselves, but humbly ask of God whatever they see they are wanting in, and to ascribe to him whatever good they may have. For Peter here, by attributing the whole of godliness, and all helps to salvation, to the divine power of Christ, takes them away from the common nature of men, so that he leaves to us not even the least particle of any virtue or merit.

[401] The connection here is variously regarded. Our version and Calvin seem to connect this verse with the foregoing, in this sense, that the Apostle prays for the increase of grace and peace from the consideration of what God had already done, or in conformity with his previous benefits. Others, perhaps more correctly, view this verse as connected with the 5th, and render {ὡς}, ``Since,'' and the beginning of the 5th verse, ``Do ye also for this reason, giving all diligence, add,'' etc.; that is, ``Since God has done so great things for you, ye also for this reason ought to be diligent in adding to your faith virtue, etc.'' But {ὡς} and {καὶ} may be rendered as and so. See Acts 7:51. ``As his divine power... so for this reason, giving all diligence, add,'' etc. --- Ed.

[402] The order is according to what is common in Scripture; the chief thing is mentioned first, and then that which leads to it. — Ed.

Through the knowledge of him. He now describes the manner in which God makes us partakers of so great blessings, even by making himself known to us by the gospel. For the knowledge of God is the beginning of life and the first entrance into godliness. In short, spiritual gifts cannot be given for salvation, until, being illuminated by the doctrine of the gospel, we are led to know God. But he makes God the author of this knowledge, because we never go to him except when called. Hence the effectual cause of faith is not the perspicacity of our mind, but the calling of God. And he speaks not of the outward calling only, which is in itself ineffectual; but of the inward calling, effected by the hidden power of the Spirit when God not only sounds in our ears by the voice of man, but draws inwardly our hearts to himself by his own Spirit.

To glory and virtue, or, by his own glory and power. Some copies have {ἰδία} {δόξῃ Υ}, ``by his own glory,'' and it is so rendered by the old interpreter; and this reading I prefer, because the sentence seems thus to flow better For it was Peter's object expressly to ascribe the whole praise of our salvation to God, so that we may know that we owe every thing to him. And this is more clearly expressed by these words, --- that he has called us by his own glory and power. However, the other reading, though more obscure, tends to the same thing; for he teaches us, that we are covered with shame, and are wholly vicious, until God clothes us with glory and adorns us with virtue. He further intimates, that the effect of calling in the elect, is to restore to them the glorious image of God, and to renew them in holiness and righteousness.

4. Whereby are given to us. It is doubtful whether he refers only to glory and power, or to the preceding things also. The whole difficulty arises from this, --- that what is here said is not suitable to the glory and virtue which God confers on us; but if we read, ``by his own glory and power,'' there will be no ambiguity nor perplexity. For what things have been promised to us by God, ought to be properly and justly deemed to be the effects of his power and glory. [403]

At the same time the copies vary here also; for some have {δι} {᾽} {ὃν}, ``on account of whom;'' so the reference may be to Christ. Whichsoever of the two readings you choose, still the meaning will be, that first the promises of God ought to be most highly valued; and, secondly, that they are gratuitous, because they are offered to us as gifts. And he then shews the excellency of the promises, that they make us partakers of the divine nature, than which nothing

[403] The received text no doubt contains the true rending. The word {ἀρετὴ} never means ``power'' either in the classics, or in the Sept., or in the New Testament. Beza and also Schleusner, regard {διὰ} as expressing the final cause, to; it is also used in the sense of ``for the sake of,'' or, ``on account of.'' ``Glory and virtue'' are in a similar order as the previous words, ``life and godliness,'' and also in the same order with the concluding words of the next verse, ``partakers of the divine nature,'' and ``escaping the corruptions of the world.'' So that there is a correspondence as to the order of the words throughout the whole passage. With respect to {δι} {᾽} {ὧν}, the rendering may be, ``for the sake of which,'' that is, for the purpose of leading us to ``glory and virtue,''`` many and precious promises have been given; and then the conclusion of the verse states the object in other words, that we might by these promises become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the pollutions of the world. Escaping the corruption of the world is ``godliness,'' is ``virtue;'' and partaking of the divine nature is ``life,'' is ``glory.'' This complete correspondence confirms the meaning which Beza and our version give to the preposition {διὰ} at the end of the third verse. --- Ed.

can be conceived better.

For we must consider from whence it is that God raises us up to such a height of honor. We know how abject is the condition of our nature; that God, then, should make himself ours, so that all his things should in a manner become our things, the greatness of his grace cannot be sufficiently conceived by our minds. Therefore this consideration alone ought to be abundantly sufficient to make us to renounce the world and to carry us aloft to heaven. Let us then mark, that the end of the gospel is, to render us eventually conformable to God, and, if we may so speak, to deify us.

But the word nature is not here essence but quality. The Manicheans formerly dreamt that we are a part of God, and that, after having run the race of life we shall at length revert to our original. There are also at this day fanatics who imagine that we thus pass over into the nature of God, so that his swallows up our nature. Thus they explain what Paul says, that God will be all in all (1 Corinthians 15:28,) and in the same sense they take this passage. But such a delirium as this never entered the minds of the holy Apostles; they only intended to say that when divested of all the vices of the flesh, we shall be partakers of divine and blessed immortality and glory, so as to be as it were one with God as far as our capacities will allow.

This doctrine was not altogether unknown to Plato, who everywhere defines the chief good of man to be an entire conformity to God; but as he was involved in the mists of errors, he afterwards glided off to his own inventions. But we, disregarding empty speculations, ought to be satisfied with this one thing, --- that the image of God in holiness and righteousness is restored to us for this end, that we may at length be partakers of eternal life and glory as far as it will be necessary for our complete felicity.

Having escaped We have already explained that the design of the Apostle was, to set before us the dignity of the glory of heaven, to which God invites us, and thus to draw us away from the vanity of this world. Moreover, he sets the corruption of the world in opposition to the divine nature; but he shews that this corruption is not in the elements which surround us, but in our heart, because there vicious and depraved affections prevail, the fountain and root of which he points out by the word lust. Corruption, then, is thus placed in the world, that we may know that the world is in us.

2 Peter 1:5-9

2 Peter 1:5-9

5. And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge;

5. Atque in hoc ipsum omne studium applicantes, subministrate in fide vestra virtutem, in virtute autem scientiam;

6. And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness;

6. In scientia verae temperantiam, in temperantia autem patientiam, in patientia verò pietatem,

7. And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity.

7. In pietate autem fraternum amorem, in fraterno verò amore charitatem.

8. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8. Haec enim si vobis adsint, et abunde, suppetant, non otiosos neque infructuosos constituent vos in cognitione Domini nostri Jesu Christi.

9. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

9. Cui enim Haec non adsunt, caecus est, manu palpans, purgationis oblitus veterum delictorum.

5 And besides this. As it is a work arduous and of immense labor, to put off the corruption which is in us, he bids us to strive and make every effort for this purpose. He intimates that no place is to be given in this case to sloth, and that we ought to obey God calling us, not slowly or carelessly, but that there is need of alacrity; as though he had said, ``Put forth every effort, and make your exertions manifest to all.'' --- For this is what the participle he uses imports.

Add to your faith virtue, or, Supply to your faith virtue. He shews for what purpose the faithful were to strive, that is, that they might have faith adorned with good morals, wisdom, patience, and love. Then he intimates that faith ought not to be naked or empty, but that these are its inseparable companions. To supply to faith, is to add to faith. There is not here, however, properly a gradation as to the sense, though it appears as to the words; for love does not in order follow patience, nor does it proceed from it. Therefore the passage is to be thus simply explained, ``Strive that virtue, prudence, temperance, and the things which follow, may be added to your faith.'' [404]

I take virtue to mean a life honest and rightly formed; for it is not here {ἐνέργεια}, energy or courage, but {ἀρετὴ}, virtue, moral goodness. Knowledge is what is necessary for acting prudently; for after having put down a general term, he mentions some of the principal endowments of a Christian. Brotherly-kindness, {φιλαδελφία}, is mutual affection among the children of God. Love extends wider, because it embraces all mankind.

It may, however, be here asked, whether Peter, by assigning to us the work of supplying or adding virtue, thus far extolled the strength and power of free-will? They who seek to establish free-will in man, indeed concede to God the first place, that is, that he begins to act or work in us; but they imagine that we

[404] Some, like Bishop Warburton, have very ingeniously attempted to shew that there is here a regular order and gradation; but it is not the order of cause and effect. Different things are mentioned, and what is added, has in some way or another a connection with the previous word. To faith add virtue or moral conduct; that virtue may be rightly formed, add knowledge; that knowledge may be gained, add temperance; that temperance may continue, add patience or perseverance; that perseverance may be retained, add godliness or piety, that is, prayer to God; that godliness may not be alone, add brotherly-kindness; and that brotherly kindness may he enlarged, add love to all mankind. The word added has a connection with the immediately previous word, as the way, means, or an addition. — Ed.

at the same time co-operate, and that it is thus owing to us that the movements of God are not rendered void and inefficacious. But the perpetual doctrine of Scripture is opposed to this delirious notion: for it plainly testifies, that right feelings are formed in us by God, and are rendered by him effectual. It testifies also that all our progress and perseverance are from God. Besides, it expressly declares that wisdom, love, patience, are the gifts of God and the Spirit. When, therefore, the Apostle requires these things, he by no means asserts that they are in our power, but only shews what we ought to have, and what ought to be done. And as to the godly, when conscious of their own infirmity, they find themselves deficient in their duty, nothing remains for them but to flee to God for aid and help. [405]

8. For if these things be in you. Then, he says, you will at length prove that Christ is really known by you, if ye be endued with virtue, temperance, and the other endowments. For the knowledge of Christ is an efficacious thing and a living root, which brings forth fruit. For by saying that these things would make them neither barren nor unfruitful, he shews that all those glory, in vain and falsely, that they have the knowledge of Christ, who boast of it without love, patience, and the like gifts, as Paul also says in Ephesians 4:20,

``Ye have not so learned Christ, if so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus, that ye put off the old man,'' etc.

For he means that those who possess Christ without newness of life, have never been rightly taught his doctrine.

But he would not have the faithful to be only taught patience, godliness, temperance, love; but he requires a continual progress to be made as to these endowments, and that justly, for we are as yet far off from the goal. We ought, therefore, always to make advances, so that God's gifts may continually increase in us.

9. But he that lacketh these things. He now expresses more clearly that they who profess a naked faith are wholly without any true knowledge. He then says that they go astray like the blind in darkness, because they do not see the right way which is shewn to us by the light of the gospel. [406] This he also confirms by adding this reason, because such have forgotten that through the benefit of Christ they had been cleansed from sin, and yet this is the beginning of our Christianity. It then follows, that those who do not strive for a pure and holy

[405] The question of free-will does not properly belong to this passage; for the Apostle writes, not to those in their natural state, but to those whom he considered to be new creatures. The question of free-will ought to be confined to conversion, and not extended to the state of those who have been converted. The tenth article of the Church of England nearly meets the question, yet not wholly: it ascribes the will to turn most distinctly to God, and says that man cannot turn himself; but it does not expressly say whether man can resist the good-will given him, which is the very gist of the question. But it says further, that the grace of God by Christ "worketh with us when we have that good-will," which seems certainly to imply, that the good-will first given is made thereby effectual. If there be, then, a cooperation, (as no doubt there is,) it is the cooperation, according to this Article, of the good-will first given, and not of anything in man by nature. — Ed.

[406] "He is blind, (manu palpans) stroking with the hand," is Calvin's; the Vulgate is manu tentans, "feeling with the hand:" but the original word means, "closing the eyes," according to the Greek grammarians, Hesychius and Suidas: "He is blind, closing his eyes." — Ed.

life, do not understand even the first rudiments of faith.

But Peter takes this for granted, that they who were still rolling in the filth of the flesh had forgotten their own purgation. For the blood of Christ has not become a washing bath to us, that it may be fouled by our filth. He, therefore, calls them old sins, by which he means, that our life ought to be otherwise formed, because we have been cleansed from our sins; not that any one can be pure from every sin while he lives in this world, or that the cleansing we obtain through Christ consists of pardon only, but that we ought to differ from the unbelieving, as God has separated us for himself. Though, then, we daily sin, and God daily forgives us, and the blood of Christ cleanses us from our sins, yet sin ought not to rule in us, but the sanctification of the Spirit ought to prevail in us; for so Paul teaches us in 1 Corinthians 6:11, ``And such were some of you; but ye are washed,'' etc.

2 Peter 1:10-15

2 Peter 1:10-15

10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

10. Quamobrem magis, fratres, studete firmam vestram vocationem et electionem facere: Haec enim si feceritis, non cadetis unquam:

11. For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

11. Sic enim abundè subministrabitur vobis ingressus in regnum eternum Domini nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi.

12. Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

12. Itaque non negligam semper de iis commonefacere, etiamsi noveritis, et confirmati sitis in praesenti veritate.

13. Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by putting you in remembrance;

13. Justum autem arbitror, quandiu sum in hoc tabernaculo, vos admonitione;

l4. Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

14. Quum sciam brevi me depositurum hoc tabernaculum, quemadmodum et Dominus Jesus manifestavit mihi.

15. Moreover I will endeavour that ye may be able after my decease to have these things always in remembrance.

15. Dabo autem operam, ut etiam semper post meum discessum possitis horum habere memoriam.

10. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence. He draws this conclusion, that it is one proof that we have been really elected, and not in vain called by the Lord, if a good conscience and integrity of life correspond with our pro-

fession of faith. And he infers, that there ought to be more labor and diligence, because he had said before, that faith ought not to be barren.

Some copies have, ``by good works;'' but these words make no change in the sense, for they are to be understood though not expressed. [407]

He mentions calling first, though the last in order. The reason is, because election is of greater weight or importance; and it is a right arrangement of a sentence to subjoin what preponderates. The meaning then is, labor that you may have it really proved that you have not been called nor elected in vain. At the same time he speaks here of calling as the effect and evidence of election. If any one prefers to regard the two words as meaning the same thing, I do not object; for the Scripture sometimes merges the difference which exists between two terms. I have, however, stated what seems to me more probable. [408]

Now a question arises, Whether the stability of our calling and election depends on good works, for if it be so, it follows that it depends on us. But the whole Scripture teaches us, first, that God's election is founded on his eternal purpose; and secondly, that calling begins and is completed through his gratuitous goodness. The Sophists, in order to transfer what is peculiar to God's grace to ourselves, usually pervert this evidence. But their evasions may be easily refuted. For if any one thinks that calling is rendered sure by men, there is nothing absurd in that; we may however, go still farther, that every one confirms his calling by leading a holy and pious life. But it is very foolish to infer from this what the Sophists contend for; for this is a proof not taken from the cause, but on the contrary from the sign or the effect. Moreover, this does not prevent election from being gratuitous, nor does it shew that it is in our own hand or power to confirm election. For the matter stands thus, --- God effectually calls whom he has preordained to life in his secret counsel before the foundation of the world; and he also carries on the perpetual course of calling through grace alone. But as he has chosen us, and calls us for this end, that we may be pure and spotless in his presence; purity of life is not improperly called the evidence and proof of election, by which the faithful may not only testify to others that they are the children of God, but also confirm themselves in this confidence, in such a manner, however, that they fix their solid foundation on something else.

At the same time, this certainty, mentioned by Peter, ought, I think, to be referred to the conscience, as though the faithful acknowledged themselves before God to be chosen and called. But I take it simply of the fact itself, that calling appears as confirmed by this very holiness of life. It may, indeed, be rendered, Labor that your calling may become certain; for the verb {ποιεῖσθαι}

[407] There is no sufficient authority for introducing them. Besides, there is no need of them, for the word {ταῦτα}, ``these things,'' has been often previously repeated, and refers to the things mentioned in verses 5, 6, and 7. --- Ed.

[408] The order is such as we often meet with, the visible effect first, and then the cause, as in Romans 10:9; confession, the ostensible act, is mentioned first, and then faith, which precedes it. So here, calling, the effect produced, is first mentioned, and then election, the cause of it; as though he had said, “Make your calling, which has proceeded from your election, sure.” — Ed.

is transitive or intransitive. Still, however you may render it, the meaning is nearly the same.

The import of what is said is, that the children of God are distinguished from the reprobate by this mark, that they live a godly and a holy life, because this is the design and end of election. Hence it is evident how wickedly some vile unprincipled men prattle, when they seek to make gratuitous election an excuse for all licentiousness; as though, forsooth! we may sin with impunity, because we have been predestinated to righteousness and holiness!

For if ye do these things. Peter seems again to ascribe to the merits of works, that God furthers our salvation, and also that we continually persevere in his grace. But the explanation is obvious; for his purpose was only to shew that hypocrites have in them nothing real or solid, and that, on the contrary, they who prove their calling sure by good works, are free from the danger of falling, because sure and sufficient is the grace of God by which they are supported. Thus the certainty of our salvation by no means depends on us, as doubtless the cause of it is beyond our limits. But with regard to those who feel in themselves the efficacious working of the Spirit, Peter bids them to take courage as to the future, because the Lord has laid in them the solid foundation of a true and sure calling.

He explains the way or means of persevering, when he says, an entrance shall be ministered to you. The import of the words is this: ``God, by ever supplying you abundantly with new graces, will lead you to his own kingdom.'' And this was added, that we may know, that though we have already passed from death into life, yet it is a passage of hope; and as to the fruition of life, there remains for us yet a long journey. In the meantime we are not destitute of necessary helps. Hence Peter obviates a doubt by these words, ``The Lord will abundantly supply your need, until you shall enter into his eternal kingdom.'' He calls it the kingdom of Christ, because we cannot ascend to heaven except under his banner and guidance.

12. Wherefore I will not be negligent. As we seem to distrust either the memory or the attention of those whom we often remind of the same thing, the Apostle makes this modest excuse, that he ceased not to press on the attention of the faithful what was well known and fixed in their minds, because its importance and greatness required this.

``Ye do, indeed,'' he says, ``fully understand what the truth of the gospel is, nor have I to confirm as it were the wavering, but in a matter so great, admonitions are never superfluous; and, therefore, they ought never to be deemed vexatious.'' Paul also employs a similar excuse in Romans 15:14,

``I am persuaded of you, brethren,'' he says, ``that ye are full of knowledge, so as to be able to admonish one another: but I have more confidently written to you, as putting you in mind.''

He calls that the present truth, into the possession of which they had already entered by a sure faith. He, then, commends their faith, in order that they might remain fixed in it more firmly.

13. Yea, I think it meet, or right. He expresses more clearly how useful and how necessary is admonition, because it is needful to arouse the faithful, for otherwise torpor will creep in from the flesh. Though, then, they might not have wanted teaching, yet he says that the goads of admonitions were useful, lest security and indulgence (as it is usually the case) should weaken what they had learned, and at length extinguish it.

He adds another cause why he was so intent on writing to them, because he knew that a short time remained for him. ``I must diligently employ my time,'' he says; ``for the Lord has made known to me that my life in this world will not be long.''

We hence learn, that admonitions ought to be so given, that the people whom we wish to benefit may not think that wrong is done to them, and also that offenses ought to be so avoided, that yet the truth may have a free course, and exhortations may not be discontinued. Now, this moderation is to be observed towards those to whom a sharp reproof would not be suitable, but who ought on the contrary to be kindly helped, since they are inclined of themselves to do their duty. We are also taught by the example of Peter, that the shorter term of life remains to us, the more diligent ought we to be in executing our office. It is not commonly given to us to foresee our end; but they who are advanced in years, or weakened by illness, being reminded by such indications of the shortness of their life, ought to be more sedulous and diligent, so that they may in due time perform what the Lord has given them to do; nay, those who are the strongest and in the flower of their age, as they do not render to God so constant a service as it behooves them to do, ought to quicken themselves to the same care and diligence by the recollection of approaching death; lest the occasion of doing good may pass away, while they attend negligently and slothfully to their work.

At the same time, I doubt not but that it was Peter's object to gain more authority and weight to his teaching, when he said that he would endeavor to make them to remember these things after his death, which was then nigh at hand. For when any one, shortly before he quits this life, addresses us, his words have in a manner the force and power of a testament or will, and are usually received by us with greater reverence.

14 I must put off this my tabernacle. Literally the words are, ``Short is the putting; away of this tabernacle.'' By this mode of speaking, and afterwards by the word ``departing,'' he designates death, which it behooves us to notice; for we are here taught how much death differs from perdition. Besides, too much dread of death terrifies us, because we do not sufficiently consider how fading and evanescent this life is, and do not reflect on the perpetuity of future life. But what does Peter say? He declares that death is departing from this world, that we may remove elsewhere, even to the Lord. It ought not, then, to be dreadful to us, as though we were to perish when we die. He declares that it is the putting away of a tabernacle, by which we are covered only for a short time. There is, then, no reason why we should regret to be removed from it.

But there is to be understood an implied contrast between a fading tabernacle and a perpetual habitation, which Paul explains in 2 Corinthians 5:1. [409]

When he says that it had been revealed to him by Christ, he refers not to the kind of death, but to the time. But if he received the oracle at Babylon respecting his death being near, how was he crucified at Rome? It certainly appears that he died very far from Italy, except he flew in a moment over seas and lands. [410] But the Papists, in order to claim for themselves the body of Peter, make themselves Babylonians, and say that Rome is called Babylon by Peter: this shall be refuted in its proper place. What he says of remembering these things after his death, was intended to shew, that posterity ought to learn from him when dead. For the apostles had not regard only for their own age, but purposed to do us good also. Though, then, they are dead, their doctrine lives and prevails: and it is our duty to profit by their writings, as though they were manifestly present with. us.

2 Peter 1:16-18

2 Peter 1:16-18

16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of his majesty.

16. Neque enim fabulas subtiliter excogitatas (vel, arte compositas) sequuti, notam vobis fecimus Domini nostri Jesu Christi potentiam et adventum; sed spectatores facti ejus magnificentiae.

17. For he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.

17. Accepit enim à Deo Patre honorém et gloriam, allata illi à magnifica gloria hujusmodi voce, Hie Filius meus dilectus, in quo mihi complacui.

18. And this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

18. Et hanc vocem nos audivimus, dum essemus in monte sancto cum illo.

16. For we have not followed cunningly devised fables. It gives us much courage, when we know that we labor in a matter that is certain. Lest, then, the faithful should think that in these labors they were beating the air, he now comes to set forth the certainty of the gospel; and he denies that anything had

[409] Paul, at the beginning of this chapter, compares our state in this world in a fading body with our state above after the resurrection in a glorified body, and takes no account of the intervening time between death and the resurrection. By keeping this in view, the whole passage, otherwise obscure, will appear quite clear. He speaks of being unclothed and clothed, that is, of being divested of one body, and of putting on another; and consistently with this view he speaks of not being found naked, that is, without a body as a covering. — Ed.

[410] It has been disputed, whether he refers here to what is recorded in John 21:18, 19, or to a new revelation. The latter was the opinion of some of the ancient fathers; and not without reason, for in John the manner of his death is what is mentioned, but here the near approach of it, — two things wholly distinct. — Ed.

been delivered by him but what was altogether true and indubitable: and they were encouraged to persevere, when they were sure of the prosperous issue of their calling.

In the first place, Peter indeed asserts that he had been an eyewitness; for he had himself seen with his own eyes the glory of Christ, of which he speaks. This knowledge he sets in opposition to crafty fables, such as cunning men are wont to fabricate to ensnare simple minds. The old interpreter renders the word ``feigned,'' (fictas;) Erasmus, ``formed by art.'' It seems to me that what is subtle to deceive is meant: for the Greek word here used, {σοφίζεσθαι}, sometimes means this. And we know how much labor men bestow on frivolous refinements, and only that they may have some amusement. Therefore no less seriously ought our minds to be applied to know the truth which is not fallacious, and the doctrine which is not nugatory, and which discovers to us the glory of the Son of God and our own salvation. [411]

The power and the coming. No doubt he meant in these words to include the substance of the gospel, as it certainly contains nothing except Christ, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom. But he distinctly mentions two things, --- that Christ had been manifested in the flesh, --- and also that power was exhibited by him. [412] Thus, then, we have the whole gospel; for we know that he, the long-promised Redeemer, came from heaven, put on our flesh, lived in the world, died and rose again; and, in the second place, we perceive the end and fruit of all these things, that is, that he might be God with us, that he might exhibit in himself a sure pledge of our adoption, that he might cleanse us from the defilement's of the flesh by the grace of his Spirit, and consecrate us temples to God, that he might deliver us from hell, and raise us up to heaven, that he might by the sacrifice of his death make an atonement for the sins of the world, that he might reconcile us to the Father, that he might become to us the author of righteousness and of life. He who knows and understands these things, is fully acquainted with the gospel.

Were eyewitnesses, or beholders [413] We hence conclude, that they by no means serve Christ, nor are like the apostles, who presumptuously mount the pulpit to prattle of speculations unknown to themselves; for he alone is the lawful minister of Christ, who knows the truth of the doctrine which he delivers: not that all obtain certainty in the same way; for what Peter says is that he himself was present, when Christ was declared by a voice from heaven to be the Son of God. Three only were then present, but they were sufficient as witnesses; for they had through many miracles seen the glory of Christ, and had a remarkable evidence of his divinity in his resurrection. But we now obtain

[411] The verb {σοφίσω}, once used by Paul in 2 Timothy 3:15, means ``to make wise,'' and in this sense it is used in the Sept.; and it may properly have a similar meaning here, ``myths (or, fables) made wise,'' or made to appear wise a trade still carried on in the world. The idea of craft and subtlety is what is given to it in the classics. --- Ed.

[412] We have the same order as in several previous instances; “power” first, then “coming.” It is the peculiar style of Scripture. — Ed.

[413] Spectators, {ἐπόπται}, lookers on, inspectors, surveyors --- it betokens those who not only see or behold a thing, but who attentively look on. It is more emphatical than {αὐτόπται}, ``eye-witnesses.'' --- Ed.

certainty in another way; for though Christ has not risen before our eyes, yet we know by whom his resurrection has been handed down to us. And added to this is the inward testimony of conscience, the sealing of the Spirit, which far exceeds all the evidence of the senses. But let us remember that the gospel was not at the beginning made up of vague rumors, but that the apostles were the authentic preachers of what they had seen.

17. For he received from God the Father. He chose one memorable example out of many, even that of Christ, when, adorned with celestial glory, he conspicuously displayed his divine majesty to his three disciples. And though Peter does not relate all the circumstances, yet he sufficiently designates them when he says, that a voice came from the magnificent glory. For the meaning is, that nothing earthly was seen there, but that a celestial majesty shone on every side. We may hence conclude what those displays of greatness were which the evangelists relate. And it was necessarily thus done, in order that the authority of that voice which came might be more awful and solemn, as we see that it was done all at once by the Lord. For when he spoke to the fathers, he did not only cause his words to sound in the air, but by adding some symbols or tokens of his presence, he proved the oracles to be his.

This is my beloved Son. Peter then mentions this voice, as though it was sufficient alone, as a full evidence for the gospel, and justly so. For when Christ is acknowledged by us to be him whom the Father has sent, this is our highest wisdom. There are two parts to this sentence. When he says, ``This is,'' the expression is very emphatical, intimating, that he was the Messiah who had been so often promised. Whatever, then, is found in the Law and the Prophets respecting the Messiah, is declared here, by the Father, to belong to him whom he so highly commended. In the other part of the sentence, he announces Christ as his own Son, in whom his whole love dwells and centres. It hence follows that we are not otherwise loved than in him, nor ought the love of God to be sought anywhere else. It is sufficient for me now only to touch on these things by the way.

18. In the holy mount. He calls it the holy mount, for the same reason that the ground was called holy where God appeared to Moses. For wherever the Lord comes, as he is the fountain of all holiness, he makes holy all things by the odor of his presence. And by this mode of speaking we are taught, not only to receive God reverently wherever he shews himself, but also to prepare ourselves for holiness, as soon as he comes nigh us, as it was commanded the people when the law was proclaimed on Mount Sinai. And it is a general truth,

``Be ye holy, for I am holy, who dwell in the midst of you.''
(Leviticus 11:44; 19:2.)

2 Peter 1:19-21

2 Peter 1:19-21

19. We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that

ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts:

19. Et habemus firmiorem propheticum sermonem, cui bene facitis attendentes, tanquam lucernae apparenti in caliginoso loco, donee illuceat dies, et lucifer oriatur in cordibus vestris;

20. Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

20. Hoc primùm cognito, quòd omnis prophetia scripturae privatae (vel, proprii motus) interpretationis non est:

21. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.

21. Neque enim voluntate hominis allata est quondam prophetia; sed à Spiritu Sancto impulsi, loquuti sunt sancti Dei homines.

19. We have also. He now shews that the truth of the gospel is founded on the oracles of the prophets, lest they who embraced it should hesitate to devote themselves wholly to Christ: for they who waver cannot be otherwise than remiss in their minds. But when he says, ``We have,'' he refers to himself and other teachers, as well as to their disciples. The apostles had the prophets as the patrons of their doctrine; the faithful also sought from them a confirmation of the gospel. I am the more disposed to take this view, because he speaks of the whole Church, and makes himself one among others. At the same time, he refers more especially to the Jews, who were well acquainted with the doctrine of the prophets. And hence, as I think, he calls their word more sure or firmer

For they who take the comparative for a positive, that is, ``more sure,'' for ``sure,'' do not sufficiently consider the whole context. The sense also is a forced one, when it is said to be ``more sure,'' because God really completed what he had promised concerning his Son. For the truth of the gospel is here simply proved by a twofold testimony, --- that Christ had been highly approved by the solemn declaration of God, and, then, that all the prophecies of the prophets confirmed the same thing. But it appears at first sight strange, that the word of the prophets should be said to be more sure or firmer than the voice which came from the holy mouth of God himself; for, first, the authority of God's word is the same from the beginning; and, secondly, it was more confirmed than previously by the coming of Christ. But the solution of this knot is not difficult: for here the Apostle had a regard to his own nation, who were acquainted with the prophets, and their doctrine was received without any dispute. As, then, it was not doubted by the Jews but that all the things which the prophets had taught, came from the Lord, it is no wonder that Peter said that their word was more sure. Antiquity also gains some reverence. There are, besides, some other circumstances which ought to be noticed; particularly, that no suspicion could be entertained as to those prophecies in which the kingdom of Christ had so long before been predicted.

The question, then, is not here, whether the prophets deserve more credit than the gospel; but Peter regarded only this, to shew how much deference the

Jews paid to those who counted the prophets as God's faithful ministers, and had been brought up from childhood in their school. [414]

Whereunto ye do well. This passage is, indeed, attended with some more difficulty; for it may be asked, what is the day which Peter mentions? To some it seems to be the clear knowledge of Christ, when men fully acquiesce in the gospel; and the darkness they explain as existing, when they, as yet, hesitate in suspense, and the doctrine of the gospel is not received as indubitable; as though Peter praised those Jews who were searching for Christ in the Law and the Prophets, and were advancing, as by this preceding light towards Christ, the Sun of righteousness, as they were praised by Luke, who, having heard Paul preaching, searched the Scripture to know whether what he said was true. (Acts 17:11)

But in this view there is, first, an inconsistency, because it thus seems that the use of the prophecies is confined to a short time, as though they would be superfluous when the gospel-light is seen. Were one to object and say, that this does not necessarily follow, because until does not always denote the end. To this I say, that in commands it cannot be otherwise taken: ``Walk until you finish your course;'' ``Fight until you conquer.'' In such expressions we doubtless see that a certain time is specified. [415] But were I to concede this point, that the reading of the prophets is not thus wholly cast aside; yet every one must see how frigid is this commendation, that the prophets are useful until Christ is revealed to us; for their teaching is necessary to us until the end of life. Secondly, we must bear in mind who they were whom Peter addressed; for he was not instructing the ignorant and novices, who were as yet in the first rudiments; but even those respecting whom he had before testified, that they had obtained the same precious faith, and were confirmed in the present truth. Surely the gross darkness of ignorance could not have been ascribed to such people. I know what some allege, that all had not made the same progress, and that here beginners who were as yet seeking Christ, are admonished.

But as it is evident from the context, that the words were addressed to the same persons, the passage must necessarily be applied to the faithful who had already known Christ, and had become partakers of the true light. I therefore extend this darkness, mentioned by Peter, to the whole course of life, and the day, I consider will then shine on us when we shall see face to face, what we now see through a glass darkly. Christ, the Sun of righteousness, indeed, shines

[414] Much has been written on this subject; and the difficulty has arisen from a wrong construction of the passage, which is literally as follows: — "And we have more firm the prophetic word," {Καὶ} {ἔχομεν} {βεβαιότερον} {τὸν} {προφητικὸν} {λόγον}, that is, we have rendered more firm the prophetic word. This is confirmed by what follows; for the prophetic word is compared to ``a light shining in a dark place,'' and, therefore, not clear nor firm until it be fulfilled; but they were doing well to attend to this light until the full light of the gospel shone in their hearts. As Scott maintains, the reference here is clearly to the experience of Christians to their real knowledge of divine truths; for it was to be in their hearts, and not before their eyes A great deal of learning has been spent to no purpose on this passage. It has been by most taken as granted, that ``the power and coming of our Lord,'' mentioned in verse 16th, is his second coming, when the whole passage refers only and expressly to his first coming. And on this gratuitous and even false supposition is grounded the elaborate exposition of Sherlock, Horsley, and others. --- Ed.

[415] There is no command here: the Apostle only approves of what they were doing, "whereunto ye do well that ye take heed." — Ed.

forth in the gospel; but the darkness of death will always, in part, possess our minds, until we shall be brought out of the prison of the flesh, and be translated into heaven. This, then, will be the brightness of day, when no clouds or mists of ignorance shall intercept the bright shining of the Sun.

And doubtless we are so far from a perfect day, as our faith is from perfection. It is, therefore, no wonder that the state of the present life is called darkness, since we are far distant from that knowledge to which the gospel invites us. [416]

In short, Peter reminds us that as long as we sojourn in this world, we have need of the doctrine of the prophets as a guiding light; which being extinguished, we can do nothing else but wander in darkness; for he does not disjoin the prophecies from the gospel, when he teaches us that they shine to shew us the way. His object only was to teach us that the whole course of our life ought to be guided by God's word; for otherwise we must be involved on every side in the darkness of ignorance; and the Lord does not shine on us, except when we take his word as our light.

But he does not use the comparison, light, or lamp, to intimate that the light is small and sparing, but to make these two things to correspond,--that we are without light, and can no more keep on the right way than those who go astray in a dark night; and that the Lord brings a remedy for this evil, when he lights a torch to guide us in the midst of darkness.

What he immediately adds respecting the day star does not however seem altogether suitable to this explanation; for the real knowledge, to which we are advancing through life, cannot be called the beginning of the day. To this I reply, that different parts of the day are compared together, but the whole day in all its parts is set in opposition to that darkness, which would wholly overspread all our faculties, were not the Lord to come to our help by the light of his word.

This is a remarkable passage: we learn from it how God guides us. The Papists have ever and anon in their mouth, that the Church cannot err. Though the word is neglected, they yet imagine that it is guided by the Spirit. But Peter, on the contrary, intimates that all are immersed in darkness who do not attend to the light of the word. Therefore, except thou art resolved wilfully to cast thyself into a labyrinth, especially beware of departing even in the least thing from the rule and direction of the word. Nay, the Church cannot follow God as its guide, except it observes what the word prescribes.

In this passage Peter also condemns all the wisdom of men, in order that we may learn humbly to seek, otherwise than by our own understanding, the true way of knowledge; for without the word nothing is left for men but darkness.

It further deserves to be noticed, that he pronounces on the clearness of Scripture; for what is said would be a false eulogy, were not the Scripture fit and suitable to shew to us with certainty the right way. Whosoever, then, will

[416] The Apostle does not speak of the perfect day, but of the dawn of it, and the daystar is that which ushers in the perfect day. The gospel is the dawn and the daystar, compared with the glimmering light of prophecy, and compared too with the perfect day of the heavenly kingdom. Prophecy is useful still; for its fulfillment, found in the gospel, greatly strengthens faith. — Ed.

open his eyes through the obedience of faith, shall by experience know that the Scripture has not been in vain called a light. It is, indeed, obscure to the unbelieving; but they who are given up to destruction are wilfully blind. Execrable, therefore, is the blasphemy of the Papists, who pretend that the light of Scripture does nothing but dazzle the eyes, in order to keep the simple from reading it. But it is no wonder that proud men, inflated with the wind of false confidence, do not see that light with which the Lord favors only little children and the humble. With a similar eulogy David commends the law of God in Psalms 19 and 119.

20. Knowing this first. Here Peter begins to shew how our minds are to be prepared, if we really wish to make progress in scriptural knowledge. There may at the same time be two interpretations given, if you read {ἐπηλύσεως} as some do, which means occurrence, impulse; or, as I have rendered it, interpretation, {ἐπιλύσεως}. But almost all give this meaning, that we ought not to rush on headlong and rashly when we read Scripture, confiding in our own understanding. They think that a confirmation of this follows, because the Spirit, who spoke by the prophets, is the only true interpreter of himself.

This explanation contains a true, godly, and useful doctrine, that then only are the prophecies read profitably, when we renounce the mind and feelings of the flesh, and submit to the teaching of the Spirit, but that it is an impious profanation of it; when we arrogantly rely on our own acumen, deeming that sufficient to enable us to understand it, though the mysteries contain things hidden to our flesh, and sublime treasures of life far surpassing our capacities. And this is what we have said, that the light which shines in it, comes to the humble alone.

But the Papists are doubly foolish, when they conclude from this passage, that no interpretation of a private man ought to be deemed authoritative. For they pervert what Peter says, that they may claim for their own councils the chief right of interpreting Scripture; but in this they act indeed childishly; for Peter calls interpretation private, not that of every individual, in order to prohibit each one to interpret; but he shews that whatever men bring of their own is profane. Were, then, the whole world unanimous, and were the minds of all men united together, still what would proceed from them, would be private or their own; for the word is here set in opposition to divine revelation; so that the faithful, inwardly illuminated by the Holy Spirit, acknowledge nothing but what God says in his word.

However, another sense seems to me more simple, that Peter says that Scripture came not from man, or through the suggestions of man. For thou wilt never come well prepared to read it, except thou bringest reverence, obedience, and docility; but a just reverence then only exists when we are convinced that God speaks to us, and not mortal men. Then Peter especially bids us to believe the prophecies as the indubitable oracles of God, because they have not emanated from men's own private suggestions. [417]

[417] There are in the main three renderings of this passage: — 1. “No Prophecy of Scripture is

To the same purpose is what immediately follows, ---

But holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost. They did not of themselves, or according to their own will, foolishly deliver their own inventions. The meaning is, that the beginning of right knowledge is to give that credit to the holy prophets which is due to God. He calls them the holy men of God, because they faithfully executed the office committed to them, having sustained the person of God in their ministrations. He says that they were --- not that they were bereaved of mind, (as the Gentiles imagined their prophets to have been,) but because they dared not to announce anything of their own, and obediently followed the Spirit as their guide, who ruled in their mouth as in his own sanctuary. Understand by prophecy of Scripture that which is contained in the holy Scriptures.

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of a private impulse," or invention; — 2. "No prophecy of Scripture is of self-interpretation," that is, is its own interpreter; — 3. No prophecy of Scripture is of private interpretation, that is, is not to be interpreted according to the fancies of men, but according to the word of God and the guidance of his Spirit. Now which of these corresponds with the context? Clearly the first, the two others have nothing in the passage to countenance them. The next verse is evidently explanatory of this sentence, which seems at once to determine its meaning; and, as it is often the case in Scripture, the explanation is given negatively and positively. Prophecy did not come from the will of man; it did come from the Spirit of God. Besides, the importance attached to the announcement, "knowing this especially," is not so clearly borne out as by the first exposition, because the fact that prophecy did not come from man, is everything in the question, while the other expositions contain only things of subordinate importance. Thus what goes before and comes after tends to confirm the same view. Whether we take the conjectural reading (which only differs from the other in one small letter) or that which is found in all the MSS., it may admit of the meaning that has been given. There is either an {ἐκ}, ``from,'' understood, or the word prophecy is to be repeated: ``No prophecy of Scripture is from one's own explanation;'' or, ``No prophecy of Scripture is a prophecy of one's own explanation,'' or interpretation, that is, as to things to come. Calvin has been followed in his view of this passage, among others, by Grotius, Doddridge, and Macknight. --- Ed.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

2 Peter 2:1-3

2 Peter 2:1-3

1. But there were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

1. Fuerunt autem et falsi prophetae in populo, sicuti et inter vos erunt falsi doctores, qui subinducent sectas perditionis, et etiam Dominum qui eos redemit abnegantes, accersentes sibi celerem interitum.

2. And many shall follow their pernicious ways; by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of.

2. Et multi sequentur eorum exitia, per quos via veritatis blasphemabitur;

3. And through covetousness shall they with feigned words make merchandise of you: whose judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation slumbereth not.

3. Et in avaritia fictis sermonibus de vobis negotiabuntur; quorum judicium pridem non cessat, et quorum perditio non dormitat.

1. But there were. As weak consciences are usually very grievously and dangerously shaken, when false teachers arise, who either corrupt or mutilate the doctrine of faith, it was necessary for the Apostle, while seeking to encourage the faithful to persevere, to remove out of the way an offense of this kind. He, moreover, comforted those to whom he was writing, and confirmed them by this argument, that God has always tried and proved his Church by such a temptation as this, in order that novelty might not disturb their hearts. ``Not different,'' he says, ``will be the condition of the Church under the gospel, from what it was formerly under the law; false prophets disturbed the ancient Church; the same thing must also be expected by us.''

It was necessary expressly to shew this, because many imagined that the Church would enjoy tranquillity under the rein of Christ; for as the prophets had promised that at his coming there would be real peace, the highest degree of heavenly wisdom, and the full restoration of all things, they thought that the Church would be no more exposed to any contests. Let us then remember that the Spirit of God hath once for all declared, that the Church shall never be free from this intestine evil; and let this likeness be always borne in mind, that the trial of our faith is to be similar to that of the fathers, and for the same reason

--- that in this way it may be made evident, whether we really love God, as we find it written in Deuteronomy 13:3.

But it is not necessary here to refer to every example of this kind; it is enough, in short, to know that, like the fathers, we must contend against false doctrines, that our faith ought by no means to be shaken on account of discords and sects, because the truth of God shall remain unshaken notwithstanding the violent agitations by which Satan strives often to upset all things.

Observe also, that no one time in particular is mentioned by Peter, when he says there shall be false teachers, but that all ages are included; for he makes here a comparison between Christians and the ancient people. We ought, then, to apply this truth to our own time, lest, when we see false teachers rising up to oppose the truth of God, this trial should break us down. But the Spirit reminds us, in order that we may take the more heed; and to the same purpose is the whole description which follows.

He does not, indeed, paint each sect in its own colors, but particularly refers to profane men who manifested contempt towards God. The advice, indeed, is general, that we ought to beware of false teachers; but, at the same time, he selected one kind of such from whom the greater danger arose. What is said here will hereafter become more evident from the words of Jude, [Jude 1:4,] who treats exactly of the same subject.

Who privily shall bring in. By these words he points out the craftiness of Satan, and of all the ungodly who militate under his banner, that they would creep in by oblique turnings, as through burrows under ground. [418] The more watchful, then, ought the godly to be, so that they may escape their hidden frauds: for however they may insinuate themselves, they cannot circumvent those who are carefully vigilant.

He calls them opinions of perdition, or destructive opinions, that every one, solicitous for his salvation, might dread such opinions as the most noxious pests. As to the word opinions or heresies, it has not, without reason, been always deemed infamous and hateful by the children of God; for the bond of holy unity is the simple truth. As soon as we depart from that, nothing remains but dreadful discord.

Even denying the Lord that bought them. Though Christ may be denied in various ways, yet Peter, as I think, refers here to what is expressed by Jude, that is, when the grace of God is turned into lasciviousness; for Christ redeemed us, that he might have a people separated from all the pollutions of the world, and devoted to holiness and innocency. They, then, who throw off the bridle, and give themselves up to all kinds of licentiousness, are not unjustly said to deny Christ by whom they have been redeemed. Hence, that the doctrine of the gospel may remain whole and complete among us, let this be fixed in our minds, that we have been redeemed by Christ, that he may be the Lord of our life and of our death, and that our main object ought to be, to live to him and to

[418] "Peter intimated that the heresies of which he speaks were to be introduced under the color of true doctrine, in the dark. as it were, and by little and little; so that the people would not discern their real nature." — Macknight.

die to him. He then says, that their swift destruction was at hand, lest others should be ensnared by them. [419]

2. And many shall follow. It is, indeed, no slight offense to the weak, when they see that false doctrines are received by the common consent of the world, that a large number of men are led astray, so that few continue in true obedience to Christ. So, at this day, there is nothing that more violently disturbs pious minds than such a defection. For hardly one in ten of those who have once made a profession of Christ, retains the purity of faith to the end. Almost all turn aside into corruptions, and being deluded by the teachers of licentiousness, they become profane. Lest this should make our faith to falter, Peter comes to our help, and in due time foretells that this very thing would be, that is, that false teachers would draw many to perdition.

But there is a double reading even in the Greek copies; for some read, ``lasciviousness,'' and others, ``perdition.'' I have, however, followed what has been mostly approved. [420]

By reason of whom the way of truth. This I consider to have been said for this reason, because as religion is adorned when men are taught to fear God, to maintain uprightness of life, a chaste and virtuous conduct, or when at least the mouth of the wicked is closed, that they do not speak evil of the gospel; so when the reins are let loose, and every kind of licentiousness is practiced, the name and the doctrine of Christ are exposed to the reproaches of the ungodly. Others give a different explanation --- that these false teachers, like filthy dogs, barked at sound doctrine. But the words of Peter appear to me on the contrary to intimate, that these would give occasion to enemies insolently to assail the truth of God. Though then they would not themselves assail the Christian faith with calumnies, yet they would arm others with the means of reproaching it.

3. With feigned words. Peter endeavors by all means to render the faithful displeased with ungodly teachers, that they might resist them more resolutely and more constantly. It is especially an odious thing that we should be exposed to sale like vile slaves. But he testifies that this is done, when any one seduces us from the redemption of Christ. He calls those feigned words which are artfully formed for the purpose of deceiving. [421] Unless then one is so

[419] The word here for "Lord" is {δεσπότης}, which is more expressive of power and authority than {Κύριος}, commonly rendered ``Lord.'' This seems to intimate the character of the men alluded to: they denied Christ as their sovereign, as they rendered no obedience to him, though they may have professed to believe in him as a Savior. --- Ed

[420] Few copies have "perdition," or perditions, for the word is in the plural number; and very many have "lasciviousness," and also the Vulg. and Syr. versions. Having before mentioned their destructive opinions or heresies, which involved the denial of the Lord who bought them, he now refers to the immorality which accompanied their false doctrines; and that immorality is here referred to is evident from this, that the way of truth would be evil spoken of or calumniated. — Ed.

[421] Either "feigned" or "invented" may be meant by {πλαστοῖς}: if ``feigned,'' then they were words used not conveying their real sentiments, but adopted for the purpose of alluring others, as is the case with those who pretend great zeal for truth and great love for souls, when their object is to gain adherents for filthy lucre's sake. But if ``invented'' be adopted, then {λόγοι} must mean narratives or fables, --- ``invented (or fictitious) fables,'' or tales. And this is the rendering of Macknight. And he says, that the Apostle had probably in view the fables concerning the visions of angels and the miracles performed at the sepulchres of departed saints, which the false teachers in the early ages, and the monks in latter times, fabricated, to draw

mad as to sell the salvation of his soul to false teachers, let him close up every avenue that may lead to their wicked inventions. For the same purpose as before he repeats again, that their destruction delayed not, that is, that he might frighten the good from their society. For since they were given up to a sudden destruction, every one who connected himself with them, must have perished with them.

2 Peter 2:4-8

2 Peter 2:4-8

4. For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment;

4. Si enim Angelis qui peccaverant, Deus non perpercit, sed catenis caliginis in tartarum praecipitatos tradidit servandos in judicium;

5. And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

5. Et prisco mundo non pepercit, sed octavum justitiae praeconem Noe servavit, diluvio in mundum impiorum inducto;

6. And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

6. Et civitates Sodomorum et Gomorrae in cinerem redactas, subversione damnavit, easque statuit exemplum iis qui impia acturi forent;

7. And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

7. Et justum Lot qui opprimebatur à nefariis per libidinosam conversationem eripuit;

8. (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)

8. Nam oculis et auribus justus ille, quum habitaret inter ipsos quotidie animam justam iniquis illorum operibus excruciabat;

4. For if. We have stated how much it behoves us to know that the ungodly, who by their mischievous opinions corrupt the Church, cannot escape God's vengeance; and this he proves especially by three remarkable examples of God's judgment, --- that he spared not even angels, that he once destroyed the whole world by a deluge, that he reduced Sodom to ashes, and other neighboring cities. But Peter thought it sufficient to take as granted what ought to be never doubted by us, that is, that God is the judge of the whole world. It hence follows that the punishment he formerly inflicted on the ungodly and wicked, he will now also inflict on the like characters. For he can never be unlike himself, nor does he shew respect of persons, so as to forgive the same wickedness in one which he has punished in another; but he hates injustice and wrong equally, whenever it is found. [422]

money from the people. Similar are the devices of superstitious men, greedy of gain, in every age. --- Ed.

[422] The “if” at the beginning of the verse requires a corresponding clause. Some, as Piscator

For we must always bear in mind that there is a difference between God and men; for men indeed judge unequally, but God keeps the same course in judging. For that he forgives sins, this is done because he blots them out through repentance and faith. He therefore does not otherwise reconcile himself to us than by justifying us; for until sin is taken away, there is always an occasion of discord between us and Him.

As to the angels. The argument is from the greater to the less; for they were far more excellent than we are, and yet their dignity did not preserve them from the hand of God; much less then can mortal men escape, when they follow them in their impiety. But as Peter mentions here but briefly the fall of angels, and as he has not named the time and the manner and other circumstances, it behoves us soberly to speak on the subject. Most men are curious and make no end of inquiries on these things; but since God in Scripture has only sparingly touched on them, and as it were by the way, he thus reminds us that we ought to be satisfied with this small knowledge. And indeed they who curiously inquire, do not regard edification, but seek to feed their souls with vain speculations. What is useful to us, God has made known, that is, that the devils were at first created, that they might serve and obey God, but that through their own fault they apostatized, because they would not submit to the authority of God; and that thus the wickedness found in them was accidental, and not from nature, so that it could not be ascribed to God.

All this Peter declares very clearly, when he says that angels fell, though superior to men; and Jude is still more express when he writes, that they kept not their first estate, or their pre-eminence. [Jude 1:6.] Let those who are not satisfied with these testimonies have recourse to the Sorbonian theology, which will teach them respecting angels to satiety, so as to precipitate them to hell together with the devils.

Chains of darkness. This metaphor intimates that they are held bound in darkness until the last day. And the comparison is taken from malefactors, who, after having been condemned, suffer half of their punishment by the severity of the prison, until they are drawn forth to their final doom. We may hence learn, not only what punishment the wicked suffer after death, but also what is the condition of the children of God: for they calmly acquiesce in the hope of sure and perfect blessedness, though they do not as yet enjoy it; as the former suffer dreadful agonies on account of the vengeance prepared for them.

5. The old world. The import of what he says is, that God, after having drowned the human race, formed again as it were a new world. This is also an argument from the greater to the less; for how can the wicked escape the deluge of divine wrath, since the whole world was once destroyed by it? For by saying that eight only were saved, he intimates that a multitude would not

and Macknight, supply at the end of the seventh verse, “he will not spare thee,” or, “will he spare thee?” But there is no need of this, the corresponding clause is in the ninth verse; and this is our version. The deliverance of the just is there first mentioned, as that of Lot was the subject of the previous verse, and then the reservation of the unjust for judgment, examples of which he had before given. This sort of arrangement is common in Scripture. — Ed.

be a shield against God to protect the wicked; but that as many as sin shall be punished, be they few or many in number.

But it may be asked why he calls Noah the preacher of righteousness. Some understand that he was the preacher of the righteousness of God, inasmuch as Scripture commends God's righteousness, because he defends his own and restores them, when dead, to life. But I rather think that he is called the preacher of righteousness, because he labored to restore a degenerated world to a sound mind, and this not only by his teaching and godly exhortations, but also by his anxious toil in building the ark for the term of a hundred and twenty years. Now, the design of the Apostle is to set before our eyes God's wrath against the wicked, so as to encourage us at the same time to imitate the saints. [423]

6 The cities of Sodom. This was so memorable an example of Divine vengeance, that when the Scripture speaks of the universal destruction of the ungodly, it alludes commonly to this as the type. Hence Peter says, that these cities were made an example. This may, indeed, be truly said of others; but Peter points out something singular, because it was the chief and a lively image; yea, rather, because the Lord designed that his wrath against the ungodly should be made known to all ages; as when he redeemed his people from Egypt, he has set forth to us by that one favor the perpetual safety of his Church. Jude has also expressed the same thing, calling it the punishment of eternal fire. [Jude 1:7.]

8. In seeing and hearing. The common explanation is, that Lot was just in his eyes and ears, because all his senses abhorred the crimes of Sodom. However, another view may be taken of his seeing and hearing, so as to make this the meaning, that when the just man lived among the Sodomites, he tormented his soul by seeing and hearing; for we know that he was constrained to see and hear many things which greatly vexed his mind. The purport of what is said then is, that though the holy man was surrounded with every kind of monstrous wickedness, he yet never turned aside from his upright course.

But Peter expresses more than before, that is, that just Lot underwent voluntary sorrows; as it is right that all the godly should feel no small grief when they see the world rushing into every kind of evil, so the more necessary it is that they should groan for their own sins. And Peter expressly mentioned this, lest when impiety everywhere prevails, we should be captivated and inebriated by the allurements of vices, and perish together with others, but that we might prefer this grief, blessed by the Lord, to all the pleasures of the world.

[423] There is a difference of opinion as to the word "eighth:" some think that the sense is, that Noah was the eighth person who was saved at the deluge, being one of the eight who were preserved. Others render the words, "Noah, the eighth preacher of righteousness," calculating from Enos, in whose time as it is said, "men began to call upon the name of the Lord." (Genesis 4:26.) Lightfoot and some others, have held the latter opinion, though the former has been more generally approved. — Ed.

2 Peter 2:9-11

2 Peter 2:9-11

9. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

9. Novit Dominus pios ex tentatione eripere; injustos autem in diem judicii puniendos servare;

10. But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government. Presumptuous are they, selfwilled, they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.

10. Praesertim verò eos qui post carnem in concupiscentia pollutionis ambulant, dominationem despiciunt, audaces, praefracti, qui excellentias non verentur probro afficere;

11. Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

11. Quum angeli, qui sunt robore et potentia majores, non ferant adversus illas coram Domino contumeliosum judicium.

9. The Lord knoweth. What first offends the weak is, that when the faithful anxiously seek aid, they are not immediately helped by God; but on the contrary he suffers them sometimes as it were to pine away through daily weariness and languor; and secondly, when the wicked grow wanton with impunity and God in the meantime is silent, as though he connived at their evil deeds. This double offense Peter now removes; for he testifies that the Lord knows when it is expedient to deliver the godly from temptation. By these words he reminds us that this office ought to be left to him, and that therefore we ought to endure temptations, and not to faint, when at any time he defers his vengeance against the ungodly.

This consolation is very necessary for us, for this thought is apt to creep in, ``If the Lord would have his own to be safe, why does he not gather them all into some corner of the earth, that they may mutually stimulate one another to holiness? why does he mingle them with the wicked by whom they may be defiled?'' But when God claims to himself the office of helping, and protecting his own, that they may not fail in the contest, we gather courage to fight more strenuously. The meaning of the first clause is, that this law is prescribed by the Lord to all the godly, that they are to be proved by various temptations, but that they are to entertain good hope of success, because they are never to be deprived of his aid and help.

And to reserve the unjust. By this clause he shews that God so regulates his judgments as to bear with the wicked for a time, but not to leave them unpunished. Thus he corrects too much haste, by which we are wont to be carried headlong, especially when the atrocity of wickedness grievously wounds us, for we then wish God to fulminate without delay; when he does not do so, he seems no longer to be the judge of the world. Lest, then, this temporary impunity of wickedness should disturb us, Peter reminds us that a day of judgment has

been appointed by the Lord; and that, therefore, the wicked shall by no means escape punishment, though it be not immediately inflicted.

There is an emphasis in the word reserve, as though he had said, that they shall not escape the hand of God, but be held bound as it were by hidden chains, that they may at a certain time be drawn forth to judgment. The participle {κολαζομένους}, though in the present tense, is yet to be thus explained, that they are reserved or kept to be punished, or, that they may be punished. For he bids us to rely on the expectation of the last judgment, so that in hope and patience we may fight till the end of life.

10. But chiefly them. He comes here to particulars, accommodating a general doctrine to his own purpose; for he had to do with men of desperate wickedness. He then shews that dreadful vengeance necessarily awaited them. For since God will punish all the wicked, how can they escape who abandon themselves like brute beasts to every kind of iniquity? To walk after the flesh, is to be given up to the flesh, like brute animals, who are not led by reason and judgment, but have the natural desire of their flesh as their chief guide. By the lust of uncleanness understand filthy and unbridled gratifications, when men, having cast away every virtuous feeling, and shaken off shame, are carried away into every uncleanness.

This is the first mark by which he brands them, that they are impure men, given up to wickedness. Other marks follow, that they despised government, and feared not to calumniate and reproach men whom God had favored with honorable stations in life. But these words refer to the same thing; for after having said that they held government in contempt, he immediately points out the fountain of this evil, that they were presumptuous, or audacious, and self-willed, or refractory; [424] and lastly, that he might more fully exhibit their pride, he says that they did not fear nor tremble when they treated dignities with contempt. For it is a monstrous arrogance to regard as nothing the glory which shines forth in dignities appointed by God.

But there is no doubt but that in these words he refers to the imperial and magisterial power; for though there is no lawful station in life which is not worthy of respect, yet we know that the magisterial office excels every other, because in governing mankind God himself is represented. Then truly glorious is that power in which God himself appears.

We now perceive what the Apostle meant in this second clause, even that they of whom he speaks were frantic men, lovers of tumults and confusion; for no one can introduce anarchy ({ἀναρχίαν}) into the world without introducing disorder ({ἀταξίαν}.) Now, these with bold effrontery vomited forth reproaches against magistrates, that they might take away every respect for public rights; and this was openly to fight against God by their blasphemies. There are also many turbulent men of this sort at the present day, who proudly

[424] Rather, "self-pleasing," {αὐθάδεις}, whose ruling principle was to please and gratify themselves, without regarding God's will or the good of others whose god was self. In a second sense, the word designates those who are haughty, arrogant, supercilious, refractory; and such is commonly the character of selfish men. --- Ed.

declare that the power of the sword is heathen and unlawful, and furiously attempt to subvert all government. Such furies Satan excites, in order to disturb and prevent the progress of the gospel. But the Lord hath dealt favorably with us; for he hath not only warned us to beware of this deadly poison, but hath also by this ancient example fortified us against this scandal. Hence the Papists act very dishonestly, when they accuse us, and say that seditious men are made so by our doctrine. The same thing might indeed have been alleged against the apostles formerly; and yet they were as far as possible from encouraging any such wickedness.

11. Whereas angels. He hence shews their rash arrogance, because they dared to assume more liberty than even angels. But it seems strange that he says that angels do not bring a railing accusation against magistrates; for why should they be adverse to that sacred order, the author of which they know to be God? Why should they oppose rulers whom they know to be exercising the same ministry with themselves? This reasoning has made some to think that the devils are meant; but they do not thus by any means escape the difficulty. For how could Satan be so moderate as to spare men, since he is the author of every blasphemy against God? And further, their opinion is refuted by what Jude says. [Jude 1:9.]

But when we consider the circumstances of the time, what is said applies very suitably to holy angels. For all the magistrates were then ungodly, and bloody enemies to the gospel. They must, therefore, have been hateful to angels, the guardians of the Church. He, however, says, that men deserving hatred and execration, were not condemned by them in order that they might shew respect to a power divinely appointed. While such moderation, he says, is shewn by angels, these men fearlessly give vent to impious and unbridled blasphemies.

2 Peter 2:12-16

2 Peter 2:12-16

12. But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not; and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

12. Isti autem tanquam bruta animalia, naturaliter genita in capturam et perniciem, in quibus nihil intelligunt maledicentes, in sua corruptione peribunt

13. And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, as they that count it pleasure to riot in the day time. Spots they are and blemishes, sporting themselves with their own deceivings while they feast with you;

13. Recipientes mercedem injustitiae, pro voluptate ducentes in diem frui deliciis, labes et maculae, deliciantes in erroribus suis, conviventes vobiscum;

14. Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot cease from sin; beguiling unstable souls: an heart they have exercised with covetous practices; cursed children:

14. Oculos habentes plenos adulterae, et inquietos ad peccandum, inescantes animas instabiles, cor habentes exercitatum cupiditatibus, execrabiles: filii;

15. Which have forsaken the right way, and are gone astray, following the way of Balaam the son of Bosor, who loved the wages of unrighteousness;

15. Qui relicta via aberraverunt, sequuti viam Balaam, filii Bozor, qui mercedem injustitiae dilexit;

16. But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb ass speaking with man's voice forbade the madness of the prophet.

16. Sed redargutus fuit de sua iniquitate; animal subjugale mutum, humana voce loquens, prohibuit prophetae dementiam. (Numbers 23:16, 28.)

12. But these. He proceeds with what he had begun to say respecting impious and wicked corrupters. And, first, he condemns their loose manners and the obscene wickedness of their whole life; and then he says that they were audacious and perverse, so that by their scurrilous garrulity they insinuated themselves into the favor of many.

He especially compares them to those brute animals, which seem to have come to existence to be ensnared, and to be driven to their own ruin by their own instinct; as though he had said, that being induced by no allurements, they of themselves hasten to throw themselves into the snares of Satan and of death. For what we render, naturally born, Peter has literally, ``natural born.'' But there is not much difference in the sense, whether one of the two has been by somebody else supplied, or by putting down both he meant more fully to express his meaning. [425]

What he adds, speaking evil of the things that they understand not, refers to the pride and presumption he mentioned in the preceding verse. He then says that all excellency was insolently despised by them, because they were become wholly stupefied, so that they differed nothing from beasts. But the word I have rendered for destruction, and afterwards in corruption, is the same, {φθορὰ}; but it is variously taken: but when he says that they would perish in their own corruption, he shews that their corruptions would be ruinous or destructive.

13. Count it pleasure [426] As though he had said, ``They place their happiness

[425] The words may be thus rendered, — "But these, as natural unreasoning animals, born for capture and destruction, speaking evil of things which they understand not, shall utterly perish through their own corruption." They are compared to animals which are by nature without reason, and such as live on prey, wild and rapacious, which seem to have been made to be taken and destroyed; and they are often taken and destroyed while committing plunder. So these men, their wickedness would be the means of ensnaring and destroying them. — Ed.

[426] It is better to connect the first words of this verse, "receiving the reward of unrigrhteousness," with the foregoing, and to begin another period with this clause, and to render this verse and the following thus, — "Counting (or, deeming) riot in the day-time a pleasure, they are spots and stains, rioting in their own delusions, feasting together with (14) you; having eyes full of adultery and which cease not from sin, ensnaring unstable souls, having a heart inured to covetous desires, being children of the curse." The various things said of them are intended to shew that they were "spots and stains," disgraceful and defiling: they rioted in carnal pleasure, and rioted in delusion, and associated with the faithful, feasting with them; they were libidinous, and led unstable souls to follow their ways; they were covetous, and shewed that they were heirs to the curse of God. — Ed.

in their present enjoyments.'' We know that men excel brute animals in this, that they extend their thoughts much farther. It is, then, a base thing in man to be occupied only with present things. Here he reminds us that our minds ought to be freed from the gratifications of the flesh, except we wish to be reduced to the state of beasts.

The meaning of what follows is this, ``These are filthy spots to you and your assembly; for while they feast with you, they at the same time luxuriate in their errors, and shew by their eyes and gestures their lascivious lusts and detestable incontinency.'' Erasmus has rendered the words thus, ``Feasting in their errors, they deride you.'' But this is too forced. It may not unaptly be thus explained, ``Feasting with you, they insolently deride you by their errors.'' I, however, have given the version which seems the most probable, ``luxuriating in their errors, feasting with you.'' He calls the libidinous such as had eyes full of adultery, and who were incessantly led to sin without restraint, as it appears from what is afterwards said.

14. Beguiling, or baiting, unstable souls. By the metaphor of baiting he reminds the faithful to beware of their hidden and deceitful arts; for he compares their impostures to hooks which may catch the unwary to their destruction. By adding unstable souls he shews the reason for caution, that is, when we have not struck firm roots in faith and in the fear of the Lord: and he intimates at the same time, that they have no excuse who suffer themselves to be baited or lured by such flatteries; for this must have been ascribed to their levity. Let there be then a stability of faith, and we shall be safe from the artifices of the ungodly.

An heart they have exercised with covetous practices, or, with lusts. Erasmus renders the last word, ``rapines.'' The word is of a doubtful meaning. I prefer ``lusts.'' As he had before condemned incontinence in their eyes, so he now seems to refer to the vices latent in their hearts. It ought not, however, to be confined to covetousness. By calling them cursed or execrable children, he may be understood to mean, that they were so either actively or passively, that is, that they brought a curse with them wherever they went, or that they deserved a curse.

As he has hitherto referred to the injury they did by the example of a perverse and corrupt life, so he again repeats, that they spread by their teaching the deadly poison of impiety, in order that they might destroy the simple. He compares them to Balaam, the son of Bozor, who employed a venal tongue to curse God's people. And to shew that they were not worthy of a long refutation, he says that Balaam was reproved by an ass, and that thus his madness was condemned. But by this means also he restrains the faithful from associating with them. For it was a dreadful judgment of God, that the angel made himself known to the ass before he did to the prophet, so that the ass, perceiving God displeased, dared not to advance farther, but went back, when the prophet, under the blind impulse of his own avarice, pushed forward against the evident prohibition of the Lord. For what was afterwards answered to him, that he was

to proceed, was an evidence of God's indignation rather than a permission. In short, as the greatest indignity to him, the mouth of the ass was opened, that he who had been unwilling to submit to God's authority might have that as his teacher. And by this miracle the Lord designed to shew how monstrous a thing it was to change the truth to a lie.

It may be here asked, by what right Balaam had the name of a prophet, when it appears that he was addicted to many wicked superstitions. To this I reply, that the gift of prophecy was so special, that though he did not worship the true God, and had not true religion, he might yet have been endued with it. Besides, God has sometimes caused prophecy to exist in the midst of idolatry, in order that men might have less excuse.

Now, if any one considers the chief things which Peter says, he will see that his warning is equally suitable to the present age; for it is an evil which prevails everywhere, that men use scurrilous raillery for the purpose of deriding God and the Savior; nay, they ridicule all religion under the cloak of wit; and when addicted, like beasts, to their own lusts, they will mingle with the faithful; they prattle something about the gospel, and yet they prostitute their tongue to the service of the devil, that they may bring the whole world, as far as they can, to eternal perdition. They are in this respect worse than Balaam himself, because they gratuitously pour forth their maledictions, when he, induced by reward, attempted to curse.

2 Peter 2:17-19

2 Peter 2:17-19

17. These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest; to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

17. Ii sunt fontes sine aqua, nebulae quae turbine aguntur; quibus caligo tenebrarum in aeternum parata est.

18. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error.

18. Nam ubi plusqum fastuosa vanitatis verba sonuerint, inescant per concupiscentias carnis, lasciviis, eos qui verè aufugerant ab iis qui in errore versantur.

19. While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

19. Dum libertatem illis promittunt, quum ipsi sint servi corruptionis: a quo enim quis superatus est, huie in servitutem est addictus.

17. These are wells, or fountains, without water. He shews by these two metaphors, that they had nothing within, though they made a great display. A fountain, by its appearance, draws men to itself, because it promises them water to drink, and for other purposes; as soon as clouds appear, they give hope of immediate rain to irrigate the earth. He then says that they were like

fountains, because they excelled in boasting, and displayed some acuteness in their thoughts and elegance in their words; but that yet they were dry and barren within: hence the appearance of a fountain was fallacious.

He says that they were clouds carried by the wind, either without rain, or which burst forth into a calamitous storm. He thereby denotes that they brought nothing useful, and that often they were very hurtful. He afterwards denounces on them the dreadful judgment of God, that fear might restrain the faithful. By naming the mist or the blackness of darkness, he alludes to the clouds which obscure the air; as though he had said, that for the momentary darkness which they now spread, there is prepared for them a much thicker darkness which is to continue for ever.

18. For when they speak great swelling words of vanity. [427] He means that they dazzled the eyes of the simple by high-flown stuff of words, that they might not perceive their deceit, for it was not easy to captivate their minds with such dotages, except they were first besotted by some artifice. He then says that they used an inflated kind of words and speech, that they might fill the unwary with admiration. And then this grandiloquence, which the ample lungs of the soul send forth, (as Persius says, [428]) was very suitable to cover their shifts and trumperies. There was formerly a craft of this kind in Valentinus, and in those like him, as we learn from the books of Irenaeus. They made words unheard of before, by the empty sound of which, the unlearned being smitten, they were ensnared by their reveries.

There are fanatics of a similar kind at this day, who call themselves by the plausible title of Libertines or free-men. For they talk most confidently of the Spirit and of spiritual things, as though they roared out from above the clouds, and fascinate many by their tricks and wiles, so that you may say that the Apostle has correctly prophesied of them. For they treat all things jocosely and scoffingly; and though they are great simpletons, yet as they indulge in all vices, they find favor with their own people by a sort of drollery. The state of the case is this, that when the difference between good and evil is removed, everything becomes lawful; and men, loosed from all subjection to laws, obey their own lusts. This Epistle, therefore, is not a little suitable to our age.

They allure, or bait, through the lusts of the flesh. He strikingly compares to hooks the allurements of the ungodly, when they make anything they please lawful; for as the lusts of men are headstrong and craving, as soon as liberty is offered, they lay hold on it with great avidity; but soon afterwards the strangling hook within is perceived. But we must consider the whole sentence of the Apostle.

He says that they who had really escaped from the society of those in error

[427] The words are, — "For uttering bombasts of vanity, they allure," etc. The word {ὑπέρογκα}, being a neuter plural, may be rendered as a noun; literally, ``overswellings of vanity;'' but when applied to words, it means what is pompous, inflated, bombastic; but these bombasts were those of vanity, being empty, useless, unprofitable; or as some render the words, they were the bombasts of falsehood, according to the meaning of the word as used often in the Sept.; they spoke false things in a bombastic and inflated strain. --- Ed.

[428] Sat. 1:14.

were again deceived by a new kind of error, even when the reins were let loose to them for the indulgence of every sort of intemperance. He hereby reminds us how dangerous are the wiles of these men. For it was already a dreadful thing that blindness and thick darkness possessed almost all mankind. It was, therefore, in a manner a double prodigy, that men, freed from the common errors of the world, should, after having received the light of God, be brought back to a beastly indifference. Let us be reminded of what we ought especially to beware of, after having been once enlightened, that is, lest Satan entice us under the pretense of liberty, so as to give ourselves up to lasciviousness to gratify the lusts of the flesh. But they are safe from this danger who seriously attend to the study of holiness.

19. While they promise them liberty. He shews their inconsistency, that they falsely promised liberty, while they themselves served sin, and were in the worst bondage; for no one can give what he has not. This reason, however, does not seem to be sufficiently valid, because it sometimes happens that wicked men, and wholly unacquainted with Christ, preach usefully concerning the benefits and blessings of Christ. But we must observe, that what is condemned here is vicious doctrine, connected with impurity of life; for the Apostle's design was to obviate the deceptive allurements by which they ensnared the foolish. The name of liberty is sweet, and they abused it for this end, that the hearer, being loosed from the fear of the divine law, might abandon himself unto unbridled licentiousness. But the liberty which Christ has procured for us, and which he offers daily by the gospel, is altogether different, for he has exempted us from the yoke of the law as far as it subjects us to a curse, that he might also deliver us from the dominion of sin, as far as it subjects us to its own lusts. Hence, where lusts reign, and therefore where the flesh rules, there the liberty of Christ has no place whatever. The Apostle then declares this to all the godly, that they might not desire any other liberty but that which leads those, who are set free from sin, to a willing obedience to righteousness.

We hence learn that there have ever been depraved men who made a false pretense to liberty, and that this has been an old cunning trick of Satan. We need not wonder that at this day the same filth is stirred up by fanatical men.

The Papists turn and twist this passage against us, but they thereby betray their ridiculous impudence. For in the first place, men of the filthiest life, in public-houses and brothels, belch out this charge, that we are the servants of corruption, in the life of whom they cannot point out anything reproachful. In the second place, since we teach nothing respecting Christian liberty but what is derived from Christ and his Apostles, and at the same time require the mortification of the flesh, and the proper exercises for subduing it, much more strictly than they do who slander us, they vomit forth their curses, not so much against us as against the Son of God, whom we have as our certain teacher and authority.

For of whom a man is overcome. This sentence is derived from military law; but yet it is a common saying among heathen writers, that there is no harder

or a more miserable bondage than when lusts rule and reign. What then ought to be done by us, on whom the Son of God has bestowed his Spirit, not only that we may be freed from the dominion of sin, but that we may also become the conquerors of the flesh and the world?

2 Peter 2:20-22

2 Peter 2:20-22

20. For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

20. Nam si ii qui sufugerant ab inquinamentis mundi per cognitionem Domini et Servatoris Jesu Christi, rursum iisdem impliciti superantur, facta sunt illis postrema pejora prioribus.

21. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

21. Melius enim ipsis esset non cognovisse viam justitiae, qum ubi cognoverunt converti ab eo, quod illis traditum fuit, sancto praecepto.

22. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog is turned to his own vomit again; and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.

22. Sed accidit illis quod vero proverbio dicitur, Canis reversus ad proprium vomitum; et sus lota, ad volutabrum coeni.

20. For if after. He again shews how pernicious was the sect which led men consecrated to God back again to their old filth and the corruptions of the world. And he exhibits the heinousness of the evil by a comparison; for it was no common sin to depart from the holy doctrine of God. It would have been better for them, he says, not to have known the way of righteousness; for though there is no excuse for ignorance, yet the servant who knowingly and wilfully despises the commands of his lord, deserves a twofold punishment. There was besides ingratitude, because they wilfully extinguished the light of God, rejected the favor conferred on them, and having shaken off the yoke, became perversely wanton against God; yea, as far as they could, they profaned and abrogated the inviolable covenant of God, which had been ratified by the blood of Christ. The more earnest then ought we to be, to advance humbly and carefully in the course of our calling. We must now consider each sentence.

By naming the pollutions of the world, he shews that we roll in filth and are wholly polluted, until we renounce the world. By the knowledge of Christ he no doubt understands the gospel. He testifies that the design of it is, to deliver us from the defilements of the world, and to lead us far away from them. For the same reason he afterwards calls it the way of righteousness. He then alone makes a right progress in the gospel who faithfully learns Christ; and he truly knows Christ, who has been taught by him to put off the old man and to put on

the new man, as Paul reminds us in Ephesians 4:22 [429]

21. By saying that having forsaken the commandment delivered unto them, they returned to their own pollutions, he intimates first, how inexcusable they were; and secondly, he reminds us that the doctrine of a holy and virtuous life, though common to all and indiscriminately belonging to all, is yet peculiarly taught to those whom God favors with the light of his gospel. But he declares that they who make themselves slaves again to the pollutions of the world fall away from the gospel. The faithful also do indeed sin; but as they allow not dominion to sin, they do not fall away from the grace of God, nor do they renounce the profession of sound doctrine which they have once embraced. For they are not to be deemed conquered, while they strenuously resist the flesh and its lusts.

22. But it has happened unto them. As the example disturbs many, when men who had submitted to the obedience of Christ, rush headlong into vices without fear or shame, the Apostle, in order to remove the offense, says that this happens through their own fault, and that because they are pigs and dogs. It hence follows that no part of the sin can be ascribed to the gospel.

For this purpose he quotes two ancient proverbs, the first of which is found as the saying of Solomon in Proverbs 26:11. But what Peter meant is briefly this, that the gospel is a medicine which purges us by wholesome vomiting, but that there are many dogs who swallow again what they have vomited to their own ruin; and that the gospel is also a laver which cleanses all our uncleanness, but that there are many swine who, immediately after washing, roll themselves again in the mud. At the same time the godly are reminded to take heed to themselves, except they wish to be deemed dogs or swine.

[429] The end of this verse is not explained, but the words of the version, facta sunt illis postrema pejora prioribus, seem to mean, that their last pollutions would become worse to them than their former pollutions; and this is the rendering of Macknight. The sentence is commonly taken in the same sense as in Matthew 12:45, but the words are somewhat different. — Ed.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

2 Peter 3:1-4

2 Peter 3:1-4

1. This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

1. Hane jam, dilecti, secundam vobis scribo epistolam, in quibus excito per commonefactionem vestram puram mentem;

2. That ye may be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apostles of the Lord and Saviour:

2. Ut memores sitis verborum quae predicta sunt a sanctis prophetis, et praecepti nostri, qui sumus apostoli Domini et Servatoris;

3. Knowing this first, that there shall come in the last days scoffers, walking after their own lusts,

3. Hoc primum scientes, quòd venient in extremo dierum illusores, secundum suas ipsorum concupiscentias ambulantes,

4. And saying, Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers fell asleep, all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation.

4. Ac dicentes, Ubi est promissio adventus ejus? Ex quo enim patres dormierunt, omnia sic permanent ab initio creationis.

1. Lest they should be wearied with the Second Epistle as though the first was sufficient, he says that it was not written in vain, because they stood in need of being often stirred up. To make this more evident, he shews that they could not be beyond danger, except they were well fortified, because they would have to contend with desperate men, who would not only corrupt the purity of the faith, by false opinions, but do what they could to subvert entirely the whole faith.

By saying, I stir up your pure mind, he means the same as though he had said, ``I wish to awaken you to a sincerity of mind.'' And the words ought to be thus explained, ``I stir up your mind that it may be pure and bright.'' For the meaning is, that the minds of the godly become dim, and as it were contract rust, when admonitions cease. But we also hence learn, that men even endued with learning, become, in a manner, drowsy, except they are stirred up by constant warnings. [430]

[430] The Apostle evidently admits that they had a sincere or a pure mind, that is, freed from the pollutions referred to in the last chapter; but still they stood in need of being stirred up by admonitions: hence their minds were not, in a strict sense, perfect, though sincere. —

It now appears what is the use of admonitions, and how necessary they are; for the sloth of the flesh smothers the truth once received, and renders it inefficient, except the goads of warnings come to its aid. It is not then enough, that men should be taught to know what they ought to be, but there is need of godly teachers, to do this second part, deeply to impress the truth on the memory of their hearers. And as men are, by nature, for the most part, fond of novelty and thus inclined to be fastidious, it is useful for us to bear in mind what Peter says, so that we may not only willingly suffer ourselves to be admonished by others, but that every one may also exercise himself in calling to mind continually the truth, so that our minds may become resplendent with the pure and clear knowledge of it.

2. That ye may be mindful. By these words he intimates that we have enough in the writings of the prophets, and in the gospel, to stir us up, provided we be as diligent as it behoves us, in meditating on them; and that our minds sometimes contract a rust, or become bedimmed through darkness, is owing to our sloth. That God may then continually shine upon us, we must devote ourselves to that study: let our faith at the same time acquiesce in witnesses so certain and credible. For when we have the prophets and apostles agreeing with us, nay, as the ministers of our faith, and God as the author, and angels as approvers, there is no reason that the ungodly, all united, should move us from our position. By the commandment of the apostles he means the whole doctrine in which they had instructed the faithful. [431]

3. Knowing this first. The participle knowing may be applied to the Apostle, and in this way, ``I labor to stir you up for this reason, because I know what and how great is your impending danger from scoffers.'' I however prefer this explanation, that the participle is used in place of a verb, as though he had said, ``Know ye this especially.'' For it was necessary that this should have been foretold, because they might have been shaken, had impious men attacked them suddenly with scoffs of this kind. He therefore wished them to know this, and to feel assured on the subject, that they might be prepared to oppose such men.

But he calls the attention of the faithful again to the doctrine which he touched upon in the second chapter. For by the last days is commonly meant the kingdom of Christ, or the days of his kingdom, according to what Paul says, ``Upon whom the ends of the world are come.'' (1 Corinthians 10:11.) [432] The meaning is, that the more God offers himself by the gospel to the world, and the more he invites men to his kingdom, the more audacious on the other hand

Ed.

[431] The construction of the passage is as follows: — “In both which I, by admonition, arouse your sincere mind to remember the words, aforetime spoken by the holy prophets, and the doctrine of us, the apostles of our Lord and Savior.” The verb {μνησθῶναι} is connected with ``arouse;'' and it is in this tense used actively as well as passively. See Matthew 26:75, and Acts 10:31. There is in the noun {ἐντολὴ}, a metonymy, the commandment for what was commanded to be taught, the doctrine. It has this meaning, according to Schleusner, in John 12:50, and in this Epistle, chapter 2:21. --- Ed

[432] It is literally, “the last of the days,” according to the Hebrew form {{הימים ,{אחרית ``the extremity of the days,'' (Isaiah (;2:2 but the meaning is the same as ``the last days,'' as used in Hebrews ,1:2 and in other places, that is, the days of the gospel dispensation. --- Ed.

will ungodly men vomit forth the poison of their impiety.

He calls those scoffers, according to what is usual in Scripture, who seek to appear witty by shewing contempt to God, and by a blasphemous presumption. It is, moreover, the very extremity of evil, when men allow themselves to treat the awful name of God with scoffs. Thus, the first Psalm speaks of the seat of scoffers. So David, in Psalms 119:51, complains that he was derided by the proud, because he attended to God's law. So Isaiah, in the 28th chapter, having referred to them, describes their supine security and insensibility. Let us therefore bear in mind, that there is nothing to be feared more than a contest with scoffers. On this subject we said something while explaining the third chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians. As, however, the Holy Scripture has foretold that they would come, and has also given us a shield by which we may defend ourselves, there is no excuse why we should not boldly resist them whatever devices they may employ.

4. Where is the promise. It was a dangerous scoff when they insinuated a doubt as to the last resurrection; for when that is taken away, there is no gospel any longer, the power of Christ is brought to nothing, the whole of religion is gone. Then Satan aims directly at the throat of the Church, when he destroys faith in the coming of Christ. For why did Christ die and rise again, except that he may some time gather to himself the redeemed from death, and give them eternal life? All religion is wholly subverted, except faith in the resurrection remains firm and immovable. Hence, on this point Satan assails us most fiercely.

But let us notice what the scoff was. They set the regular course of nature, such as it seems to have been from the beginning, in opposition to the promise of God, as though these things were contrary, or did not harmonize together. Though the faith of the fathers, they said, was the same, yet no change has taken place since their death, and it is known that many ages have passed away. Hence they concluded that what was said of the destruction of the world was a fable; because they conjectured, that as it had lasted so long, it would be perpetual.

2 Peter 3:5-8

2 Peter 3:5-8

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water:

5. Nam hoe nesciunt volentes. quòd caeli jam olim fuerint, et terra ex aqua, et per aquam consistens, Dei sermone;

6. Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished:

6. Per quae mundus qui tunc erat, aqua inundatus periit:

7. But the heavens and the earth, which are now, by the same word are kept in store, reserved unto fire against the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men.

7. Qui autem nunc sunt coeli et terra, ejusdem sermone repositi sunt, et servantur igni in diem judicii et perditionis impiorum.

8. But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, that one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

8. Porri, ne hoc unum nos lateat, dilecti, quòd unus dies apud Dominum perinde est ut mille anni, et mille anni ut dies unus.

5. For this they willingly are ignorant of. By one argument only he confutes the scoff of the ungodly, even by this, that the world once perished by a deluge of waters, when yet it consisted of waters. (Genesis 1:2.) And as the history of this was well known, he says that they willingly, or of their own accord, erred. For they who infer the perpetuity of the world from its present state, designedly close their eyes, so as not to see so clear a judgment of God. The world no doubt had its origin from waters, for Moses calls the chaos from which the earth emerged, waters; and further, it was sustained by waters; it yet pleased the Lord to use waters for the purpose of destroying it. It hence appears that the power of nature is not sufficient to sustain and preserve the world, but that on the contrary it contains the very element of its own ruin, whenever it may please God to destroy it.

For it ought always to be borne in mind, that the world stands through no other power than that of God's word, and that therefore inferior or secondary causes derive from him their power, and produce different effects as they are directed. Thus through water the world stood, but water could have done nothing of itself, but on the contrary obeyed God's word as an inferior agent or element. As soon then as it pleased God to destroy the earth, the same water obeyed in becoming a ruinous inundation. We now see how egregiously they err, who stop at naked elements, as though there was perpetuity in them, and their nature were not changeable according to the bidding of God.

By these few words the petulance of those is abundantly refuted, who arm themselves with physical reasons to fight against God. For the history of the deluge is an abundantly sufficient witness that the whole order of nature is governed by the sole power of God. (Genesis 7:17.)

It seems, however, strange that he says that the world perished through the deluge, when he had before mentioned the heaven and the earth. To this I answer, that the heaven was then also submerged, that is, the region of the air, which stood open between the two waters. For the division or separation, mentioned by Moses, was then confounded. (Genesis 1:6;) and the word heaven is often taken in this sense. if any wishes for more on this subject, let him read Augustine on the City of God. Lib. 20. [433]

[433]The two verses, the fifth and the sixth, have been differently explained. “The earth,” say some, “subsisting from water and through water,” that is, emerging from water and made firm and solid by means of water; which is true, for through moisture the earth adheres together and becomes a solid mass. Others render the last clause, “in water,” or in the midst of water, that is, surrounded by water; and this is the most suitable meaning. The {δι} {᾽} {ὦν} at the beginning of the sixth verse, refers, according to Beza, Whitby, and others, to the heavens and the earth in the preceding verse, the deluge being occasioned by ``the windows of heaven being opened,'' and ``the fountains of the great deep being broken up.'' (Genesis 7:11.) ``By which (or by the means of which) the

7. But the heavens and the earth which are now. He does not infer this as the consequence; for his purpose was no other than to dissipate the craftiness of scoffers respecting the perpetual state of nature, and we see many such at this day who being slightly embued with the rudiments of philosophy, only hunt after profane speculations, in order that they may pass themselves off as great philosophers.

But it now appears quite evident from what has been said, that there is nothing unreasonable in the declaration made by the Lord, that the heaven and the earth shall hereafter be consumed by fire, because the reason for the fire is the same as that for the water. For it was a common saying even among the ancients, that from these two chief elements all things have proceeded. But as he had to do with the ungodly, he speaks expressly of their destruction.

8. But be not ignorant of this one thing. He now turns to speak to the godly; and he reminds them that when the coming of Christ is the subject, they were to raise upwards their eyes, for by so doing, they would not limit, by their unreasonable wishes, the time appointed by the Lord. For waiting seems very long on this account, because we have our eyes fixed on the shortness of the present life, and we also increase weariness by computing days, hours, and minutes. But when the eternity of God's kingdom comes to our minds, many ages vanish away like so many moments.

This then is what the Apostle calls our attention to, so that we may know that the day of resurrection does not depend on the present flow of time, but on the hidden purpose of God, as though he had said, ``Men wish to anticipate God for this reason, because they measure time according to the judgment of their own flesh; and they are by nature inclined to impatience, so that celerity is even delay to them: do ye then ascend in your minds to heaven, and thus time will be to you neither long nor short.''

2 Peter 3:9-13

2 Peter 3:9-13

9. The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but

world at that time, being overflowed with water, was destroyed.'' The objection to this view is, as justly stated by Macknight, that the correspondence between this verse and the following is thereby lost: the reservation of the world to be destroyed by fire is expressly ascribed, in verse seventh, to God's word; and to the same ought the destruction of the old world to be ascribed. This is doubtless the meaning required by the passage, but ``which'' being in the plural, creates a difficulty, and there is no different reading. Macknight solves the difficulty by saying that the plural ``which'' or whom, refers to ``word,'' meaning Christ, and ``God,'' as in the first verse of this chapter, ``in both which,'' a reference is made to what is implied in ``the second Epistle,'' that is, the first. He supposes that there is here the same anomalous mode of speaking. But the conjecture which has been made is not improbable, that it is a typographical mistake, {ὧν} being put for {οὗ} or for {ὃν}. Then the meaning would be evident; and the two parts would correspond the one with the other: 5. ``For of this they are wilfully ignorant, that the heavens existed of old and the earth (which subsisted from water and in water,) by 6. the word of God; by which the world at that time, being over- 7. flowed with water, was destroyed. But the present heavens and the earth are by His word reserved, being kept for fire to the day of judgment and of the perdition of ungodly men.'' By ``word'' here is meant command, or power, or the fiat by which the world was created; and by the same it was destroyed, and by the same it will be finally destroyed. Instead of {αὐτῶ} ``the same'' Griesbach has introduced into his text {αὐτοῦ}, ``His.'' --- Ed

that all should come to repentance.

9. Non tardat Dominus in promissione, sicuti quidam tarditatem slackness; existimant; sed tolerantem se praebet erga nos, nolens ullos perire, sed omnes ad poenitentiam recipere (aut, colligi, vel, aggregari.)

10. But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burnt up.

10. Veniet autem dies Domini tanquam fur in nocte, in qua coeli in modum procellae transibunt, elementa autem ardore solventur; et terra, quaeque in ea sunt opera ardebunt.

11. Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness,

11. Quum Haec igitur omnia solvantur, quales oportet nos esse in sanctis conversationibus et pietatibus;

12. Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

12. Expectantes properando adventum diei Dei, propter quem coeli solventur, et elementa ardore consumentur?

13. Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness.

13. Novos autem coelos et terram novam juxta promissum ejus expectamus, ín quibus habitat justitia.

9. But the Lord is not slack, or, delays not. He checks extreme and unreasonable haste by another reason, that is, that the Lord defers his coming that he might invite all mankind to repentance. For our minds are always prurient, and a doubt often creeps in, why he does not come sooner. But when we hear that the Lord, in delaying, shews a concern for our salvation, and that he defers the time because he has a care for us, there is no reason why we should any longer complain of tardiness. He is tardy who allows an occasion to pass by through slothfulness: there is nothing like this in God, who in the best manner regulates time to promote our salvation. And as to the duration of the whole world, we must think exactly the same as of the life of every individual; for God by prolonging time to each, sustains him that he may repent. In the like manner he does not hasten the end of the world, in order to give to all time to repent.

This is a very necessary admonition, so that we may learn to employ time aright, as we shall otherwise suffer a just punishment for our idleness.

Not willing that any should perish. So wonderful is his love towards mankind, that he would have them all to be saved, and is of his own self prepared to bestow salvation on the lost. But the order is to be noticed, that God is ready to receive all to repentance, so that none may perish; for in these words the way and manner of obtaining salvation is pointed out. Every one of us, therefore, who is desirous of salvation, must learn to enter in by this way.

But it may be asked, If God wishes none to perish, why is it that so many

do perish? To this my answer is, that no mention is here made of the hidden purpose of God, according to which the reprobate are doomed to their own ruin, but only of his will as made known to us in the gospel. For God there stretches forth his hand without a difference to all, but lays hold only of those, to lead them to himself, whom he has chosen before the foundation of the world. [434]

But as the verb {χωρῶσαι} is often taken passively by the Greeks, no less suitable to this passage is the verb which I have put in the margin, that God would have all, who had been before wandering and scattered, to be gathered or come together to repentance.

10. But the day of the Lord will come. This has been added, that the faithful might be always watching, and not promise to-morrow to themselves. For we all labor under two very different evils --- too much haste, and slothfulness. We are seized with impatience for the day of Christ already expected; at the same time we securely regard it as afar off. As, then, the Apostle has before reproved an unreasonable ardor, so he now shakes off our sleepiness, so that we may attentively expect Christ at all times, lest we should become idle and negligent, as it is usually the case. For whence is it that flesh indulges itself except that there is no thought of the near coming of Christ?

What afterwards follows, respecting the burning of heaven and earth, requires no long explanation, if indeed we duly consider what is intended. For it was not his purpose to speak refinedly of fire and storm, and other things, but only that he might introduce an exhortation, which he immediately adds, even that we ought to strive after newness of life. For he thus reasons, that as heaven and earth are to be purged by fire, that they may correspond with the kingdom of Christ, hence the renovation of men is much more necessary. Mischievous, then, are those interpreters who consume much labor on refined speculations, since the Apostle applies his doctrine to godly exhortations.

Heaven and earth, he says, shall pass away for our sakes; is it meet, then, for us to be engrossed with the things of earth, and not, on the contrary, to attend to a holy and godly life? The corruptions of heaven and earth will be purged by fire, while yet as the creatures of God they are pure; what then ought to be done by us who are full of so many pollutions? As to the word godlinesses (pietatibus,) the plural number is used for the singular, except you take it as meaning the duties of godliness. [435] Of the elements of the world I shall only say this one thing, that they are to be consumed, only that they may be renovated, their substance still remaining the same, as it may be easily gathered from Romans 8:21, and from other passages. [436]

[434] A similar view was taken by Estius, Piscator, and Beza. — Ed.

[435] The previous word is also in the plural number, "in holy conversations." What seems to be meant is, that every part of the conduct should be holy, and that every part of godliness should be attended to: "In every part of a holy life, and every act of godliness;" that is, we are not to be holy in part or pious in part, but attend to every branch of duty towards man, and every branch of duty towards God. — Ed.

[436] All that is said here is, that there will be new heavens and a new earth, and not that the present heavens and the present earth will be renovated. See Revelation 20:11; 21:1. — Ed.

12 Looking for and hasting unto, or, waiting for by hastening; so I render the words, though they are two participles; for what we had before separately he gathers now into one sentence, that is, that we ought hastily to wait. Now this contrarious hope possesses no small elegance, like the proverb, ``Hasten slowly,'' (festina lente.) When he says, ``Waiting for,'' he refers to the endurance of hope; and he sets hastening in opposition to topor; and both are very apposite. For as quietness and waiting are the peculiarities of hope, so we must always take heed lest the security of the flesh should creep in; we ought, therefore, strenuously to labor in good works, and run quickly in the race of our calling. [437] What he before called the day of Christ (as it is everywhere called in Scripture) he now calls the day of God, and that rightly, for Christ will then restore the kingdom to the Father, that God may be all in all.

2 Peter 3:14-18

2 Peter 3:14-18

14. Wherefore, beloved, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot, and blameless.

14. Quare, dilecti, quum Haec expectetis, studete incontaminati et irreprehensibiles ab eo inyeniri in pace:

15. And account that the longsuffering of our Lord is salvation; even as our beloved brother Paul also according to the wisdom given unto him hath written unto you;

15. Et Domini nostri tolerantiam salutem existimate, quemadmodum et dilectus frater noster Paulus, secundum datam sibi sapientiam scripsit vobis;

16. As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things; in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

16. Sicuti in omnibus Epistolis, loquens de iis in quibus sunt quaedam difficilia intellectu, quae indocti et instabiles invertunt (ut et caeteras Scripturas) ad suam perniciem.

17. Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know these things before, beware lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

17. Vos igitur, dilecti, praemoniti cavete, ut ne simul nefariorum errore abacti, excidatis à vestra firmitate.

18. But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

18. Crescite autem in gratia et notitia Domini nostri et Servatoris Jesu Christi; ipsi gloria et nunc et in diem seternitatis

14. Wherefore. He justly reasons from hope to its effect, or the practice of

[437] The first meaning of {σπεύδω} is to hasten, and it is often used, when connected with another verb, adverbially as proposed by Calvin; but when followed as here by an accusative case, it has often the secondary meaning of earnestly desiring a thing. It is so taken here by Schleusner, Parkhurst, and Macknight; ``Expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God.'' --- Ed

a godly life; for hope is living and efficacious; therefore it cannot be but that it will attract us to itself. He, then, who waits for new heavens, must begin with renewal as to himself, and diligently aspire after it; but they who cleave to their own filth, think nothing, it is certain, of God's kingdom, and have no taste for anything but for this corrupt world.

But we must notice that he says, that we ought to be found blameless by Christ; for by these words he intimates, that while the world engages and engrosses the minds of others, we must cast our eyes on the Lord, and he shews at the same time what is real integrity, even that which is approved by his judgment, and not that which gains the Praise of men. [438]

The word peace seems to be taken for a quiet state of conscience, founded on hope and patient waiting. [439] For as so few turn their attention to the judgment of Christ, hence it is, that while they are carried headlong by their importunate lusts, they are at the same time in a state of disquietude. This peace, then, is the quietness of a peaceable soul, which acquiesces in the word of God.

It may be asked, how any one can be found blameless by Christ, when we all labor under so many deficiencies. But Peter here only points out the mark at which the faithful ought all to aim, though they cannot reach it, until having put off their flesh they become wholly united to Christ.

15. The long-suffering of our Lord. He takes it as granted that Christ defers the day of his coming, because he has a regard for our salvation. He hence animates the faithful, because in a longer delay they have an evidence as to their own salvation. Thus, what usually disheartens others through weariness, he wisely turns to a contrary purpose.

Even as our beloved brother Paul. We may easily gather from the Epistle to the Galatians, as well as from other places, that unprincipled men, who went about everywhere to disturb the churches, in order to discredit Paul, made use of this pretense, that he did not well agree with the other Apostles. It is then probable that Peter referred to Paul in order to shew their consent; for it was very necessary to take away the occasion for such a calumny. And yet, when I examine all things more narrowly, it seems to me more probable that this Epistle was composed by another according to what Peter communicated, than that it was written by himself, for Peter himself would have never spoken thus. But it is enough for me that we have a witness of his doctrine and of his goodwill, who brought forward nothing contrary to what he would have himself said.

16. In which are some things. The relative which does not refer to epistles, for it is in the neuter gender. [440] The meaning is, that in the things which

[438] He says, “Expecting these things, be diligent,” etc.; {σπουδάσατε}, hasten, make speed, diligently strive, earnestly labor, carefully endeavor: ``Therefore, beloved, since ye expect these things, diligently strive to be found by him in peace, unspotted and unblamable;'' that is, having no stain, and not chargeable with crime. --- Ed

[439] Some say, “peace” with God; but the view of Calvin is more suitable here. — Ed.

[440] It is in the feminine gender in some MSS. The authority as to the copies and versions is nearly equal. The difference is not much as to the sense, only “in which epistles,” reads better. So thought Beza, Mill, and others. It has been a question as to the particular epistle

he wrote there was sometimes an obscurity, which gave occasion to the unlearned to go astray to their own ruin. We are reminded by these words, to reason soberly on things so high and obscure; and further, we are here strengthened against this kind of offense, lest the foolish or absurd speculations of men should disturb us, by which they entangle and distort simple truth, which ought to serve for edification.

But we must observe, that we are not forbidden to read Paul's Epistles, because they contain some things hard and difficult to be understood, but that, on the contrary, they are commended to us, provided we bring a calm and teachable mind. For Peter condemns men who are trifling and volatile, who strangely turn to their own ruin what is useful to all. Nay, he says that this is commonly done as to all the Scripture: and yet he does not hence conclude, that we are not to read it, but only shews, that those vices ought to be corrected which prevent improvement, and not only so, but render deadly to us what God has appointed for our salvation.

It may, however, be asked, Whence is this obscurity, for the Scripture shines to us like a lamp, and guides our steps? To this I reply, that it is nothing to be wondered at, if Peter ascribed obscurity to the mysteries of Christ's kingdom, and especially if we consider how hidden they are to the perception of the flesh. However the mode of teaching which God has adopted, has been so regulated, that all who refuse not to follow the Holy Spirit as their guide, find in the Scripture a clear light. At the same time, many are blind who stumble at mid-day; others are proud, who, wandering through devious paths, and flying over the roughest places, rush headlong into ruin.

17. Ye, therefore, beloved. After having shewn to the faithful the dangers of which they were to beware, he now concludes by admonishing them to be wise. But he shews that there was need of being watchful, lest they should be

referred to by Peter; for that he alludes to some particular epistle is evident from the manner in which he writes. The difficulty has arisen from connecting the reference made to Paul, only with the former part of the 15th verse, while that part ought to be viewed only as an addition to the former verse; and the former verse stands connected with the new heavens and the new earth. So that the subjects in hand are the day of judgment, the future state, and the necessity of being prepared for it; and that these are the things referred to is evident from this, that he says, that Paul speaks of them in all his epistles, which is not true, as to what is said at the beginning of the 15th verse. The passage then ought to be thus rendered: — 14. Therefore, beloved, since ye expect these things, diligently strive to be found by him in peace, unspotted and unblamable; 15. and deem the long-suffering of our Lord to be for salvation: even as Paul, our beloved brother, has, according to the wisdom given 16. to him, written to you; as also in all his epistles, when speaking in them of these things; in which (epistles) there are some things difficult to be understood," etc. Now the special epistle referred to was most probably the epistle to the Hebrews, one particular design of which was to direct the attention of the Jews to the country promised to their fathers. Some, indeed, hold that that epistle was written to the Jews in Judea; but others maintain that it was written to converted Hebrews generally, whether in Judea or elsewhere; and this passage seems to favor the latter opinion. If the view given here is right, that is, that the subjects on which reference is made to Paul, are those mentioned in the 12th, the 13th, and 14th verses, then there is no epistle of Paul which could be more appropriately referred to than that to the Hebrews, as the new heavens and the new earth answer exactly to "the better and heavenly country," mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews. See Hebrews 11:16. Besides, the exhortations and warnings of that epistle wholly coincide with the exhortation given here by Peter. — Ed.

overwhelmed. And, doubtless, the craft of our enemy, the many and various treacheries which he employs against us, the cavils of ungodly men, leave no place for security. Hence, vigilance must be exercised, lest the devices of Satan and of the wicked should succeed in circumventing us. It, however seems that we stand on slippery ground, and the certainty of our salvation is suspended, as it were, on a thread, since he declares to the faithful, that they ought to take heed lest they should fall from their own steadfastness.

What, then, will become of us, if we are exposed to the danger of falling? To this I answer, that this exhortation, and those like it, are by no means intended to shake the firmness of that faith which recumbs on God, but to correct the sloth of our flesh. If any one wishes to see more on this subject, let him read what has been said on the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians.

The meaning is this, that as long as we are in the flesh, our tardiness must be roused, and that this is fitly done by having our weakness, and the variety of dangers which surround us, placed before our eyes; but that the confidence which rests on God's promises ought not to be thereby shaken.

18. But grow in grace. He also exhorts us to make progress; for it is the only way of persevering, to make continual advances, and not to stand still in the middle of our journey; as though he had said, that they only would be safe who labored to make progress daily.

The word grace, I take in a general sense, as meaning those spiritual gifts we obtain through Christ. But as we become partakers of these blessings according to the measure of our faith, knowledge is added to grace; as though he had said, that as faith increases, so would follow the increase of grace. [441]

To him be glory. This is a remarkable passage to prove the divinity of Christ; for what is said cannot belong to any but to God alone. The adverb of the present time, now, is designed for this end, that we may not rob Christ of his glory, during our warfare in the world. He then adds, for ever, that we may now form some idea of his eternal kingdom, which will make known to us his full and perfect glory.

END OF THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER

[441] "Grace" is the attainment, and "the knowledge" of Christ is the way and means. The chief thing is often mentioned first in Scripture, then that which leads to it: or the cause of it. — Ed.

First John

First John: The Argument

THE ARGUMENT

This Epistle is altogether worthy of the spirit of that disciple who, above others, was loved by Christ, that he might exhibit him as a friend to us. But it contains doctrines mixed with exhortations; for he speaks of the eternal Deity of Christ, and at the same time of the incomparable grace which he brought with him when he appeared in the world, and generally of all his blessings; and he especially commends and extols the inestimable grace of divine adoption.

On these truths he grounds his exhortations; and at one time he admonishes us in general to lead a pious and holy life, and at another time he expressly enjoins love. But he does none of these things in a regular order; for he everywhere mixes teaching with exhortation. But he particularly urges brotherly love: he also briefly touches on other things, such as to beware of impostors, and similar things. But each particular shall be noticed in its own place.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 John 1:1-2

1 John 1:1-2

1. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life;

1. Quod erat ab initio, quod audivimus, quod vidimus oculis nostris, quod intuiti sumus, quod manus nostrae contrectaverunt, de Sermone vitae;

2. (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

2. Et vita manifesta est, et vidimus et testamur et annuntiamus vobis vitam aeternam, quae erat apud Patrem, et manifesta est nobis.

He shows, first, that life has been exhibited to us in Christ; which, as it is an incomparable good, ought to rouse and inflame all our powers with a marvelous desire for it, and with the love of it. It is said, indeed, in a few and plain words, that life is manifested; but if we consider how miserable and horrible a condition death is, and also what is the kingdom and the glory of immortality, we shall perceive that there is something here more magnificent than what can be expressed in any words.

Then the Apostle's object, in setting before us the vast good, yea, the chief and only true happiness which God has conferred on us, in his own Son, is to raise our thoughts above; but as the greatness of the subject requires that the truth should be certain, and fully proved, this is what is here much dwelt upon. For these words, What we have seen, what we have heard, what we have looked on, serve to strengthen our faith in the gospel. Nor does he, indeed, without reason, make so many asseverations; for since our salvation depends on the gospel, its certainty is in the highest degree necessary; and how difficult it is for us to believe, every one of us knows too well by his own experience. To believe is not lightly to form an opinion, or to assent only to what is said, but a firm, undoubting conviction, so that we may dare to subscribe to the truth as fully proved. It is for this reason that the Apostle heaps together so many things in confirmation of the gospel.

1 That which was from the beginning As the passage is abrupt and involved, that the sense may be made clearer, the words may be thus arranged; ``We announce to you the word of life, which was from the beginning and really tes-

tified to us in all manner of ways, that life has been manifested in him;'' or, if you prefer, the meaning may be thus given, ``What we announce to you respecting the word of life, has been from the beginning, and has been openly shewed to us, that life was manifested in him.'' But the words, That which was from the beginning, refer doubtless to the divinity of Christ, for God manifested in the flesh was not from the beginning; but he who always was life and the eternal Word of God, appeared in the fullness of time as man. Again, what follows as to the looking on and the handling of the hands, refers to his human nature. But as the two natures constitute but one person, and Christ is one, because he came forth from the Father that he might put on our flesh, the Apostle rightly declares that he is the same, and had been invisible, and afterwards became visible. [442]

Hereby the senseless cavil of Servetus is disproved, that the nature and essence of Deity became one with the flesh, and that thus the Word was transformed into flesh, because the life-giving Word was seen in the flesh.

Let us then bear in mind, that this doctrine of the Gospel is here declared, that he who in the flesh really proved himself to be the Son of God, and was acknowledged to be the Son of God, was always God's invisible Word, for he does not refer here to the beginning of the world, but ascends much higher.

Which we have heard, which we have seen. It was not the hearing of a report, to which little credit is usually given, but John means, that he had faithfully learnt from his Master those things which he taught, so that he alleged nothing thoughtlessly and rashly. And, doubtless, no one is a fit teacher in the Church, who has not been the disciple of the Son of God, and rightly instructed in his school, since his authority alone ought to prevail.

When he says, we have seen with our eyes, it is no redundancy, but a fuller expression for the sake of amplifying; nay, he was not satisfied with seeing only, but added, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled By these words he shews that he taught nothing but what had been really made known to him.

It may seem, however, that the evidence of the senses little availed on the present subject, for the power of Christ could not be perceived by the eyes nor felt by the hands. To this I answer, that the same thing is said here as in the first chapter of the Gospel of John, ``We have seen his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father;'' for he was not known as the Son of God by the external form of his body, but because he gave illustrious proofs of his Divine power, so that in him shone forth the majesty of the Father, as in a living and distinct image. As the words are in the plural number, and the subject equally applies to all the apostles, I am disposed to include them, especially as the authority of

[442] It is more consistent with the passage to take “from the beginning” here as from the beginning of the Gospel, from the beginning of the ministry of our Savior, because what had been from the beginning was what the apostles had heard and seen. That another view has been taken of these words has been owing to an over-anxiety on the part of many, especially of the Fathers, to establish the divinity of our Savior; but this is what is sufficiently evident from the second verse. See ch. 2:7, 24. — Ed.

testimony is what is treated of.

But no less frivolous (as I have before said) than impudent is the wickedness of Servetus, who urges these words to prove that the Word of God became visible and capable of being handled; he either impiously destroys or mingles together the twofold nature of Christ. It is, therefore, a pure figment. Thus deifying the humanity of Christ, he wholly takes away the reality of his human nature, at the same time denying that Christ is for any other reason called the Son of God, except that he was conceived of his mother by the power of the Holy Spirit, and taking away his own subsistence in God. It hence follows that he was neither God nor man, though he seems to form a confused mass from both. But as the meaning of the Apostle is evident to us, let us pass by that unprincipled man.

Of the Word of life The genitive here is used for an adjective, vivifying, or life-giving; for in him, as it is said in the first chapter of John's Gospel, was life. At the same time, this distinction belongs to the Son of God on two accounts, because he has infused life into all creatures, and because he now restores life to us, which had perished, having been extinguished by the sin of Adam. Moreover, the term Word may be explained in two ways, either of Christ, or of the doctrine of the Gospel, for even by this is salvation brought to us. But as its substance is Christ, and as it contains no other thing than that he, who had been always with the Father, was at length manifested to men, the first view appears to me the more simple and genuine. Moreover, it appears more fully from the Gospel that the wisdom which dwells in God is called the Word.

2 For (or, and) the life was manifested The copulative is explanatory, as though he had said, ``We testify of the vivifying Word, as life has been manifested.'' The sense may at the same time be twofold, that Christ, who is life and the fountain of life, has been manifested, or, that life has been openly offered to us in Christ. The latter, indeed, necessarily follows from the former. Yet as to the meaning, the two things differ, as cause and effect. When he repeats, We shew, or announce eternal life, he speaks, I have no doubt, of the effect, even that he announces that life is obtained for us in Christ.

We hence learn, that when Christ is preached to us, the kingdom of heaven is opened to us, so that being raised from death we may live the life of God.

Which was with the Father. This is true, not only from the time when the world was formed, but also from eternity, for he was always God, the fountain of life; and the power and the faculty of vivifying was possessed by his eternal wisdom: but he did not actually exercise it before the creation of the world, and from the time when God began to exhibit the Word, that power which before was hid, diffused itself over all created things. Some manifestation had already been made; the Apostle had another thing in view, that is, that life was then at length manifested in Christ, when he in our flesh completed the work of redemption. For though the fathers were even under the law associates and partakers of the same life, yet we know that they were shut up under the hope that was to be revealed. It was necessary for them to seek life from the death and resurrection

of Christ; but the event was not only far remote from their eyes, but also hid from their minds. They depended, then, on the hope of revelation, which at length in due time followed. They could not, indeed, have obtained life, except it was in some way manifested to them; but the difference between us and them is, that we hold him already revealed as it were in our hands, whom they sought obscurely promised to them in types.

But the object of the Apostle is, to remove the idea of novelty, which might have lessened the dignity of the Gospel; he therefore says, that life had not now at length began to be, though it had but lately appeared, for it was always with the Father.

1 John 1:3-7

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3. That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3. Quod vidimus et audivimus, annuntiamus vobis, ut et vos societatem habeatis nobiscum, et societas nostra sit cum Patre et cure filio ejus Jesu Christo.

4. And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

4. Et hæc scribimus vobis, ut gaudium vestrum sit completum.

5. This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

5. Et haec est promissio quam annuntiamus, quod Deus lux est, et tenebrae in eo non sunt ullae.

6. If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not the truth:

6. Si dixerimus quod societatem habemus cum eo, et in tenebris ambulamus, mentimur, et veritatem non facimus.

7. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

7. Si autem in luce ambulamus, sicut ipse in luce est, societatem habemus inter nos mutuam, et sanguis Jesu Christi filii ejus emundat nos ab omni peccato.

3 That which we have seen. He now repeats the third time the words, seen and heard, that nothing might be wanting as to the real certainty of his doctrine. And it ought to be carefully noticed, that the heralds of the Gospel chosen by Christ were those who were fit and faithful witnesses of all those things which they were to declare. He also testifies of the feeling of their heart, for he says that he was moved by no other reason to write except to invite those to whom he was writing to the participation of an inestimable good. It hence appears how much care he had for their salvation; which served not a little to induce them to believe; for extremely ungrateful we must be, if we refuse to hear him who

wishes to communicate to us a part of that happiness which he has obtained.

He also sets forth the fruit received from the Gospel, even that we are united thereby to God, and to his Son Christ in whom is found the chief good. It was necessary for him to add this second clause, not only that he might represent the doctrine of the Gospel as precious and lovely, but that he might also show that he wished them to be his associates for no other end but to lead them to God, so that they might be all one in him. For the ungodly have also a mutual union between themselves, but it is without God, nay, in order to alienate themselves more and more from God, which is the extreme of all evils. It is, indeed, as it has been stated, our only true happiness, to be received into God's favor, so that we may be really united to him in Christ; of which John speaks in the seventeenth chapter of his gospel.

In short, John declares, that as the apostles were adopted by Christ as brethren, that being gathered into one body, they might together be united to God, so he does the same with other colleagues; though many, they are yet made partakers of this holy and blessed union.

4 That your joy may be full By full joy, he expresses more clearly the complete and perfect happiness which we obtain through the Gospel; at the same time he reminds the faithful where they ought to fix all their affections. True is that saying,

``Where your treasure is, there will be your heart also.''
(Matthew 6:21.)

Whosoever, then, really perceives what fellowship with God is, will be satisfied with it alone, and will no more burn with desires for other things.

``The Lord is my cup,'' says David, ``and my heritage; the lines have fallen for me on an excellent lot.'' (Psalm 16:5, 6.)

In the same manner does Paul declare that all things were deemed by him as dung, in comparison with Christ alone. (Philippians 3:8.) He, therefore, has at length made a proficiency in the Gospel, who esteems himself happy in having communion with God, and acquiesces in that alone; and thus he prefers it to the whole world, so that he is ready for its sake to relinquish all other things.

5 This then is the message, or promise. I do not disapprove of the rendering of the old interpreter, ``This is the annunciation,'' or message; for though {ἐπαγγελία} means for the most part a promise, yet, as John speaks here generally of the testimony before mentioned, the context seems to require the other meaning, except you were to give this explanation, ``The promise which we bring to you, includes this, or has this condition annexed to it.'' Thus, the meaning of the Apostle would become evident to us. [443] For his object here was not to include the whole doctrine of the Gospel, but to shew that if we desire to enjoy Christ and his blessings, it is required of us to be conformed to God in righteousness and holiness. Paul says the same thing in the second chapter of the Epistle to Titus, ``Appeared has the saving grace of God to all, that denying

[443] Griesbach has substituted {ἀγγελία} for the word here used, as being most approved; but the other, {ἐπαγγελία}, has also a similar meaning, announcement, or message, or command, though in the New Testament it is mostly taken in the sense of a promise. --- Ed

ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live soberly and righteously and holily in this world;'' except that here he says metaphorically, that we are to walk in the light, because God is light.

But he calls God light, and says that he is in the light; such expressions are not to be too strictly taken. Why Satan is called the prince of darkness is sufficiently evident. When, therefore, God on the other hand is called the Father of light, and also light, we first understand that there is nothing in him but what is bright, pure, and unalloyed; and, secondly, that he makes all things so manifest by his brightness, that he suffers nothing vicious or perverted, no spots or filth, no hypocrisy or fraud, to lie hid. Then the sum of what is said is, that since there is no union between light and darkness, there is a separation between us and God as long as we walk in darkness; and that the fellowship which he mentions, cannot exist except we also become pure and holy.

In him is no darkness at all. This mode of speaking is commonly used by John, to amplify what he has affirmed by a contrary negation. Then, the meaning is, that God is such a light, that no darkness belongs to him. It hence follows, that he hates an evil conscience, pollution, and wickedness, and everything that pertains to darkness.

6 If we say It is, indeed, an argument from what is inconsistent, when he concludes that they are alienated from God, who walk in darkness. This doctrine, however, depends on a higher principle, that God sanctifies all who are his. For it is not a naked precept that he gives, which requires that our life should be holy; but he rather shews that the grace of Christ serves for this end to dissipate darkness, and to kindle in us the light of God; as though he had said, ``What God communicates to us is not a vain fiction; for it is necessary that the power and effect of this fellowship should shine forth in our life; otherwise the possession of the gospel is fallacious.'' What he adds, and do not the truth, is the same as if he had said, ``We do not act truthfully. We do not regard what is true and right.'' And this mode of speaking, as I have before observed, is frequently used by him.

7 But if we walk in the light. He now says, that the proof of our union with God is certain, if we are conformable to him; not that purity of life conciliates us to God, as the prior cause; but the Apostle means, that our union with God is made evident by the effect, that is, when his purity shines forth in us. And, doubtless, such is the fact; wherever God comes, all things are so imbued with his holiness, that he washes away all filth; for without him we have nothing but filth and darkness. It is hence evident, that no one leads a holy life, except he is united to God.

In saying, We have fellowship one with another, he does not speak simply of men; but he sets God on one side, and us on the other.

It may, however, be asked, ``Who among men can so exhibit the light of God in his life, as that this likeness which John requires should exist; for it would be thus necessary, that he should be wholly pure and free from darkness.'' To this I answer, that expressions of this kind are accommodated to the capacities of

men; he is therefore said to be like God, who aspires to his likeness, however distant from it he may as yet be. The example ought not to be otherwise applied than according to this passage. He walks in darkness who is not ruled by the fear of God, and who does not, with a pure conscience, devote himself wholly to God, and seek to promote his glory. Then, on the other hand, he who in sincerity of heart spends his life, yea, every part of it, in the fear and service of God, and faithfully worships him, walks in the light, for he keeps the right way, though he may in many things offend and sigh under the burden of the flesh. Then, integrity of conscience is alone that which distinguishes light from darkness.

And the blood of Jesus Christ After having taught what is the bond of our union with God, he now shews what fruit flows from it, even that our sins are freely remitted. And this is the blessedness which David describes in the thirty-second Psalm, in order that we may know that we are most miserable until, being renewed by God's Spirit, we serve him with a sincere heart. For who can be imagined more miserable than that man whom God hates and abominates, and over whose head is suspended both the wrath of God and eternal death?

This passage is remarkable; and from it we first learn, that the expiation of Christ, effected by his death, does then properly belong to us, when we, in uprightness of heart, do what is right and just for Christ is no redeemer except to those who turn from iniquity, and lead a new life. If, then, we desire to have God propitious to us, so as to forgive our sins, we ought not to forgive ourselves. In short, remission of sins cannot be separated from repentance, nor can the peace of God be in those hearts, where the fear God does not prevail.

Secondly, this passage shews that the gratuitous pardon of sins is given us not only once, but that it is a benefit perpetually residing in the Church, and daily offered to the faithful. For the Apostle here addresses the faithful; as doubtless no man has ever been, nor ever will be, who can otherwise please God, since all are guilty before him; for however strong a desire there may be in us of acting rightly, we always go haltingly to God. Yet what is half done obtains no approval with God. In the meantime, by new sins we continually separate ourselves, as far as we can, from the grace of God. Thus it is, that all the saints have need of the daily forgiveness of sins; for this alone keeps us in the family of God.

By saying, from all sin, he intimates that we are, on many accounts, guilty before God; so that doubtless there is no one who has not many vices. But he shews that no sins prevent the godly, and those who fear God, from obtaining his favor. He also points out the manner of obtaining pardon, and the cause of our cleansing, even because Christ expiated our sins by his blood; but he affirms that all the godly are undoubtedly partakers of this cleansing.

The whole of his doctrine has been wickedly perverted by the sophists; for they imagine that pardon of sins is given us, as it were, in baptism. They maintain that there only the blood of Christ avails; and they teach, that after baptism, God is not otherwise reconciled than by satisfactions. They, indeed, leave

some part to the blood of Christ; but when they assign merit to works, even in the least degree, they wholly subvert what John teaches here, as to the way of expiating sins, and of being reconciled to God. For these two things can never harmonize together, to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, and to be cleansed by works: for John assigns not the half, but the whole, to the blood of Christ.

The sum of what is said, then, is, that the faithful know of a certainty, that they are accepted by God, because he has been reconciled to them through the sacrifice of the death of Christ. And sacrifice includes cleansing and satisfaction. Hence the power and efficiency of these belong to the blood of Christ alone.

Hereby is disproved and exposed the sacrilegious invention of the Papists as to indulgences; for as though the blood of Christ were not sufficient, they add, as a subsidy to it, the blood and merits of martyrs. At the same time, this blasphemy advances much further among us; for as they say that their keys, by which they hold as shut up the remission of sins, open a treasure made up partly of the blood and merits of martyrs, and partly of the worlds of supererogation, by which any sinner may redeem himself, no remission of sins remains for them but what is derogatory to the blood of Christ; for if their doctrine stands, the blood of Christ does not cleanse us, but comes in, as it were, as a partial aid. Thus consciences are held in suspense, which the Apostle here bids to rely on the blood of Christ.

1 John 1:8-10

1 John 1:8-10

8. If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

8. Si dixerimus quod peccatum non habemus, nos ipsos decipimus, et veritas non est in nobis.

9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9. Si confitemur peccata nostra, fidelis est et justus, ut nobis peccata remittat; et purget nos ab omni injustitia.

10. If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

10. Si dixerimus quod non peccavimus, mendacem facimus eum, et sermo ejus non est in nobis.

8. If we say. He now commends grace from its necessity; for as no one is free from sin, he intimates that we are all lost and undone, except the Lord comes to our aid with the remedy of pardon. The reason why he so much dwells on the fact, that no one is innocent, is, that all may now fully know that they stand in need of mercy, to deliver them from punishment, and that they may thus be more roused to seek the necessary blessing.

By the word sin, is meant here not only corrupt and vicious inclination, but

the fault or sinful act which really renders us guilty before God. Besides, as it is a universal declaration, it follows, that none of the saints, who exist now, have been, or shall be, are exempted from the number. Hence most fitly did Augustine refute the cavil of the Pelagians, by adducing against them this passage: and he wisely thought that the confession of guilt is not required for humility's sake, but lest we by lying should deceive ourselves.

When he adds, and the truth is not in us, he confirms, according to his usual manner, the former sentence by repeating it in other words; though it is not a simple repetition, (as elsewhere,) but he says that they are deceived who glory in falsehood.

9 If we confess He again promises to the faithful that God will be propitious to them, provided they acknowledge themselves to be sinners. It is of great moment to be fully persuaded, that when we have sinned, there is a reconciliation with God ready and prepared for us: we shall otherwise carry always a hell within us. Few, indeed, consider how miserable and wretched is a doubting conscience; but the truth is, that hell reigns where there is no peace with God. The more, then, it becomes us to receive with the whole heart this promise which offers free pardon to all who confess their sins. Moreover, this is founded even on the justice of God, because God who promises is true and just. For they who think that he is called just, because he justifies us freely, reason, as I think, with too much refinement, because justice or righteousness here depends on fidelity, and both are annexed to the promise. For God might have been just, were he to deal with us with all the rigor of justice; but as he has bound himself to us by his word, he would not have himself deemed just, except he forgives. [444]

But this confession, as it is made to God, must be in sincerity; and the heart cannot speak to God without newness of life. It then includes true repentance. God, indeed, forgives freely, but in such a way, that the facility of mercy does not become an enticement to sin.

And to cleanse us The verb, to cleanse, seems to be taken in another sense than before; for he had said, that we are cleansed by the blood of Christ, because through him sins are not imputed; but now, having spoken of pardon, he also adds, that God cleanses us from iniquity: so that this second clause is different from the preceding. Thus he initiates that a twofold fruit comes to us from confession, --- that God being reconciled by the sacrifice of Christ, forgives us, --- and that he renews and reforms us.

Were any one to object and say, that as long as we sojourn in the world, we

[444] "Faithful" and "just" are nearly of the same import, having both a regard to God's promise, only the latter affords a stronger or an additional ground of confidence, inasmuch as the fulfillment of God's gracious promise is set forth as an act of justice. So that the penitent has here two of God's attributes, faithfulness and justice, to encourage and support his faith. We may, at the same time, consider "just" as having reference to forgiveness, and "faithful" to cleansing, according to a very common mode of stating things both in the Old and New Testament, the order in the second clause being reversed. Then "just" means the same as when Paul says, "that he might be just and the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus," Romans 3:26. Forgiveness is thus an act of justice, then, not to us, but to Christ, who made an atonement for sins. — Ed.

are never cleansed from all unrighteousness, with regard to our reformation: this is indeed true; but John does not refer to what God now performs in us. He is faithful, he says, to cleanse us, not today or tomorrow; for as long as we are surrounded with flesh, we ought to be in a continual state of progress; but what he has once begun, he goes on daily to do, until he at length completes it. So Paul says, that we are chosen, that we may appear without blame before God, (Colossians 1:22;) and in another place he says, that the Church is cleansed, that it might be without spot or wrinkle. (Ephesians 5:27.)

If yet any one prefers another explanation, that he says the same thing twice over, I shall not object. [445]

10 We make him a liar He goes still further, that they who claim purity for themselves blaspheme God. For we see that he everywhere represents the whole race of man as guilty of sin.

Whosoever then tries to escape this charge carries on war with God, and accuses him of falsehood, as though he condemned the undeserving. To confirm this he adds, and his word is not in us; as though he had said, that we reject this great truth, that all are under guilt.

We hence learn, that we then only make a due progress in the knowledge of the word of the Lord, when we become really humbled, so as to groan under the burden of our sins and learn to flee to the mercy of God, and acquiesce in nothing else but in his paternal favor.

[445] That is, that he refers to forgiveness in the two clauses. — Ed

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 John 2:1-2

1 John 2:1-2

1. My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

1. Filioli mei, haec scribo vobis, ut non peccetis; quod si quis peccaverit, advocatum habemus apud Patrem, Jesum Christum justum:

2. And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

2. Et ipse est propitiatio pro peccatis nostris, non pro nostris autem solum, sed etiam pro totius mundi.

1. My little children. It is not only the sum and substance of the preceding doctrine, but the meaning of almost the whole gospel, that we are to depart from sin; and yet, though we are always exposed to God's judgment, we are certain that Christ so intercedes by the sacrifice of his death, that the Father is propitious to us. In the meantime, he also anticipates an objection, lest any one should think that he gave license to sin when he spoke of God's mercy, and shewed that it is presented to us all. He then joins together two parts of the gospel, which unreasonable men separate, and thus lacerate and mutilate. Besides, the doctrine of grace has always been calumniated by the ungodly. When the expiation of sins by Christ is set forth, they boastingly say that a license is given to sin.

To obviate these calumnies, the Apostle testifies first that the design of his doctrine was to keep men from sinning; for when he says, that ye sin not, his meaning only is, that they, according to the measure of human infirmity, should abstain from sins. And to the same purpose is what I have already said respecting fellowship with God, that we are to be conformable to him. He is not, however, silent as to the gratuitous remission of sins; for though heaven should fall and all things be confounded, yet this part of truth ought never to be omitted; but, on the contrary, what Christ is ought to be preached clearly and distinctly.

So ought we also to do at this day. As the flesh is inclined to wantonness, men ought to be carefully warned, that righteousness and salvation are provided in Christ for this end, that we may become the holy possession of God. Yet whenever it happens that men wantonly abuse the mercy of God, there are many snarlish men who load us with calumny, as though we gave loose reins to vices. We ought still boldly to go on and proclaim the grace of Christ, in

which especially shines forth the glory of God, and in which consists the whole salvation of men. These barkings of the ungodly ought, I repeat it, to be wholly disregarded; for we see that the apostles were also by these barkings assailed.

For this reason he immediately adds the second clause, that when we sin we have an advocate By these words he confirms what we have already said, that we are very far from being perfectly righteous, nay, that we contract new guilt daily, and that yet there is a remedy for reconciling us to God, if we flee to Christ; and this is alone that in which consciences call acquiesce, in which is included the righteousness of men, in which is founded the hope of salvation.

The conditional particle, if, ought to be viewed as causal; for it cannot be but that we sin. In short, John means, that we are not only called away from sin by the gospel, because God invites us to himself, and offers to us the Spirit of regeneration, but that a provision is made for miserable sinners, that they may have God always propitious to them, and that the sins by which they are entangled, do not prevent them from becoming just, because they have a Mediator to reconcile them to God. But in order to shew how we return into favor with God, he says that Christ is our advocate; for he appears before God for this end, that he may exercise towards us the power and efficacy of his sacrifice. That this may be better understood, I will speak more homely. The intercession of Christ is a continual application of his death for our salvation. That God then does not impute to us our sins, this comes to us, because he has regard to Christ as intercessor.

But the two names, by which he afterwards signalizes Christ, properly belong to the subject of this passage. He calls him just and a propitiation. It is necessary for him to be both, that he might sustain the office and person of an Advocate; for who that is a sinner could reconcile God to us? For we are excluded from access to him, because no one is pure and free from sin. Hence no one is fit to be a high priest, except he is innocent and separated from sinners, as it is also declared in Hebrews 7:26. Propitiation is added, because no one is fit to be a high priest without a sacrifice. Hence, under the Law, no priest entered the sanctuary without blood; and a sacrifice, as a usual seal, was wont, according to God's appointment, to accompany prayers. By this symbol it was God's design to shew, that whosoever obtains favor for us, must be furnished with a sacrifice; for when God is offended, in order to pacify him a satisfaction is required. It hence follows, that all the saints who have ever been and shall be, have need of an advocate, and that no one except Christ is equal to undertake this office. And doubtless John ascribed these two things to Christ, to shew that he is the only true advocate.

Now, as no small consolation comes to us, when we hear that Christ not only died for us to reconcile us to the Father, but that he continually intercedes for us, so that an access in his name is open to us, that our prayers may be heard; so we ought especially to beware, lest this honor, which belongs peculiarly to him, should be transferred to another.

But we know that under the Papacy this office is ascribed indiscriminately

to the saints. Thirty years ago, this so remarkable an article of our faith, that Christ is our advocate, was nearly buried; but at this day they allow that he is indeed one of many, but not the only one. They among the Papists who have a little more modesty, do not deny that Christ excels others; but they afterwards join with him a vast number of associates. But the words clearly mean that he cannot be an advocate who is not a priest; and the priesthood belongs to none but to Christ alone. In the meantime we do not take away the mutual intercessions of saints, which they exercise in love towards one another; but this has nothing to do with the dead who have removed from their intercourse with men; and nothing with that patronage which they feign for themselves, that they may not be dependent on Christ alone. For though brethren pray for brethren, yet they all, without exception, look to one advocate. There is, then, no doubt but the Papists set up against Christ so many idols as the patrons or advocates they devise for themselves.

We must also notice by the way, that those err very grossly, who imagine that Christ falls on his knees before the Father to pray for us. Such thoughts ought to be renounced, for they detract from the celestial glory of Christ; and the simple truth ought to be retained, that the fruit of his death is ever new and perpetual, that by his intercession he renders God propitious to us, and that he sanctifies our prayers by the odor of his sacrifice, and also aids us by pleading for us.

2 And not for ours only He added this for the sake of amplifying, in order that the faithful might be assured that the expiation made by Christ, extends to all who by faith embrace the gospel.

Here a question may be raised, how have the sins of the whole world been expiated? I pass by the dotages of the fanatics, who under this pretense extend salvation to all the reprobate, and therefore to Satan himself. Such a monstrous thing deserves no refutation. They who seek to avoid this absurdity, have said that Christ [446] suffered sufficiently for the whole world, but efficiently only for the elect. This solution has commonly prevailed in the schools. Though then I allow that what has been said is true, yet I deny that it is suitable to this passage; for the design of John was no other than to make this benefit common to the whole Church. Then under the word all or whole, he does not include the reprobate, but designates those who should believe as well as those who were then scattered through various parts of the world. For then is really made evident, as it is meet, the grace of Christ, when it is declared to be the only true salvation of the world.

1 John 2: 3-6

1 John 2: 3-6

3. And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

[446] "It seems to me that the Apostle is to be understood as speaking only of all those who believe, whether Jews or Gentiles, over the whole world." — Doddridge. — Ed.

3. Atque in hoc cognoscimus quod cognovimus eum, si praecepta ejus servamus.

4. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

4. Qui dicit, Novi eum, et praecepta ejus non servat, mendax est, et in eo veritas non est.

5. But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

5. Qui vero servat ejus sermonem, vere in ipso charitas Dei perfecta est; in hoc cognoscimus quod in ipso sumus.

6. He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

6. Qui dicit se in eo manere, debet, sicut ille ambulavit, ita et ipse ambulare.

3 And hereby, or by this. After having treated of the doctrine respecting the gratuitous remission of sins, he comes to the exhortations which belong to it, and which depend on it. And first indeed he reminds us that the knowledge of God, derived from the gospel, is not ineffectual, but that obedience proceeds from it. He then shews what God especially requires from us, what is the chief thing in life, even love to God. What we read here of the living knowledge of God, the Scripture does not without reason repeat everywhere; for nothing is more common in the world than to draw the doctrine of religion to frigid speculations. In this way theology has been adulterated by the Sorbonian sophists, so that from their whole science not even the least spark of true religion shines forth. And curious men do everywhere learn so much from God's word, as enables them to prattle for the sake of display. In short, no evil has been more common in all ages than vainly to profess God's name.

John then takes this principle as granted, that the knowledge of God is efficacious. He hence concludes, that they by no means know God who keep not his precepts or commandments. Plato, though groping in darkness, yet denied that ``the beautiful'' which he imagined, could be known, without filling man with the admiration of itself; so he says in his Phaedrus and in other places. How then is it possible for thee to know God, and to be moved by no feeling? Nor does it indeed proceed only from God's nature, that to know him is immediately to love him; but the Spirit also, who illuminates our minds, inspires our hearts with a feeling conformable to our knowledge. At the same time the knowledge of God leads us to fear him and to love him. For we cannot know him as Lord and Father, as he shews himself, without being dutiful children and obedient servants. In short, the doctrine of the gospel is a lively mirror in which we contemplate the image of God, and are transformed into the same, as Paul teaches us in 2 Corinthians 3:18. Where, therefore, there is no pure conscience, nothing can be there but an empty phantom of knowledge.

We must notice the order when he says, We do know that we know him; for he intimates that obedience is so connected with knowledge, that the last is yet in order the first, as the cause is necessarily before its effect.

If we keep his commandments But there is no one who in everything keeps them; there would thus be no knowledge of God in the world. To this I answer, that the Apostle is by no means inconsistent with himself; since he has before shewed that all are guilty before God, he does not understand that those who keep his commandments wholly satisfy the law (no such example can be found in the world;) but that they are such as strive, according to the capacity of human infirmity, to form their life in conformity to the will of God. For whenever Scripture speaks of the righteousness of the faithful, it does not exclude the remission of sins, but on the contrary, begins with it.

But we are not hence to conclude that faith recumbs on works; for though every one receives a testimony to his faith from his works, yet it does not follow that it is founded on them, since they are added as an evidence. Then the certainty of faith depends on the grace of Christ alone; but piety and holiness of life distinguish true faith from that knowledge of God which is fictitious and dead; for the truth is, that those who are in Christ, as Paul says, have put off the old man. (Colossians 3:9.)

4 He that saith, I know him How does he prove that they are liars who boast that they have faith without piety? even by the contrary effect; for he has already said, that the knowledge of God is efficacious. For God is not known by a naked imagination, since he reveals himself inwardly to our hearts by the Spirit. Besides, as many hypocrites vainly boast that they have faith, the Apostle charges all such with falsehood; for what he says would be superfluous, were there no false and vain profession of Christianity made by man.

5 But whoso keepeth He now defines what a true keeping of God's law is, even to love God. This passage is, I think, incorrectly explained by those who understand that they please the true God who keep his word. Rather take this as its meaning, ``to love God in sincerity of heart, is to keep his commandments.'' For he intended, as I have before reminded you, briefly to shew what God requires from us, and what is the holiness of the faithful. Moses also said the same thing, when he stated the sum of the law.

``Now, O Israel, what does the Lord require of thee, but to fear and love him, and to walk in his precepts?''
(Deuteronomy 10:12.)

And again he says,

``Choose life, even to love the Lord thy God, to serve him and to cleave to him.'' (Deuteronomy 30:19, 20)

For the law, which is spiritual, does not command only external works, but enjoins this especially, to love God with the whole heart.

That no mention is here made of what is due to men, ought not to be viewed as unreasonable; for brotherly love flows immediately from the love of God, as we shall hereafter see. Whosoever, then, desires that his life should be approved by God, must have all his doings directed to this end. If any one objects and says, that no one has ever been found who loved God thus perfectly; to this I reply, that it is sufficient, provided every one aspired to this perfection

according to the measure of grace given unto him. In the meantime, the definition is, that the perfect love of God is the complete keeping of his law. To make progress in this as in knowledge, is what we ought to do.

Hereby know we that we are in him He refers to that fruit of the gospel which he had mentioned, even fellowship with the Father and the Son; and he thus confirms the former sentence, by stating what follows, as a consequence. For if it be the end of the gospel to hold communion with God, and no communion can be without love, then no one makes a real progress in faith except he who cleaves from the heart to God.

6 He that saith he abideth in him As he has before set before us God as light for an example, he now calls us also to Christ, that we may imitate him. Yet he does not simply exhort us to imitate Christ; but from the union we have with him, he proves that we ought to be like him. A likeness in life and deeds, he says, will prove that we abide in Christ. But from these words he passes on to the next clause, which he immediately adds respecting love to the brethren.

1 John 2: 7-11

1 John 2: 7-11

7. Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning. The old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

7. Fratres, non mandatum novum mandment scribo vobis, sed mandatum vetus, quod habuistis ab initio: mandatum vetus est sermo quem audistis ab initio.

8. Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

8. Rursum mandatum novum scribo vobis, quae est veritas in ipso et in vobis; quia tenebrae transeunt, et lumen verum jam lucet.

9. He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

9. Quia dicit se in luce esse, et fratrem suum odit, in tenebræ est adhuc.

10. He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

10. Qui diligit fratrem suum, in luce manet, et offendiculum in eo non est.

11. But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

11. Qui vero fratrem suum odit, in tenebris ambulat, nec scit quo vadat, quia tenebrae excaecarunt oculos ejus.

7 Brethren, I write no new commandment This is an explanation of the preceding doctrine, that to love God is to keep his commandments. And not without reason did he largely dwell on this point. First, we know that novelty is disliked or suspected. Secondly, we do not easily undertake an unwonted yoke. In addition to these things, when we have embraced any kind of doctrine, we dislike to

have anything changed or made new in it. For these reasons John reminds us, that he taught nothing respecting love but what had been heard by the faithful from the beginning, and had by long usage become old.

Some explain oldness differently, even that Christ now prescribes no other rule of life under the Gospel than what God did formerly under the Law. This is indeed most true; nor do I object but that he afterwards calls in this sense the word of the gospel the old commandment But I think that he now means only, that these were the first elements of the gospel, that they had been thus taught from the beginning, that there was no reason why they should refuse that as unusual by which they ought to have been long ago imbued. For the relative seems to be used in a causative sense. He calls it then old, not because it was taught the fathers many ages before, but because it had been taught them on their new entrance into a religious life. And it served much to claim their faith, that it had proceeded from Christ himself from whom they had received the gospel. [447]

The old commandment The word old, in this place, probably extends further; for the sentence is fuller, when he says, the word which ye have heard from the beginning is the old commandment And as I, indeed, think, he means that the gospel ought not to be received as a doctrine lately born, but what has proceeded from God, and is his eternal truth; as though he had said, ``Ye ought not to measure the antiquity of the gospel which is brought to you, by time; since therein is revealed to you the eternal will of God: not only then has God delivered to you this rule of a holy life, when ye were first called to the faith of Christ, but the same has always been prescribed and approved by him.'' And, doubtless, this only ought to be deemed antiquity, and deserves faith and reverence, which has its origin from God. For the fictions of men, whatever long prescription of years they may have, cannot acquire so much authority as to subvert the truth of God.

8 Again, a new commandment Interpreters do not appear to me to have attained the meaning of the Apostle. He says new, because God, as it were, renews it by daily suggesting it, so that the faithful may practice it through their whole life, for nothing more excellent can be sought for by them. The elements which children learn give place in time to what is higher and more solid. On the contrary, John denies that the doctrine respecting brotherly love is of this kind, is one which grows old with time, but that it is perpetually in force, so that it is no less the highest perfection than the very beginning.

It was, however, necessary that this should be added, for as men are more curious than what they ought to be, there are many who always seek something new. Hence there is a weariness as to simple doctrine, which produces innumerable prodigies of errors, when every one gapes continually for new mysteries. Now, when it is known that the Lord proceeds in the same even

[447] That this view is correct, appears evident from the words, “which ye had from the beginning;” he calls it “old,” because they had been taught it from “the beginning,” that is, of the gospel. Then “new” can mean no other thing than what Calvin states, that it continues still in force, it being, as it were, always new. — Ed.

course, in order to keep us through life in that which we have learnt, a bridle is cast on desires of this kind. Let him, then, who would reach the goal of wisdom, as to the right way of living, make proficiency in love.

Which then is true, or which is truth. He proves by this reason what he had said; for this one command respecting love, as to our conduct in life, constitutes the whole truth of Christ. Besides, what other greater revelation can be expected? for Christ, doubtless, is the end and the completion of all things. Hence the word truth means this, that they stood, as it were at the goal, for it is to be taken for a completion or a perfect state. He joins Christ to them, as the head to the members, as though he had said, that the body of the Church has no other perfection, or, that they would then be really united to Christ, if holy love existed continually among them.

Some give another explanation, ``That which is the truth in Christ, is also in you.'' But I do not see what the meaning of this is.

Because the darkness is past. The present time is here instead of the past; for he means, that as soon as Christ brings light, we have the full brightness of knowledge: not that every one of the faithful becomes wise the first day as much as he ought to be, (for even Paul testifies that he labored to apprehend what he had not apprehended, (Philippians 3:12,) but that the knowledge of Christ alone is sufficient to dissipate darkness. Hence, daily progress is necessary; and the faith of every one has its dawn before it reaches the noonday. But as God continues the inculcation of the same doctrine, in which he bids us to make advances, the knowledge of the Gospel is justly said to be the true light, when Christ, the Sun of righteousness, shines. Thus the way is shut up against the audacity of those men who try to corrupt the purity of the Gospel by their own fictions; and we may safely denounce an anathema on the whole theology of the Pope, for it wholly obscures the true light.

9 He that saith he is in the light He pursues the same metaphor. He said that love is the only true rule according to which our life is to be formed; he said that this rule or law is presented to us in the Gospel; he said, lastly, that it is there as the meridian light, which ought to be continually looked on. Now, on the other hand, he concludes that all are blind and walk in darkness who are strangers to love. But that he mentioned before the love of God and now the love of the brethren, involves no more contrariety than there is between the effect and its cause. Besides, these are so connected together that they cannot be separated.

John says in the third chapter, that we falsely boast of love to God, except we love our brethren; and this is most true. But he now takes love to the brethren as a testimony by which we prove that we love God. In short, since love so regards God, that in God it embraces men, there is nothing strange in this, that the Apostle, speaking of love, should refer at one time to God, at another to the brethren; and this is what is commonly done in Scripture. The whole perfection of life is often said to consist in the love of God; and again, Paul teaches us, that the whole law is fulfilled by him who loves his neighbor, (Romans 13:8;)

and Christ declares that the main points of the law are righteousness, judgment, and truth. (Matthew 23:23.) Both these things are true and agree well together, for the love of God teaches us to love men, and we also in reality prove our love to God by loving men at his command. However this may be, it remains always certain that love is the rule of life. And this ought to be the more carefully noticed, because all choose rather almost anything else than this one commandment of God.

To the same purpose is what follows, and there is no occasion of stumbling in him --- that is, in him who acts in love; for, he who thus lives will never stumble. [448]

11. But he that hateth his brother. He again reminds us, that whatever specious appearance of excellency thou shewest, there is yet nothing but what is sinful if love be absent. This passage may be compared with the thirteenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, and no long explanation is needed. But this doctrine is not understood by the world, because the greater part are dazzled by all sorts of masks or disguises. Thus, fictitious sanctity dazzles the eyes of almost all men, while love is neglected, or, at least, driven to the farthest corner.

1 John 2:12-14

1 John 2:12-14

12. I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

12. Scribo vobis, filioli, quoniam remittuntur vobis peccata vestra propter homer ejus.

13. I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

13. Scribo vobis, patres, quoniam novistis eum qui est ab initio. Scribo vobis, adolescentes, quoniam vicistis malum illum. Scribo vobis, pueri, quoniam novistis Patrem.

14. I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

14. Scripsi vobis, patres, quoniam novistis eum qui est ab initio. Scripsi vobis, adolescentes, quia fortes estis, et verbum Dei manet in vobis, et vicistis malum illum.

12 Little children This is still a general declaration, for he does not address

[448] Literally, “and to him there is not a stumblingblock;” that is, nothing that causes him to stumble or fall. He is not like him mentioned in the next verse, who “walks in darkness and knows not whither he goeth.” The sentence seems to have been taken from Psalm 119:165, with this only difference, that it is “to them,” instead of “to him.” There is in the Sept no preposition, but in Hebrew the preposition “to” is used; and {ἐν} has sometimes this meaning in the New Testament. See Colossians 1:23; 1 Thessalonians 4:7. --- Ed.

those only of a tender age, but by little children he means men of all ages, as in the first verse, and also hereafter. I say this, because interpreters have incorrectly applied the term to children. But John, when he speaks of children, calls them {παιδία}, a word expressive of age; but here, as a spiritual father, he calls the old as well as the young, {τεκνία} He will, indeed, presently address special words to different ages; yet they are mistaken who think that he begins to do so here. But, on the contrary, lest the preceding exhortation should obscure the free remission of sins, he again inculcates the doctrine which peculiarly belongs to faith, in order that the foundation may with certainty be always retained, that salvation is laid up for us in Christ alone.

Holiness of life ought indeed to be urged, the fear of God ought to be carefully enjoined, men ought to be sharply goaded to repentance, newness of life, together with its fruits, ought to be commended; but still we ought ever to take heed, lest the doctrine of faith be smothered, --- that doctrine which teaches that Christ is the only author of salvation and of all blessings; on the contrary, such moderation ought to be presented, that faith may ever retain its own primacy. This is the rule prescribed to us by John: having faithfully spoken of good works, lest he should seem to give them more importance than he ought to have done, he carefully calls us back to contemplate the grace of Christ.

Your sins are forgiven you Without this assurance, religion would not be otherwise than fading and shadowy; nay, they who pass by the free remission of sins, and dwell on other things, build without a foundation. John in the meantime intimates, that nothing is more suitable to stimulate men to fear God than when they are rightly taught what blessing Christ has brought to them, as Paul does, when he beseeches by the bowels of God's mercies. (Philippians 2:1.)

It hence appears how wicked is the calumny of the Papists, who pretend that the desire of doing what is right is frozen, when that is extolled which alone renders us obedient children to God. For the Apostle takes this as the ground of his exhortation, that we know that God is so benevolent to us as not to impute to us our sins.

For his name's sake The material cause is mentioned, lest we should seek other means to reconcile us to God. For it would not be sufficient to know that God forgives us our sins, except we came directly to Christ, and to that price which he paid on the cross for us. And this ought the more to be observed, because we see that by the craft of Satan, and by the wicked fictions of men, this way is obstructed; for foolish men attempt to pacify God by various satisfactions, and devise innumerable kinds of expiations for the purpose of redeeming themselves. For as many means of deserving pardon we intrude on God, by so many obstacles are we prevented from approaching him. Hence John, not satisfied with stating simply the doctrine, that God remits to us our sins, expressly adds, that he is propitious to us from a regard to Christ, in order that he might exclude all other reasons. We also, that we may enjoy this blessing, must pass by and forget all other names, and rely only on the name of Christ.

13 I write unto you, fathers He comes now to enumerate different ages, that

he might shew that what he taught was suitable to every one of them. For a general address sometimes produces less effect; yea, such is our perversity, that few think that what is addressed to all belongs to them. The old for the most part excuse themselves, because they have exceeded the age of learning; children refuse to learn, as they are not yet old enough; men of middle age do not attend, because they are occupied with other pursuits. Lest, then, any should exempt themselves, he accommodates the Gospel to all. And he mentions three ages, the most common division of human life. Hence also, the Lacedemonian chorus had three orders; the first sang, ``What ye are we shall be;'' the last, ``What ye are we have been;'' and the middle, ``We are what one of you have been and the other will be.'' Into these three degrees John divides human life.

He, indeed, begins with the old, and says that the Gospel is suitable to them, because they learnt from it to know the eternal Son of God. Moroseness is the character of the old, but they become especially unteachable, because they measure wisdom by the number of years. Besides, Horace in his Art of Poetry, has justly noticed this fault in them, that they praise the time of their youth and reject whatever is differently done or said. This evil John wisely removes, when he reminds us that the Gospel contains not only a knowledge that is ancient, but what also leads us to the very eternity of God. It hence follows that there is nothing here which they can dislike. He says that Christ was from the beginning; I refer this to his Divine presence, as being co-eternal with the Father, as well as to his power, of which the Apostle speaks in Hebrews, that he was yesterday what he is today; as though he had said,

``If antiquity delights you, ye have Christ, who is superior to all antiquity; therefore his disciples ought not to be ashamed of him who includes all ages in Himself.'' (Hebrews 13:8)

We must, at the same time, notice what that religion is which is really ancient, even that which is founded on Christ, for otherwise it will be of no avail, however long it may have existed, if it derives its origin from error.

I write unto you, young men Though it be a diminutive word, {νεανίσκοι}, [449] yet there is no doubt but that he directs his word to all who were in the flower of their age. We also know that those of that age are so addicted to the vain cares of the world, that they think but little of the kingdom of God; for the rigor of their minds and the strength of their bodies in a manner inebriate them. Hence the Apostle reminds them where true strength is, that they might no more exult as usual in the flesh. Ye are strong, he says, because ye have overcome Satan. The copulative here is to be rendered causatively. And, doubtless, that strength is what we ought to seek, even that which is spiritual. At the same time he intimates that it is not had otherwise than from Christ, for he mentions the blessings which we receive through the Gospel. He says that they had conquered who were as yet engaged in the contest; but our condition

[449] The diminutive termination often expresses affection; hence {νεανίσκοι} may properly be rendered, ``dear youth,'' or ``dear young men;'' and so {τεκνία} {μου}, in the first verse, may be rendered, ``My dear children.'' --- Ed

is far otherwise than that of those who fight under the banners of men, for war is doubtful to them and the issue is uncertain; but we are conquerors before we engage with the enemy, for our head Christ has once for all conquered for us the whole world.

I write unto you, young children They needed another direction. That the Gospel is well adapted to young children the Apostle concludes, because they find there the Father. We now see how diabolical is the tyranny of the Pope, which drives away by threats all ages from the doctrine of the Gospel, while the Spirit of God so carefully addresses them all.

But these things which the Apostle makes particular, are also general; for we should wholly fall off into vanity, except our infirmity were sustained by the eternal truth of God. There is nothing in us but what is frail and fading, except the power of Christ dwells in us. We are all like orphans until we attain the grace of adoption by the Gospel. Hence, what he declares respecting young children is also true as to the old. But yet his object was to apply to each what was most especially necessary for them, that he might shew that they all without exception stood in need of the doctrine of the Gospel. The particle {ὅτι} is explained in two ways, but the meaning I have given to it is the best, and agrees better with the context.

14 I have written unto you, fathers These repetitions I deem superfluous; and it is probable that when unskillful readers falsely thought that he spoke twice of little children, they rashly introduced the other two clauses. It might at the same time be that John himself, for the sake of amplifying, inserted the second time the sentence respecting the young men, (for he adds, that they were strong, which he had not said before;) but that the copyists presumptuously filled up the number. [450]

1 John 2:15-17

1 John 2:15-17

15. Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

15. Ne diligatis mundum, neque ea quae in mundo sunt: si quis diligit mundum non est charitas Patris in eo.

16. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

16. Quia quicquid est in mundo (nempe concupiscentia carnis, concupiscentia oculorum, et superbia vitae) non est ex Patre, sed ex mundo est.

[450] There are no different readings that can justify the supposition of an interpolation. The only reading that Griesbach considers probable is {ἔγραψα} for {γράφω} at the end of the 13th verse. If that be adopted, then the three characters are twice mentioned, and in regular order. The objection that {τεκνία} in ver. 12, is {παιδία} in ver. 13, is not valid, for he uses the latter in the same sense as the former in ver. 18, as denoting Christians in general; while here, in connection with ``fathers'' and ``young men,'' they must mean those young in years or in the profession of the gospel. The repetition is for the sake of emphasis. --- Ed

17. And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever.

17. Atqui mundus transit, et concupiscentia ejus; qui autem facit voluntatem Dei manet in aeternum.

15 Love not He had said before that the only rule for living religiously, is to love God; but as, when we are occupied with the vain love of the world, we turn away all our thoughts and affections another way, this vanity must first be torn away from us, in order that the love of God may reign within us. Until our minds are cleansed, the former doctrine may be iterated a hundred times, but with no effect: it would be like pouring water on a ball; you can gather, no, not a drop, because there is no empty place to retain water. [451]

By the world understand everything connected with the present life, apart from the kingdom of God and the hope of eternal life. So he includes in it corruptions of every kind, and the abyss of all evils. In the world are pleasures, delights, and all those allurements by which man is captivated, so as to withdraw himself from God. [452]

Moreover, the love of the world is thus severely condemned, because we must necessarily forget God and ourselves when we regard nothing so much as the earth; and when a corrupt lust of this kind rules in man, and so holds him entangled that he thinks not of the heavenly life, he is possessed by a beastly stupidity.

If any man love the world He proves by an argument from what is contrary, how necessary it is to cast away the love of the world, if we wish to please God; and this he afterwards confirms by an argument drawn from what is inconsistent; for what belongs to the world is wholly at variance with God. We must bear in mind what I have already said, that a corrupt mode of life is here mentioned, which has nothing in common with the kingdom of God, that is, when men become so degenerated, that they are satisfied with the present life, and think no more of immortal life than mute animals. Whosoever, then, makes himself thus a slave to earthly lusts, cannot be of God.

16 The lust of the flesh, or, namely, the lust of the flesh. The old interpreter renders the verse otherwise, for from one sentence he makes two. Those Greek

[451] It is considered by many, such as Macknight and Scott, that the three former verses are connected with this — that the particulars stated with regard to little children, fathers, and young men, are adduced as reasons to enforce this exhortation, "Love not the world," etc. And this no doubt is the best view of the passage. — Ed.

[452] There are two things, the world, and the things that are in the world. The world, thus distinguished from what is in it, means, according to Macknight, the wicked and unbelieving, the men of the world, as when our Savior says, "the world," that is, the unbelieving Jews, "hateth you," John 15:19. According to this view, the contrast in verse 17 appears very suitable, "The world (the ungodly men of the world) passeth away, and its lust, (their lust;) but he that doeth the will of God abideth for ever." Others think that the blessings of the world are meant, the good things necessary for the support of man, and that these are not to be loved, though they may be rightly used. In this case, "in the world" must have a different meaning, a thing not unusual in Scripture; it must mean in the present state of things. But the most consistent view is the first, that is, to take "the world" throughout as signifying the ungodly men of the world. What prevail among them are the lusts here mentioned, — sensual gratification, avarice, and ambition, the three gods who rule and reign in mankind. — Ed.

authors do better, who read these words together, ``Whatever is in the world is not of God;'' and then the three kinds of lusts they introduce parenthetically. For John, by way of explanation, inserted these three particulars as examples, that he might briefly shew what are the pursuits and thoughts of men who live for the world; but whether it be a full and complete division, it does not signify much; though you will not find a worldly man in whom these lusts do not prevail, at least one of them. It remains for us to see what he understands by each of these.

The first clause is commonly explained of all sinful lusts in general; for the flesh means the whole corrupt nature of man. Though I am unwilling to contend, yet I am unwilling to dissemble that I approve of another meaning. Paul, when forbidding, in Romans 13:14, to make provision for the flesh as to its lusts, seems to me to be the best interpreter of this place. What, then, is the flesh there? even the body and all that belongs to it. What, then, is the lust or desire of the flesh, but when worldly men, seeking to live softly and delicately, are intent only on their own advantages? Well known from Cicero and others, is the threefold division made by Epicurus; for he made this difference between lusts; he made some natural and necessary, some natural and not necessary, and some neither natural nor necessary. But John, well knowing the insubordination ({ἀταξία})of the human heart unhesitantly condemns the lust of the flesh, because it always flows out immoderately, and never observes any due medium. He afterwards comes gradually to grosser vices.

The lust of the eyes He includes, as I think, libidinous looks as well as the vanity which delights in pomps and empty splendor.

In the last place follows pride or haughtiness; with which is connected ambition, boasting, contempt of others, blind love of self, headstrong self-confidence.

The sum of the whole is, that as soon as the world presents itself, our lusts or desires, when our heart is corrupt, are captivated by it, like unbridled wild beasts; so that various lusts, all which are adverse to God, bear rule in us. The Greek word, {βìος} rendered life, (vita,) means the way or manner of living.

17 And the world passeth away As there is nothing in the world but what is fading, and as it were for a moment, he hence concludes that they who seek their happiness from it, make a wretched and miserable provision for themselves, especially when God calls us to the ineffable glory of eternal life; as though he had said, ``The true happiness which God offers to his children, is eternal; it is then a shameful thing for us to be entangled with the world, which with all its benefits will soon vanish away.'' I take lust here metonymically, as signifying what is desired or coveted, or what captivates the desires of men. The meaning is, that what is most precious in the world and deemed especially desirable, is nothing but a shadowy phantom.

By saying that they who do the will of God shall abide for ever, or perpetually, he means that they who seek God shall be perpetually blessed. Were any one to object and say, that no one doeth what God commands, the obvious answer

is, that what is spoken of here is not the perfect keeping of the law, but the obedience of faith, which, however imperfect it may be, is yet approved by God. The will of God is first made known to us in the law; but as no one satisfies the law, no happiness can be hoped from it. But Christ comes to meet the despairing with new aid, who not only regenerates us by his Spirit that we may obey God, but makes also that our endeavor, such as it is, should obtain the praise of perfect righteousness.

1 John 2:18-19

1 John 2:18-19

18. Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

18. Filioli, novissima hora est; et sicut audistis quod Antichristus venturus sit, etiam nunc Antichristi multi coeperunt esse: unde scimus esse novissimam horam.

19. They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us; but they went out, that they might be made manifest that they were not all of us.

19. Ex nobis egressi sunt, sed non erant ex nobis; nam si fuissent ex nobis, permansissent utique nobiscum; sed ut manifesti fierent quod non erant omnes ex nobis.

18 It is the last time, or hour. He confirms the faithful against offenses by which they might have been disturbed. Already many sects had risen up, which rent the unity of faith and caused disorder in the churches. But the Apostle not only fortifies the faithful, lest they should falter, but turns the whole to a contrary purpose; for he reminds them that the last time had already come, and therefore he exhorts them to a greater vigilance, as though he had said, ``Whilst various errors arise, it behooves you to be awakened rather than to be overwhelmed; for we ought hence to conclude that Christ is not far distant; let us then attentively look for him, lest he should come upon us suddenly.'' In the same way it behooves us to comfort ourselves at this day, and to see by faith the near advent of Christ, while Satan is causing confusion for the sake of disturbing the Church, for these are the signs of the last time.

But so many ages having passed away since the death of John, seem to prove that this prophecy is not true: to this I answer, that the Apostle, according to the common mode adopted in the Scripture, declares to the faithful, that nothing more now remained but that Christ should appear for the redemption of the world. But as he fixes no time, he did not allure the men of that age by a vain hope, nor did he intend to cut short in future the course of the Church and the many successions of years during which the Church has hitherto remained in the world. And doubtless, if the eternity of God's kingdom be borne in mind, so long a time will appear to us as a moment. We must understand the design of

the Apostle, that he calls that the last time, during which all things shall be so completed, that nothing will remain except the last revelation of Christ.

As ye have heard that antichrist will come He speaks as of a thing well known. We may hence conclude that the faithful had been taught and warned from the beginning respecting the future disorder of the Church, in order that they might, carefully keep themselves in the faith they professed, and also instruct posterity in the duty of watchfulness. For it was God's will that his Church should be thus tried, lest any one knowingly and willingly should be deceived, and that there might be no excuse for ignorance. But we see that almost the whole world has been miserably deceived, as though not a word had been said about Antichrist.

Moreover, under the Papacy there is nothing more notorious and common than the future coming of Antichrist; and yet they are so stupid, that they perceive not that his tyranny is exercised over them. Indeed, the same thing happens altogether to them as to the Jews; for though they hold the promises respecting the Messiah, they are yet further away from Christ than if they had never heard his name; for the imaginary Messiah, whom they have invented for themselves, turns them wholly aside from the Son of God; and were any one to shew Christ to them from the Law and the Prophets, he would only spend his labor in vain. The Popes have imagined an Antichrist, who for three years and a half is to harass the Church. All the marks by which the Spirit of God has pointed out Antichrist, clearly appear in the Pope; but the triennial Antichrist lays fast hold on the foolish Papists, so that seeing they do not see. Let us then remember, that Antichrist has not only been announced by the Spirit of God, but that also the marks by which he may be distinguished have been mentioned.

Even now are there many antichrists. This may seem to have been added by way of correction, as they falsely thought that it would be some one kingdom; but it is not so. They who suppose that he would be only one man, are indeed greatly mistaken. For Paul, referring to a future defection, plainly shows that it would be a certain body or kingdom. (2 Thessalonians 2:3.) He first predicts a defection that would prevail through the whole Church, as a universal evil; he then makes the head of the apostasy the adversary of Christ, who would sit in the temple of God, claiming for himself divinity and divine honors. Except we desire willfully to err, we may learn from Paul's description to know Antichrist. That passage I have already explained; it is enough now touch on it by the way.

But how can that passage agree with the words of John, who says that there were already many antichrists? To this I reply, that John meant no other thing than to say, that some particular sects had already risen, which were forerunners of a future Antichrist; for Cerinthus, Basilides, Marcion, Valentinus, Ebion, Arrius, and others, were members of that kingdom which the Devil afterwards raised up in opposition to Christ. Properly speaking, Antichrist was not yet in existence; but the mystery of iniquity was working secretly. But John uses the name, that he might effectually stimulate the care and solicitude of the godly to repel frauds.

But if the Spirit of God even then commanded the faithful to stand on their watch, when they saw at a distance only signs of the coming enemy, much less is it now a time for sleeping, when he holds the Church under his cruel and oppressive tyranny, and openly dishonors Christ.

19 They went out from us He anticipates another objection, that the Church seemed to have produced these pests, and to have cherished them for a time in its bosom. For certainly it serves more to disturb the weak, when any one among us, professing the true faith, falls away, than when a thousand aliens conspire against us. He then confesses that they had gone out from the bosom of the Church; but he denies that they were ever of the Church. But the way of removing this objection is, to say, that the Church is always exposed to this evil, so that it is constrained to bear with many hypocrites who know not Christ, really, however much they may by the mouth profess his name.

By saying, They went out from us, he means that they had previously occupied a place in the Church, and were counted among the number of the godly. He, however, denies that they were of them, though they had assumed the name of believers, as chaff though mixed with wheat on the same floor cannot yet be deemed wheat.

For if they had been of us He plainly declares that those who fell away had never been members of the Church. And doubtless the seal of God, under which he keeps his own, remains sure, as Paul says, (2 Timothy 2:19.) But here arises a difficulty, for it happens that many who seemed to have embraced Christ, often fall away. To this I answer, that there are three sorts of those who profess the Gospel; there are those who feign piety, while a bad conscience reproves them within; the hypocrisy of others is more deceptive, who not only seek to disguise themselves before men, but also dazzle their own eyes, so that they seem to themselves to worship God aright; the third are those who have the living root of faith, and carry a testimony of their own adoption firmly fixed in their hearts. The two first have no stability; of the last John speaks, when he says, that it is impossible that they should be separated from the Church, for the seal which God's Spirit engraves on their hearts cannot be obliterated; the incorruptible seed, which has struck roots, cannot be pulled up or destroyed.

He does not speak here of the constancy of men, but of God, whose election must be ratified. He does not then, without reason declare, that where the calling of God is effectual, perseverance would be certain. He, in short, means that they who fall away had never been thoroughly imbued with the knowledge of Christ, but had only a light and a transient taste of it.

That they might be made manifest He shews that trial is useful and necessary for the Church. It hence follows, on the other hand, that there is no just cause for perturbation. Since the Church is like a threshing-floor, the chaff must be blown away that the pure wheat may remain. This is what God does, when he casts out hypocrites from the Church, for he then cleanses it from refuse and filth.

1 John 2:20-23

1 John 2:20-23

20. But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

20. Et vos unctionem habetis a Sancto, et novistis omnia.

21. I have not written unto you because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

21. Non scripsi vobis, quia non noveritis veritatem; sed quia novistis eam, et quia omne mendacium ex veritate non est.

22. Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.

22. Quis est mendax, nisi qui negat Jesum esse Christum? Hic est antichristus, qui negat Patrem et Filium.

23. Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (but) he that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.

23. Omnis qui negat Filium, neque Patrem habet.

20 But ye have an unction. The Apostle modestly excuses himself for having so earnestly warned them, lest they should think that they were indirectly reproved, as though they were rude and ignorant of those things which they ought to have well known. So Paul conceded wisdom to the Romans, that they were able and fit to admonish others. He at the same time shewed that they stood in need of being reminded, in order that they might rightly perform their duty. (Romans 15:14, 15.) The Apostles did not, however, speak thus in order to flatter them; but they thus wisely took heed lest their doctrine should be rejected by any, for they declared what was suitable and useful, not only to the ignorant, but also to those well instructed in the Lord's school.

Experience teaches us how fastidious the ears of men are. Such fastidiousness ought indeed to be far away from the godly; it yet behooves a faithful and wise teacher to omit nothing by which he may secure a hearing from all. And it is certain that we receive what is said with less attention and respect, when we think that he who speaks disparages the knowledge which has been given us by the Lord. The Apostle by this praise did at the same time stimulate his readers, because they who were endued with the gift of knowledge, had less excuse if they did not surpass others in their proficiency.

The state of the case is, that the Apostle did not teach them as though they were ignorant, and acquainted only with the first elements of knowledge, but reminded them of things already known, and also exhorted them to rouse up the sparks of the Spirit, that a full brightness might shine forth in them. And in the next words he explained himself, having denied that he wrote to them because they knew not the truth, but because they had been well taught in it; for had they been wholly ignorant and novices, they could not have comprehended his doctrine.

Now, when he says that they knew all things, it is not to be taken in the widest sense, but ought to be confined to the subject treated of here. But when

he says that they had an unction from the Holy One, he alludes, no doubt, to the ancient types. The oil by which the priests were anointed was obtained from the sanctuary; and Daniel mentions the coming of Christ as the proper time for anointing the Most Holy. (Daniel 9:24.) For he was anointed by the Father, that he might pour forth on us a manifold abundance from his own fullness. It hence follows that men are not rightly made wise by the acumen of their own minds, but by the illumination of the Spirit; and further, that we are not otherwise made partakers of the Spirit than through Christ, who is the true sanctuary and our only high priest. [453]

21 And that no lie is of the truth. He concedes to them a judgment, by which they could distinguish truth from falsehood; for it is not the dialectic proposition, that falsehood differs from truth, (such as are taught as general rules in the schools;) but what is said is applied to that which is practical and useful; as though he had said, that they did not only hold what was true, but were also so fortified against the impostures and fallacies of the ungodly, that they wisely took heed to themselves. Besides, he speaks not of this or of that kind of falsehood; but he says, that whatever deception Satan might contrive, or in whatever way he might attack them, they would be able readily to distinguish between light and darkness, because they had the Spirit as their guide.

22 Who is a liar He does not assert that they alone were liars who denied that the Son of God appeared in the flesh, lest no one in unloosing the knot should above measure torment himself; but that they surpassed all others, as though he had said, that except this be deemed a lie, no other could be so reckoned; as we are wont commonly to say, ``If perfidy towards God and men is not a crime, what else can we call a crime?'' [454]

What he had generally said of false prophets, he now applies to the state of his own time; for he points out, as by the finger, those who disturbed the Church. I readily agree with the ancients, who thought that Cerinthus and Carpocrates are here referred to. But the denial of Christ extends much wider; for it is not enough in words to confess that Jesus is the Christ, except he is acknowledged to be such as the Father offers him to us in the gospel. The two I have named gave the title of Christ to the Son of God, but imagined him to be man only. Others followed them, such as Arius, who, adorning him with the name of God, robbed him of his eternal divinity. Marcion dreamt that he was a mere phantom. Sabellius imagined that he differed nothing from the Father. All these denied the Son of God; for not one of them really acknowledged the true Christ; but, adulterating, as far as they could, the truth respecting him, they devised for themselves an idol instead of Christ. Then broke out Pelagius, who, indeed, raised no dispute respecting Christ's essence, but allowed him to

[453] "From the Holy One," from the Father, say some; from the Son, say others; from the Holy Spirit, according to a third party. By comparing this verse with the 27th and the 28th verse, we see reason to conclude that the "Holy One" is Christ, who had promised the Spirit to teach his people. The unction, or the anointing, is the act of the Spirit by which the truth is taught. — Ed.

[454] Taking this view of the passage, we may give this rendering, — "Who is a liar, except it be he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?" — Ed.

be true man and God; yet he transferred to us almost all the honor that belongs to him. It is, indeed, to reduce Christ to nothing, when his grace and power are set aside.

So the Papists, at this day, setting up freewill in opposition to the grace of the Holy Spirit, ascribing a part of their righteousness and salvation to the merits of works, feigning for themselves innumerable advocates, by whom they render God propitious to them, have a sort of fictitious Christ, I know not what; but the lively and genuine image of God, which shines forth in Christ, they deform by their wicked inventions; they lessen his power, subvert and pervert his office.

We now see that Christ, is denied, whenever those things which peculiarly belong to him, are taken away from him. And as Christ is the end of the law and of the gospel, and has in himself all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, so he is the mark at which all heretics level and direct their arrows. Therefore the Apostle does not, without reason, make those the chief impostors, who fight against Christ, in whom the full truth is exhibited to us.

He is Antichrist He speaks not of that prince of defection who was to occupy the seat of God; but all those who seek to overthrow Christ, he puts them among that impious band. And that he might amplify their crime, he asserts that the Father, no less than the Son, is denied by them; as though he had said, ``They have no longer any religion, because they wholly cast away God.'' And this he afterwards confirms, by adding this reason, that the Father cannot be separated from the Son.

Now this is a remarkable sentence, and ought to be reckoned among the first axioms of our religion. yea, when we have confessed that there is one true God, this second article ought necessarily to be added, that he is no other but he who is made known in Christ. The Apostle does not here treat distinctly of the unity of essence. It is, indeed, certain, that the Son cannot be disunited from the Father, for he is of the same essence, ({ὁμοούσιος};) but another thing is spoken of here, that is, that the Father, who is invisible, has revealed himself only in his Son. Hence he is called the image of the Father, (Hebrews 1:3,) because he sets forth and exhibits to us all that is necessary to be known of the Father. For the naked majesty of God would, by its immense brightness, ever dazzle our eyes; it is therefore necessary for us to look on Christ. This is to come to the light, which is justly said to be otherwise inaccessible.

I say, again, that there is not here a distinct discussion respecting the eternal essence of Christ, which he has in common with the Father. This passage is, indeed, abundantly sufficient to prove it: but John calls us to this practical part of faith, that as God has given himself to us to be enjoyed only in Christ, he is elsewhere sought for in vain; or (if any one prefers what is clearer) that as in Christ dwells all the fullness of the Deity, there is no God apart from him. It hence follows, that Turks, Jews, and such as are like them, have a mere idol and not the true God. For by whatever titles they may honor the God whom they worship, still, as they reject him without whom they cannot come to God, and in whom God has really manifested himself to us, what have they but some

creature or fiction of their own? They may flatter themselves as much as they please, with their own speculations, who, without Christ, philosophize on divine things; it is still certain that they do nothing but rave and rant, because, as Paul says, they hold not the Head. (Colossians 2:19.) It is obvious, hence, to conclude how necessary is the knowledge of Christ.

Many copies have the opposite sentence, ``He who confesses the Son,'' etc. But as I think that a note by some copyist has crept into the text, I hesitated not to omit it. [455] But if its insertion be approved, the meaning would be, that there is no right confession of God except the Father be acknowledged in the Son.

Were any one to object and say, that many of the ancients thought rightly of God, to whom Christ was not known: I allow that the knowledge of Christ has not been always so explicitly revealed, nevertheless, I contend that it has been always true, that as the light of the sun comes to us by its rays, so the knowledge of God has been communicated through Christ.

1 John 2:24-29

1 John 2:24-29

24. Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

24. Ergo quod audistis ab initio, in vobis maneat: si in vobis manserit quod ab initio audistis, et vos in Patre et Filio manebitis.

25. And this is the promise that he hath promised us, even eternal life.

25. Atque haec est promissio, quam ipse nobis promisit, nempe vitae eternae (vel, quam nobis pollicitus est vitam eternam.)

26. These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

26. Haec scripsi vobis de iis qui seducunt vos.

27. But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him.

27. Et unctio quam accepistis ab eo, in vobis manet; neque opus habetis ut quis vos doceat; sed quemadmodum unctio docet vos de omnibus, et veritas est, et non est mendacium; et quemadmodum docuit vos, manete in eo (vel, in ea.)

28. And now, little children, abide in him; that, when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

28. Et nunc filioli, manete in eo, ut quum apparuerit, habeamus fiduciam, neque pudefiamus ab ejus praesentia.

[455] The words are found in most of the MSS., and in most of the versions, and in many of the Fathers. Besides, they wholly comport with the usual style of the Apostle, whose common practice it was to state things positively and negatively, and vice versa. Sec especially chap. 5:12. — Ed.

29. If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doeth righteousness is born of him.

29. Si nostis quod justus sit, cognoscite quod quisquis facit justitiam ex eo genitus est.

24 Let that therefore abide in you He annexes an exhortation to the former doctrine; and that it might have more weight, he points out the fruit they would receive from obedience. He then exhorts them to perseverance in the faith, so that they might retain fixed in their hearts what they had learnt.

But when he says, from the beginning, he does not mean that antiquity alone was sufficient to prove any doctrine true; but as he has already shown that they had been rightly instructed in the pure gospel of Christ, he concludes that they ought of right to continue in it. And this order ought to be especially noticed; for were we unwilling to depart from that doctrine which we have once embraced, whatever it may be, this would not be perseverance, but perverse obstinacy. Hence, discrimination ought to be exercised, so that a reason for our faith may be made evident from God's word: then let inflexible perseverance follow.

The Papists boast of ``a beginning,'' because they have imbibed their superstitions from childhood. Under this pretense they allow themselves obstinately to reject the plain truth. Such perverseness shews to us, that we ought always to begin with the certainty of truth.

In that which ye have heard Here is the fruit of perseverance, that they in whom God's truth remains, remain in God. We hence learn what we are to seek in every truth pertaining to religion. He therefore makes the greatest proficiency, who makes such progress as wholly to cleave to God. But he in whom the Father dwells not through his Son, is altogether vain and empty, whatever knowledge he may possess. Moreover, this is the highest commendation of sound doctrine, that it unites us to God, and that in it is found whatever pertains to the real fruition of God.

In the last place, he reminds us that it is real happiness when God dwells in us. The words he uses are ambiguous. They may be rendered, ``This is the promise which he has promised to us, even eternal life.'' [456] You may, however, adopt either of these renderings, for the meaning is still the same. The sum of what is said is, that we cannot live otherwise than by nourishing to the end the seed of life sown in our hearts. John insists much on this point, that not only the beginning of a blessed life is to be found in the knowledge of Christ, but also its perfection. But no repetition of it can be too much, since it is well known that it has ever been a cause of ruin to men, that being not content with Christ, they have had a hankering to wander beyond the simple doctrine of the gospel.

26 These things have I written unto you The apostle excuses himself again for having admonished them who were well endued with knowledge and judgment. But he did this, that they might apply for the guidance of the Spirit, lest

[456] This, which is our version, is, no doubt, the best construction. “Promise” is a metonymy for what is promised: “This is the promise, which he hath promised to us, even eternal life.” “Eternal life” is in apposition with “which.” — Ed.

his admonition should be in vain; as though he had said, ``I indeed do my part, but still it is necessary that the Spirit of God should direct you in all things; for in vain shall I, by the sound of my voice, beat your ears, or rather the air, unless he speaks within you.''

When we hear that he wrote concerning seducers, we ought always to bear in mind, that it is the duty of a good and diligent pastor not only to gather a flock, but also to drive away wolves' for what will it avail to proclaim the pure gospel, if we connive at the impostures of Satan? No one, then, can faithfully teach the Church, except he is diligent in banishing errors whenever he finds them spread by seducers. What he says of the unction having been received from him, I refer to Christ.

27 And ye need not Strange must have been the purpose of John, as I have already said, if he intended to represent teaching as useless. He did not ascribe to them so much wisdom, as to deny that they were the scholars of Christ. He only meant that they were by no means so ignorant as to need things as it were unknown to be taught them, and that he did not set before them anything which the Spirit of God might not of himself suggest to them. Absurdly, then, do fanatical men lay hold on this passage, in order to exclude from the Church the use of the outward ministry. He says that the faithful, taught by the Spirit, already understood what he delivered to them, so that they had no need to learn things unknown to them. He said this, that he might add more authority to his doctrine, while every one repeated in his heart an assent to it, engraven as it were by the finger of God. But as every one had knowledge according to the measure of his faith, and as faith in some was small, in others stronger, and in none perfect, it hence follows, that no one knew so much, that there was no room for progress.

There is also another use to be made of this doctrine, --- that when men really understand what is needful for them, we are yet to warn and rouse them, that they may be more confirmed. For what John says, that they were taught all things by the Spirit, ought not to be taken generally, but to be confined to what is contained in this passage. He had, in short, no other thing in view than to strengthen their faith, while he recalled them to the examination of the Spirit, who is the only fit corrector and approver of doctrine, who seals it on our hearts, so that we may certainly know that God speaks. For while faith ought to look to God, he alone can be a witness to himself, so as to convince our hearts that what our ears receive has come from him.

And the same is the meaning of these words, As the same anointing teaches you of all things, and is truth; that is, the Spirit is like a seal, by which the truth of God is testified to you. When he adds, and is no lie, he points out another office of the Spirit, even that he endues us with judgment and discernment, lest we should be deceived by lies, lest we should hesitate and be perplexed, lest we should vacillate as in doubtful things.

As it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him, or, abide in him. He had said, that the Spirit abode in them; he now exhorts them to abide in the revelation made

by him, and he specifies what revelation it was, ``Abide,'' he says, ``in Christ, as the Spirit hath taught you.'' Another explanation, I know, is commonly given, ``Abide in it,'' that is, the unction. But as the repetition which immediately follows, cannot apply to any but to Christ, I have no doubt but that he speaks here also of Christ; and this is required by the context; for the Apostle dwells much on this point, that the faithful should retain the true knowledge of Christ, and that they should not go to God in any other way.

He at the same time shews, that the children of God are for no other end illuminated by the Spirit, but that they may know Christ. Provided they turned not aside from him, he promised them the fruit of perseverance, even confidence, so as not to be ashamed at his presence. For faith is not a naked and a frigid apprehension of Christ, but a lively and real sense of his power, which produces confidence. Indeed, faith cannot stand, while tossed daily by so many waves, except it looks to the coming of Christ, and, supported by his power, brings tranquillity to the conscience. But the nature of confidence is well expressed, when he says that it can boldly sustain the presence of Christ. For they who indulge securely in their vices, turn their backs as it were on God; nor can they otherwise obtain peace than by forgetting him. This is the security of the flesh, which stupefies men; so that turning away from God, they neither dread sin nor fear death; and in the meantime they shun the tribunal of Christ. But a godly confidence delights to look on God. Hence it is, that the godly calmly wait for Christ, nor do they dread his coming.

29. If ye know that he is righteous He again passes on to exhortations, so that he mingles these continually with doctrine throughout the Epistle; but he proves by many arguments that faith is necessarily connected with a holy and pure life. The first argument is, that we are spiritually begotten after the likeness of Christ; it hence follows, that no one is born of Christ but he who lives righteously. It is at the same time uncertain whether he means Christ or God, when he says that they who are born of him do righteousness. It is a mode of speaking certainly used in Scripture, that we are born of God in Christ; but there is nothing inconsistent in the other, that they are born of Christ, who are renewed by his Spirit. [457]

[457] It is the character of John's style that he often passes as it were abruptly from the Son to the Father, and from the Father to the Son; and often the antecedent is not the next preceding word, but one at some distance: we find this to be the case by what the sentence contains, as in the present instance; the new birth is never ascribed to the Son, referred to in the foregoing verse, but to the Father or to the Spirit. Hence we must conclude that the righteous one spoken of here, who together with the Son is mentioned in the 22d verse, is the Father. As the intervening verses, with the exception of the 23d, which is only explanatory of the previous verse, apply to the Son, so this verse seems to refer to the Father, consistently with a mode of writing common in Scripture. — Ed.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 John 3:1-3

1 John 3:1-3

1. Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not.

1. Videte (vel, videtis) qualem charitatem dedit nobis Pater, ut filii Dei nominemur: propterea mundus non novit nos, quia non novit ipsum.

2. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.

2. Dilecti, nunc filii Dei sumus; et nondum apparuit quid erimus: scimus antera quod si apparuerit, similes ei erimus; quia videbimus eum sicuti est.

3. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3. Et omnis qui habet hanc spem in eo, purificat seipsum, quemadmodum ille purus est.

1 Behold The second argument is from the dignity and excellency of our calling; for it was not common honor, he says, that the heavenly Father bestowed on us, when he adopted us as his children. This being so great a favor, the desire for purity ought to be kindled in us, so as to be conformed to his image; nor, indeed, can it be otherwise, but that he who acknowledges himself to be one of God's children should purify himself. And to make this exhortation more forcible, he amplifies the favor of God; for when he says, that love has been bestowed, he means that it is from mere bounty and benevolence that God makes us his children; for whence comes to us such a dignity, except from the love of God? Love, then, is declared here to be gratuitous. There is, indeed, an impropriety in the language; but the Apostle preferred speaking thus rather than not to express what was necessary to be known. He, in short, means that the more abundantly God's goodness has been manifested towards us, the greater are our obligations to him, according to the teaching of Paul, when he besought the Romans by the mercies of God to present themselves as pure sacrifices to him. (Romans 12:1.) We are at the same time taught, as I have said, that the adoption of all the godly is gratuitous, and does not depend on any regard to works.

What the sophists say, that God foresees those who are worthy to be adopted,

is plainly refuted by these words, for, in this way the gift would not be gratuitous. It behooves us especially to understand this doctrine; for since the only cause of our salvation is adoption, and since the Apostle testifies that this flows from the mere love of God alone, there is nothing left to our worthiness or to the merits of works. For why are we sons? Even because God began to love us freely, when we deserved hatred rather than love. And as the Spirit is a pledge of our adoption, it hence follows, that if there be any good in us, it ought not to be set up in opposition to the grace of God, but, on the contrary, to be ascribed to him.

When he says that we are called, or named, the expression is not without its meaning; for it is God who with his own mouth declares us to be sons, as he gave a name to Abraham according to what he was. [458]

Therefore the world It is a trial that grievously assaults our faith, that we are not so much regarded as God's children, or that no mark of so great an excellency appears in us, but that, on the contrary, almost the whole world treats us with ridicule and contempt. Hence it can hardly be inferred from our present state that God is a Father to us, for the devil so contrives all things as to obscure this benefit. He obviates this offense by saying that we are not as yet acknowledged to be such as we are, because the world knows not God: a remarkable example of this very thing is found in Isaac and Jacob; for though both were chosen by God, yet Ishmael persecuted the former with laughter and taunts; and Esau, the latter with threats and the sword. However, then, we may be oppressed by the world, still our salvation remains safe and secure.

2 Now are we the sons of God He comes now to what every one knows and feels himself; for though the ungodly may not entice us to give up our hope, yet our present condition is very short of the glow of God's children; for as to our body we are dust and a shadow, and death is always before our eyes; we are also subject to thousand miseries, and the soul is exposed to innumerable evils; so that we find always a hell within us. The more necessary it is that all our thoughts should be withdrawn from the present view of things, lest the miseries by which we are on every side surrounded and almost overwhelmed, should shake our faith in that felicity which as yet lies hid. For the Apostle's meaning is this, that we act very foolishly when we estimate what God has bestowed on us according to the present state of things, but that we ought with undoubting faith to hold to that which does not yet appear.

But we know that when he shall appear The conditional particle ought to be rendered as an adverb of time, when But the verb appear means not the same thing as when he used it before. The Apostle has just said, it does not yet appear what we shall be, because the fruit of our adoption is as yet hid, for in heaven is our felicity, and we are now far away traveling on the earth; for this fading life, constantly exposed to hundred deaths, is far different from that eternal life which belongs to the children of God; for being enclosed as slaves

[458] Calvin, like our version, renders {τέκνα}, ``sons;'' but the word would be better rendered ``children,'' ``That we should be called the children of God.'' The passage might be thus paraphrased, ``See what great proof of love the Father hath given us, that we should be made the children of God'' --- Ed

in the prison of our flesh, we are far distant from the full sovereignty of heaven and earth. But the verb now refers to Christ, when, he shall appear; for he teaches the same thing with Paul, in Colossians, where he says,

``Your life is hid with Christ in God: when Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.''
(Colossians 3:3,4)

For our faith cannot stand otherwise than by looking to the coming of Christ. The reason why God defers the manifestation of our glory is this, because Christ is not manifested in the power of his kingdom. This, then, is the only way of sustaining our faith, so that we may wait patiently for the life promised to us. As soon as any one turns away the least from Christ, he must necessarily fail. [459]

The word to know, shews the certainty of faith, in order to distinguish it from opinion. Neither simple nor universal knowledge is here intended, but that which every one ought to have for himself, so that he may feel assured that he will be sometime like Christ. Though, then, the manifestation of our glory is connected with the coming of Christ, yet our knowledge of this is well founded.

We shall be like him He does not understand that we shall be equal to him; for there must be some difference between the head and the members; but we shall be like him, because he will make our vile body conformable to his glorious body, as Paul also teaches us in Philippians 3:21. For the Apostle intended shortly to shew that the final end of our adoption is, that what has in order preceded in Christ, shall at length be completed in us.

The reason that is added may, however, seem inappropriate. For if to see Christ makes us like him, we shall have this in common with the wicked, for they shall also see his glory. To this I reply, that this is to see him as a friend, which will not be the case with the wicked, for they will dread his presence; nay, they will shun God's presence, and be filled with terror; his glow will so dazzle their eyes, that they will be stupefied and confounded. For we see that Adam, conscious of having done wrong, dreaded the presence of God. And God declared this by Moses, as a general truth as to men,

``No man shall see me and live.'' (Exodus 33:20.)

For how can it be otherwise but that God's majesty, as a consuming fire, will consume us as though we were stubble, so great is the weakness of our flesh. But as far as the image of God is renewed in us, we have eyes prepared to see God. And now, indeed, God begins to renew in us his own image, but in what a small measure! Except then we be stripped of all the corruption of the flesh, we shall not be able to behold God face to face.

And this is also expressed here, as he is He does not, indeed, say, that there

[459] "When he shall appear," refers to Christ, mentioned in the 28th verse of the last chapter; what intervenes seems to have been parenthetically introduced. This is often the manner of writing found in this apostle. The end of the 8th verse, in this chapter, is connected with the 16th; for the antecedent to {ἐκεῖνος}, he, in the latter verse, is ``the Son of God'' in the former. [1Jo 2:28; 3:8, 16.] --- Ed

is no seeing of God now; but as Paul says,

``We see now through a glass, darkly.''
(1 Corinthians 13:12.)

But he elsewhere makes a difference between this way of living, and the seeing of the eye. In short, God now presents himself to be seen by us, not such as he is, but such as we can comprehend. Thus is fulfilled what is said by Moses, that we see only as it were his back, (Exodus 33:23;) for there is too much brightness in his face.

We must further observe, that the manner which the Apostle mentions is taken from the effect, not from the cause; for he does not teach us, that we shall be like him, because we shall see him; but he hence proves that we shall be partakers of the divine glory, for except our nature were spiritual, and endued with a heavenly and blessed immortality, it could never come so nigh to God yet the perfection of glory will not be so great in us, that our seeing will enable us to comprehend all that God is; for the distance between us and him will be even then very great.

But when the Apostle says, that we shall see him as he is, he intimates a new and an ineffable manner of seeing him, which we enjoy not now; for as long as we walk by faith, as Paul teaches us, we are absent from him. And when he appeared to the fathers, it was not in his own essence, but was ever seen under symbols. Hence the majesty of God, now hid, will then only be in itself seen, when the veil of this mortal and corruptible nature shall be removed.

Refined questions I pass by: for we see how Augustine tormented himself with these, and yet never succeeded, both in his Epistles to Paulus and Fortunatus, and in the City of God, (2:2,) and in other places. What he says, however, is worthy of being observed, that the way in which we live avails more in this inquiry than the way in which we speak, and that we must beware, lest by wrangling as to the manner in which God can be seen, we lose that peace and holiness without which no one shall see him.

3 And every man that hath this hope He now draws this inference, that the desire for holiness should not grow cold in us, because our happiness has not as yet appeared, for that hope is sufficient; and we know that what is hoped for is as yet hid. The meaning then is, that though we have not Christ now present before our eyes, yet if we hope in him, it cannot be but that this hope will excite and stimulate us to follow purity, for it leads us straight to Christ, whom we know to be a perfect pattern of purity.

1 John 3:4-6

1 John 3:4-6

4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

4. Quicunque facit peccatum, etiam iniquitatem facit; et peccatum est iniquitas.

5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

5. Porro nostis quod ille apparuit ut peccata nostra tolleret; et peccatum in eo non est.

6. Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

6. Quisquis in eo manet, non peccat; quisquis peccat, non vidit eum, nec novit eum.

4 Whosoever committeth, or doeth, sin. The Apostle has already shown how ungrateful we must be to God, if we make but little account of the honor of adoption, by which he of his own goodwill anticipates us, and if we do not, at least, render him mutual love. He, at the same time, introduced this admonition, that our love ought not to be diminished, because the promised happiness is deferred. But now, as men are wont to indulge themselves more than they ought, in evils, he reproves this perverse indulgence, declaring that all they who sin are wicked and transgressors of the law. For it is probable that there were then those who extenuated their vices by this kind of flattery, ``It is no wonder if we sin, because we are men; but there is a great difference between sin and iniquity.''

This frivolous excuse the Apostle now dissipates, when he defines sin to be a transgression of the divine law; for his object was to produce hatred and horror as to sin. The word sin seems light to some; but iniquity or transgression of the law cannot appear to be so easily forgiven. But the Apostle does not make sins equal, by charging all with iniquity who sin; but he means simply to teach us, that sin arises from a contempt of God, and that by sinning, the law is violated. Hence this doctrine of John has nothing in common with the delirious paradoxes of the Stoics.

Besides, to sin here, does not mean to offend in some instances; nor is the word sin to be taken for every fault or wrong a man may commit.; but he calls that sin, when men with their whole heart run into evil, nor does he understand that men sin, except those who are given up to sin. For the faithful, who are as yet tempted by the lusts of the flesh, are not to be deemed guilty of iniquity, though they are not pure or free from sin, but as sin does not reign in them, John says that they do not sin, as I shall presently explain more fully.

The import of the passage is, that the perverse life of those who indulge themselves in the liberty of sinning, is hateful to God, and cannot be borne with by him, because it is contrary to his Law. It does not hence follow, nor can it be hence inferred, that the faithful are iniquitous; because they desire to obey God, and abhor their own vices, and that in every instance; and they also form their own life, as much as in them lieth, according to the law. But when there is a deliberate purpose to sin, or a continued course in sin, then the law is transgressed. [460]

[460] To do, or to commit, or to work, or to practice, sin, and to sin, are evidently used in the same sense by the Apostle: and to commit or practice sin, according to what he

5 And ye know that he was manifested, or, hath appeared. He shews by another argument how much sin and faith differ from one another; for it is the office of Christ to take away sins, and for this end was he sent by the Father; and it is by faith we partake of Christ's virtue. Then he who believes in Christ is necessarily cleansed from his sins. But it is said in John 1:29, that Christ takes away sins, because he atoned for them by the sacrifice of his death, that they may not be imputed to us before God: John means in this place that Christ really, and, so to speak, actually takes away sins, because through him our old man is crucified, and his Spirit, by means of repentance, mortifies the flesh with all its lusts. For the context does not allow us to explain this of the remission of sins; for, as I have said, he thus reasons, ``They who cease not to sin, render void the benefits derived from Christ, since he came to destroy the reigning power of sin.'' This belongs to the sanctification of the Spirit.

And in him is no sin He does not speak of Christ personally, but of his whole body. [461] Wherever Christ diffuses his efficacious grace, he denies that there is any more room for sin. He, therefore, immediately draws this inference, that they sin not who remain in Christ. For if he dwells in us by faith, he performs his own work, that is, he cleanses us from sins. It hence appears what it is to sin For Christ by his Spirit does not perfectly renew us at once, or in an instant, but he continues our renovation throughout life. It cannot then be but that the faithful are exposed to sin as long as they live in the world; but as far as the kingdom of Christ prevails in them, sin is abolished. In the meantime they are designated according to the prevailing principle, that is, they are said to be righteous and to live righteously, because they sincerely aspire to righteousness.

They are said not to sin, because they consent not to sin, though they labor under the infirmity of the flesh; but, on the contrary, they struggle with groaning, so that they can truly testify with Paul that they do the evil they would not.

He says that the faithful abide in Christ, because we are by faith united to him, and made one with him.

6 Whosoever sinneth hath not seen him. According to his usual manner he added the opposite clause, that we may know that faith in Christ and knowledge of him are vainly pretended, except there be newness of life. For Christ is never dormant where he reigns, but the Spirit renders effectual his power. And it may be rightly said of him, that he puts sin to flight, not otherwise than as the sun

says in his Gospel, (John 8:34,) is the same with being "the servant of sin." It is hence evident, that in the language of John, to do sin, or to sin, means a prevailing or an habitual course of sinning. We might render the fourth verse thus, — "Every doer of sin, is also the doer of unrighteousness; for sin is unrighteousness," or iniquity, as Calvin renders it. The word {ἀνομία}, literally, is lawlessness, but it is never used strictly in this sense either in the Sept or the New Testament. The terms by which it is commonly expressed, are, wickedness, iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness. See verse 7. --- Ed

[461] It is generally taken as referring to Christ personally; he being mentioned here as having no sin, because he is in this respect an example to his people; or, according to some, because he was thereby fitted for the office of taking away our sins; or, because he had no sin of his own to take away. Grotius viewed the present as used here for the past tense, — "and sin was not in him." See a similar instance in John 15:27 — Ed.

drives away darkness by its own brightness. But we are again taught in this place how strong and efficacious is the knowledge of Christ; for it transforms us into his image. So by seeing and knowing we are to understand no other thing than faith.

1 John 3:7-10

1 John 3:7-10

7. Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

7. Filioli, nemo vos decipiat; qai facit justitiam justus est, quemadmodum ille justus est.

8. He that committeth sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

8. Qui facit peccatum, ex diabolo est; quia ab initio diabolus peccat: in hoc manifestus est Filius Dei, ut solvat opera diaboli.

9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

9. Quisquis natus est ex Deo, peccatum non facit, quoniam semen ejus in ipso manet; et non potest peccare, quia ex Deo genitus est.

10. In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil:

10. In hoc manifesti sunt filii Dei et filii Diaboli, ---

7. He that doeth righteousness The Apostle shews here that newness of life is testified by good works; nor does that likeness of which he has spoken, that is between Christ and his members, appear, except by the fruits they bring forth; as though he had said, ``Since it behooves us to be conformed to Christ, the truth and evidence of this must appear in our life.'' The exhortation is the same with that of Paul in Galatians

``If ye live in the Spirit, walk also in the Spirit.''
(Galatians 5:25)

For many would gladly persuade themselves that they have this righteousness buried in their hearts, while iniquity evidently occupies their feet, and hands, and tongue, and eyes.

8 He that committeth sin, This word, to commit, or to do, refers also to outward works, so that the meaning is, that there is no life of God and of Christ, where men act perversely and wickedly, but that such are, on the contrary, the slaves of the devil; and by this way of speaking he sets forth more fully how unlike they are to Christ. For as he has before represented Christ as the fountain of all righteousness, so now, on the other hand, he mentions the devil as the beginning of sin. He denied that any one belongs to Christ except he who is righteous and shews himself to be such by his works; he now assigns to the devil all others, and subjects them to his government, in order that we may know that there is no middle condition, but that Satan exercises his tyranny

where the righteousness of Christ possesses not the primacy.

There are not however two adverse principles, such as the Manicheans have imagined; for we know that the devil is not wicked by nature or by creation, but became so through defection. We know also that he is not equal to God, so that he can with equal right or authority contend with him, but that he is unwillingly under restraint, so that he can do nothing except at the nod and with the permission of his Creator. John, in the last place, in saying that some were born of God and some of the devil, imagined no tradition such as the Manicheans dreamt of; but he means that the former are governed and guided by the Spirit of God, and that the others are led astray by Satan, as God grants to him this power over the unbelieving.

For the Devil sinneth from the beginning As before he spoke not of Christ personally, when he said that he is righteous, but mentioned him as the fountain and the cause of righteousness; so now, when he says that the Devil sins, he includes his whole body, even all the reprobate; as though he had said, this belongs to the Devil, to entice men to sin. It hence follows, that his members, and all who are ruled by him, give themselves up to commit sin. But the beginning which the Apostle mentions, is not from eternity, as when he says that the Word is from the beginning, for there is a wide difference between God and creatures. Beginning as to God, refers to no time. Since, then, the Word was always with God, you can find no point of time in which he began to be, but you must necessarily admit his eternity. But here John meant no other thing than that the Devil had been an apostate since the creation of the world, and that from that time he had never ceased to scatter his poison among men.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested He repeats in other words what he had before said, that Christ came to take away sins. Hence two conclusions are to be drawn, that those in whom sin reigns cannot be reckoned among the members of Christ, and that they can by no means belong to his body; for wherever Christ puts forth his own power, he puts the Devil to flight as well as sin. And this is what John immediately adds; for the next sentence, where he says that those who sin not are born of God, is a conclusion from what is gone before. It is an argument drawn from what is inconsistent, as I have already said; for the kingdom of Christ, which brings righteousness with it, cannot admit of sin. But I have already said what not to sin means. He does not make the children of God wholly free from all sin; but he denies that any can really glory in this distinction, except those who from the heart strive to form their life in obedience to God.

The Pelagians, indeed, and the Catharians did formerly make a wrong use of this passage, when they vainly imagined that the faithful are in this world endued with angelic purity; and in our own age some of the Anabaptists have renewed this dotage. But all those who dream of a perfection of this kind, sufficiently shew what stupid consciences they must have. But the words of the Apostle are so far from countenancing their error, that they are sufficient to confute it.

He says that they sin not who are born of God. Now, we must consider, whether God wholly regenerates us at once, or whether the remains of the old man continue in us until death. If regeneration is not as yet full and complete, it does not exempt us from the bondage of sin except in proportion to its own extent. It hence appears that it cannot be but that the children of God are not free from sins, and that they daily sin, that is, as far as they have still some remnants of their old nature. Nevertheless, what the Apostle contends for stands unalterable, that the design of regeneration is to destroy sin, and that all who are born of God lead a righteous and a holy life, because the Spirit of God restrains the lusting of sin.

The Apostle means the same thing by the seed of God; for God's Spirit so forms the hearts of the godly for holy affections, that the flesh and its lusts do not prevail, but being subdued and put as it were under a yoke, they are checked and restrained. In short, the Apostle ascribes to the Spirit the sovereignty in the elect, who by his power represses sin and suffers it not to rule and reign.

And he cannot sin Here the Apostle ascends higher, for he plainly declares that the hearts of the godly are so effectually governed by the Spirit of God, that through an inflexible disposition they follow his guidance. This is indeed far removed from the doctrine of the Papists. The Sorbons, it is true, confess that the will of man, unless assisted by God's Spirit, cannot desire what is right; but they imagine such a motion of the Spirit as leaves to us the free choice of good and evil. Hence they draw forth merits, because we willingly obey the influence of the Spirit, which it is in our power to resist. In short, they desire the grace of the Spirit to be only this, that we are thereby enabled to choose right if we will. John speaks here far otherwise; for he not only shews that we cannot sin, but also that the power of the Spirit is so effectual, that it necessarily retains us in continual obedience to righteousness. Nor is this the only passage of Scripture which teaches us that the will is so formed that it cannot be otherwise than right. For God testifies that he gives a new heart to his children, and promises to do this, that they may walk in his commandments. Besides, John not only shews how efficaciously God works once in man, but plainly declares that the Spirit continues his grace in us to the last, so that inflexible perseverance is added to newness of life. Let us not, then, imagine with the Sophists that it is some neutral movement, which leaves men free either to follow or to reject; but let us know that our own hearts are so ruled by God's Spirit, that they constantly cleave to righteousness.

Moreover; what the Sophists absurdly object, may be easily refuted: they say that thus the will is taken away from man; but they say so falsely: for the will is a natural power; but, as nature is corrupted, it has only depraved inclinations. It is hence necessary that the Spirit of God should renew it, in order that it may begin to be good. And, then, as men would immediately fall away from what is good, it is necessary that the same Spirit should carry on what he has begun, to the end.

As to merit, the answer is obvious, for it cannot be deemed strange that men merit nothing; and yet good works, which flow from the grace of the Spirit, do not cease to be so deemed, because they are voluntary. They have also a reward, for they are by grace ascribed to men as though they were their own.

But here a question arises, Whether the fear and love of God can be extinguished in any one who has been regenerated by the Spirit of God? for that this cannot be, seems to be the import of the Apostle's words. They who think otherwise refer to the example of David, who for a time labored under such a beastly stupor, that not a spark of grace appeared in him. Moreover, in the fifty-first Psalm, he prays for the restoration of the Spirit. It hence follows that he was deprived of him. I, however, doubt not but that the seed, communicated when God regenerates his elect, as it is incorruptible, retains its virtue perpetually. I, indeed, grant that it may sometimes be stifled, as in the case of David; but still, when all religion seemed to be extinct in him, a live coal was hid under the ashes. Satan, indeed, labors to root out whatever is from God in the elect; but when the utmost is permitted to him, there ever remains a hidden root, which afterwards springs up. But John does not speak of one act, as they say, but of the continued course of life.

Some fanatics dream of something I know not what, that is, of an eternal seed in the elect, which they always bring from their mother's womb; but for this purpose they very outrageously pervert the words of John; for he does not speak of eternal election, but begins with regeneration.

There are also those who are doubly frantic, who hold, under this pretense, that, everything is lawful to the faithful, that is, because John says that they cannot sin. They then maintain that we may follow indiscriminately whatever our inclinations may lead us to. Thus they take the liberty to commit adultery, to steal, and to murder, because there can be no sin where God's Spirit reigns. But far otherwise is the meaning of the Apostle; for he denies that the faithful sin for this reason, because God has engraven his law on their hearts, according to what the Prophet says (Jeremiah 31:33.)

10 In this the children of God are manifest. He shortly draws this conclusion, that those in vain claim a place and a name among the children of God, who do not prove themselves to be such by a pious and holy life, since by this evidence they shew that they differ from the children of the devil. But he does not mean that they are thus manifested, so as to be openly recognized by the whole world; but his meaning is only this, that the fruit and adoption always appear in the life.

1 John 3:10-13

1 John 3:10-13

10. --- Whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

10. --- Quisquis non facit justitiam, non est ex Deo, et qui non diligit fratrem

suum.

11. For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

11. Quia haec est praedicatio quam audistis ab initio, ut mutuo nos diligamus.

12. Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and slew his brother. And wherefore slew he him? Because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

12. Non sicut Cain, qui ex maligno erat, occidit fratrem suum; et qua de causa eum occidit? Quia opera ejus mala erant, fratris autem justa.

13. Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

13. Ne miremini, fratres mei, si vos mundus odit.

10 Whosoever doeth not righteousness. To do righteousness and to do sin, are here set in opposition the one to the other. Then, to do righteousness is no other thing than to fear God from the heart, and to walk in his commandments as far as human weakness will permit; for though righteousness in a strict sense is a perfect keeping of the law, from which the faithful are always far off; yet as offenses and fallings are not imputed to them by God, righteousness is that imperfect obedience which they render to him. But John declares that all who do not live righteously are not of God, because all those whom God calls, he regenerates by his Spirit. Hence newness of life is a perpetual evidence of divine adoption.

Neither he who loveth not his brother. He accommodates a general doctrine to his own purpose. For hitherto he has been exhorting the faithful to brotherly love; now, for the same end, he refers to true righteousness. Hence this clause is added instead of an explanation. But I have already stated the reason why the whole of righteousness is included in brotherly love. The love of God holds, indeed, the first place; but as on it depends love towards men, it is often, as a part for the whole, comprehended under it, and also the latter under the former. Then he declares that every one who is endued with benevolence and humanity, is thus just, and is to be so deemed, because love is rite fulfillment of the law. He confirms this declaration by saying that the faithful had been so taught from the beginning; for by these words he intimates that the statement which he made ought not to have appeared new to them.

12 Not as Cain This is another confirmation, taken from what is contrary; for in the reprobate and the children of the devil hatred reigns, and it holds, as it were, the chief place in their life; and he brings forward Cain as an instance. It served in the meantime to give them consolation, as he at length concluded by saying, Marvel not, if the world hate you.

This explanation ought to be carefully noticed, for men ever blunder as to the way of living, because they make holiness to consist of fictitious works, and while they torment themselves with trifles, they think themselves doubly acceptable to God, as the monks, who proudly call their mode of living a state of perfection; nor is there any other worship of God under the Papacy but a mass of

superstitions. But the Apostle testifies that this righteousness alone is approved by God, that is, if we love one another; and further, that the devil reigns where hatred, dissimulation, envy, and enmity prevail. We ought, however, at the same time, to bear in mind what I have already touched upon, that brotherly love, as it proceeds from the love of God as an effect from a cause, is not disjoined from it, but on the contrary is commended by John on this account, because it is an evidence of our love to God.

By saying that Cain was driven to slay his brother, because his works were evil, he intimates what I have already stated, that when impiety rules, hatred occupies the first place. He refers to Abel's righteous works, that we may learn to endure patiently when the world hates us gratuitously, without any just provocation.

1 John 3:15-18

1 John 3:15-18

14. We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

14. Nos scimus quod transierimus a morte in vitam, quia diligimus fratres: qui non diligit fratrem, manet in morte.

15. Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

15. Omnis qui odit fratrem suum, homicida est; et nostis quod omnis homicida, non habet vitam aeternam in se manentem.

16. Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

16. In hoc cognoscimus charitatem, quod ille pro nobis animam suam posuit: et nos debemus pro fratribus animas ponere.

17. But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

17. Si quis habeat victum mundi, et videat fratrem suum egentem, et claudat viscera sua ab eo, quomodo charitas Dei in ipso manet?

18. My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

18. Filioli mei, ne diligamus sermone, neque lingua, sed opere et veritate.

14 We know. He commends love to us by a remarkable eulogy, because it is an evidence of a transition from death to life. It hence follows that if we love the brethren we are blessed, but that we are miserable if we hate them. There is no one who does not wish to be freed and delivered from death. Those then who by cherishing hatred willingly give themselves up to death, must be extremely stupid and senseless. But when the Apostle says, that it is known by love that we have passed into life, he does not mean that man is his own deliverer, as though he could by loving the brethren rescue himself from death, and procure

life for himself; for he does not here treat of the cause of salvation, but as love is the special fruit of the Spirit, it is also a sure symbol of regeneration. Then the Apostle draws an argument from the sign, and not from the cause. For as no one sincerely loves his brethren, except he is regenerated by the Spirit of God, he hence rightly concludes that the Spirit of God, who is life, dwells in all who love the brethren. But it would be preposterous for any one to infer hence, that life is obtained by love, since love is in order of time posterior to it.

The argument would be more plausible, were it said that love makes us more certain of life: then confidence as to salvation would recumb on works. But the answer to this is obvious; for though faith is confirmed by all the graces of God as aids, yet it ceases not to have its foundation in the mercy of God only. As for instance, when we enjoy the light, we are certain that the sun shines; if the sun shines on the place in which we are, we have a clearer view of it; but yet when the visible rays do not come to us, we are satisfied that the sun diffuses its brightness for our benefit. So when faith is founded on Christ, some things may happen to assist it, still it rests on Christ's grace alone.

15 Is a murderer To stimulate us still more to love, he shews how detestable before God is hatred. There is no one who dreads not a murderer; nay, we all execrate the very name. But the Apostle declares that all who hate their brethren are murderers. He could have said nothing more atrocious; nor is what is said hyperbolical, for we wish him to perish whom we hate. It does not matter if a man keeps his hands from mischief; for the very desire to do harm, as well as the attempt, is condemned before God: nay, when we do not ourselves seek to do an injury, yet if we wish an evil to happen to our brother from some one else, we are murderers.

Then the Apostle defines the thing simply as it is, when he ascribes murder to hatred. Hence is proved the folly of men, that though they abominate the name, they yet make no account of the crime itself. Whence is this? even because the external face of things engrosses our thoughts; but the inward feeling comes to an account before God. Let no one therefore extenuate any more so grievous an evil. Let us learn to refer our judgments to the tribunal of God.

16 Hereby perceive we, or, By this we know. He now shews what true love is; for it would not have been enough to commend it, unless its power is understood. As an instance of perfect love, he sets before us the example of Christ; for he, by not sparing his own life, testified how much he loved us. This then is the mark to which he bids them to advance. The sum of what is said is, that our love is approved, when we transfer the love of ourselves to our brethren, so that every one, in a manner forgetting himself, should seek the good of others. [462]

It is, indeed, certain, that we are far from being equal to Christ: but the Apos-

[462] There is no authority for adding of God after love in this verse; nor indeed is it right, for what follows clearly shows that the love of Christ is what is referred to. The antecedent to "he," ("because he laid down," &e.) is "the Son of God" in the 8th verse. The passage may be thus rendered, "By this we know love, that he laid down his own life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for our brethren." — Ed.

tle recommends to us the imitation of him; for though we do not overtake him, it is yet meet, that we should follow his steps, though at a distance. Doubtless, since it was the Apostle's object to beat down the vain boasting of hypocrites, who gloried that they had faith in Christ though without brotherly love, he intimated by these words, that except this feeling prevails in our hearts, we have no connection with Christ. Nor does he yet, as I have said, set before us the love of Christ, so as to require us to be equal to him; for what would this be but to drive us all to despair? But he means that our feelings should be so formed and regulated, that we may desire to devote our life and also our death, first to God, and then to our neighbors.

There is another difference between us and Christ, --- the virtue or benefit of our death cannot be the same. For the wrath of God is not pacified by our blood, nor is life procured by our death, nor is punishment due to others suffered by us. But the Apostle, in this comparison, had not in view the end or the effect of Christ's death; but he meant only that our life should be formed according to his example.

17 But whose hath this world's good, or, If any one has the world's sustenance. He now speaks of the common duties of love, which flow from that chief foundation, that is, when we are prepared to serve our neighbors even to death. He, at the same time, seems to reason from the greater to the less; for he who refuses to alleviate by his goods the want of his brother, while his life is safe and secure, much less would he expose for him his life to danger. Then he denies that there is love in us, if we withhold help from our neighbors. But he so recommends this external kindness, that at the same time he very fitly expresses the right way of doing good, and what sort of feeling ought to be in us.

Let this, then, be the first proposition, that no one truly loves his brethren, except he really shews this whenever an occasion occurs; the second, that as far as any one has the means, he is bound so far to assist his brethren, for the Lord thus supplies us with the opportunity to exercise love; the third, that the necessity of every one ought to be seen to, for as any one needs food and drink or other things of which we have abundance, so he requires our aid; the fourth, that no act of kindness, except accompanied with sympathy, is pleasing to God. There are many apparently liberal, who yet do not feel for the miseries of their brethren. But the Apostle requires that our bowels should be opened; which is done, when we are endued with such a feeling as to sympathize with others in their evils, no otherwise than as though they were our own.

The love of God Here he speaks of loving the brethren; why then does he mention the love of God? even because this principle is to be held, that it cannot be but that the love of God will generate in us the love of the brethren. [463] And thus God tries our love to him, when he bids us to love men from a regard to himself, according to what is said in Psalm 16:2,

``My goodness reaches not to thee, but towards the saints who are on the

[463] "The love of God" here is love of which God is the object, that is, love to God. — Ed.

earth is my will and my care.''

18. Let us not love in word There is a concession in this first clause; for we cannot love in tongue only; but as many falsely pretend this, the Apostle concedes, according to what is often done, the name of the thing to their dissimulation, though, in the second clause, he reproves their vanity, when he denies that there is reality except in the deed. For thus ought the words to be explained, --- Let us not profess by the tongue that we love, but prove it by the deed; for this is the only true way of shewing love. [464]

1 John 3:19-22

1 John 3:19-22

19. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

19. Et in hoc cognoscimus quod ex veritate sumus, et coram ipso persuadebimus corda nostra.

20. For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

20. Quod si accuset nos cor nostrum, certe major est Deus corde nostro et novit omnia.

21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God.

21. Dilecti, si cor nostrum non accuset, fiduciam habemus erga Deum:

22. And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

22. Et siquid petierimus, accipimus ab eo, quia praecepta ejus servamus, et quæ coram co placent facimus.

19 And hereby we know, or, by this we know. The word truth, he takes now in a different sense; but there is a striking similarity in the words, --- If we, in truth, love our neighbors, we have an evidence that we are born of God, who is truth, or that the truth of God dwells in us. But we must ever remember, that we have not from love the knowledge which the Apostle mentions, as though we were to seek from it the certainty of salvation. And doubtless we know not otherwise that we are the children of God, than as he seals his free adoption on our hearts by his own Spirit., and as we receive by faith the sure pledge of it offered in Christ. Then love is accessory or an inferior aid, a prop to our faith, not a foundation on which it rests.

[464] Beza and others regard "only," or "merely," as understood in the first clause, according to a mode of speaking which often occurs in Scripture, as "Labor not," etc., (John 6:27.) "My dear children, let us love, not only by word, or with the tongue, but by work and in truth." That is, let us not love only by making in words fair promises, or by expressing sympathy with the tongue, but by giving effect to our sympathy by works, and by making our word true, by fulfilling it. Here we find the same arrangement as in many other instances; the "word" has its correspondence in "truth;" and "tongue in "work." It is justly observed by Macknight, that "the Apostle cannot be supposed to forbid our using affectionate speeches to our brethren in distress But he forbiddeth us to content ourselves with these." — Ed

Why then does the Apostle say, We shall assure our hearts before God? He reminds us by these words, that faith does not exist without a good conscience; not that assurance arises from it or depends on it, but that then only we are really and not falsely assured of our union with God, when by the efficacy of his Holy Spirit he manifests himself in our love. For it is ever meet and proper to consider what the Apostle handles; for as he condemns feigned and false profession of faith, he says that a genuine assurance before God we cannot have, except his Spirit produces in us the fruit of love. Nevertheless, though a good conscience cannot be separated from faith, yet no one should hence conclude that we must look to our works in order that our assurance may be certain.

20. For if our heart condemn us He proves, on the other hand, that they in vain possess the name and appearance of Christians, who have not the testimony of a good conscience. For if any one is conscious of guilt, and is condemned by his own heart, much less can he escape the judgment of God. It hence follows, that faith is subverted by the disquiet of an evil conscience.

He says, that God is greater than our heart, with reference to judgment, that is, because he sees much more keenly than we do, and searches more minutely and judges more severely. For this reason, Paul says, that though he was not conscious of wrong himself, yet he was not therefore justified, (1 Corinthians 4:4;) for he knew that however carefully attentive he was to his office, he erred in many things, and through inadvertence was ignorant of mistakes which God perceived. What then the Apostle means is, that he who is harassed and condemned by his own conscience, cannot escape the judgment of God.

To the same purpose is what immediately follows, that God knoweth or seeth all things For how can those things be hid from him which we, who in comparison with him are dull and blind, are constrained to see? Then take this explanation, ``Since God sees all things, he is far superior to our hearts.'' For to render a copulative as a causal particle is no new thing. The meaning is now clear, that since the knowledge of God penetrates deeper than the perceptions of our conscience, no one can stand before him except the integrity of his conscience sustains him.

But here a question may be raised. It is certain that the reprobate are sometimes sunk by Satan into such stupor, that they are no longer conscious of their own evils, and. without alarm or fear, as Paul says, rush headlong into perdition; it is also certain, that hypocrites usually flatter themselves, and proudly disregard the judgment of God, for, being inebriated by a false conceit as to their own righteousness, they feel no convictions of sin. The answer to these things is not difficult; hypocrites are deceived because they shun the light; and the reprobate feel nothing, because they have departed from God; and, indeed there is no security for an evil conscience but in hiding-places.

But the Apostle speaks here of consciences which God draws forth to the light, forces to his tribunal, and fills with an apprehension of his judgment. Yet; it is at the same time generally true, that we cannot have a calm peace except

that which God's Spirit gives to purified hearts; for those who, as we have said, are stupefied, often feel secret compunctions, and torment themselves in their lethargy.

21 If our heart condemns not I have already explained that this refers not to hypocrites nor to the gross despisers of God. For how muchsoever the reprobate may approve of their own lives, yet the Lord, as Solomon says, weigheth their hearts. (Proverbs 16:2.) This balance of God, by which he tries men, is such, that no one can boast that he has a clean heart. The meaning, then, of the Apostle's words is, that then only we come in calm confidence into God's presence, when we bring with us the testimony of a heart conscious of what is right and honest. That saying of Paul is indeed true, that by faith, which relies on the grace of Christ, an access to God with confidence is opened to us, (Ephesians 3:12;) and also, that peace is given us by faith, that our consciences may stand peaceably before God. (Romans 5:1.) But there is not much difference between these sentences; for Paul shews the cause of confidence, but John mentions only an inseparable addition, which necessarily adheres to it, though it be not the cause.

Here, however, arises a greater difficulty, which seems to leave no confidence in the whole world; for who can be found whose heart reproves him in nothing? To this I answer, that the godly are thus reproved, that they may at the same time be absolved. For it is indeed necessary that they should be seriously troubled inwardly for their sins, that terror may lead them to humility and to a hatred of themselves; but they presently flee to the sacrifice of Christ, where they have sure peace. Yet the Apostle says, in another sense, that they are not condemned, because however deficient they may confess themselves to be in many things, they are still relieved by this testimony of conscience, that they truly and from the heart fear God and desire to submit to his righteousness. All who possess this godly feeling, and at the same time know that all their endeavors, how muchsoever they come short of perfection, yet please God, are justly said to have a calm or a peaceful heart, because there is no inward compunction to disturb their calm cheerfulness.

22 And whatsoever we ask These two things are connected, confidence and prayer. As before he shewed that an evil conscience is inconsistent with confidence, so now he declares that none can really pray to God but those who with a pure heart, fear and rightly worship him. The latter follows from the former. It is a general truth taught in Scripture, that the ungodly are not heard by God, but that on the contrary, their sacrifices and prayers are an abomination to him. Hence the door is here closed up against hypocrites, lest they should in contempt of him rush into his presence.

He does not yet mean that a good conscience must be brought, as though it obtained favor to our prayers. Woe to us if we look on works, which have nothing in them but what is a cause of fear and trembling. The faithful, then, cannot otherwise come to God's tribunal than by relying on Christ the Mediator. But as the love of God is ever connected with faith, the Apostle, in order that

he might the more severely reprove hypocrites, deprives them of that singular privilege with which God favors his own children; that is, lest they should think that their prayers have an access to God.

By saying, because we keep his commandments, he means not that confidence in prayer is founded on our works; but he teaches this only, that true religion and the sincere worship of God cannot be separated from faith. Nor ought it to appear strange that he uses a causal particle, though he does not speak of a cause; for an inseparable addition is sometimes mentioned as a cause as when one says, Because the sun shines over us at midday, there is more heat; but it does not follow that heat comes from light.

1 John 3:23-24

1 John 3:23-24

23. And this is his commandment, That we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

23. Et hoc est praeceptum ejus, ut eredamns riomini Filii ejus Jesu Christi, et nos diligamus invicem, sicuti praeceptum dedit nobis.

24. And he that keepeth his commandments dwelleth in him, and he in him. And hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

24. Qui servat praecepta ejus, in ipso manet, et ipse in eo; atque in hoc cognoscimus quod manet in nobis, ex Spiritu quem nobis dedit.

23 And this is his commandment He again accommodates a general truth to his own purpose. The meaning is, that such is the discord between us and God, that we are kept off from an access to him, except we are united by love to one another. At the same time he does not here commend love alone, as before, but joins it as the companion and attendant of faith.

The Sophists by their glosses distort these words, as though liberty to pray were obtained by us, partly by faith and partly by works. As John requires us to keep God's commandments that we may pray aright, and afterwards teaches us that this keeping refers to faith and love, they conclude, that from these two things ought we to derive confidence in prayer. But I have already several times reminded you, that the subject here is not how or by what means men may prepare themselves so that they may have confidence to pray to God, for he speaks not here of the cause of ills or of any worthiness. John only shews, that God favors none with the honor and privilege of intercourse with himself but his own children, even those who have been regenerated by his Spirit. The import, then, of what is said is, Where the fear and love of God do not prevail, it cannot be that God will hear prayer.

But if it be our purpose to obey his commandments, let us see what he commands. He does not, however, separate faith from love; but he requires both together from us. And this is the reason why he uses the word commandment in the singular number.

But this is a remarkable passage; for he defines briefly as well as lucidly in what the whole perfection of a holy life consists. There is then no reason that we should allege any difficulty, since God does by no means lead us about through long labyrinths, but simply and shortly sets before us what is right and what he approves. Besides, in this brevity there is no obscurity, for he shews to us clearly the beginning and the end of a life rightly formed. But that a mention is here only made of brotherly love, while the love of God is omitted**,** the reason is, as we have elsewhere said, that as brotherly love flows from the love of God, so it is a sure and real evidence of it.

On the name of his Son The name refers to preaching; and this connection deserves to be noticed, for few understand what it is to believe on Christ; but from this mode of speaking, we may easily conclude that the only right faith is that which embraces Christ as he is set forth in the Gospel. Hence also it is, that there is no faith without teaching, as Paul also shews to us in Romans 10:14. We must at the same time observe, that the Apostle includes faith in the knowledge of Christ; for he is the living image of the Father, and in him are laid up all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. As soon, then, as we turn aside from him, we cannot do anything else but wander in error.

24 And he that keepeth his commandments He confirms what I have already stated, that the union we have with God is evident when we entertain mutual love: not that our union begins thereby, but that it cannot be fruitless or without effect whenever it begins to exist. And he proves this by adding a reason, because God does not abide in us, except his Spirit dwells in us. But wherever the Spirit is, he necessarily manifests his power and efficiency. We hence readily conclude, that none abide in God and are united to him, but those who keep his commandments.

When, therefore, he says, and by this we know, the copulative, and, as a reason is here given, is to be rendered, ``for,'' or, ``because.'' But the character of the present reason ought to be considered; for though the sentence in words agrees with that of Paul, when he says that the Spirit testifies to our hearts that we are the children of God, and that we through him cry to God, Abba, Father, yet there is some difference in the sense; for Paul speaks of the certainty of gratuitous adoption, which the Spirit of God seals on our hearts; but John here regards the effects which the Spirit produces while dwelling in us, as Paul himself does, when he says, that those are God's children who are led by the Spirit of God; for there also he is speaking of the mortification of the flesh and newness of life.

The sum of what is said is, that it hence appears that we are God's children, that is, when his Spirit rules and governs our life. John at the same time teaches us, that whatever good works are done by us, proceed from the grace of the Spirit, and that the Spirit is not obtained by our righteousness, but is freely given to us.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 John 4:1-3

1 John 4:1-3

1. Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

1. Dilecti, ne omni spiritui credatis, sed probate spiritus, an ex Deo sint; quia multi pseudoprophetae exierunt in mundum.

2. Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God:

2. In hoc cognoscite Spiritum Dei; omnis spiritus qui confitetur Jesum Christum in carne venisse, ex Deo est:

3. And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world.

3. Et omnis spiritus qui non confitetur Jesum Christum in carne venisse, ex Deo non est; et hic est antichristus, de quo audiistis quod venturus sit; et nunc jam in mundo est.

He returns to his former doctrine, which he had touched upon in the second chapter; for many (as it is usual in new things) abused the name of Christ for the purpose of serving their own errors. Some made a half profession of Christ; and when they obtained a place among his friends, they had more opportunity to injure his cause. Satan took occasion to disturb the Church, especially through Christ himself; for he is the stone of offense, against whom all necessarily stumble who keep not on the right way, as shewn to us by God.

But what the Apostle says consists of three parts. He first shews an evil dangerous to the faithful; and therefore he exhorts them to beware. He prescribes how they were to beware, that is, by making a distinction between the spirits; and this is the second part. In the third place, he points out a particular error, the most dangerous to them, he therefore forbids them to hear those who denied that the Son of God appeared in the flesh. We shall now consider each in order.

But though in the passage this reason is added, that many false prophets had gone forth into the world, yet it is convenient to begin with it. The announcement contains a useful admonition; for if Satan had then already seduced many, who under the name of Christ scattered their impostures, similar instances at this day ought not to terrify us. For it is the case perpetually with the Gospel,

that Satan attempts to pollute and corrupt its purity by variety of errors. This our age has brought forth some horrible and monstrous sects; and for this reason many stand amazed; and not knowing where to turn, they cast aside every care for religion; for they find no more summary way for extricating themselves from the danger of errors. They thus, indeed, act most foolishly; for by shunning the light of truth, they cast themselves into the darkness of errors. Let, therefore, this fact remain fixed in our minds, that from the time the Gospel began to be preached, false prophets immediately appeared; and the fact will fortify us against such offenses.

The antiquity of errors keeps many, as it were, fast bound, so that they dare not emerge from them. But John points out here all intestine evil which was then in the Church. Now, if there were impostors mixed then with the Apostles and other faithful teachers, what wonder is it, that the doctrine of the Gospel has been long ago suppressed, and that many corruptions have prevailed in the world? There is, then, no reason why antiquity should hinder us to exercise our liberty in distinguishing between truth and falsehood.

1 Believe not every spirit When the Church is disturbed by discords and contentions, many, as it has been said, being frightened, depart from the Gospel. But the Spirit prescribes to us a far different remedy, that is, that the faithful should not receive any doctrine thoughtlessly and without discrimination. We ought, then, to take heed lest, being offended at the variety of opinions, we should discard teachers, and, together with them, the word of God. But this precaution is sufficient, that all are not to be heard indiscriminately.

The word spirit I take metonymically, as signifying him who boasts that he is endowed with the gift of the Spirit to perform his office as a prophet. For as it was not permitted to any one to speak in his own name, nor was credit given to speakers but as far as they were the organs of the Holy Spirit, in order that prophets might have more authority, God honored them with this name, as though he had separated them from mankind in general. Those, then, were called spirits, who, giving only a language to the oracles of the Holy Spirit, in a manner represented him. They brought nothing of their own, nor came they forth in their own name, but the design of this honorable title was, that God's word should not lose the respect due to it through the humble condition of the minister. For God would have his word to be always received from the mouth of man no otherwise than if he himself had appeared from heaven.

Here Satan interposed, and having sent false teachers to adulterate God's word, he gave them also this name, that they might more easily deceive. Thus false prophets have always been wont superciliously and boldly to claim for themselves whatever honor God had bestowed on his own servants. But the Apostle designedly made use of this name, lest they who falsely pretend God's name should deceive us by their masks, as we see at this day; for many are so dazzled by the mere name of a Church, that they prefer, to their eternal ruin, to cleave to the Pope, than to deny him the least part of his authority.

We ought, therefore, to notice this concession: for the Apostle might have

said that every sort of men ought not to be believed; but as false teachers claimed the Spirit, so he left them to do so, having at the same time reminded them that their claim was frivolous and nugatory, except they really exhibited what they professed, and that those were foolish who, being astonished at the very sound of so honorable a name, dared not to make any inquiry on the subject.

Try the spirits As all were not true prophets, the Apostle here declares that they ought to have been examined and tried. And he addresses not only the whole Church, but also every one of the faithful.

But it may be asked, whence have we this discernment? They who answer, that the word of God is the rule by which everything that men bring forward ought to be tried, say something, but not the whole. I grant that doctrines ought to be tested by God's word; but except the Spirit of wisdom be present, to have God's word in our hands will avail little or nothing, for its meaning will not appear to us; as, for instance, gold is tried by fire or touchstone, but it can only be done by those who understand the art; for neither the touchstone nor the fire can be of any use to the unskillful. That we may then be fit judges, we must necessarily be endowed with and directed by the Spirit of discernment. But as the Apostle would have commanded this in vain, were there no power of judging supplied, we may with certainty conclude, that the godly shall never be left destitute of the Spirit of wisdom as to what is necessary, provided they ask for him of the Lord. But the Spirit will only thus guide us to a right discrimination, when we render all our thoughts subject to God's word; for it is, as it has been said, like the touchstone, yea, it ought to be deemed most necessary to us; for that alone is true doctrine which is drawn from it.

But here a difficult question arises: If every one has the right and the liberty to judge, nothing can be settled as certain, but on the contrary the whole of religion will be uncertain. To this I answer, that there is a twofold trial of doctrine, private and public. The private trial is that by which every one settles his own faith, when he wholly acquiesces in that doctrine which he knows has come from God; for consciences will never find a safe and tranquil port otherwise than in God. Public trial refers to the common consent and polity of the Church; for as there is danger lest fanatics should rise up, who may presumptuously boast that they are endued with the Spirit of God, it is a necessary remedy, that the faithful meet together and seek a way by which they may agree in a holy and godly manner. But as the old proverb is too true, ``So many heads, so many opinions,'' it is doubtless a singular work of God, when he subdues our perverseness and makes us to think the same thing, and to agree in a holy unity of faith.

But what Papists under this pretense hold, that whatever has been decreed in councils is to be deemed as certain oracles, because the Church has once proved them to be from God, is extremely frivolous. For though it be the ordinary way of seeking consent, to gather a godly and holy council, when controversies may be determined according to God's word; yet God has never bound

himself to the decrees of any council. Nor does it necessarily follow, that as soon as a hundred bishops or more meet together in any place, they have duly called on God and inquired at his mouth what is true; nay, nothing is more clear that they have often departed from the pure word of God. Then in this case also the trial which the Apostle prescribes ought to take place, so that the spirits may be proved.

2 Hereby, or by this, know ye He lays down a special mark by which they might more easily distinguish between true and false prophets. Yet he only repeats here what we have met with before, that as Christ is the object at which faith aims, so he is the stone at which all heretics stumble. As long then as we abide in Christ, there is safety; but when we depart from him, faith is lost, and all truth is rendered void. [465]

But let us consider what this confession includes; for when the Apostle says that Christ came, we hence conclude that he was before with the Father; by which his eternal divinity is proved. By saying that he came in the flesh, he means that by putting on flesh, he became a real man, of the same nature with us, that he might become our brother, except that he was free from every sin and corruption. And lastly, by saying that he came, the cause of his coming must be noticed, for he was not sent by the Father for nothing. Hence on this depend the office and merits of Christ.

As, then, the ancient heretics departed from the faith, in one instance, by denying the divine, and in another by denying the human nature of Christ; so do the Papists at this day: though they confess Christ to be God and man, yet they by no means retain the confession which the Apostle requires, because they rob Christ of his own merit; for where freewill, merits of works, fictitious modes of worship, satisfactions, the advocacy of saints, are set up, how very little remains for Christ!

The Apostle then meant this, that since the knowledge of Christ includes the sum and substance of the doctrine respecting true religion, our eyes ought to be directed to and fixed on that, so that we may not be deceived. And doubtless Christ is the end of the law and the prophets; nor do we learn anything else from the gospel but his power and grace.

3. And this is that spirit of Antichrist The Apostle added this, to render more detestable the impostures which lead us away from Christ. We have already said that the doctrine respecting the kingdom of Antichrist was well known; so that the faithful had been warned as to the future scattering of the Church, in order that they might exercise vigilance. Justly then did they dread the name as something base and ominous. The Apostle says now, that all those who de-

[465] It appears that by "spirit" throughout this passage, we are to understand a teacher claiming, rightly or falsely, to be influenced by God's Spirit. Nor would it be improper, but suitable to the context, to consider the spirit of God in this verse as meaning a teacher guided by God. The meaning of the passage might be thus expressed, — 2. "By this know ye the teacher of God; every teacher who confesses Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, is from God; and 3. every teacher who does not confess Jesus Christ as having come in the flesh, is not from God; and this is the teacher of Antichrist, (or, the Anti Christian teacher,) of whom ye have heard that he is coming, and he is now already in the world." — Ed

preciated Christ were members of that kingdom.

And he says that the spirit of antichrist would come, and that it was already in the world, but in a different sense. He means that it was already in the world, because it carried on in secret its iniquity. As, however, the truth of God had not as yet been subverted by false and spurious dogmas, as superstition had not as yet prevailed in corrupting the worship of God, as the world had not as yet perfidiously departed from Christ, as tyranny, opposed to the kingdom of Christ, had not as yet openly exalted itself, he therefore says, that it would come.

1 John 4:4-6

1 John 4:4-6

4. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

4. Vos ex Deo estis, filioli, et vicistis eos; quia major est qui est in vobis, quam qui in mundo.

5. They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

5. Ipsi ex mundo sunt; propterea ex mundo loquuntur, et mundus eos audit.

6. We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

6. Nos ex Deo sumus; qui novit Deum, audit nos; qui non est ex Deo, non audit nos: in hoc cognocimus spiritum veritatis et spiritum erroris.

4 Ye are of God He had spoken of one antichrist; he now mentions many. But the many were the false prophets who had come forth before the head appeared. [466] But the Apostle's object was to animate the faithful, that they might courageously and boldly resist impostors, for alacrity is weakened when the issue of the contest is doubtful. Besides, it might have caused the good to fear, when they saw that hardly the kingdom of Christ had been set up, when enemies stood ready to suppress it. Though then they must contend, yet he says that they had conquered, because they would have a successful issue, as though he had said that they were already, though in the middle of the contest;, beyond any danger, because they would surely be conquerors.

But this truth ought to be farther extended, for whatever contests we may have with the world and the flesh, a certain victory is to follow. Hard and fierce conflicts indeed await us, and some continually succeed others; but as by Christ's power we fight and are furnished with God's weapons, we even by fighting and striving become conquerors. As to the main subject of this passage, it is a great consolation, that with whatever wiles Satan may assail us, we shall stand through the power of God.

[466] When it is said, ye “have overcome them,” the antecedent to “them” is no doubt “the false prophets” in the first verse. It is usual with John to refer to antecedents at some distance. See John 3:16. — Ed.

But we must observe the reason which is immediately added, because greater, or stronger, is he who is in you than he who is in the world. For such is our infirmity, that we succumb before we engage with an enemy, for we are so immersed in ignorance that we are open to all kinds of fallacies, and Satan is wonderfully artful in deceiving. Were we to hold out for one day, yet a doubt may creep into our minds as to what would be the case tomorrow; we should thus be in a state of perpetual anxiety. Therefore the Apostle reminds us that we become strong, not by our own power, but by that of God. He hence concludes, that we can no more be conquered than God himself, who has armed us with his own power to the end of the world. But in this whole spiritual warfare this thought ought to dwell in our hearts, that it would be all over with us immediately were we to fight in our own strength; but that as God repels our enemies while we are reposing, victory is certain. [467]

5 They are of the world It is no small consolation that they who dare to assail God in us, have only the world to aid and help them. And by the world the Apostle means that portion of which Satan is the prince. Another consolation is also added, when he says that the world embraces through the false prophets that which it acknowledges as its own. [468] We see what great propensity to vanity and falsehood there is in men. Hence false doctrines easily penetrate and spread far and wide. The Apostle intimates that there is no reason why we should on this account be disturbed, for it is nothing new or unusual that the world, which is wholly fallacious, should readily hearken to what is false.

6 We are of God Though this really applies to all the godly, yet it refers properly to the faithful ministers of the Gospel; for the Apostle, through the confidence imparted by the Spirit, glories here that he and his fellow-ministers served God in sincerity, and derived from him whatever they taught. It happens that false prophets boast of the same thing, for it is their custom to deceive under the mask of God; but faithful ministers differ much from them, who declare nothing of themselves but what they really manifest in their conduct.

We ought, however, always to bear in mind the subject which he here handles; small was the number of the godly, and unbelief prevailed almost everywhere; few really adhered to the Gospel, the greater part were running headlong into errors. Hence was the occasion of stumbling. John, in order to obviate this, bids us to be content with the fewness of the faithful, because all God's children honored him and submitted to his doctrine. For he immediately sets

[467] "The world" is in this verse identified with "the false prophets;" true Christians had overcome these for this reason, because greater was he that was in them than he that was in the world, that is, in the unbelieving and ungodly, of whom the false prophets formed a part. Hence it follows, "They are of the world," that is, they are of the number of those who are ungodly and wicked, who make up the kingdom of darkness. — Ed.

[468] The clause, "therefore speak they of the world," is hardly a true rendering, for {ἐκ} never means ``of,'' in the sense of ``concerning.'' Macknight renders it ``from.'' Grotius paraphrases the sentence thus, ``They preach things agreeable to the dispositions of the world;'' and Doddridge thus, ``They speak as of the world, as taking their instructions from it.'' But {ἐκ}, like ex in Latin, means sometimes ``according to,'' as in Matthew 12:37, ``For by (or, according to) thy words thou shalt be justified.'' See also verse 34, ``but of (or, according to) the abundance,'' etc. Then this sentence may be thus rendered, ``Therefore speak they according to the world:'' that is, according to the views and principles of the superstitious and ungodly men of the world. --- Ed

in opposition to this a contrary clause, that they who are not of God, do not hear the pure doctrine of the Gospel. By these words he intimates that the vast multitude to whom the Gospel is not acceptable, do not hear the faithful and true servants of God, because they are alienated from God himself. It is then no diminution to the authority of the Gospel that many reject it.

But to this doctrine is added a useful admonition, that by the obedience of faith we are to prove ourselves to be of God. Nothing is easier than to boast that we are of God; and hence nothing is more common among men, as the case is at this day with the Papists, who proudly vaunt that they are the worshippers of God, and yet they no less proudly reject the word of God. For though they pretend to believe God's word, yet when they are brought to the test, they close their ears and will not hear, and yet to revere God's word is the only true evidence that we fear him. Nor can the excuse, made by many, have any place here, that they shun the doctrine of the Gospel when proclaimed to them, because they are not fit to form a judgment; for it cannot be but that every one who really fears and obeys God, knows him in his word.

Were any one to object and say, that many of the elect do not immediately attain faith, nay, that at first they stubbornly resist; to this I answer, that at that time they are not to be regarded, as I think, as God's children; for it is a sign of a reprobate man when the truth is perversely rejected by him.

And by the way, it must be observed, that the hearing mentioned by the Apostle, is to be understood of the inward and real hearing of the heart, which is done by faith.

Hereby know we The antecedent to hereby, or, by this, is included in the two preceding clauses, as though he had said, ``Hence the truth is distinguished from falsehood, because some speak from God, others from the world.'' But by the spirit of truth and the spirit of error, some think that hearers are meant, as though he had said, that those who give themselves up to be deceived by impostors, were born to error, and had in them the seed of falsehood; but that they who obey the word of God shew themselves by this very fact to be the children of the truth. This view I do not approve of. For as the Apostle takes spirits here metonymically for teachers or prophets, he means, I think, no other thing than that the trial of doctrine must be referred to these two things, whether it be from God or from the world. [469]

[469] According to this view, “the spirit of truth” means the teacher of truth, and “the spirit of error” the teacher of error; and this is agreeable to the whole tenor of the context, the spirit throughout denoting the person who claimed, rightly or falsely, to be under the direction of the divine Spirit. “By this,” refers to what had been just stated, that is, that false teachers were of the world, and spake things agreeable to the worldly-minded, and were heard by the world, and that the true teachers were from God, and were heard or attended to by those who knew God, and were not attended to by such as were ignorant of him. It was by this statement which he had made, they could distinguish between the teacher of truth and the teacher of error. The teacher of truth was one from God, and was attended to by those who knew God, and not by those who knew him not; on the other hand, the teacher of error was from the world, preached what was agreeable to the men of the world, and was hearkened to by them. The order, as it is often the case, is inverted; the teacher of error, mentioned last, is described in the fifth verse, and the teacher of truth, mentioned first, at the beginning of the sixth. — Ed.

However, by thus speaking he seems to say nothing; for all are ready to declare, that they do not speak except from God. So the Papists at this day boast with magisterial gravity, that all their inventions are the oracles of the Spirit. Nor does Mahomet assert that he has drawn his dotages except from heaven. The Egyptians also, in former times, pretended that all their mad absurdities, by which they infatuated themselves and others, had been revealed from above. But, to all this I reply, that we have the word of the Lord, which ought especially to be consulted. When, therefore, false spirits pretend the name of God, we must inquire from the Scriptures whether things are so. Provided a devout attention be exercised, accompanied with humility and meekness, the spirit of discernment will be given us, who, as a faithful interpreter, will open to us the meaning of what is said in Scripture.

1 John 4:7-10

1 John 4:7-10

7. Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.

7. Dilecti, diligamus nos mutuo, quia dilectio ex Deo est; et omnis qui diligit ex Deo genitus est, et cognoscit Deum.

8. He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love.

8. Qui non diligit, non novit Deum; quia Deus dilectio est.

9. In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

9. In hoc apparuit dilectio Dei in nobis, quod Filium suum unigenitum misit Deus in mundum, ut per eum vivamus.

10. Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

10. In hoc est dilectio, non quod nos dilexerimus Deum, sed quod nos ipse dilexit, et misit Filium propitiationem pro peccatis nostris.

7 Beloved He returns to that exhortation which he enforces almost throughout the Epistle. We have, indeed, said, that it is filled with the doctrine of faith and exhortation to love. On these two points he so dwells, that he continually passes from the one to the other.

When he commands mutual love, he does not mean that we discharge this duty when we love our friends, because they love us; but as he addresses in common the faithful, he could not have spoken otherwise than that they were to exercise mutual love. He confirms this sentence by a reason often adduced before, even because no one can prove himself to be the son of God, except he loves his neighbors, and because the true knowledge of God necessarily produces love in us.

He also sets in opposition to this, according to his usual manner, the contrary clause, that there is no knowledge of God where there is no love. And he takes as granted a general principle or truth, that God is love, that is, that his

nature is to love men. I know that many reason more refinedly, and that the ancients especially have perverted this passage in order to prove the divinity of the Spirit. But the meaning of the Apostle is simply this, --- that as God is the fountain of love, this effect flows from him, and is diffused wherever the knowledge of him comes, as he had at the beginning called him light, because there is nothing dark in him, but on the contrary he illuminates all things by his own brightness. Here then he does not speak of the essence of God, but only shews what he is found to be by us.

But two things in the Apostle's words ought to be noticed, --- that the true knowledge of God is that which regenerates and renews us, so that we become new creatures; and that hence it cannot be but that it must conform us to the image of God. Away, then, with that foolish gloss respecting unformed faith. For when any one separates faith from love, it is the same as though he attempted to take away heat from the sun.

9 In this was manifested, or, has appeared. We have the love of God towards us testified also by many other proofs. For if it be asked, why the world has been created, why we have been placed in it to possess the dominion of the earth, why we are preserved in life to enjoy innumerable blessings, why we are endued with light and understanding, no other reason can be adduced, except the gratuitous love of God. But the Apostle here has chosen the principal evidence of it, and what far surpasses all other things. For it was not only an immeasurable love, that God spared not his own Son, that by his death he might restore us to life; but it was goodness the most marvelous, which ought to fill our minds with the greatest wonder and amazement. Christ, then, is so illustrious and singular a proof of divine love towards us, that whenever we look upon him, he fully confirms to us the truth that God is love.

He calls him his only begotten, for the sake of amplifying. For in this he more clearly shewed how singularly he loved us, because he exposed his only Son to death for our sakes. In the meantime, he who is his only Son by nature, makes many sons by grace and adoption, even all who, by faith, are united to his body. He expresses the end for which Christ has been sent by the Father, even that we may live through him, for without him we are all dead, but by his coming he brought life to us; and except our unbelief prevents the effect of his grace, we feel it in ourselves.

10 Herein is love He amplifies God's love by another reason, that he gave us his own Son at the time when we were enemies, as Paul teaches us, in Romans 5:8; but he employs other words, that God, induced by no love of men, freely loved them. He meant by these words to teach us that God's love towards us has been gratuitous. And though it was the Apostle's object to set forth God as an example to be imitated by us; yet the doctrine of faith which he intermingles, ought not to be overlooked. God freely loved us, --- how so? because he loved us before we were born, and also when, through depravity of nature, we had hearts turned away from him, and influenced by no right and pious feelings.

Were the prattlings of the Papists entertained, that every one is chosen by

God as he foresees him to be worthy of love, this doctrine, that he first loved us, would not stand; for then our love to God would be first in order, though in time posterior. But the Apostle assumes this as an evident truth, taught in Scripture (of which these profane Sophists are ignorant,) that we are born so corrupt and depraved, that there is in us as it were an innate hatred to God, so that we desire nothing but what is displeasing to him, so that all the passions of our flesh carry on continual war with his righteousness.

And sent his Son It was then from God's goodness alone, as from a fountain, that Christ with all his blessings has come to us. And as it is necessary to know, that we have salvation in Christ, because our heavenly Father has freely loved us; so when a real and full certainty of divine love towards us is sought for, we must look nowhere else but to Christ. Hence all who inquire, apart from Christ, what is settled respecting them in God's secret counsel, are mad to their own ruin.

But he again points out the cause of Christ's coming and his office, when he says that he was sent to be a propitiation for our sins And first, indeed, we are taught by these words, that we were all through sin alienated from God, and that this alienation and discord remains until Christ intervenes to reconcile us. We are taught, secondly, that it is the beginning of our life, when God, having been pacified by the death of his Son, receives us unto favor: for propitiation properly refers to the sacrifice of his death. We find, then, that this honor of expiating for the sins of the world, and of thus taking away the enmity between God and us, belongs only to Christ.

But here some appearance of inconsistency arises. For if God loved us before Christ offered himself to death for us, what need was there for another reconciliation? Thus the death of Christ may seem to be superfluous. To this I answer, that when Christ is said to have reconciled the Father to us, this is to be referred to our apprehensions; for as we are conscious of being guilty, we cannot conceive of God otherwise than as of one displeased and angry with us, until Christ absolves us from guilt. For God, wherever sin appears, would have his wrath, and the judgment of eternal death, to be apprehended. It hence follows, that we cannot be otherwise than terrified by the present prospect. as to death, until Christ by his death abolishes sin, until he delivers us by his own blood from death. Further, God's love requires righteousness; that we may then be persuaded that we are loved, we must necessarily come to Christ, in whom alone righteousness is to be found.

We now see that the variety of expressions, which occurs in Scripture, according to different aspects of things, is most appropriate and especially useful with regard to faith. God interposed his own Son to reconcile himself to us, because he loved us; but this love was hid, because we were in the meantime enemies to God, continually provoking his wrath. Besides, the fear and terror of an evil conscience took away from us all enjoyment of life. Thence as to the apprehension of our faith, God began to love us in Christ. And though the Apostle here speaks of the first reconciliation, let us yet know that to propitiate

God to us by expiating sins is a perpetual benefit proceeding from Christ.

This the Papists also in part concede; but afterwards they extenuate and almost annihilate this grace, by introducing their fictitious satisfactions. For if men redeem themselves by their works, Christ cannot be the only true propitiation, as he is called here.

1 John 4:11-16

1 John 4:11-16

11. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

11. Dilecti, si ita Deus nos dilexit, nos quoque debemus invicem diligere.

12. No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

12. Deum nemo vidit unquam; si diligimus nos invicem, Deus in nobis manet, et dilectio ejus perfecta est in nobis.

13. Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

13. In hoc cognoscimus, quod in ipso manemus, et ipse in nobis, quit ex Spiritu suo dedit nobis.

14. And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world.

14. Et nos vidimus et testamur, testify, quod Pater misit Filium servatorem mundi.

15. Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

15. Qui confessus fuerit, quod Jesus est Filius Dei, Deus in eo manet et ipse in Deo.

16. And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love; and he that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him.

16. Et nos cognovimus et credimus dilectionem quam habet Deus in nobis: Deus charitas est; et qui manet in charitate, in Deo manet, et Deus in eo.

11 Beloved Now the Almighty accommodates to his own purpose what he has just taught us respecting the love of God; for he exhorts us by God's example to brotherly love; as also Paul sets before us Christ, who offered himself to the Father a sacrifice of pleasant fragrance, that every one of us might labor to benefit his neighbors. (Ephesians 5:2.) And John reminds us, that our love ought not to be mercenary, when he bids us to love our neighbors as God has loved us; for we ought to remember this, that we have been loved freely. And doubtless when we regard our own advantage, or return good offices to friends, it is self-love, and not love to others.

12 No man hath seen God The same words are found in the first chapter of John's Gospel; but John the Baptist had not there exactly the same thing in view, for he meant only that God could not be otherwise known, but as he has revealed himself in Christ. The Apostle here extends the same truth farther,

that the power of God is comprehended by us by faith and love, so as to know that we are his children and that he dwells in us.

He speaks, however, first of love, when he says, that God dwells in us, if we love one another; for perfected, or really proved to be, in us is then his love; as though he had said, that God shews himself as present, when by his Spirit he forms our hearts so that they entertain brotherly love. For the same purpose he repeats what he had already said, that we know by the Spirit whom he has given us that he dwells in us; for it is a confirmation of the former sentence, because love is the effect or fruit of the Spirit.

The sum, then, of what is said is, that since love is from the Spirit of God, we cannot truly and with a sincere heart love the brethren, except the Spirit puts forth his power. In this way he testifies that he dwells in us. But God by his Spirit dwells in us; then, by love we prove that we have God abiding in us. On the other hand, whosoever boasts that he has God and loves not the brethren, his falsehood is proved by this one thing, because he separates God from himself.

When he says, and his love is perfected, the conjunction is to be taken as a causative, for, or, because And love here may be explained in two ways, either that which God shews to us, or that which he implants in us. That God has given his Spirit to us, or given us of his Spirit, means the same thing; for we know that the Spirit in a measure is given to each individual.

14 And we have seen He now explains the other part of the knowledge of God, which we have referred to, that he communicates himself to us in his Son, and offers himself to be enjoyed in him. It hence follows, that he is by faith received by us. For the design of the Apostle is to shew, that God is so united to us by faith and love, that he really dwells in us and renders himself in a manner visible by the effect of his power, who otherwise could not be seen by us.

When the Apostle says, We have, seen and do testify, he refers to himself and others. And by seeing, he does not mean any sort of seeing, but what belongs to faith by which they recognized the glory of God in Christ, according to what follows, that he was sent to be the Savior of the world; and this knowledge flows from the illumination of the Spirit.

15 Whosoever shall confess He repeats the truth, that we are united to God by Christ, and that we cannot be connected with Christ except, God abides in us. Faith and confession are used indiscriminately in the same sense; for though hypocrites may wisely boast of faith, yet the apostle here acknowledges none of those who ordinarily confess, but such as truly and from the heart believe. Besides, when he says that Jesus is the Son of God, he briefly includes the sum and substance of faith; for there is nothing necessary for salvation which faith finds not in Christ

After having said in general, that men are so united to Christ by faith, that Christ unites them to God, he subjoined what they themselves had seen so that he accommodated a general truth to those to whom he was writing. Then follows the exhortation, to love one another as they were loved by God. Therefore

the order and connection of his discourse is this, --- Faith in Christ, makes God to dwell in men, and we are partakers of this grace; but as God is love, no one dwells in him except he loves his brethren. Then love ought to reign in us, since God unites himself to us.

16 And we have known and believed It is the same as though he had said, ``We have known by believing;'' for such knowledge is not attained but by faith. But we hence learn how different, is an uncertain or doubtful opinion from faith. Besides, though he meant here, as I have already said, to accommodate the last sentence to his readers, yet he defines faith in various ways. He had said before, that it is to confess that Jesus is the Son of God; but, he now says, We know by faith God's love towards us. It hence appears, that the paternal love of God is found in Christ, and that nothing certain is known of Christ, except by those who know themselves to be the children of God by his grace. For the Father sets his own Son daily before us for this end, that he may adopt us in him.

God is love This is as it were the minor proposition in an argument; for from faith to love he reasons in this way: By faith God dwells in us, and God is love; then, wherever God abides, love ought to be there. Hence it follows that love is necessarily connected with faith.

1 John 4:17-18

1 John 4:17-18

17. Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

17. In hoc perfecta est charitas nobiscum, ut fiduciam habaemus in die judicii, quod sicut ille est, nos quoque sumus in hoc mundo.

18. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment. He that feareth is not made perfect in love.

18. Timor non est in charitate; sed perfecta charitas foras pellit timorem: quia timor tormentum habet; qui autem timet, non est perfectus in charitate.

17 Herein is our love made perfect There are two clauses in this passage, --- that we are then partakers of divine adoption, when we resemble God as children their father; and**,** secondly, that this confidence is invaluable, for without it we must be most miserable.

Then in the first place, he shews to what purpose God has in love embraced us, and how we enjoy that grace manifested to us in Christ. Then, God's love to us is what is to be understood here. He says it is perfected, because it is abundantly poured forth and really given, that it appears to be complete. But he asserts that no others are partakers of this blessing; but those who, by being conformed to God, prove themselves to be his children. It is, then, an argument taken from what is an inseparable condition.

That we may have boldness He now begins to shew the fruit of divine love towards us, though he afterwards shews it more clearly from the contrary effect. It is, however, an invaluable benefit, that we can dare boldly to stand

before God. By nature, indeed, we dread the presence of God, and that justly; for, as he is the Judge of the world, and our sins hold us guilty, death and hell must come to our minds whenever we think of God. Hence is that dread which I have mentioned, which makes men shun God as much as they can. But John says that the faithful do not fear, when mention is made to them of the last judgment, but that on the contrary they go to God's tribunal confidently and cheerfully, because they are assured of his paternal love. Every one, then, has made so much proficiency in faith, as he is well prepared in his mind to look forward to the day of judgment.

As he is By these words, as it has been already said, he meant that it is required of us at our turn to resemble the image of God. What God then in heaven is, such he bids us to be in this world, in order that we may be deemed his children; for the image of God, when it appears in us, is as it were the seal of his adoption.

But he seems thus to place a part of our confidence on works. Hence the Papists raise their crests here, as though John denied that we, relying on God's grace alone, can have a sure confidence as to salvation without the help of works. But in this they are deceived, because they do not consider that the Apostle here does not refer to the cause of salvation, but to what is added to it. And we readily allow that no one is reconciled to God through Christ, except he is also renewed after God's image, and that the one cannot be disjoined from the other. Right then is what is done by the Apostle, who excludes from the confidence of grace all those in whom no image of God is seen; for it is certain that such are wholly aliens to the Spirit of God and to Christ. Nor do we deny that newness of life, as it is the effect of divine adoption, serves to confirm confidence, as a prop, so to speak, of the second order; but in the meantime we ought to have our foundation on grace alone. [470] Nor indeed does the doctrine of John appear otherwise consistent with itself; for experience proves, and even Papists are forced to confess, that as to works they always give an occasion for trembling. Therefore no one can come with a tranquil mind to God's tribunal, except he believes that he is freely loved.

But that none of these things please the Papists, there is no reason for any one to wonder, since being miserable they know no faith except that which is entangled with doubts. Besides, hypocrisy brings darkness over them, so that they do not seriously consider how formidable is God's judgment when Christ the Mediator is not present, and some of them regard the resurrection as fabulous. But that we may cheerfully and joyfully go forth to meet Christ, we must have our faith fixed on his grace alone.

18 There is no fear He now commends the excellency of this blessing by stating the contrary effect, for he says that we are continually tormented until God

[470] What is love? It is as much a gift, a grace, as faith; it constitutes a fitness for heaven, but is in no way meritorious; and were it perfect, there would be nothing of merit in it; for the highest degrees of it come far short of what is due to God. To set up merit of any kind on the part of man, betokens extreme blindness, for salvation from first to last is altogether gratuitous. — Ed

delivers us from misery and anguish by the remedy of his own love towards us. The meaning is, that as there is nothing more miserable than to be harassed by continual inquietude, we obtain by knowing God's love towards us the benefit of a peaceful calmness beyond the reach of fear. It hence appears what a singular gift of God it is to be favored with his love. Moreover from this doctrine, he will presently draw an exhortation; but before he exhorts us to duty, he commends to us this gift of God, which by faith removes our fear.

This passage, I know, is explained otherwise by many; but I regard what the Apostle means, not what others think. They say that there is no fear in love, because, when we voluntarily love God, we are not constrained by force and fear to serve him. Then according to them, servile fear is here set in opposition to voluntary reverence; and hence has arisen the distinction between servile and filial fear. I indeed allow it to be true, that when we willingly love God as a Father, we are no longer constrained by the fear of punishment; but this doctrine has nothing in common with this passage, for the Apostle only teaches us, that when the love of God is by us seen and known by faith, peace is given to our consciences, so that they no longer tremble and fear.

It may, however, be asked, when does perfect love expel fear, for since we are endued with some taste only of divine love towards us, we can never be wholly freed from fear? To this I answer, that, though fear is not wholly shaken off, yet when we flee to God as to a quiet harbor, safe and free from all danger of shipwreck and of tempests, fear is really expelled, for it gives way to faith. Then fear is not so expelled, but that it assails our minds, but it is so expelled that it does not torment us nor impede that peace which we obtain by faith.

Fear hath torment Here the Apostle amplifies still further the greatness of that grace of which he speaks; for as it is a most miserable condition to suffer continual torments, there is nothing more to be wished than to present ourselves before God with a quiet conscience and a calm mind. What some say, that servants fear, because they have before their eyes punishment and the rod, and that they do not their duty except when forced, has nothing to do, as it has been already stated, with what the Apostle says here. So in the next clause, the exposition given, that he who fears is not perfect in love, because he submits not willingly to God, but would rather free himself from his service, does not comport at all with the context. For the Apostle, on the contrary, reminds us, that it is owing to unbelief when any one fears, that is, has a disturbed mind; for the love of God, really known, tranquilizes the heart. [471]

[471] Beza, Doddridge, Scott, and most commentators, regard love here as that which is in us, and not the love of God as apprehended by faith. The main subject of the Apostle is love in us, and the words "perfected" and "perfect," as applied to it, seem inappropriate to God's love towards us; and this perfection is said in verse 17th to consist in this, that as God is, so are we in this world; that is, like him in love, as God is said in the previous verse to be love. "Fear" is the fear of judgment, mentioned in verse 17th, and he who fears is said to be not perfected or made perfect in love, which obviously refers to love in us. And then it immediately follows, "We love him," and the reason is assigned, "because he first loved us." He afterwards proceeds to show the indispensable necessity of having love to God and to the brethren — Ed.

1 John 4:19-21

1 John 4:19-21

19. We love him, because he first loved us.

19. Nos diligimus eum, quia prior dilexit nos.

20. If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

20. Si quis dicit, Deum diligo; et proximum suum odio habeat, mendax est: qui enim non diligit fratrem suum quem videt; Deum quem non videt, quomodo potest diligere?

21. And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God love his brother also.

21. Et hoc præceptum habemus ab ipso, ut qui Deum diligit, diligat et fratrem suum.

19 We love him The verb {ἀγαπῶμεν} may be either in the indicative or imperative mood; but the former is the more suitable here, for the Apostle, as I think, repeats the preceding sentence, that as God has anticipated us by his free love, we ought to return to render love to him, for he immediately infers that he ought to be loved in men, or that the love we have for him ought to be manifested towards men. If, however, the imperative mood be preferred, the meaning would be nearly the same, that as God has freely loved us, we also ought now to love him.

But this love cannot exist, except it generates brotherly love. Hence he says, that they are liars who boast that they love God, when they hate their brethren.

But the reason he subjoins seems not sufficiently valid, for it is a comparison between the less and the greater: If, he says, we love not our brethren whom we see, much less can we love God who is invisible. Now there are obviously two exceptions; for the love which God has to us is from faith and does not flow from sight, as we find in 1 Peter 1:8; and secondly, far different is the love of God from the love of men; for while God leads his people to love him through his infinite goodness, men are often worthy of hatred. To this I answer, that the Apostle takes here as granted what ought no doubt to appear evident to us, that God offers himself to us in those men who bear his image, and that he requires the duties, which he does not want himself, to be performed to them, according to Psalm 16:2, where we read,

``My goodness reaches not to thee, O Lord;
towards the saints who are on the earth is my love.''

And surely the participation of the same nature, the need of so many things, and mutual intercourse, must allure us to mutual love, except; we are harder than iron. But John meant another thing: he meant to shew how fallacious is the boast of every one who says that he loves God, and yet loves not God's image which is before his eyes.

21 And this commandment This is a stronger argument, drawn from the au-

thority and doctrine of Christ; for he not only gave a commandment respecting the love of God, but bade us also to love our brethren. We must therefore so begin with God, as that there may be at the same time a transition made to men.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 John 5:1-5

1 John 5:1-5

1. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God: and everyone that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

1. Omnis qui credit quod Jesus est Christus, ex Deo genitus est; et omnis qui diligit eum qui genuit, diligit etiam eum qui genitus est ab eo.

2. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments.

2. In hoc cognoscimus quod diligimus filios Dei, si Deum diligimus, et praecepta ejus servamus.

3. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous.

3. Haec est dilectio Dei, ut praecepta ejus servemus, et praecepta ejus gravia non sunt.

4. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith.

4. Quoniam omne qued ex Deo genitum est, vincit mundum: et haec est victoria quae vincit mundum, fides nostra.

5. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

5. Quis est qui vincit mundum, nisi qui credit quod Jesus est Filius Dei?

1 Whosoever believeth He confirms by another reason, that faith and brotherly love are united; for since God regenerates us by faith he must necessarily be loved by us as a Father; and this love embraces all his children. Then faith cannot be separated from love.

The first truth is, that all born of God, believe that Jesus is the Christ; where, again, you see that Christ alone is set forth as the object of faith, as in him it finds righteousness, life, and every blessing that can be desired, and God in all that he is. [472] Hence the only true way of believing is when we direct our minds to him. Besides, to believe that he is the Christ, is to hope from him all those things which have been promised as to the Messiah.

Nor is the title, Christ, given him here without reason, for it designates the office to which he was appointed by the Father. As, under the Law, the full restoration of all things, righteousness and happiness, were promised through

[472] Literally, "and the whole God — totum Deum." — Ed.

the Messiah; so at this day the whole of this is more clearly set forth in the gospel. Then Jesus cannot be received as Christ, except salvation be sought from him, since for this end he was sent by the Father, and is daily offered to us.

Hence the Apostle declares that all they who really believe have been born of God; for faith is far above the reach of the human mind, so that we must be drawn to Christ by our heavenly Father; for not any of us can ascend to him by his own strength. And this is what the Apostle teaches us in his Gospel, when he says, that those who believe in the name of the only-begotten, were not born of blood nor of the flesh. (John 1:13.) And Paul says, that we are endued, not with the spirit of this world, but with the Spirit that is from God, that we may know the things given us by him. (1 Corinthians 2:12.) For eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, nor the mind conceived, the reward laid up for those who love God; but the Spirit alone penetrates into this mystery. And further, as Christ is given to us for sanctification, and brings with it the Spirit of regeneration, in short, as he unites us to his own body, it is also another reason why no one can have faith, except he is born of God.

Loveth him also that is begotten of him Augustine and some others of the ancients have applied this to Christ, but not correctly. For though the Apostle uses the singular number, yet he includes all the faithful; and the context plainly shows that his purpose was no other than to trace up brotherly love to faith as its fountain. It is, indeed, an argument drawn from the common course of nature; but what is seen among men is transferred to God. [473]

But we must observe, that the Apostle does not so speak of the faithful only, and pass by those who are without, as though the former are alone to be loved, and no care and no account to be had for the latter; but he teaches us as it were by this first exercise to love all without exception, when he bids us to make a beginning with the godly. [474]

2 By this we know He briefly shows in these words what true love is, even that which is towards God. He has hitherto taught us that there is never a true love to God, except when our brethren are also loved; for this is ever its effect. But he now teaches us that men are rightly and duly loved, when God holds the primacy. And it is a necessary definition; for it often happens, that we love men apart from God, as unholy and carnal friendships regard only private advantages or some other vanishing objects. As, then, he had referred first to the effect, so he now refers to the cause; for his purpose is to shew that mutual love ought to be in such a way cultivated that God may be honored.

To the love of God he joins the keeping of the law, and justly so; for when we love God as our Father and Lord, reverence must necessarily be connected with love. Besides, God cannot be separated from himself. As, then, he is

[473] The literal rendering of the verse is as follows, — "Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and every one who loves the begetter loves also the begotten by him." — Ed.

[474] The subject no doubt is love to the brethren throughout; and this passage shews this most clearly. Love to all is evidently a duty, but it is not taught here. — Ed.

the fountain of all righteousness and equity, he who loves him must necessarily have his heart prepared to render obedience to righteousness. The love of God, then, is not idle or inactive. [475]

But from this passage we also learn what is the keeping of the law. For if, when constrained only by fear, we obey God by keeping his commandments, we are very far off from true obedience. Then, the first thing is, that our hearts should be devoted to God in willing reverence, and then, that our life should be formed according to the rule of the law. This is what Moses meant when, in giving a summary of the law, he said,

``O Israel, what does the Lord thy God require of thee, but to love him and to obey him?'' (Deuteronomy 10:12.)

3 His commandments are not grievous This has been added, lest difficulties, as it is usually the case, should damp or lessen our zeal. For they who with a cheerful mind and great ardor have pursued a godly and holy life, afterwards grow weary, finding their strength inadequate. Therefore John, in order to rouse our efforts, says that God's commandments are not grievous.

But it may, on the other hand, be objected and said that we have found it far otherwise by experience, and that Scripture testifies that the yoke of the law is insupportable. (Acts 15:2.) The reason also is evident, for as the denial of self is, as it were, a prelude to the keeping of the law, can we say that it is easy for a man to deny himself? nay, since the law is spiritual, as Paul, in Romans 7:14, teaches us, and we are nothing but flesh, there must be a great discord between us and the law of God. To this I answer, that this difficulty does not arise from the nature of the law, but from our corrupt flesh; and this is what Paul expressly declares; for after having said that it was impossible for the Law to confer righteousness on us, he immediately throws the blame on our flesh.

This explanation fully reconciles what is said by Paul and by David, which apparently seems wholly contradictory. Paul makes the law the master of death, declares that it effects nothing but to bring on us the wrath of God, that it was given to increase sin, that it lives in order to kill us. David, on the other hand, says that it is sweeter than honey, and more desirable than gold; and among other recommendations he mentions the following --- that it cheers hearts, converts to the Lord, and quickens. But Paul compares the law with the corrupt nature of man; hence arises the conflict: but David shews how they think and feel whom God by his Spirit has renewed; hence the sweetness and delight of which the flesh knows nothing. And John has not omitted this difference; for he confines to God's children these words, God's commandments are not grievous, lest any one should take them literally; and he intimates that, it comes through the power of the Spirit, that it is not grievous nor wearisome to us to obey God.

The question, however, seems not as yet to be fully answered; for the faithful, though ruled by the Spirit, of God, yet, carry on a hard contest with their own flesh; and how muchsoever they may toil, they yet hardly perform the half of

[475] The love of God," here clearly means love to God: it is the love of which God is the object. — Ed.

their duty; nay, they almost fail under their burden, as though they stood, as they say, between the sanctuary and the steep. We see how Paul groaned as one held captive, and exclaimed that he was wretched, because he could not fully serve God. My reply to this is, that the law is said to be easy, as far as we are endued with heavenly power, and overcome the lusts of the flesh. For however the flesh may resist, yet the faithful find that there is no real enjoyment except in following God.

It must further be observed, that John does not speak of the law only, which contains nothing but commands, but connects with it the paternal indulgence of God, by which the rigor of the law is mitigated. As, then, we know that we are graciously forgiven by the Lord, when our works do not come up to the law, this renders us far more prompt to obey, according to what we find in Psalm 130:4,

``With thee is propitiation, that thou mayest be feared.''

Hence, then, is the facility of keeping the law, because the faithful, being sustained by pardon, do not despond when they come short of what they ought to be. The Apostle, in the meantime, reminds us that we must fight, in order that we may serve the Lord; for the whole world hinders us to go where the Lord calls us. Then, he only keeps the law who courageously resists the world.

4 This is the victory As he had said that all who are born of God overcome the world, he also sets forth the way of overcoming it. For it might be still asked, whence comes this victory? He then makes the victory over the world to depend on faith. [476]

This passage is remarkable, for though Satan continually repeats his dreadful and horrible onsets, yet the Spirit of God, declaring that we are beyond the reach of danger, removes fear, and animates us to fight with courage. And the past time is more emphatical than the present or the future; for he says, that has overcome, in order that we might feel certain, as though the enemy had been already put to flight. It is, indeed, true, that our warfare continues through life, that our conflicts are daily, nay, that new and various battles are every moment on every side stirred up against us by the enemy; but as God does not arm us only for one day, and as faith is not that of one day, but is the perpetual work of the Holy Spirit, we are already partakers of victory, as though we had already conquered.

This confidence does not, however, introduce indifference, but renders us always anxiously intent on fighting. For the Lord thus bids his people to be certain, while yet he would not have them to be secure; but on the contrary, he

[476] The words literally are, — "For every thing begotten by God overcomes the world," etc. The neuter gender is used for the masculine, "every thing" for "every one," as in the first verse; or according to {{כל in Hebrew, it is used in a plural sense, for }πάντες} as in John 17:2, ``that all ({πᾶν}) which thou hast given him, he should give them ({αὐτοῖς}) eternal life.'' Macknight and others have said that the neuter gender is used in order to comprehend all sorts of persons, males and females, young and old, Jews and Gentiles, bond or free. Why, then, was not the neuter gender used in the first verse? It is clearly a peculiarity of style, and nothing else, and ought not to be retained in a translation. ``Victory'' stands for that which brings victory, the effect for the cause; or it may designate the person, as {νίκη} means sometimes the goddess of victory. --- ``And this the conqueress who conquers the world, even our faith.'' --- Ed

declares that they have already overcome, in order that they may fight more courageously and more strenuously.

The term world has here a wide meaning, for it includes whatever is adverse to the Spirit of God: thus, the corruption of our nature is a part of the world; all lusts, all the crafts of Satan, in short, whatever leads us away from God. Having such a force to contend with, we have an immense war to carry on, and we should have been already conquered before coming to the contest, and we should be conquered a hundred times daily, had not God promised to us the victory. But God encourages us to fight by promising us the victory. But as this promise secures to us perpetually the invincible power of God, so, on the other hand, it annihilates all the strength of men. For the Apostle does not teach us here that God only brings some help to us, so that being aided by him, we may be sufficiently able to resist; but he makes victory to depend on faith alone; and faith receives from another that by which it overcomes. They then take away from God what is his own, who sing triumph to their own power.

5 Who is he that overcometh the world This is a reason for the previous sentence; that is, we conquer by faith, because we derive strength from Christ; as Paul also says,

``I can do all things through him that strengtheneth me,''
(Philippians 4:13.)

He only then can conquer Satan and the world, and not succumb to his own flesh, who, diffident as to himself, recumbs on Christ's power alone. For by faith he means a real apprehension of Christ, or an effectual laying hold on him, by which we apply his power to ourselves.

1 John 5:6-9

1 John 5:6-9

6. This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

6. Hic est qui venit per aquam et sanguinem, Jesum Christum; non in aqua solum, sed in aqua et sanguine; et Spiritus est qui testificatur, quandoquidem Spiritus est veritas.

7. For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one.

7. Nam tres sunt qui testificantur in coelo, Pater, Sermo, et Spiritus Sanctus; et hi tres unum sunt.

8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

8. Et tres sunt qui testificantur in terra, Spiritus, aqua et sanguis; et hi tres in unum conveniunt.

9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

9. Si testimonium hominum recipimus, testimonium Dei majus est; quoniam hoc est testimonium Dei, quod testificatus est de Filio suo.

6 This is he that came That our faith may rest safely on Christ, he says the real substance of the shadows of the law appears in him. For I doubt not but that he alludes by the words water and blood to the ancient rites of the law. The comparison, moreover, is intended for this end, not only that we may know that the Law of Moses was abolished by the coming of Christ, but that we may seek in him the fulfillment of those things which the ceremonies formerly typified. And though they were of various kinds, yet under these two the Apostle denotes the whole perfection of holiness and righteousness, for by water was all filth washed away, so that men might come before God pure and clean, and by blood was expiation made, and a pledge given of a full reconciliation with God; but the law only adumbrated by external symbols what was to be really and fully performed by the Messiah.

John then fitly proves that Jesus is the Christ of the Lord formerly promised, because he brought with him that by which he sanctifies us wholly.

And, indeed, as to the blood by which Christ reconciled God, there is no doubt, but how he came by water may be questioned. But that the reference is to baptism is not probable. I certainly think that John sets forth here the fruit and effect of what he recorded in the Gospel history; for what he says there, that water and blood flowed from the side of Christ, is no doubt to be deemed a miracle. I know that such a thing does happen naturally to the dead; but it happened through God's purpose, that Christ's side became the fountain of blood and water, in order that the faithful may know that cleansing (of which the ancient baptisms were types) is found in him, and that they might know that what all the sprinklings of blood formerly presignified was fulfilled. On this subject we dwelt more at large on the ninth and tenth chapters of the Epistle to the Hebrews.

And it is the Spirit that beareth witness He shews in this clause how the faithful know and feel the power of Christ, even because the Spirit renders them certain; and that their faith might not vacillate, he adds, that a full and real firmness or stability is produced by the testimony of the Spirit. And he calls the Spirit truth, because his authority is indubitable, and ought to be abundantly sufficient for us.

7. There are three than bear record in heaven The whole of this verse has been by some omitted. Jerome thinks that this has happened through design rather than through mistake, and that indeed only on the part of the Latins. But as even the Greek copies do not agree, I dare not assert any thing on the subject. Since, however, the passage flows better when this clause is added, and as I see that it is found in the best and most approved copies, I am inclined to receive it as the true reading. [477] And the meaning would be, that God, in

[477] Calvin probably refers to printed copies in his day, and not to Greek MSS. As far as the authority of MSS. and versions and quotations goes, the passage is spurious, for it is not found in any of the Greek MSS prior to the 16th century, nor in any of the early versions, except the Latin, nor in some of the copies of that version; nor is it quoted by any of the

order to confirm most abundantly our faith in Christ, testifies in three ways that we ought to acquiesce in him. For as our faith acknowledges three persons in the one divine essence, so it is called in so really ways to Christ that it may rest on him.

When he says, These three are one, he refers not to essence, but on the contrary to consent; as though he had said that the Father and his eternal Word and Spirit harmoniously testify the same thing respecting Christ. Hence some copies have {εἰς} {ἓν}, ``for one.'' But though you read {ἓν} {εἰσιν}, as in other copies, yet there is no doubt but that the Father, the Word and the Spirit are said to be one, in the same sense in which afterwards the blood and the water and the Spirit are said to agree in one.

But as the Spirit, who is one witness, is mentioned twice, it seems to be an unnecessary repetition. To this I reply, that since he testifies of Christ in various ways, a twofold testimony is fitly ascribed to him. For the Father, together with his eternal Wisdom and Spirit, declares Jesus to be the Christ as it were authoritatively, then, in this ease, the sole majesty of the deity is to be considered by us. But as the Spirit, dwelling in our hearts, is an earnest, a pledge, and a seal, to confirm that decree, so he thus again speaks on earth by his grace.

But inasmuch as all do not receive this reading, I will therefore so expound what follows, as though the Apostle referred to the witnesses only on the earth.

8 There are three He applies what had been said of water and blood to it's own purpose, in order that they who reject Christ might have no excuse; for by testimonies abundantly strong and clear, he proves that it is he who had been formerly promised, inasmuch as water and blood, being the pledges and the effects of salvation, really testify that he had been sent by God. He adds a third witness, the Holy Spirit, who yet holds the first place, for without him the water and blood would have flowed without any benefit; for it is he who seals on our hearts the testimony of the water and blood; it is he who by his power makes the fruit of Christ's death to come to us; yea, he makes the blood shed for our redemption to penetrate into our hearts, or, to say all in one word, he makes Christ with all his blessings to become ours. So Paul, in Romans 1:4, after having said that Christ by his resurrection manifested himself to be the Son of God, immediately adds, ``Through the sanctification of the Spirit.''

early Greek fathers, nor by early Latin fathers, except a very few, and even their quotations have been disputed. These are facts which no refined conjectures can upset; and it is to be regretted that learned men, such as the late Bishop Burgess, should have labored and toiled in an attempt so hopeless as to establish the genuineness of this verse, or rather of a part of this verse, and of the beginning of the following. The whole passage is as follows, the spurious part being put within crotchets, — 7. "For there are three who bear witness [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one: 8. And there are three who bear witness in earth,] the Spirit and the water and the blood; and these three agree in one." As to the construction of the passage, as far as grammar and sense are concerned, it may do with or without the interpolation equally the same. What has been said to the contrary on this point, seems to be nothing of a decisive character, in no way sufficient to shew that the words are not spurious. Indeed, the passage reads better without the interpolated words; and as to the sense, that is, the sense in which they are commonly taken by the advocates of their genuineness, it has no connection whatever with the general drift of the passage. — Ed.

For whatever signs of divine glory may shine forth in Christ, they would yet be obscure to us and escape our vision, were not the Holy Spirit to open for us the eyes of faith.

Readers may now understand why John adduced the Spirit as a witness together with the water and the blood, even because it is the peculiar office of the Spirit, to cleanse our consciences by the blood of Christ, to cause the cleansing effected by it to be efficacious. On this subject some remarks are made at the beginning of the Second Epistle of Peter, [478] where he uses nearly the same mode of speaking, that is, that the Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts by the sprinkling of the blood of Christ. [479]

But from these words we may learn, that faith does not lay hold on a bare or an empty Christ, but that his power is at the same time vivifying. For to what purpose has Christ been sent on the earth, except to reconcile God by the sacrifice of his death? except the office of washing had been allotted to him by the Father?

It may however be objected, that the distinction here mentioned is superfluous, because Christ cleansed us by expiating our sins; then the Apostle mentions the same thing twice. I indeed allow that cleansing is included in expiation; therefore I made no difference between the water and the blood, as though they were distinct; but if any one of us considers his own infirmity, he will readily acknowledge that it is not in vain or without reason that blood is distinguished from the water. Besides, the Apostle, as it has been stated, alludes to the rites of the law; and God, on account of human infirmity, had formerly appointed, not only sacrifices, but also washings. And the Apostle meant distinctly to show that the reality of both has been exhibited in Christ, and on this account he had said before, ``Not by water only,'' for he means, that not only some part of our salvation is found in Christ, but the whole of it, so that nothing is to be sought elsewhere.

9 If we receive the witness, or testimony, of men He proves, reasoning from the less to the greater, how ungrateful men are when they reject Christ, who

[478] Although the commentary in 2Peter1:9 seems to be close to what Calvin is talking of here, it may be that perhaps the First Epistle of Peter might be the one he had in mind. - fj.

[479] If we exclude the words deemed interpolated, we may read the passage thus: “This is he who came with water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with water only, but with water and blood: the Spirit also beareth witness, for (or seeing that) the Spirit is truth (or, is true); because there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. We see hence a reason why the Spirit is said to be true, even because he is not alone, for the water and the blood concur with him. Thus a testimony is formed consistently with the requirement of the law. We hence also see the import of what is stated when the testimony of men is mentioned, as though he had said, The testimony of three men is received as valid, how much more valid is the testimony of God, which has three witnesses in its behalf? It is called God’s testimony, because the witnesses have been ordered and appointed by him. When it is said that he came with water and blood, the meaning is, that he came, having water and blood; the proposition {διὰ} has sometimes this meaning, and it is changed in the second clause into {ἐν}. We meet with similar instances in 2 Corinthians 3:11, and in 2 Corinthians 4:11. See Romans 2:27; 4:11 According to this construction, the explanation of Calvin is alone the right one, that the water means cleansing, and the blood expiation, the terms being borrowed from the rites of the law; and a reference is also made to the law when the witness of men is mentioned. --- Ed.

has been approved, as he has related, by God; for if in worldly affairs we stand to the words of men, who may lie and deceive, how unreasonable it is that God should have less credit given to him, when sitting as it were on his own throne, where he is the supreme judge. Then our own corruption alone prevents us to receive Christ,, since he gives us full proof for believing in his power. Besides, he calls not only that the testimony of God which the Spirit imprints on our hearts, but also that which we derive from the water and the blood. For that power of cleansing and expiating was not earthly, but heavenly. Hence the blood of Christ is not to be estimated according to the common manner of men; but we must rather look to the design of God, who ordained it for blotting out sins, and also to that divine efficacy which flows from it.

1 John 5:9-12

1 John 5:9-12

9. --- For this is the witness of God which he hath testified of his Son.

9. --- Porro hoc est testimonium Dei, quod testificatus est de Filio suo.

10. He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God hath made him a liar; because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

10. Qui credit in Filium Dei, habet testimonium in seipso; qui non credit Deo, mendacem facit eum; quia non credidit in testimonium quod testificatus est Deus de Filio suo.

11. And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son.

11. Et hoc est testimonium, quod vitam aeternam dedit nobis Deus; et haec vita in Filio ejus est.

12. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.

12. Qui habet Filium, habet vitam; qui non habet Filium Dei, vitam non habet.

9 For this is the witness, or testimony, of God The particle {ὅτι} does not mean here the cause, but is to be taken as explanatory; for the Apostle, after having reminded us that God deserves to be believed much more than men, now adds, that we can have no faith in God, except by believing in Christ, because God sets him alone before us and makes us to stand in him. He hence infers that we believe safely and with tranquil minds in Christ, because God by his authority warrants our faith. He does not say that God speaks outwardly, but that every one of the godly feels within that God is the author of his faith. It hence appears how different from faith is a fading opinion dependent on something else.

10. He that believeth not As the faithful possess this benefit, that they know themselves to be beyond the danger of erring, because they have God as their foundation; so he makes the ungodly to be guilty of extreme blasphemy, because

they charge God with falsehood. Doubtless nothing is more valued by God than his own truth, therefore no wrong more atrocious can be done to him, than to rob him of this honor. Then in order to induce us to believe, he takes an argument from the opposite side; for if to make God a liar be a horrible and execrable impiety, because then what especially belongs to him is taken away, who would not dread to withhold faith from the gospel, in which God would have himself to be counted singularly true and faithful? This ought to be carefully observed.

Some wonder why God commends faith so much, why unbelief is so severely condemned. But the glory of God is implicated in this; for since he designed to shew a special instance of his truth in the gospel, all they who reject Christ there offered to them, leave nothing to him. Therefore, though we may grant that a man in other parts of his life is like an angel, yet his sanctity is diabolical as long as he rejects Christ. Thus we see some under the Papacy vastly pleased with the mere mask of sanctity, while they still most obstinately resist the gospel. Let us then understand, that it is the beginning of true religion, obediently to embrace this doctrine, which he has so strongly confirmed by his testimony.

11 That God hath given us eternal life Having now set forth the benefit, he invites us to believe. It is, indeed, a reverence due to God, immediately to receive, as beyond controversy, whatever he declares to us. But since he freely offers life to us, our ingratitude will be intolerable, except with prompt faith we receive a doctrine so sweet and so lovely. And, doubtless, the words of the Apostle are intended to shew, that we ought, not only reverently to obey the gospel, lest we should affront God; but, that we ought to love it, because it brings to us eternal life. We hence also learn what is especially to be sought in the gospel, even the free gift of salvation; for that God there exhorts us to repentance and fear, ought not to be separated from the grace of Christ.

But the Apostle, that he might keep us together in Christ, again repeats that life is found in him; as though he had said, that no other way of obtaining life has been appointed for us by God the Father. And the Apostle, indeed, briefly includes here three things: that we are all given up to death until God in his gratuitous favor restores us to life; for he plainly declares that life is a gift from God: and hence also it follows that we are destitute of it, and that it cannot be acquired by merits; secondly, he teaches us that this life is conferred on us by the gospel, because there the goodness and the paternal love of God is made known to us; lastly, he says that we cannot otherwise become partakers of this life than by believing in Christ.

12 He that hath not the Son This is a confirmation of the last sentence. It ought, indeed, to have been sufficient, that God made life to be in none but in Christ, that it might be sought in him; but lest any one should turn away to another, he excludes all from the hope of life who seek it not in Christ. We know what it is to have Christ, for he is possessed by faith. He then shews that all who are separated from the body of Christ are without life.

But this seems inconsistent with reason; for history shews that there have

been great men, endued with heroic virtues, who yet were wholly unacquainted with Christ; and it seems unreasonable that men of so great eminence had no honor. To this I answer, that we are greatly mistaken if we think that whatever is eminent in our eyes is approved by God; for, as it is said in Luke,

``What is highly esteemed by men is an abomination with God.'' (Luke 16:15)

For as the filthiness of the heart is hid from us, we are satisfied with the external appearance; but God sees that under this is concealed the foulest filth. It is, therefore, no wonder if specious virtues, flowing from an impure heart, and tending to no right end, have an ill odor to him. Besides, whence comes purity, whence a genuine regard for religion, except from the Spirit of Christ? There is, then, nothing worthy of praise except in Christ.

There is, further, another reason which removes every doubt; for the righteousness of men is in the remission of sins. If you take away this, the sure curse of God and eternal death awaits all. Christ alone is he who reconciles the Father to us, as he has once for all pacified him by the sacrifice of the cross. It hence follows, that God is propitious to none but in Christ, nor is there righteousness but in him.

Were any one to object and say, that Cornelius, as mentioned by Luke, (Acts 10:2,) was accepted of God before he was called to the faith of the gospel: to this I answer shortly, that God sometimes so deals with us, that the seed of faith appears immediately on the first day. Cornelius had no clear and distinct knowledge of Christ; but as he had some perception of God's mercy, he must at the same time understand something of a Mediator. But as God acts in ways hidden and wonderful, let us disregard those speculations which profit nothing, and hold only to that plain way of salvation, which he has made known to us.

1 John 5:13-15

1 John 5:13-15

13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

13. Haec scripsi vebis credentibus in nomen Filii Dei, ut sciatis quod vitam habetis aeternam, et ut credatis in nomen Filii Dei.

14. And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us:

14. Atque haec est fiducia quam habemus erga eum, quod si quid petierimus secundum voluntatem ejus, audit nos.

15. And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

15. Si autem novimus quod audit nos, quum quid petierimus; novimus quod habemus petitiones quas postulavimus ab eo.

13 These things have I written unto you As there ought to be a daily progress in faith, so he says that he wrote to those who had already believed, so that they

might believe more firmly and with greater certainty, and thus enjoy a fuller confidence as to eternal life. Then the use of doctrine is, not only to initiate the ignorant in the knowledge of Christ, but also to confirm those more and more who have been already taught. It therefore becomes us assiduously to attend to the duty of learning, that our faith may increase through the whole course of our life. For there are still in us many remnants of unbelief, and so weak is our faith that what we believe is not yet really believed except there be a fuller confirmation.

But we ought to observe the way in which faith is confirmed, even by having the office and power of Christ explained to us. For the Apostle says that he wrote these things, that is, that eternal life is to be sought nowhere else but in Christ, in order that they who were believers already might believe, that is, make progress in believing. It is therefore the duty of a godly teacher, in order to confirm disciples in the faith, to extol as much as possible the grace of Christ, so that being satisfied with that, we may seek nothing else.

As the Papists obscure this truth in various ways, and extenuate it, they shew sufficiently by this one thing that they care for nothing less than for the right doctrine of faith; yea, on this account, their schools ought to be more shunned than all the Scyllas and Charybdises in the world; for hardly any one can enter them without a sure shipwreck to his faith.

The Apostle teaches further in this passage, that Christ is the peculiar object of faith, and that to the faith which we have in his name is annexed the hope of salvation. For in this case the end of believing is, that we become the children and the heirs of God.

14 And this is the confidence He commends the faith which he mentioned by its fruit, or he shews that in which our confidence especially is, that is, that the godly dare confidently to call on God; as also Paul speaks in Ephesians 3:12, that we have by faith access to God with confidence; and also in Romans 8:15, that the Spirit gives us a mouth to cry Abba, Father. And doubtless, were we driven away from an access to God, nothing could make us more miserable; but, on the other hand, provided this asylum be opened to us, we should be happy even in extreme evils; nay, this one thing renders our troubles blessed, because we surely know that God will be our deliverer, and relying on his paternal love towards us, we flee to him.

Let us, then, bear in mind this declaration of the Apostle, that calling on God is the chief trial of our faith, and that God is not rightly nor in faith called upon except we be fully persuaded that our prayers will not be in vain. For the Apostle denies that those who, being doubtful, hesitate, are endued with faith.

It hence appears that the doctrine of faith is buried and nearly extinct under the Papacy, for all certainty is taken away. They indeed mutter many prayers, and prattle much about praying to God; but they pray with doubtful and fluctuating hearts, and bid us to pray; and yet they even condemn this confidence which the Apostle requires as necessary.

According to his will By this expression he meant by the way to remind us

what is the right way or rule of praying, even when men subject their own wishes to God. For though God has promised to do whatsoever his people may ask, yet he does not allow them an unbridled liberty to ask whatever may come to their minds; but he has at the same time prescribed to them a law according to which they are to pray. And doubtless nothing is better for us than this restriction; for if it was allowed to every one of us to ask what he pleased, and if God were to indulge us in our wishes, it would be to provide very badly for us. For what may be expedient we know not; nay, we boil over with corrupt and hurtful desires. But God supplies a twofold remedy, lest we should pray otherwise than according to what his own will has prescribed; for he teaches us by his word what he would have us to ask, and he has also set over us his Spirit as our guide and ruler, to restrain our feelings, so as not to suffer them to wander beyond due bounds. For what or how to pray, we know not, says Paul, but the Spirit helpeth our infirmity, and excites in us unutterable groans. (Romans 8:26.) We ought also to ask the mouth of the Lord to direct and guide our prayers; for God in his promises has fixed for us, as it has been said, the right way of praying.

15 And if we know This is not a superfluous repetition, as it seems to be; for what the Apostle declared in general respecting the success of prayer, he now affirms in a special manner that the godly pray or ask for nothing from God but what they obtain. But when he says that all the petitions of the faithful are heard, he speaks of right and humble petitions, and such as are consistent with the rule of obedience. For the faithful do not give loose reins to their desires, nor indulge in anything that may please them, but always regard in their prayers what God commands.

This, then, is an application of the general doctrine to the special and private benefit of every one, lest the faithful should doubt that God is propitious to prayers of each individual, so that with quiet minds they may wait until the Lord should perform what they pray for, and that being thus relieved from all trouble and anxiety, they may cast on God the burden of their cares. This ease and security ought not, however, to abate in them their earnestness in prayer, for he who is certain of a happy event ought not to abstain from praying to God. For the certainty of faith by no means generates indifference or sloth. The Apostle meant; that every one should be tranquil in these necessities when he has deposited his sighs in the bosom of God.

1 John 5:16-18

1 John 5:16-18

16. If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say that he shall pray for it.

16. Si quis viderit fratrem suum peccantem peccato non ad mortem, petet; et dabit illi vitam peecanti, dico, non ad mortem: est peccatum ad mortem; non

pro illo, dico, ut quis roget.

17. All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

17. Omnis injustitia peccatum est; et est peccatum non ad mortem.

18. We know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not; but he that is begotten of God keepeth himself, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

18. Novlinus quod quisquis ex Deo genitus est, non peccat; sed qui genitus est ex Deo servat seipsum, et malignus non tangit eum.

16 If any man The Apostle extends still further the benefits of that faith which he has mentioned, so that our prayers may also avail for our brethren. It is a great thing, that as soon as we are oppressed, God kindly invites us to himself, and is ready to give us help; but that he hears us asking for others, is no small confirmation to our faith in order that we may be fully assured that we shall never meet with a repulse in our own case.

The Apostle in the meantime exhorts us to be mutually solicitous for the salvation of one another; and he would also have us to regard the falls of the brethren as stimulants to prayer. And surely it is an iron hardness to be touched with no pity, when we see souls redeemed by Christ's blood going to ruin. But he shews that there is at hand a remedy, by which brethren can aid brethren. He who will pray for the perishing, will, he says, restore life to him; though the words, ``he shall give,'' may be applied to God, as though it was said, God will grant to your prayers the life of a brother. But the sense will still be the same, that the prayers of the faithful so far avail as to rescue a brother from death. If we understand man to be intended, that he will give life to a brother, it is a hyperbolical expression; it however contains nothing inconsistent; for what is given to us by the gratuitous goodness of God, yea, what is granted to others for our sake, we are said to give to others. So great a benefit ought to stimulate us not a little to ask for our brethren the forgiveness of sins. And when the Apostle recommends sympathy to us, he at the same time reminds us how much we ought to avoid the cruelty of condemning our brethren, or an extreme rigor in despairing of their salvation.

A sin which is not unto death That we may not cast away all hope of the salvation of those who sin, he shews that God does not so grievously punish their falls as to repudiate them. It hence follows that we ought to deem them brethren, since God retains them in the number of his children. For he denies that sins are to death, not only those by which the saints daily offend, but even when it happens that God's wrath is grievously provoked by them. For as long as room for pardon is left, death does not wholly retain its dominion.

The Apostle, however, does not here distinguish between venial and mortal sin, as it was afterwards commonly done. For altogether foolish is that distinction which prevails under the Papacy. The Sorbons acknowledge that there is hardly a mortal sin, except there be the grossest baseness, such as may be, as it were, tangible. Thus in venial sins they think that there may be the greatest filth, if hidden in the soul. In short, they suppose that all the fruits of original sin, provided they appear not outwardly, are washed away by the slight sprin-

kling of holy water! And what wonder is it, since they regard not as blasphemous sins, doubts respecting God's grace, or any lusts or evil desires, except they are consented to? If the soul of man be assailed by unbelief, if impatience tempts him to rage against God, whatever monstrous lusts may allure him, all these are to the Papists lighter than to be deemed sins, at least after baptism. It is then no wonder, that they make venial offenses of the greatest crimes; for they weigh them in their own balance and not in the balance of God.

But among the faithful this ought to be an indubitable truth, that whatever is contrary to God's law is sin, and in its nature mortal; for where there is a transgression of the law, there is sin and death.

What, then, is the meaning of the Apostle? He denies that sins are mortal, which, though worthy of death, are yet not thus punished by God. He therefore does not estimate sins in themselves, but forms a judgment of them according to the paternal kindness of God, which pardons the guilt, where yet the fault is. In short, God does not give over to death those whom he has restored to life, though it depends not on them that they are not alienated from life.

There is a sin unto death I have already said that the sin to which there is no hope of pardon left, is thus called. But it may be asked, what this is; for it must be very atrocious, when God thus so severely punishes it. It may be gathered from the context, that it is not, as they say, a partial fall, or a transgression of a single commandment, but apostasy, by which men wholly alienate themselves from God. For the Apostle afterwards adds, that the children of God do not sin, that is, that they do not forsake God, and wholly surrender themselves to Satan, to be his slaves. Such a defection, it is no wonder that it is mortal; for God never thus deprives his own people of the grace of the Spirit; but they ever retain some spark of true religion. They must then be reprobate and given up to destruction, who thus fall away so as to have no fear of God.

Were any one to ask, whether the door of salvation is closed against their repentance; the answer is obvious, that as they are given up to a reprobate mind, and are destitute of the Holy Spirit, they cannot do anything else, than with obstinate minds, become worse and worse, and add sins to sins. Moreover, as the sin and blasphemy against the Spirit ever brings with it a defection of this kind, there is no doubt but that it is here pointed out.

But it may be asked again, by what evidences can we know that a man's fall is fatal; for except the knowledge of this was certain, in vain would the Apostle have made this exception, that they were not to pray for a sin of this kind. It is then right to determine sometimes, whether the fallen is without hope, or whether there is still a place for a remedy. This, indeed, is what I allow, and what is evident beyond dispute from this passage; but as this very seldom happens, and as God sets before us the infinite riches of his grace, and bids us to be merciful according to his own example, we ought not rashly to conclude that any one has brought on himself the judgment of eternal death; on the contrary, love should dispose us to hope well. But if the impiety of some appear to us not otherwise than hopeless, as though the Lord pointed it out by

the finger, we ought not to contend with the just judgment of God, or seek to be more merciful than he is.

17 All unrighteousness This passage may be explained variously. If you take it adversatively, the sense would not be unsuitable, ``Though all unrighteousness is sin, yet every sin is not unto death.'' And equally suitable is another meaning, ``As sin is every unrighteousness, hence it follows that every sin is not unto death.'' Some take all unrighteousness for complete unrighteousness, as though the Apostle had said, that the sin of which he spoke was the summit of unrighteousness. I, however, am more disposed to embrace the first or the second explanation; and as the result is nearly the same, I leave it to the judgment of readers to determine which of the two is the more appropriate.

18 We know that whosoever is born of God If you suppose that God's children are wholly pure and free from all sin, as the fanatics contend, then the Apostle is inconsistent with himself; for he would thus take away the duty of mutual prayer among brethren. Then he says that those sin not who do not wholly fall away from the grace of God; and hence he inferred that prayer ought to be made for all the children of God, because they sin not unto death. A proof is added, that every one, born of God, keeps himself, that is, keeps himself in the fear of God; nor does he suffer himself to be so led away, as to lose all sense of religion, and to surrender himself wholly to the devil and the flesh.

For when he says, that he is not touched by that wicked one, reference is made to a deadly wound; for the children of God do not remain untouched by the assaults of Satan, but they ward off his strokes by the shield of faith, so that they do not penetrate into the heart. Hence spiritual life is never extinguished in them. This is not to sin. Though the faithful indeed fall through the infirmity of the flesh, yet they groan under the burden of sin, loathe themselves, and cease not to fear God.

Keepeth himself. What properly belongs to God he transfers to us; for were any one of us the keeper of his own salvation, it would be a miserable protection. Therefore Christ asks the Father to keep us, intimating that it is not done by our own strength. The advocates of freewill lay hold on this expression, that they may thence prove, that we are preserved from sin, partly by God's grace, and partly by our own power. But they do not perceive that the faithful have not from themselves the power of preservation of which the Apostle speaks. Nor does he, indeed, speak of their power, as though they could keep themselves by their own strength; but he only shews that they ought to resist Satan, so that they may never be fatally wounded by his darts. And we know that we fight with no other weapons but those of God. Hence the faithful keep themselves from sin, as far as they are kept by God. (John 17:11.)

1 John 5:19-21

1 John 5:19-21

19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

19. Novimus quod ex Deo sumus, et mundus torus in maligno positus est.

20. And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

20. Novimus autem quod Filius Dei venit, et dedit nobis intelligentiam, ut cognoscamus illum verum; et sumus in ipso vero, in Filio ejus Jesu Christo: Hic est verus Deus, et vita aeterna.

21. Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

21. Filioli, custodite vos ab idolis. Amen.

19 We are of God He deduces an exhortation from his previous doctrine; for what he had declared in common as to the children of God, he now applies to those he was writing to; and this he did, to stimulate them to beware of sin, and to encourage them to repel the onsets of Satan.

Let readers observe, that it is only true faith, that applies to us, so to speak, the grace of God; for the Apostle acknowledges none as faithful, but those who have the dignity of being God's children. Nor does he indeed put probable conjecture, as the Sophists speak, for confidence; for he says that we know. The meaning is, that as we have been born of God, we ought to strive to prove by our separation from the world, and by the sanctity of our life, that we have not been in vain called to so great all honor.

Now, this is an admonition very necessary for all the godly; for wherever they turn their eyes, Satan has his allurements prepared, by which he seeks to draw them away from God. It would then be difficult for them to hold on in their course, were they not so to value their calling as to disregard all the hindrances of the world. Then, in order to be well prepared for the contest, these two things must be borne in mind, that the world is wicked, and that our calling is from God.

Under the term world, the Apostle no doubt includes the whole human race. By saying that it lieth in the wicked one, he represents it as being under the dominion of Satan. There is then no reason why we should hesitate to shun the world, which condemns God and delivers up itself into the bondage of Satan: nor is there a reason why we should fear its enmity, because it is alienated from God. In short, since corruption pervades all nature, the faithful ought to study self-denial; and since nothing is seen in the world but wickedness and corruption, they must necessarily disregard flesh and blood that they may follow God. At the same time the other thing ought to be added, that God is he who has called them, that under this protection they may oppose all the machinations of the world and Satan.

20 And we know that the Son of God is come As the children of God are assailed on every side, he, as we have said, encourages and exhorts them to persevere in resisting their enemies, and for this reason, because they fight under the banner of God, and certainly know that they are ruled by his Spirit; but he now reminds them where this knowledge is especially to be found.

He then says that God has been so made known to us, that now there is no

reason for doubting. The Apostle does not without reason dwell on this point; for except our faith is really founded on God, we shall never stand firm in the contest. For this purpose the Apostle shews that we have obtained through Christ a sure knowledge of the true God, so that we may not fluctuate in uncertainty.

By true God he does not mean one who tells the truth, but him who is really God; and he so calls him to distinguishing him from all idols. Thus true is in opposition to what is fictitious; for it is {ἀληθινὸς}, and not {ἀληθής} A similar passage is in John

``This is eternal life, to know thee,
the only true God,
and him whom thou hast sent,
Jesus Christ.''
(John 17:3)

And he justly ascribes to Christ this office of illuminating our minds as to the knowledge of God. For, as he is the only true image of the invisible God, as he is the only interpreter of the Father, as he is the only guide of life, yea, as he is the life and light of the world and the truth, as soon as we depart from him, we necessarily become vain in our own devices.

And Christ is said to have given us an understanding, not only because he shews us in the gospel what sort of being is the true God, and also illuminates us by his Spirit; but because in Christ himself we have God manifested in the flesh, as Paul says, since in him dwells all the fullness of the Deity, and are hid all the treasures of knowledge and wisdom. (Colossians 2:9.) Thus it is that the face of God in a manner appears to us in Christ; not that there was no knowledge, or a doubtful knowledge of God, before the coming of Christ,, but that now he manifests himself more fully and more clearly. And this is what Paul says in 2 Corinthians 4:6, that

God, who formerly commanded light to shine out of darkness at the creation of the world, hath now shone in our hearts through the brightness of the knowledge of his glory in the face of Christ.

And it must be observed, that this gift is peculiar to the elect. Christ, indeed, kindles for all indiscriminately the torch of his gospel; but all have not the eyes of their minds opened to see it, but on the contrary Satan spreads the veil of blindness over many. Then the Apostle means the light which Christ kindles within in the hearts of his people, and which when once kindled, is never extinguished, though in some it may for a time be smothered.

We are in him that is true By these words he reminds us how efficacious is that knowledge which he mentions, even because by it we are united to Christ; and become one with God; for it has a living root, fixed in the heart, by which it comes that God lives in us and we in him. As he says, without a copulative, that: we are in him that is true, in his Son, he seems to express the manner of our union with God, as though he had said, that we are in God through Christ.

480

This is the true God Though the Arians have attempted to elude this passage, and some agree with them at this day, yet we have here a remarkable testimony to the divinity of Christ. The Arians apply this passage to the Father, as though the Apostle should again repeat that he is the true God. But nothing could be more frigid than such a repetition. It has already twice testified that the true God is he who has been made known to us in Christ, why should he again add, This is the true God? It applies, indeed, most suitably to Christ; for after having taught us that Christ is the guide by whose hand we are led to God, he now, by way of amplifying, affirms that Christ is that God, lest we should think that we are to seek further; and he confirms this view by what is added, and eternal life. It is doubtless the same that is spoken of, as being the true God and eternal life. I pass by this, that the relative {οὗτος} usually refers to the last person. I say, then, that Christ is properly called eternal life; and that this mode of speaking perpetually occurs in John, no one can deny.

The meaning is, that when we have Christ, we enjoy the true and eternal God, for nowhere else is he to be sought; and, secondly, that we become thus partakers of eternal life, because it is offered to us in Christ though hid in the Father. The origin of life is, indeed, the Father; but the fountain from which we are to draw it, is Christ.

21 Keep yourselves from idols Though this be a separate sentence, yet it is as it were an appendix to the preceding doctrine. For the vivifying light of the Gospel ought to scatter and dissipate, not only darkness, but also all mists, from the minds of the godly. The Apostle not only condemns idolatry, but commands us to beware of all images and idols; by which he intimates, that the worship of God cannot continue uncorrupted and pure whenever men begin to be in love with idols or images. For so innate in us is superstition, that the least occasion will infect us with its contagion. Dry wood will not so easily burn when coals are put under it, as idolatry will lay hold on and engross the minds of men, when an occasion is given to them. And who does not see that images are the sparks? What sparks do I say? nay, rather torches, which are sufficient to set the whole world on fire.

The Apostle at the same time does not only speak of statues, but also of altars, and includes all the instruments of superstitions. Moreover, the Papists are ridiculous, who pervert this passage and apply it to the statues of Jupiter and Mercury and the like, as though the Apostle did not teach generally, that there is a corruption of religion whenever a corporeal form is ascribed to God, or whenever statues and pictures form a part of his worship. Let us then remember that we ought carefully to continue in the spiritual worship of God, so

[480]It is rendered by some, “through his Son Jesus Christ.” Our version, “even in his Son Jesus Christ,” seems not to be right, as it makes “him that is true,” to be the Son, while the reference is to God, as in the previous clause. The true meaning would be thus conveyed, “And we are in the true God, being in his Son Jesus Christ;” for to be in Christ, is to be in God. Three MSS., the Vulgate, and several of the Fathers, read thus, “and we are in his true Son Jesus Christ”. — Ed.

as to banish far from us everything that may turn us aside to gross and carnal superstitions.

end of the first epistle of John

Jude

Jude: The Argument

THE ARGUMENT

Though there was a dispute among the ancients respecting this Epistle, yet as the reading of it is useful, and as it contains nothing inconsistent with the purity of apostolic doctrine, and was received as authentic formerly, by some of the best, I willingly add it to the others. Its brevity, moreover, does not require a long statement of its contents; and almost the whole of it is nearly the same with the second chapter of the last Epistle.

As unprincipled men, under the name of Christians, had crept in, whose chief object was to lead the unstable and weak to a profane contempt of God, Jude first shews, that the faithful ought not to have been moved by agents of this kind, by which the Church has always been assailed; and yet he exhorts them carefully to beware of such pests. And to render them more hateful and detestable, he denounces on them the approaching vengeance of God, such as their impiety deserved. Now, if we consider what Satan has attempted in our age, from the commencement of the revived gospel, and what arts he still busily employs to subvert the faith, and the fear of God, what was a useful warning in the time of Jude, is more than necessary in our age. But this will appear more fully as we proceed in reading the Epistle.

Chapter 1

The Epistle of jude

Jude 1-2

Jude 1-2

1. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James, to them that are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in Jesus Christ, and called:

1. Judas Jesu Christi servus, frater autem Jacobi,, vocatis qui in Deo Patre sanctificati sunt, et in Jesu Christo custoditi,

2. Mercy unto you, and peace, and love, be multiplied.

2. Misericordia vobis et pax et dilectio augeatur.

1 Jude the servant of Jesus Christ. He calls himself the servant of Christ, not as the name applies to all the godly, but with respect to his apostleship; for they were deemed peculiarly the servants of Christ, who had some public office committed to them. And we know why the apostles were wont to give themselves this honorable name. Whosoever is not called, arrogates to himself presumptuously the right and authority of teaching. Then their calling was an evidence to the apostles, that they did not thrust themselves into their office through their own will. It was not, however, of itself sufficient to be appointed to their office, except they faithfully discharged it. And, no doubt, he who declares himself to be the servant of God, includes both these things, that is, that God is the bestower of the office which he exercises, and that he faithfully performs what has been committed to him. Many act falsely, and falsely boast to be what they are very far from being: we ought always to examine whether the reality corresponds with the profession.

And brother of James. He mentions a name more celebrated than his own, and more known to the churches. For though faithfulness of doctrine and authority do not depend on the names of mortal men, yet it is a confirmation to the faith, when the integrity of the man who undertakes the office of a teacher is made certain to us. Besides, the authority of James is not here brought forward as that of a private individual, but because he was counted by all the Church as one of the chief apostles of Christ. He was the son of Alpheus, as I have said elsewhere. Nay, this very passage is a sufficient proof to me against Eusebius and others, who say, that he was a disciple, named Oblias, [James,] mentioned by Luke, in Acts 15:13; Acts 21:18, who was more eminent than the apostles in the Church. [481] But there is no doubt but that Jude mentions here his own

[481] Some have held, that James, mentioned in the forecited places in Acts, was not James the apostle, but another James, a disciple, and one of the seventy, who was also called Oblias:

brother, because he was eminent among the apostles. It is, then, probable, that he was the person to whom the chief honor was conceded by the rest, according to what Luke relates.

To them that are sanctified by God the Father, or, to the called who are sanctified, etc. [482] By this expression, ``the called,'' he denotes all the faithful, because the Lord has separated them for himself. But as calling is nothing else but the effect of eternal election, it is sometimes taken for it. In this place it makes but little difference in which way you take it; for he, no doubt, commends the grace of God, by which he has been pleased to choose them as his peculiar treasure. And he intimates that men do not anticipate God, and that they never come to him until he draws them.

Of the same he says that they were sanctified in God the Father, which may be rendered, ``by God the Father.'' I have, however, retained the very form of the expression, that readers may exercise their own judgment. For it may be, that this is the sense, --- that being profane in themselves, they had their holiness in God. But the way in which God sanctifies is, by regenerating us by his Spirit.

Another reading, which the Vulgate has followed, is somewhat harsh, ``To the beloved ({ἠγαπημένοις}) in God the Father.'' I therefore regard it as corrupt; and it is, indeed, found but in a few copies.

He further adds, that they were preserved in Jesus Christ. For we should be always in danger of death through Satan, and he might take us at any moment as an easy prey, were we not safe under the protection of Christ, whom the Father has given to be our guardian, so that none of those whom he has received under his care and shelter should perish.

Jude then mentions here a threefold blessing, or favor of God, with regard to all the godly, --- that he has made them by his calling partakers of the gospel; that he has regenerated them, by his Spirit, unto newness of life; and that he has preserved them by the hand of Christ, so that they might not fall away from salvation.

2. Mercy to you. Mercy means nearly the same as grace in the salutations of Paul. Were any one to wish for a refined distinction, it may be said that grace is properly the effect of mercy; for there is no other reason why God has embraced us in love, but that he pitied our miseries. Love may be understood as that of God towards men, as well as that of men towards one another. [483] If it be referred to God, the meaning is, that it might increase towards them, and that the assurance of divine love might be daily more confirmed in their hearts. The other meaning is, however, not unsuitable, that God would kindle

but this is not correct. — Ed.

[482] So Beza renders the words, “To the called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ:” that is, to the effectually called, (as the word commonly means,) set apart and separated by God from the ungodly world, and kept by Christ, having been committed to his care and protection. — Ed.

[483] As mercy is that of God, so it is more consistent to consider “peace” and “love’’ to be those of God: “may the mercy” of God, “and the peace” of God, “and the love” of God, “be increased (or multiplied) to you” — Ed.

and confirm in them mutual love.

Jude 3-4

Jude 3-4

3. Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

3. Dilecti, quum omne studium adhiberem ad scribendum vobis de communi salute, necesse habui scribere vobis ad vos hortandos ut certando adjuvetis eam, quae semel tradita est sanctis, fidem.

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

4. Subingressi enim sunt quidam homines, olim praescripti judicium, impii, Dei nostri gratiam transferentes in lasciviam, et Deum, qui solus est Herus, et Dominum Jesum Christum negantes.

3. When I gave diligence. I have rendered the words {σπουδὴν} {ποιούμενος}, ``Applying care:'' literally they are, ``Making diligence.'' But many interpreters explain the sentence in this sense, that a strong desire constrained Jude to write, as we usually say of those under the influence of some strong feeling, that they cannot govern or restrain themselves. Then, according to these expounders, Jude was under a sort of necessity, because a desire to write suffered him not to rest. But I rather think that the two clauses are separate, that though he was inclined and solicitous to write, yet a necessity compelled him. He then intimates, that he was indeed glad and anxious to write to them, but yet necessity urged him to do so, even because they were assailed (according to what follows) by the ungodly, and stood in need of being prepared to fight with them. [484]

Then, in the first place, Jude testifies that he felt so much concern for their salvation, that he wished himself, and was indeed anxious to write to them; and, secondly, in order to rouse their attention, he says that the state of things required him to do so. For necessity adds strong stimulants. Had they not been forewarned how necessary his exhortation was, they might have been slothful and negligent; but when he makes this preface, that he wrote on account of the necessity of their case, it was the same as though he had blown a trumpet to awake them from their torpor.

Of the common salvation. Some copies add ``your,'' but without reason, as I think; for he makes salvation common to them and to himself. And it adds not a

[484] Then the rendering would be, “Beloved, when I was applying all care to write to you of the common salvation, I deemed (or found) it necessary to write to you, in order to exhort you to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints.” Macknight and some others give another meaning to the first clause, and one more literal: “Beloved, making all haste to write to you, concerning the common salvation, I have thought it necessary,” etc. For this haste the Apostle gives a reason in the following verse, “For some men have stealthily crept in,” etc. This is the most obvious meaning of the passage. — Ed.

little weight to the doctrine that is announced, when any one speaks according to his own feelings and experience; for vain is what we say, if we speak of salvation to others, when we ourselves have no real knowledge of it. Then, Jude professed himself to be (so to speak) an experimental teacher, when he associated himself with the godly in the participation of the same salvation.

And exhort you. Literally, ``exhorting you;'' but as he points out the end of his counsel, the sentence ought to be thus expressed. What I have rendered, ``to help the faith by contending,'' means the same as to strive in retaining the faith, and courageously to sustain the contrary assaults of Satan. [485] For he reminds them that in order to persevere in the faith, various contests must be encountered and continual warfare maintained. He says that faith had been once delivered, that they might know that they had obtained it for this end, that they might never fail or fall away.

4. For there are certain men crept in unawares. Though Satan is ever an enemy to the godly, and never ceases to harass them, yet Jude reminds those to whom he was writing of the state of things at that time. Satan now, he says, attacks and harasses you in a peculiar manner; it is therefore necessary to take up arms to resist him. We hence learn that a good and faithful pastor ought wisely to consider what the present state of the Church requires, so as to accommodate his doctrine to its wants.

The word {παρεισέδυσαν}, which he uses, denotes an indirect and stealthy insinuation, by which the ministers of Satan deceive the unwary; for Satan sows his tares in the night, and while husbandmen are asleep, in order that he may corrupt the seed of God. And at the same time he teaches us that it is an intestine evil; for Satan in this respect also is crafty, as he raises up those who are of the flock to do mischief, in order that they may more easily creep in.

Before of old ordained. He calls that judgment, or condemnation, or a reprobate mind, by which they were led astray to pervert the doctrine of godliness; for no one can do such a thing except to his own ruin. But the metaphor is taken from this circumstance, because the eternal counsel of God, by which the faithful are ordained unto salvation, is called a book: and when the faithful heard that these were given up to eternal death, it behooved them to take heed lest they should involve themselves in the same destruction. It was at the same time the object of Jude to obviate danger, lest the novelty of the thing should disturb and distress any of them; for if these were already long ago ordained, it follows that the Church is not tried or exercised but according to the infallible counsel of God. [486]

[485] The meaning of the verb is, to combat for, to strive, fight or contend for. It is a word derived from the games, and expresses a strenuous effort. Our version conveys well its meaning, "earnestly contend for the faith;" or, the words may be rendered, "strenuously combat for the faith;" not with the sword, says Beza, but with sound doctrine and the example of a holy life. — Ed

[486] The words literally are, "Who have been long ago (or, some time past) forewritten of for (or, as to) this judgment." The reference is to prophecy; such creepers in for the purpose of corrupting the truth had been foretold; and this creeping in for such a purpose was a judgment for yielding up themselves to the delusions of Satan. The word {πάλαι} refers indefinitely to what is past, either long ago, or some time past. See Matthew 11:21, and Mark 15:44. The

The grace of our God. He now expresses more clearly what the evil was; for he says that they abused the grace of God, so as to lead themselves and others to take an impure and profane liberty in sinning. But the grace of God has appeared for a far different purpose, even that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we may live soberly, righteously, and godly in this world. Let us, then, know that nothing is more pestilential than men of this kind, who from the grace of Christ take a cloak to indulge in lasciviousness. [487]

Because we teach that salvation is obtained through God's mercy alone, the Papists accuse us of this crime. But why should we use words to refute their effrontery, since we everywhere urge repentance, the fear of God, and newness of life, and since they themselves not only corrupt the whole world with the worst examples, but also by their ungodly teaching take away from the world true holiness and the pure worship of God? Though I rather think, that those of whom Jude speaks, were like the libertines of our time, as it will be more evident from what follows.

The only Lord God, or, God who alone is Lord. Some old copies have, ``Christ, who alone is God and Lord.'' And, indeed, in the Second Epistle of Peter, Christ alone is mentioned, and there he is called Lord. [488] But He means that Christ is denied, when they who had been redeemed by his blood, become again the vassals of the Devil, and thus render void as far as they can that incomparable price. That Christ, then, may retain us as his peculiar treasure, we must remember that he died and rose again for us, that he might have dominion over our life and death.

Jude 5-7

Jude 5-7

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye once knew this, how that the Lord, having saved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward destroyed them that believed not.

5. Commonefacere autem vos volo, quum istud semel noveritis, quod Dominus postquam ex terra Egypti populum servaverat, postea non credentes perdidit.

6. And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.

6. Angelos vero qui principatum (vel, initium) suum non servaverant, sed

reference may be to ancient prophecies, or to those of our Savior and his Apostles. --- Ed

[487] "The grace of God" here is evidently the gospel. They transformed, says Grotius, the gospel to a libidinous doctrine. — Ed.

[488] Griesbach excludes {Θεὸν}, ``God,'' from the text: then the passage would correspond in sense, with 2 Peter 2:1; literally, ``denying the only sovereign and Lord of us, Jesus Christ.'' The word {δεσπότην}, sovereign, or master, is used by Jude as well as by Peter. It was not the grace, but the ruling power of Christ that was denied; they boasted of his grace, but did not submit to him as a king. Hence the word {δεσπότης} is used --- one exercising absolute power. We may render the words, ``denying our only sovereign and Lord, Jesus Christ.'' --- Ed

reliquerant suum domicilium, judicium magnae diei vinculis aeternis sub caligine servavit.

7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

7. Quemadmodum Sodoma et Gomorrha, et qae circum erant urbes, quum simili modo scortatae essent, et abiissent post carnem alienam, propositae sunt ignis aeterni judicium sustinentes.

5. I will therefore put you in remembrance, or, remind you. He either modestly excuses himself, lest he should seem to teach as it were the ignorant things unknown to them; or, indeed, he openly declares in an emphatical manner, (which I approve more of,) that he adduced nothing new or unheard of before, in order that what he was going to say might gain more credit and authority. I only recall, he says, to your mind what you have already learnt. As he ascribes knowledge to them, so he says that they stood in need of warnings, lest they should think that the labor he undertook towards them was superfluous; for the use of God's word is not only to teach what we could not have otherwise known, but also to rouse us to a serious meditation of those things which we already understand, and not to suffer us to grow torpid in a cold knowledge.

Now, the meaning is, that after having been called by God, we ought not to glory carelessly in his grace, but on the contrary, to walk watchfully in his fear; for if any trifles thus with God, the contempt of his grace will not be unpunished. And this he proves by three examples. He first refers to the vengeance which God executed on those unbelievers, whom he had chosen as his people, and delivered by his power. Nearly the same reference is made by Paul in the tenth chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians. The import of what he says is, that those whom God had honored with the greatest blessings, whom he had extolled to the same degree of honor as we enjoy at this day, he afterwards severely punished. Then in vain were all they proud of God's grace, who did not live in a manner suitable to their calling.

The word people is by way of honor taken for the holy and chosen nation, as though he had said that it availed them nothing, that they by a singular favor had been taken into covenant. By calling them unbelieving, he denotes the fountain of all evils; for all their sins, mentioned by Moses, were owing to this, because they refused to be ruled by God's word. For where there is the subjection of faith, there obedience towards God necessarily appears in all the duties of life.

6. And the angels. This is an argument from the greater to the less; for the state of angels is higher than ours; and yet God punished their defection in a dreadful manner. He will not then forgive our perfidy, if we depart from the grace unto which he has called us. This punishment, inflicted on the inhabitants of heaven, and on such superior ministers of God, ought surely to be constantly before our eyes, so that we may at no time be led to despise God's grace, and thus rush headlong into destruction.

The word {ἀρχὴ} in this place, may be aptly taken for beginning as well as for principality or dominion. For Jude intimates that they suffered punishment, because they had despised the goodness of God and deserted their first vocation. And there follows immediately an explanation, for he says that they had left their own habitation; for, like military deserters, they left the station in which they had been placed.

We must also notice the atrocity of the punishment which the Apostle mentions. They are not only free spirits but celestial powers; they are now held bound by perpetual chains. They not only enjoyed the glorious light of God, but his brightness shone forth in them, so that from them, as by rays, it spread over all parts of the universe; now they are sunk in darkness. But we are not to imagine a certain place in which the devils are shut up, for the Apostle simply intended to teach us how miserable their condition is, since the time they apostatized and lost their dignity. For wherever they go, they drag with them their own chains, and remain involved in darkness. Their extreme punishment is in the meantime, deferred until the great day comes.

7. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha. This example is more general, for he testifies that God, excepting none of mankind, punishes without any difference all the ungodly. And Jude also mentions in what follows, that the fire through which the five cities perished was a type of the eternal fire. Then God at that time exhibited a remarkable example, in order to keep men in fear till the end of the world. Hence it is that it is so often mentioned in Scripture; nay, whenever the prophets wished to designate some memorable and dreadful judgment of God, they painted it under the figure of sulfurous fire, and alluded to the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrha. It is not, therefore, without reason that Jude strikes all ages with terror, by exhibiting the same view.

When he says, the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, I do not apply these words to the Israelites and the angels, but to Sodom and Gomorrha. It is no objection that the pronoun {τούτοις} is masculine, for Jude refers to the inhabitants and not to the places. To go after strange flesh, is the same as to be given up to monstrous lusts; for we know that the Sodomites, not content with the common manner of committing fornication, polluted themselves in a way the most filthy and detestable. We ought to observe, that he devotes them to eternal fire; for we hence learn, that the dreadful spectacle which Moses describes, was only an image of a much heavier punishment.

Jude 8-10

Jude 8-10

8. Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

8. Similiter isti quoque somniis delusi, carnem quidem contaminant, dominationem vero, rejiciunt, et in glorias maledicta congerunt.

9. Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

9. Atqui Michael archangelus, quando judicio disceptans cum diabolo, disputabat de corpore Mosis, non ausus fuit judicium inferre contumeliae; sed dixit, Increpet te Dominus.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beasts, in those things they corrupt themselves.

10. Isti vero quae cumque non noverunt, convitiis incessunt; quaecunque vero naturaliter tanquam bruta animalia sciunt, in iis corrumpuntur.

8. Likewise also these. This comparison is not to be pressed too strictly, as though he compared these whom he mentions in all things to be Sodomites, or to the fallen angels, or to the unbelieving people. He only shews that they were vessels of wrath appointed to destruction, and that they could not escape the hand of God, but that he would some time or another make them examples of his vengeance. For his design was to terrify the godly to whom he was writing, lest they should entangle themselves in their society.

But he begins here more clearly to describe these impostors. And he says first, that they polluted their flesh as it were by dreaming, by which words he denotes their stupid effrontery, as though he had said that they abandoned themselves to all kinds of filth, which the most wicked abhor, except sleep took away shame and also consciousness. It is then a metaphorical mode of speaking, by which he intimates that they were so dull and stupid as to give up themselves without any shame to every kind of baseness. [489]

There is a contrast to be noticed, when he says that they defiled or polluted the flesh, that is, that they degraded what was less excellent, and that yet they despised as disgraceful what is deemed especially excellent among mankind.

It appears from the second clause that they were seditious men, who sought anarchy, that, being loosed from the fear of the laws, they might sin more freely. But these two things are nearly always connected, that they who abandon themselves to iniquity, do also wish to abolish all order. Though, indeed, their chief object is to be free from every yoke, it yet appears from the words of Jude that they were wont to speak insolently and reproachfully of magistrates, like the fa-

[489] The "dreaming" is connected with the three things which follow, defiling the flesh, despising government and slandering dignities. Hence the idea conveyed by our version, in which filthy is introduced, is by no means correct. Allusion seems to be made to the pretensions of false prophets in former times. See Jeremiah 23:25-27. The false prophets taught what they pretended to see in dreams, as dreams as well as visions were vouchsafed to true prophets. See Joel 2:28. It is not improbable that those referred to here pretended that they had received what they taught., by supernatural dreams; for how otherwise could they deceive others, especially respecting errors so gross and palpable as are here mentioned? The eighth verse is, as to its construction, connected with the seventh. The {ὡς} and the {ὁμοίως} are corresponding terms; ``as Sodom and Gomorrha, etc., are set forth for an example, in like manner also these would be.'' This is the drift of the passage; --- 8. ``In like manner, indeed, shall also these dreamers be that is, an example of divine vengeance, who defile the flesh, despise dominion, and revile dignities.'' Peter threatened them with ``swift destruction,'' 2 Peter 2:1. There are here three things mentioned which apply to the three instances previously adduced: like the Sodomites they defiled the flesh; like the fallen angels they despised dominion; and like the Israelites in the wilderness, they reviled dignities; for it was especially by opposing the power given to Moses that the Israelites manifested their unbelief. --- Ed.

natics of the present day, who not only grumble because they are restrained by the authority of magistrates, but furiously declaim against all government, and say that the power of the sword is profane and opposed to godliness; in short, they superciliously reject from the Church of God all kings and all magistrates. Dignities or glories are orders or ranks eminent in power or honor.

9. Yet Michael the archangel. Peter gives this argument shorter, and states generally, that angels, far more excellent than men, dare not bring forward a railing judgment. [2 Peter 2:11.]

But as this history is thought to have been taken from an apocryphal book, it has hence happened that less weight has been attached to this Epistle. But since the Jews at that time had many things from the traditions of the fathers, I see nothing unreasonable in saying that Jude referred to what had already been handed down for many ages. I know indeed that many puerilities had obtained the name of tradition, as at this day the Papists relate as traditions many of the silly dotages of the monks; but this is no reason why they should not have had some historical facts not committed to writing.

It is beyond controversy that Moses was buried by the Lord, that is, that his grave was concealed according to the known purpose of God. And the reason for concealing his grave is evident to all, that is, that the Jews might not bring forth his body to promote superstition. What wonder then is it, when the body of the prophet was hidden by God, Satan should attempt to make it known; and that angels, who are ever ready to serve God, should on the other hand resist him? And doubtless we see that Satan almost in all ages has been endeavoring to make the bodies of God's saints idols to foolish men. Therefore this Epistle ought not to be suspected on account of this testimony, though it is not found in Scripture.

That Michael is introduced alone as disputing against Satan is not new. We know that myriads of angels are ever ready to render service to God; but he chooses this or that to do his business as he pleases. What Jude relates as having been said by Michael, is found also in the book of Zechariah,

``Let God chide (or check) thee, Satan.''
(Zechariah 3:2.)

And it is a comparison, as they say, between the greater and the less. Michael dared not to speak more severely against Satan (though a reprobate and condemned) than to deliver him to God to be restrained; but those men hesitated not to load with extreme reproaches the powers which God had adorned with peculiar honors.

10. But these speak evil of those things which they know not. He means that they had no taste for anything but what was gross, and as it were beastly, and therefore did not perceive what was worthy of honor; and that yet they added audacity to madness, so that they feared not to condemn things above their comprehension; and that they also labored under another evil --- for when like beasts they were carried away to those things which gratified the senses of the body, they observed no moderation, but gorged themselves excessively

like the swine which roll themselves in stinking mud. The adverb naturally is set in opposition to reason and judgment for the instinct of nature alone rules in brute animals; but reason ought to govern men and to bridle their appetites.

Jude 11-13

Jude 11-13

11. Woe unto them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

11. Vae illis, quoniam viam Cain ingressi sunt (Genesis 4:12;) et deceptione mercedis Balaam effusi sunt (Numbers 22:21;) et contradictione Core perierunt (Numbers 26:2.)

12. These are spots in your feasts of charity, when they feast with you, feeding themselves without fear: clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

12. Hi sunt in fraternis vestris conviviis maculae, inter se (vel vobiscum) convivantes, secure pascentes seipsos; nubes aqua carentes, quae a ventis circum aguntur; arbores autummi emarcidae, et eradicata infrugiferae, bis emortuae, et eradicatae;

13. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.

13. Undae efferatae maris, despumantes sua ipserum dedecora; stelie erraticae, quibus caligo tenebrarum in aeternum servata est.

11. Woe unto them. It is a wonder that he inveighs against them so severely, when he had just said that it was not permitted to an angel to bring a railing accusation against Satan. But it was not his purpose to lay down a general rule. He only shewed briefly, by the example of Michael, how intolerable was their madness when they insolently reproached what God honored. It was certainly lawful for Michael to fulminate against Satan his final curse; and we see how vehemently the prophets threatened the ungodly; but when Michael forbore extreme severity (otherwise lawful), what madness was it to observe no moderation towards those excelling in glory? But when he pronounced woe on them, he did not so much imprecate evil on them, but rather reminded them what sort of end awaited them; and he did so, lest they should carry others with them to perdition.

He says that they were the imitators of Cain, who being ungrateful to God and perverting his worship through an ungodly and wicked heart, forfeited his birthright. He says that they were deceived like Balaam by a reward, because they adulterated the doctrine of true religion for the sake of filthy lucre. But the metaphor he uses, expresses something more; for he says that they overflowed, even because their excess was like overflowing water. He says in the third place, that they imitated the contradiction of Core, because they disturbed the order and quietness of the church.

12. These are spots in your feasts of charity. They who read, ``among your charities,'' do not, as I think, sufficiently explain the true meaning. For he calls those feasts charities, ({ἀγάπαις},) which the faithful had among themselves for the sake of testifying their brotherly unity. Such feasts, he says, were disgraced by impure men, who afterwards fed themselves to an excess; for in these there was the greatest frugality and moderation. It was then not right that these gorgers should be admitted, who afterwards indulged themselves to an excess elsewhere.

Some copies have, ``Feasting with you,'' which reading, if approved, has this meaning, that they were not only a disgrace, but that they were also troublesome and expensive, as they crammed themselves without fear, at the public expense of the church. Peter speaks somewhat different, [2 Peter 2:13,] who says that they took delight in errors, and feasted together with the faithful, as though he had said that they acted inconsiderately who cherished such noxious serpents, and that they were very foolish who encouraged their excessive luxury. And at this day I wish there were more judgment in some good men, who, by seeking to be extremely kind to wicked men, bring great damage to the whole church.

Clouds they are without water. The two similitudes found in Peter are here given in one, but to the same purpose, for both condemn vain ostentation: these unprincipled men, though promising much, were yet barren within and empty, like clouds driven by stormy winds, which give hope of rain, but soon vanish into nothing. Peter adds the similitude of a dry and empty fountain; but Jude employs other metaphors for the same end, that they were trees fading, as the vigor of trees in autumn disappears. He then calls them trees unfruitful, rooted up, and twice dead; [490] as though he had said, that there was no sap within, though leaves might appear.

13. Raging waves of the sea. Why this was added, we may learn more fully from the words of Peter: [2 Peter 2:17,18] it was to shew, that being inflated with pride, they breathed out, or rather cast out the scum of high-flown stuff of words in grandiloquent style. At the same time they brought forth nothing spiritual, their object being on the contrary to make men as stupid as brute animals. Such, as it has been before stated, are the fanatics of our day, who call themselves Libertines. You may justly say that they make only rumbling sounds; for, despising common language, they form for themselves an exotic idiom, I know not what. They seem at one time to carry their disciples above heaven, then they suddenly fall down to beastly errors, for they imagine a state of innocency in which there is no difference between baseness and honesty; they imagine a spiritual life, when fear is extinguished, and when every one heedlessly indulges himself; they imagine that we become gods, because God absorbs the spirits when they quit their bodies. With the more care and reverence ought the simplicity of Scripture to be studied, lest, by reasoning more

[490] "Twice dead" is deemed by some a proverbial expression to signify what is altogether dead; or, as by Macknight, it means that they were dead when professing Judaism, and dead after having made a profession of the gospel. — Ed.

refinedly than is right, we should not draw men to heaven, but on the contrary be involved in manifold labyrinths. He therefore calls them wandering stars, because they dazzled the eyes by a sort of evanescent light.

Jude 14-16

Jude 14-16

14. And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

14. Prius autem etiam de iis vaticinatus est septimus ab Adam Enoch, dicens, Ecce venit Dominus in sanctis millibus suis,

15. To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

15. Ut faciat judicium adversus omnes, et redarguat ex eis omnes impios de factis omnibus impietatis quae impie patrarunt deque omnibus duris quae loquuti sunt adversus Deum peccatores impii.

16. These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling words, having men's persons in admiration because of advantage.

16. Hi sunt murmuratores, queruli, juxta concupiscentias suas ambulantes, et os illorum loquitur tumida, admirantes personas, utilitatis gratia.

14. And Enoch also. I rather think that this prophecy was unwritten, than that it was taken from an apocryphal book; for it may have been delivered down by memory to posterity by the ancients. [491] Were any one to ask, that since similar sentences occur in many parts of Scripture, why did he not quote a testimony written by one of the prophets? the answer is obvious, that he wished to repeat from the oldest antiquity what the Spirit had pronounced respecting them: and this is what the words intimate; for he says expressly that he was the seventh from Adam, in order to commend the antiquity of the prophecy, because it existed in the world before the flood.

But I have said that this prophecy was known to the Jews by being reported; but if any one thinks otherwise, I will not contend with him, nor, indeed, respecting the epistle itself, whether it be that of Jude or of some other. In things doubtful, I only follow what seems probable.

Behold, the Lord cometh, or came. The past tense, after the manner of the prophets, is used for the future. He says, that the Lord would come with ten thousand of his saints; [492] and by saints he means the faithful as well as angels; for both will adorn the tribunal of Christ, when he shall descend to judge

[491] This is the most common opinion. There is no evidence of such a book being known for some time after this epistle was written; and the book so called was probably a forgery, occasioned by this reference to Enoch's prophecy. See Macknight's Preface to this Epistle. Until of late, it was supposed to be lost; but in 1821, the late Archbishop Laurence, having found an Ethiopia version of it, published it with a translation. — Ed.

[492] Literally, "with his holy myriads." — Ed

the world. He says, ten thousand, as Daniel also mentions myriads of angels, (Daniel 7:10;) in order that, the multitude of the ungodly may not, like a violent sea, overwhelm the children of God; but that they may think of this, that the Lord will sometime collect his own people, a part of whom are dwelling in heaven, unseen by us, and a part are hid under a great mass of chaff.

But the vengeance suspended over the wicked ought to keep the elect in fear and watchfulness. He speaks of deeds and words, Because their corrupters did much evil, not only by their wicked life, but also by their impure and false speech. And their words were hard, on account of the refractory audacity, by which, being elated, they acted insolently. [493]

16. These are murmurers. They who indulge their depraved lusts, are hard to please, and morose, so that they are never satisfied. Hence it is, that they always murmur and complain, however kindly good men may treat them. [494] He condemns their proud language, because they haughtily made a boast of themselves; but at the same time he shews that they were mean in their disposition, for they were servilely submissive for the sake of gain. And, commonly, this sort of inconsistency is seen in unprincipled men of this kind. When there is no one to check their insolence, or when there is nothing that stands in their way, their pride is intolerable, so that they imperiously arrogate everything to themselves; but they meanly flatter those whom they fear, and from whom they expect some advantage. He takes persons as signifying eternal greatness and power.

Jude 17-19

Jude 17-19

17. But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

17. Vos autem dilecti, memores estis (vel, estote) verborum quae praedicta sunt ab apostolis Domini Christ: nostri Jesu nempe,

18. How that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

18. Quod vobis dixerunt, ultimo tempore futuros (vel, venturos) derisores, qui secundum concupiscentias tias suarum impietatum ambularent.

19. These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

19. Hi sunt qui seipsos segregant, animales, Spiritum non habentes.

17. But, beloved. To a most ancient prophecy he now adds the admonitions of the apostles, the memory of whom was recent. As to the verb {μνήσθητε}, it

[493] There seems to be a want of due order in the 15th verse; the execution of judgment is mentioned first, and then the conviction of the ungodly; but it is an order which exactly corresponds with numberless passages in Scripture: the final action first, and then that which lends to it. — Ed.

[494] We may render the words “Grumblers and fault-finders,” that is, as the word means, with their own lot: they grumbled or murmured against others, and were discontented with their own condition; and yet walked in such a way (that is, in indulging their lusts,) as made their lot worse and occasioned still more grumbling. — Ed.

makes no great difference, whether you read it as declarative or as an exhortation; for the meaning remains the same, that being fortified by the prediction he quotes, they ought to be terrified.

By the last time he means that in which the renewed condition of the Church received a fixed form till the end of the world; and it began at the first coming of Christ.

After the usual manner of Scripture, he calls them scoffers who, being inebriated with a profane and impious contempt of God, rush headlong into a brutal contempt of the Divine Being, so that no fear nor reverence keeps them any longer within the limits of duty: as no dread of a future judgment exists in their hearts, so no hope of eternal life. So at this day the world is full of Epicurean despisers of God, who having cast off every fear, madly scoff at the whole doctrine of true religion, regarding it as fabulous.

19. These be they who separate themselves. Some Greek copies have the participle by itself, other copies add {ἑαυτοὺς}, ``themselves;'' but the meaning is nearly the same. He means that they separated from the Church, because they would not bear the yoke of discipline, as they who indulge the flesh dislike spiritual life. [495] The word sensual, or animal, stands opposed to spiritual, or to the renovation of grace; and hence it means the vicious or corrupt, such as men are when not regenerated. For in that degenerated nature which we derive from Adam, there is nothing but what is gross and earthly; so that no part of us aspires to God, until we are renewed by his Spirit.

Jude 20-25

Jude 20-25

20. But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

20. Vos autem dilecti, sanctissimæ vestræ fidei vosmet superstruentes, in Spiritu Sancti precantes,

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

21. Vosmet in charitate servate, expectantes misericordiam Domini nostri Jesu Christi in vitam eternam.

22. And of some have compassion, making a difference.

22. Et hos quidem miseramini, dijudicantes;

23. And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

[495] This is the common interpretation, and yet it seems inconsistent with what is previously said of these men, that they crept in stealthily, and "feasted" with the members of the Church. The {ἑαυτοὺς}, though retained by Griesbach, is excluded by Wetstein and others, being absent from most of the MSS. The verb {ἀποδιορίζω}, means to separate by a boundary two portions from one another, and hence metaphorically to separate or cause divisions: ``These be they who cause divisions.'' They were doing the same thing as those mentioned by Paul in Romans 16:17. They were producing discords in the Church, and not separations from it; and by continuing in it, they became ``spots and stains'' to its members. --- Ed

23. Illos verò per timorem servate, ex incendio rapientes, odio prosquentes etiam maculatam a' carne tunicam.

24. Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy,

24. Ei autem qui servare potest vos (vel, eos) à peccato immunes, et statuere in conspectu gloriae suae reprehensibiles cum exultatione,

25. To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

25. Soli sapienti Deo, Servatori nostro, gloria et magnificentia et perium et potestas, nunc, et in omnia secula. Amen.

20. But ye, beloved. He shews the manner in which they could overcome all the devices of Satan, that is, by having love connected with faith, and by standing on their guard as it were in their watch-tower, until the coming of Christ. But as he uses often and thickly his metaphors, so he has here a way of speaking peculiar to himself, which must be briefly noticed.

He bids them first to build themselves on faith; by which he means, that the foundation of faith ought to be retained, but that the first instruction is not sufficient, except they who have been already grounded on true faith, went on continually towards perfection. He calls their faith most holy, in order that they might wholly rely on it, and that, leaning on its firmness, they might never vacillate.

But since the whole perfection of man consists in faith, it may seem strange that he bids them to build upon it another building, as though faith were only a commencement to man. This difficulty is removed by the Apostle in the words which follow, when he adds, that men build on faith when love is added; except, perhaps, some one may prefer to take this meaning, that men build on faith, as far as they make proficiency in it, and doubtless the daily progress of faith is such, that itself rises up as a building. [496] Thus the Apostle teaches us, that in order to increase in faith, we must be instant in prayer and maintain our calling by love.

Praying in the Holy Ghost. The way of persevering is, when we are endued with the power of God. Hence whenever the question is respecting the constancy of faith, we must flee to prayer. And as we commonly pray in a formal manner, he adds, In the Spirit; as though he had said, that such is our sloth, and that such is the coldness of our flesh, that no one can pray aright except he be roused by the Spirit of God; and that we are also so inclined to diffidence and trembling, that no one dares to call God his Father, except through the teaching of the same Spirit; for from him is solicitude, from him is ardor and vehemence, from him is alacrity, from him is confidence in obtaining what we ask; in short,

[496] It is better to take “faith” here metonymically for the word or doctrine of faith, the gospel; and the sense would be more evident, were we to render {ἑαυτοὺς}, ``one another,'' as it means in 1 Thessalonians 5:13 20. ``But ye, beloved, building one another on your most holy faith, (on the most holy doctrine which you believe,) praying by the 21. Holy Spirit, keep one another in love to God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal life. And on some, indeed, have compassion, making a difference; but others save with fear,'' etc. The whole passage would read thus better, when their duty towards one another is specifically pointed out. --- Ed.

from him are those unutterable groanings mentioned by Paul (Romans 8:26.) It is not, then, without reason that Jude teaches us, that no one can pray as he ought without having the Spirit as his guide.

21. Keep yourselves in the love of God. He has made love as it were the guardian and the ruler of our life; not that he might set it in opposition to the grace of God, but that it is the right course of our calling, when we make progress in love. But as many things entice us to apostasy, so that it is difficult to keep us faithful to God to the end, he calls the attention of the faithful to the last day. For the hope of that alone ought to sustain us, so that we may at no time despond; otherwise we must necessarily fail every moment.

But it ought to be noticed that he would not have us to hope for eternal life, except through the mercy of Christ: for he will in such a manner be our judge, as to have no other rule in judging us than that gratuitous benefit of redemption obtained by himself.

22. And of some have compassion. He adds another exhortation, shewing how the faithful ought to act in reproving their brethren, in order to restore them to the Lord. He reminds them that such ought to be treated in different ways, every one according to his disposition: for to the meek and teachable we ought to use kindness; but others, who are hard and perverse, must be subdued by terror. [497] This is the difference which he mentions.

The participle {διακρινόμενοι}, I know not why this is rendered in a passive sense by Erasmus. It may, indeed, be rendered in either way, but its active meaning is more suitable to the context. The meaning then is, that if we wish to consult the well-being of such as go astray, we must consider the character and disposition of every one; so that they who are meek and tractable may in a kind manner be restored to the right way, as being objects of pity; but if any be perverse, he is to be corrected with more severity. And as asperity is almost hateful, he excuses it on the ground of necessity; for otherwise, they who do not willingly follow good counsels, cannot be saved.

Moreover, he employs a striking metaphor. When there is a danger of fire, we hesitate not to snatch away violently whom we desire to save; for it would not be enough to beckon with the finger, or kindly to stretch forth the hand. So also the salvation of some ought to be cared for, because they will not come to God, except when rudely drawn. Very different is the old translation, which reading is however found in many of the Greek copies; the Vulgate is, ``Rebuke the judged,'' (Arguite dijudicatos.) But the first meaning is more suitable, and is, I think, according to the old and genuine reading. The word to save, is transferred to men, not that they are the authors, but the ministers of salvation.

23. Hating even the garment. This passage, which otherwise would appear

[497] Though most agree that by "fear" here is meant terror, that is, that the persons referred to are to be terrified by the judgment which awaited them; yet what follows seems favorable to another view, that fear means the care and caution with which they were to be treated; for the act of saving them is compared to that of a man snatching anything from the fire, in doing which he must be careful lest he himself should be burnt; and then the other comparison, that of a man shunning an infected garment lest he should catch the contagion, favors the same view. Hence our version seems right — "with fear." — Ed.

obscure, will have no difficulty in it, when the metaphor is rightly explained. He would have the faithful not only to beware of contact with vices, but that no contagion might reach them, he reminds them that everything that borders on vices and is near to them ought to be avoided: as, when we speak of lasciviousness, we say that all excitements to lusts ought to be removed. The passage will also become clearer, when the whole sentence is filled up, that is, that we should hate not only the flesh, but also the garment, which, by a contact with it, is infected. The particle {καὶ} even serves to give greater emphasis. He, then, does not allow evil be cherished by indulgence, so that he bids all preparations and all accessories, as they say, to be cut off.

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you. He closes the Epistle with praise to God; by which he shews that our exhortations and labors can do nothing except through the power of God accompanying them. [498]

Some copies have ``them'' instead of ``you.'' If we receive this reading, the sense will be, ``It is, indeed, your duty to endeavor to save them; but it is God alone who can do this'' However, the other reading is what I prefer; in which there is an allusion to the preceding verse; for after having exhorted the faithful to save what was perishing, that they might understand that all their efforts would be vain except God worked with them, he testifies that they could not be otherwise saved than through the power of God. In the latter clause there is indeed a different verb, {φυλάξαι}, which means to guard; so the allusion is to a remoter clause, when he said, Keep yourselves

END OF THE EPISTLE OF JUDE

[498] The doxology is as follows, — "To the only wise God (or, to the wise God alone) our Savior, be glory and greatness, might and dominion, both now and through all ages." "Dominion" ({ἐξουσία}) is the right to govern, imperial authority or power; ``might'' ({κράτος}) is strength to effect his purpose, omnipotence; ``greatness'' ({μεγαλωσύνη}) comprises knowledge, wisdom, holiness, and everything that constitutes what is really great and magnificent; and ({δόξα}) is the result of all these things which belong to God; all terminate in his glory. The ultimate issue is first mentioned, then the things which lead to it. It is by acknowledging his sovereign power, his capacity to exercise that power --- his omnipotence, and his greatness in everything that constitutes greatness, that we give him the glory, the honor, and the praise due to his name. --- Ed.

Appendices

Hebrews: Appendix of Additional Notations

APPENDIX OF ADDITIONAL ANNOTATIONS.

Appendix A

APPENDIX A

Chapter 1:3 Who being the brightness, etc. The words are rendered by Beza, ``the effulgence of his glory, and the impress of his person;'' by Doddridge, ``the effulgent ray of his glory, and the express delineation of his person;'' by Macknight, ``an effulgence of his glory, and an exact image of his substance;'' and by Stuart, ``the radiance of his glory, and the exact image of his substance.'' The word ``brightness,'' does not adequately express the meaning of the first word, {ἀπαύγασμα}, which signifies an emitted light, a splendor proceeding from an object. The most suitable word would be, outshining, or irradiation, ``the outshining of his glory.'' The ``express image'' of our version is the impress, the engraven or impressed form, derived from the archetype. And ``impress,'' as given by Beza, fully expresses it.

The words are doubtless metaphorical, but the idea is this --- that Christ, as a Mediator, as the Son of God in human nature, exactly represents what God is, being the very image of him who is invisible. ``Substance,'' or essence, is the divine nature in all its glorious and incomprehensible attributes of power, wisdom, holiness, justice, and goodness. These and other perfections are exhibited in Christ perfectly, and in such a way that we can look on them, and in a measure understand them. Hence he said, ``He that hath seen me, hath seen the Father,'' John 14:9.

The word {ὑπόστασις}, does not mean a ``person,'' either in Scripture or in classic writers. It is a meaning invented by the fathers during the Arian controversy. As used in the Sept. and in the New Testament, it means foundation or basis, Ezekiel 43:11, --- substance, Psalm 139:15, --- expectation, Psalm 38:11, --- and confidence, 2 Corinthians 9:4. Its classic meaning, according to Stuart, is foundation, steadfastness, courage, purpose, resolution, determination, substance, essence, being. There is in Colossians 1:15, a phrase of a similar import, with ``the impress of his substance,'' where Christ is said to be ``the image ({εἴχων} --- the likeness) of the invisible God.'' The substance or essence is ``the invisible God,'' and ``the impress'' is ``the image.''

``In the opinion,'' says Stuart, ``that the verse now under consideration relates to the incarnate Messiah, and not to the Logos in his divine nature simply considered, I find that Scott and Beza concur, not to mention others of the most respectable commentators.''

It was the mistaken view which the fathers took of the passage that led them to invent a new meaning to the word {ὑπόστασις}; and many have followed them.

Appendix B

APPENDIX B

Chapter 1:5. Thou art my Son, etc. It is to be observed that Christ is called a Son when his prophetic office is referred to, ver. 2, when spoken of as a king, ver. 8, when his priesthood is mentioned, chapter 5:5, and when a comparison is made between him and Moses, chapter 3:6. But as a king over his people is he represented here as superior to angels; and David as his type was also called a son because he was a king. Christ is said here to have derived his name by ``inheritance'' --- from whom? The Apostle refers throughout to the Old Testament; and what does Peter say That David, being a Prophet, knew that God ``would raise up Christ to sit on his throne,'' Acts 2:30. Then the inheritance in this instance was from David. Christ is God's onlybegotten Son as to his divine nature; but he is also a Son in a peculiar manner, superior to all others, that is, as a Prophet, Priest, and King. There were types of him in these offices; but they were only types, and therefore far inferior to him even as to these offices. And angels never sustained such offices.

Appendix C

APPENDIX C

Chapter 1:6 And again when he bringeth, etc Critics have found some difficulty in the order in which the particles are arranged here, and have proposed a transposition, which is not at all necessary. The word ``firstbegotten,'' or firstborn, seems to have been used on account of what the previous verse contains. The words, ``Today have I begotten thee,'' refer clearly to the resurrection; and Christ is said to have been ``the firstborn from the dead,'' Colossians 1:18. Having then referred to Christ's resurrection, he now as it were goes back to his birth, or to the announcement made in prophecy of his coming into the world, and seems to say, that not only when he became the firstborn from the dead he attained a manifested superiority over angels, but even at his first introduction into the world, for they were commanded even to worship him. ``And when again,'' or also, or moreover, ``he introduces,'' etc.; as though he had said, ``God owned him as his Son by raising him from the dead; and again, or in addition to this, when he introduced him into the world, he commanded the angels to worship him.'' So that the subordination of angels was evident before his resurrection, even at his very introduction into the world.

Stuart considers his introduction to be his birth, and regards the words, ``and let all the angels of God worship him,'' as borrowed, though not literally, from Psalm 97:7, to express what is intimated in the account of his birth, Luke

2:10-14. The Hebrews, written to, were, he supposes, acquainted with that event.

This is the view taken by some of the fathers, Chrysostom and others. But some, as Mede, thinking the quotation a prophecy, consider that his second coming is intended, as the contents of the Psalm were deemed to be descriptive of the day of judgment. A third party, as Dr. Owen, view the introduction to be Christ's birth, and consider the Psalm as giving an allegorical description of the progress of the Gospel in the world; and this seems to be the view taken by Calvin, and is apparently the most consistent.

The difference in the quotation is quite immaterial. The words in the Psalm are, ``Worship him all gods,'' or rather angels; for so is the word sometimes rendered. The version of the Sept. is, ``Worship him all ye his angels;'' and here ``God ``is put instead of ``his.''

Appendix D

APPENDIX D

Chapter 1:10. Thou, Lord, etc. The quotation is literally from the Sept., only the order of the words in the first sentence is changed; and it is literally the Hebrew, except that {σὺ} {χύζιε} are added. The Hebrew is, ``Of old the earth hast thou founded, and the work of thy hands are the heavens.''

Nothing can more clearly prove the divine nature of Christ than this quotation; and it settles at once the meaning of {αἰῶνας}; in the 2nd verse, as it confirms the truth that Christ, the Messiah, being not only the Son but also the onlybegotten of God, is the Creator of the world, even the earth and the heavens, as here stated. Nor can the word have any other meaning in chapter 9:26, and 11:3

It is generally admitted that this Psalm refers to Christ; and Dr. Owen mentions three particulars in proof of this, --- the redemption of the Church, verses 13 and 16, --- the call of the Gentiles, verses 15, 21, and 22, --- and the creation of a new people, verse 18; and he adds, that the Jews themselves refer the last thing to the time of the Messiah.

Referring to the words, ``as a vesture,'' the same author beautifully observes, that the whole creation is like God's vesture, by which he shews himself to men in his power and wisdom, and that hence it is said, that he ``clothes himself with light as with a garment,'' Psalm 104:2.

Appendix E

APPENDIX E

Chapter 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits, etc It is said of Christ also, that he was a minister or a servant; but while he was a servant, he was at the same time the Lord of all, which cannot be said of angels. Yet as a servant he was superior to them; for he became so in a work which they were not capable

of doing. So that as a servant a superiority belongs to him. But his office as a servant is not contemplated here. Indeed all the names given to him, in common either with men on earth or with angels in heaven, mean very different things when applied to him; such as son, servant, priest, king, Savior, etc.

It ought to be born in mind that throughout this chapter Christ is spoken of in his character of a Mediator, and not as to his divine nature simply considered, and that the reference is made, as to his superiority over angels, to the testimonies in the Old Testament. He is in this chapter represented as superior to angels, ---

1. Because he is called in a peculiar respect a Son.

2. Because angels were commanded to worship him.

3. Because he is addressed as having an eternal throne, and being honored more than all his associates as a king.

4. Because he is the Creator of the world.

5. And lastly, because there is a promise made to him that all his enemies shall be finally subdued, while angels are only employed in ministering to his people.

Who, after duly considering all these things, can possibly come to any other conclusion than that the Messiah is a divine person as well as human? Angels are commanded to worship him, his throne is eternal, he created this world, and all his enemies shall finally be made his footstool. That he is sometimes spoken of as having a delegated power, as in verse 2, ``by whom he (God) made the world,'' and sometimes as acting independently, as in verse 10, ``Thou, Lord, hast founded the earth;'' all this only proves, that as he is inferior to the Father in his mediatorial office, so he is one with the Father as his onlybegotten Son. Creation is what God claims as peculiarly his own work; and were not the Son one in essence with the Father, creation could not have been ascribed to him.

Appendix F

APPENDIX F

Chapter 2:1. Lest at any time we should let them slip. Much has been written as to the meaning of the verb here used. It is said by Schleusner that it signifies two things, ``to flow through,'' as waters through a sieve or a leaky vessel, and ``to flow by,'' as a river. It is used mostly in the latter sense. Chrysostom and others, both ancient and modern, give it the sense of falling away or perishing; but, according to Stuart, there is no instance either in Scripture or the classics which countenances such a meaning. As it was often the case, so here, the fathers gave what they conceived to be the general sense, without attending to the precise meaning of the word used; and thus their propositions are often very loose. Besides, most of them were wholly ignorant of the language of the Old Testament.

To flow by, in the sense of escaping, is its meaning in classical authors; and Stuart says that all the examples commonly referred to apply only to things,

and not to persons. The word only occurs here in the New Testament, and once in the Sept.; and there also it refers to a person, and is clearly used transitively. The passage is Proverbs 3:21, ``O son, pass not by (or disregard not, {μὴ} {παραῤῥυῶς}, flow not by,) but keep (or retain, {τήρησον}) my counsel and thought.'' The form of the sentence is different in Hebrew, but the idea is here preserved, ``My son, let them not depart from thine eyes; keep (retain) sound wisdom and discretion.'' Not to suffer them to depart from the eyes, is the same as not to pass them by or disregard them. There is no other idea compatible with the context; and it is what exactly suits this passage. Then the sentence would be, ``Lest we should at any time disregard (or neglect) them.''

It is justly observed by Stuart, that everything in the whole passage is in favor of this meaning: it is the opposite of ``taking heed;'' and it is often the case in Scripture that the negative idea is stated as well as the positive, and vice versa. Besides, in verse 3 the same idea is presented to us on the same subject, ``If we neglect,'' etc. Indeed, to disregard or neglect may be deemed as the consequence of not taking heed or attending to a thing. Inattention to truth is followed by the neglect of what it teaches and inculcates. Unless we earnestly attend to what we hear, we shall inevitably neglect what is required. There may be some attention without performance; but there can be no performance without attention.

Appendix G

APPENDIX G

Chapter 2:7 Thou madest him, etc The reference is to Psalm 8, and has been variously explained. There are especially three opinions on the subject. Some, like Calvin and Doddridge, consider that the case of ``man,'' as described in the Psalm, is alluded to, or accommodated to Christ. Others, like Grotius, hold that ``man,'' in the Psalm, is to be understood historically and mystically. The third party, as most of the Fathers, as well as some later divines, such as Beza, Dr. Owen., and Stuart, maintain that the Psalm is strictly prophetic. What makes it difficult to regard it in this light is the exclamation, ``What is man?'' and also the dominion over the brute creation, which is the only thing mentioned in the Psalm as constituting the glory and honor of man.

All critics refer on this subject to the grant given to Adam in Genesis 1:28. But this grant, forfeited no doubt by Adam's sin and fall, was afterwards renewed to Noah and his sons, when they came out of the ark, and was even enlarged, as the permission to eat animal food was given them. Genesis 9:1-3. It was this grant no doubt the Psalmist had in view. Noah and his sons were men of faith; Noah is distinctly said to have been a righteous man. It was to them as bearing this character that the grant was made. What Adam forfeited was restored to those restored to God's favor, that is, the dominion over the brute creation and the inheritance of this lower world. But as Canaan was afterwards to the Israelites a type of heaven, and also a pledge to those who were

Israelites indeed, so might be regarded the possession of the earth granted to Noah and his sons, though dominion in which ``glory and honor'' consisted, is what is expressly mentioned in the Psalm; and dominion is the special subject handled by the Apostle, verse 5.

Though man, as to his nature, is inferior to the angels, yet in that nature God has granted him a dominion never granted to angels. The power over every living thing in the world was bestowed, not on angels, but on man, according to the testimony of the Old Testament; so that the power ascribed by the Jews to angels was not warranted by their own Scriptures. This fact seems to have been referred to as an introduction to what the Apostle was proceeding to say respecting Christ, and as an evidence that his human nature, though in itself inferior to that of angels, did not detract from his superiority; as though he had said, ``It is no objection that he became man, for even to man, not to angels, has been granted the dominion of the world.''

Then the Apostle extends the idea, and refers to Christ as one who was to make good the grant made. The dominion promised to man, especially what that dominion was a pledge of, was not attained by man; but Christ, who has assumed his nature, and in this respect became lower than the angels, will yet attain it for him. It is through Christ indeed that we obtain a right to the things of this world as well as to the things of the next world. God promises both to his people; but in Christ only are his promises, yea and amen. The promise made to man as a believer, both as to this world and the next, is as it were made good only through Christ, who assumed his nature for this very purpose.

By taking this view we avoid the necessity of making that prophetic which has no appearance of being so, or of supposing that the Psalm is referred to by way of accommodation. The fact respecting man restored to God's favor is stated, and the Apostle teaches us that the dominion granted to him can only be realized through Christ, who has already attained that dominion in his own person, and will eventually confer it on all his people.

Appendix H

APPENDIX H

Chapter 2:9. That he by the grace of God, etc How to connect the different parts of this verse has been a difficulty which critics have in various ways attempted to remove. There is hardly a sense in our version. We must either regard a transposition in the words, or, like Stuart, give the meaning of when to {ὅπως}, ``when by the grace of God he had tasted death for all.'' But this is an unnatural meaning, and therefore not satisfactory. Doddridge supposes a transposition, and gives this version, ---

``But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man, crowned with glory and honor.''

Macknight more properly connects ``the suffering of death'' with ``crowned

with glory and honor,'' while he makes a similar transposition. Bloomfield considers that there is an ellipsis in the last clause, and gives this rendering, ---

``But him, who was made a little lower than the angels, even Jesus, we behold, on account of having suffered death, crowned with glory and honor, which suffering he bore, in order that by the grace of God he might taste of death for every man.''

This borders on tautology, and cannot be admitted. That the transposition made by Doddridge and Macknight gives the real meaning, admits hardly of a doubt; and such a version would be the most suitable in our language. But how to account for the arrangement in the Apostle's words seems to be this, it is a construction according to the system of Hebrew parallelism; the first and the last clause are connected, and the second and the third. Let the verse be arranged in lines, and this will become quite evident, ---

``But him, who was made a little lower than angels, --- We behold, even Jesus, for the suffering of death, Crowned with glory and honor, --- That by God's grace he might for all taste death.''

The meaning is clearly this, --- that he was made lower than angels in order to die for all, and that on account of his atoning death he was crowned with glory and honor; which perfectly accords with what the Apostle teaches us in Philippians 2:8-10. See a similar arrangement in Matthew 7:6, and 1 Corinthians 6:11.

Appendix I

APPENDIX I

Chapter 2:14 The power of death, etc This is rendered by Stuart ``deadly power.'' The genitive after {χράτος}; is no doubt in several instances rendered adjectively, as ``the power of his glory,'' in Colossians 1:11, ``his glorious power;'' and ``the power of his might,'' in Ephesians 6:10, may be rendered ``His mighty power.'' But there is here an antithesis which ought to be preserved, --- the death of Christ and the death over which Satan is said to have power. Christ by his death deprived Satan of his power to cause death.

To ``destroy'' does not suitably express what is meant by the verb here used. It means to render void, useless, inefficacious, and hence to overcome, to subdue. When applied to the Law, it means to render void or to abolish: but when it refers to a person, as here, or to a hostile power, as in 1 Corinthians 15:24, it means to subjugate, to put down, or to overcome. So here, the rendering most suitable would be, ``that by death he might overcome (or subdue) him who had the power of death,'' that is, the power of causing eternal ruin; for death here must mean the second death. And hence the Rabbinical notion about the angel of death, that is, of temporal death, has no connection with this passage.

There is here evidently an allusion to Genesis 3:13. The originator of death is Satan, both as to the soul and the body; and hence our Savior calls him a murderer. To subdue this murderer was to remove the sin which he introduced,

by means of which he brought in death; and this removal of sin was effected by death, so that the remedy for sin was the same with the effect which sin produced.

Appendix K

APPENDIX K

Chapter 2:16 For verily he took not, etc The words may be rendered, ``For verily he lays not hold on angels, but on the seed of Abraham does he lay hold.'' Both early and later divines have supposed ``nature'' to be understood; but some moderns, following Cameron of an earlier age, regard the verb in the sense of bringing aid or help. So Stuart and Bloomfield. The first renders the verse thus, ---

``Besides, he doth not at all help the angels, but he helpeth the seed of Abraham.''

The present, the historical present, is used for the past; or if we render {οὐ} {γὰρ} {δήπου} ``for nowhere,'' the reference is to Scripture; nowhere in Scripture is such a thing recorded.

But to ``take hold on'' is sufficiently plain and very expressive. Christ took hold on Peter when he was sinking, (Matthew 14:31:) it is the same verb. Our Savior took not hold on the angels when sinking into ruin, but he did take hold on the seed of Abraham to save them from perdition. The connection seems to be with the preceding verses; therefore {γὰρ} ought to be rendered ``for'' and not ``besides,'' as by Stuart, nor ``moreover,'' as by Macknight. A reason is given why Christ became partaker of flesh and blood; and the reason was, because he did not come to deliver angels but the seed of Abraham; that is, his spiritual, not his natural seed, for he speaks throughout of God's sons and God's children. See John 1:12, 13, where the born of God are represented to be those to whom Christ grants the privilege of children.

Appendix L

APPENDIX L

Chapter 3:4 He that built, etc. This verse has been considered as difficult with respect to the connection it has with the argument of the Apostle. Stuart states thus the difficulty, --- ``Moses as the delegate of God was the founder of the Jewish institution, and Christ is merely declared to be only a delegated founder, then in what way does the writer make out the superiority of Christ to Moses. Both were delegates of the same God, and both the founders of a new and divine dispensation. If Christ, then, is not here asserted to be founder in some other character than that of a delegate, I am unable to perceive any force in the writer's argument.'' Hence the Professor comes to the conclusion, that Christ is meant by the Apostle when he says, ``He who built (or formed) all things is God,'' conceiving that the argument is otherwise inconclusive.

Now, the mistake of the Professor is this, that he makes delegation to be the comparison and not the character of the delegation. That Christ's power was delegated is quite evident from this passage: Christ is said to have been ``appointed'' in verse 2, and is said to be ``faithful,'' which implies that he had an office delegated to him. Then the delegation is undeniable; and what the Apostle evidently dwells upon is the superiority of the delegated power: Moses was faithful as a servant in God's house; the people of Israel were previously Gods adopted people; but Christ has power, a delegated power, to make as it were a new people; he builds his own house. Moses was a part of the house in which he served; but as Christ builds his own house, he is worthy of more glory than Moses. These are the comparisons made by the Apostle.

Then this verse is introduced, and that for two reasons, --- first, to shew that God built the house in which Moses served; and secondly, to intimate the divine power of Christ, as none but God builds all things. Moses' house is called God's house in verse 2; and Christ's house is called his own in verse 5. Hence the obvious inference is, that he is one with God, as God only builds all things, though in his Mediatorial character he acts as God's Apostle and high priest. The same kind of representation we find in the first chapter: it is said that by him God made the world; and afterwards that the Son is the Creator, who had founded the earth, and whose work are the heavens. Creative power, though exercised by Christ as a Mediator, must yet be a divine power.

Appendix M

APPENDIX M

Chapter 3:9. Tempted, etc. To understand this passage we must bear in mind the event referred to. The same year in which the people of Israel came forth from Egypt, they were distressed for water at Rephidim, (Exodus 17:1;) and the place had two names given to it, Massah and Meribah, because the people tempted God and chided with Moses. The Lord did not swear then that they should not enter into the land of Canaan; but this was on the following year, after the return of the spies. (Numbers 14:20-38.) And God said then that they had tempted him ``ten times;'' that is, during the short time since their deliverance from Egypt. It was after ten temptations that God deprived them of the promised land.

Bearing in mind these facts, we shall be able to see the full force of the passage. The ``provocation'' or contention, and ``temptation'' refer clearly to the latter instance, as recorded in Numbers 14, because it was then that God swear that the people should not enter into his rest. The people's conduct was alike in both instances.

To connect ``forty years'' with ``grieved'' was the work of the Punctuists, and this mistake the Apostle corrected; and it is to be observed that he did not follow in this instance the Septuagint, in which the words are arranged as divided by the Masorites. Such a rendering as would correspond with the

Hebrew is as follows, --- ``Today when ye hear his voice,

8. Harden not your hearts as in the provocation, In the day of temptation in the wilderness.

9. When your fathers tempted me, they proved me And saw my works forty years:

10 I was therefore offended with that generation and said, Always do they go astray in heart, And they have not known my ways;

11. So that I swear in my wrath, They shall by no means enter into my rest.'''

The meaning of the ninth verse is, that when the children of Israel tempted God, they proved him, i.e., found out by bitter experience how great his displeasure was, and saw his works or his dealings with them for forty years. He retained them in the wilderness during that period until the death of all who disbelieved his word at the return of the spies; he gave them this proof of his displeasure. ``Therefore'' in verse 11 is connected with ``tempted;'' it was because they tempted him that he was offended with them so as to swear that they should not enter into his rest. There is evidently a {ו{ left out in Hebrew, found only in one MS.; but it is required by the future form of the verb. To ``go astray in heart'' was to disbelieve God's word, (see verse 12, and Numbers 14:11;) and not to have known Gods ways, was not to recognize his power, and goodness, and faithfulness in their deliverance from Egypt. See Numbers 14:22. Not to know here does not mean what Stuart says, not to approve, but not to comprehend or understand God's ways, or not to recognize them as his ways or doings.

The last line is in the form of an oath, ``If they shall enter,'' etc.; but when in this defective form, the ``if'' may be rendered as a strong negative, ``by no means.'' Doddridge has ``never,'' and Macknight ``not,'' in which he has been followed by Stuart.

Appendix N

APPENDIX N

Chapter 3:15 While it is said, etc. No doubt the connection first referred to in the note is the most suitable. This verse is as it were the heading of what follows; but to put the sixteenth verse in an interrogatory form, as is done by Stuart, seems not suitable to the passage. I would render the words thus, ---

15. With regard to what is said, ``Today, when ye hear his

16. voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation,'' some indeed when they heard did provoke, but not all who came

17. out of Egypt under Moses: but with whom was he offended for forty years? was it not with those who sinned, whose

18. carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, but to those who did not believe?

The ``provocation'' is the subject; who offered it are then mentioned; and afterwards the cause of it, the want of faith.

Appendix O

APPENDIX O

Chapter 4:2 For unto us was the Gospel preached, etc. Literally it is, ``For we have been evangelized.'' Doddridge has, ``For we are made partakers of the good tidings;'' Macknight, ``For we also have received the good tidings;'' and Stuart, ``For to us also blessings are proclaimed.'' Perhaps the most literal version would be, ``For we also have had good tidings.'' The same form of words occurs again in verse 6, ``And they to whom it was first preached,'' etc.; rather, ``And they who had first good tidings,'' etc. The good tidings were evidently the promise of rest.

``The word preached'' is literally ``the word of hearing;'' that is, the word heard, a noun being put for a participle, a common thing in Hebrew.

Though there are several MSS. and the Greek fathers in favor of ``mixed'' being in the accusative case, agreeing with ``them,'' ``who united not by faith with those who heard,'' i.e., obeyed; yet the Vulgate and the Syriac countenance our present reading, which has been adopted by Erasmus, Beza, Dr. Owen, and most modern divines, as being most suitable to the passage.

Our version is followed by Doddridge and Macknight. The version of Stuart is the same with that of Calvin, ``being not connected with faith in those who heard it.'' The Syriac seems the most literal, ``being not mingled with faith by them who heard it.'' They had not the ingredient of faith to mix up as it were with it. Instead of receiving the promise, they refused and rejected it, as though it were an unwholesome and disagreeable draught. The word is used in 2 Macc. 15:39, of wine mingled with water.

Appendix P

APPENDIX P

Chapter 4:12. For the word of God, etc. Some, as Stuart and Bloomfield, view ``the word'' here as minatory, being a threatening to the unbelievers before mentioned. Though it may be so viewed, yet it seems not to be right to translate {λόγος}; ``threatening,'' as done by Stuart.

Appendix Q

APPENDIX Q

``Quick'' or living, and ``powerful'' or efficacious, are regarded by many as meaning nearly the same thing; but ``living'' designates what is valid, what continues in force, as opposed to what is dead and no longer existing; and ``efficacious'' refers to the effect, capable of producing the effect designed. Exclusion from rest as to unbelievers was still living, still in force, abiding the same without any change. See 1 Peter 1:23, 25. It was also in full power so as effectually to exclude from rest all who did not believe. And then to prevent

every evasion, so that no one might think a mere profession sufficient, or rather to guard against the incipient seduction of sin, he compares this ``word'' to a sword which can dissect the whole wellcompacted frame of man, so that even the very marrow may be discovered; and then passing from this simile, he says that this ``word'' is capable of judging the thoughts and purposes of the heart. And in order to identify as it were this ``word'' with God himself; he immediately refers to God's omniscience. The design of the Apostle seems to have been to guard the Hebrews against the deceitfulness of sin; so that they might not give heed to any of its hidden suggestions.

Stuart makes the transition from the ``word'' to God at the end of the twelfth verse, and renders the clause thus, ``He also judgeth the thoughts and purposes of the heart.'' But this clause may more properly be viewed as explanatory of what is said of the two-edged sword.

Appendix R

APPENDIX R

Chapter 4:12. Twoedged sword, etc Whether the penetrating, or convincing, or killing power of the ``word'' is set forth by the metaphor of the ``sword,'' has been controverted. Beza and Scott, as well as Calvin, regard its convincing and killing power as intended. ``It enters,'' says Beta, ``into the inmost recesses of the soul, so that it indicts on the perverse a deadly wound, and by killing the old man quickens into life the elect.'' Stuart views its killing power as alone intended: ``The sense is,'' he observes, ``that the divine commination is of most deadly punitive efficacy.''

Now, if the whole passage be duly considered in connection with what is gone before, there will appear a sufficient reason to conclude, that the metaphor of ``the sword ``is only intended to shew that the ``word'' reaches to all the inward workings of the soul, that it extends to the motives and the most hidden thoughts and purposes of the heart. The last clause in the 12th verse clearly explains what is meant by the ``sword;'' and this is further confirmed by the following verse, where it is said that all things are naked and open to God, of whose word he speaks, and with whom we have to do. All this seems to concur with the purpose for which the words were introduced, that is, to warn the Hebrews of the danger of listening to the seductive and deceiving power of sin.

As to the 13th verse, Bloomfield suggests a transposition which would render the transition from God's word to God himself much more easy, ``Moreover there exists no creature that is not manifest in the sight of him with whom we have to do; but all things are naked and exposed to his eyes.'' But the construction here is similar to what we have noticed in two previous instances, chapter 2:9, and 17, 18; the first and the last clause are connected, and the two middle clauses.

The last sentence is rendered by Grotius, ``of whom is our word, i.e., of whom we speak; by Beza, ``with whom we have to do; by Doddridge, Mack-

night, and Stuart, ``to whom we must give an account.'' Wherever {λόγος} signifies ``account,'' the verb ``to render,'' or a similar verb is connected with it. There are two instances in the Sept. where it stands alone with a pronoun in the dative case as here, and it means business, affair, or concern: see Judges 18:28, and 2 Kings 9:5. In the last passage it is connected also, as here, with the preposition {πρὸς}. There can therefore be no doubt but that our version is the right one, ``with whom we have to do,'' or literally, ``with whom there is to us a concern.'' There is no usus loquendi, as pleaded by some, in favor of the other meaning.

Appendix S

APPENDIX S

Chapter 6:1 Therefore leaving, etc Authors differ as to the character of this passage, whether it be hortatory or didactic, that is, whether the Apostle, putting himself as it were with them, exhorts them to advance in knowledge, or, discharging the office of a teacher, he intimates the course which he means to pursue. Stuart and some others, as well as Calvin, take the first view, as though the Apostle had said, ``As the perfect or grown up are alone capable of receiving strong food, it behooves us to quit the state of childhood and to advance into the state of manhood, so as to attain perfect knowledge.'' It is said that this view comports better with what follows, ``for it is impossible,'' etc.

But there are especially two things in the passage which militate against this view, first, ``not laying the foundation,'' etc. which refers evidently to teaching; and secondly, the third verse, which also refers to teaching.

It is usual with the Apostle to speak of himself in the plural number: see, for instance, the 9th verse. ``Therefore'' is a general inference from what he had been saying, and not from a particular clause, as though he had said, ``Such being the case with you, let me now therefore, in order to draw you onward, leave the first principles, and proceed to state things which are suitable to advanced Christians: it is not my purpose now to preach repentance and faith in which you have been already taught, and to do this is unavailing as to those who have fallen away; `for it is impossible,'" etc. His object was not to convert them to the faith, but to confirm and advance them in it.

Or the whole argument may be more fully stated thus, --- ``What I design now to do is not to call you to repentance and faith, to require you to be baptized that you might receive the miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, and to teach you the doctrine of the resurrection as confirmed by our Savior's resurrection, and of the day of judgment, when a sentence shall be pronounced on the just and unjust which shall never be reversed; for all these things have been long known to you, and you have made a long profession of them: there is therefore no need of taking such a course, nor is it of any benefit, for if you fall away, it is impossible to restore you again to repentance.'' But instead of making the case

personal to them, he states it generally. He thus most powerfully stimulated them to make advances in the knowledge of divine truths; for not to advance is to retrograde, and to retrograde is the direct way to apostasy.

Appendix T

APPENDIX T

Chapter 6:5. And the powers of the world to come. The five things mentioned here have been variously explained.

1 Enlightened, --- baptized, say most of the fathers, and some moderns too, but without any countenance from the use of the word in Scripture, either in the New Testament or in the Sept. It means to emit light, to bring to light, to enlighten, and hence to instruct, to teach. It is often used in the Sept. for a word that means to teach in Hebrew. The taught, the instructed in the duty and necessity of repentance and in Christian truth generally, were no doubt ``the enlightened.'' This is the meaning given to it by Crotius, Beza, Dr Owen, Doddridge, Scott, Stuart, etc.

2 The heavenly gift, --- faith --- Christ --- the Holy Spirit --- pardon of sins --- peace of conscience --- eternal life: all these have been stated, but the first, ``faith towards God,'' mentioned in the first verse, is no doubt what is meant.

3. Partakers of the Holy Ghost; that is, in his miraculous powers, as understood by most; it is what is evidently intimated by ``baptisms and laying on of hands'' in the second verse.

4 The good word of God, --- the Gospel --- the Gospel covenant --- the promises of the Gospel --- the heavenly inheritance: such have been the explanations given. There are but two places where the phrase ``the good word'' occurs, and that is in Jeremiah 29:10, and in 33:14; and there it means the promise of restoration given to the Jews, and here it clearly means the promise of the resurrection mentioned in the second verse.

5. The powers of the world to come; that is, miraculous powers, say most; but {αἰω}<n oj me>{λλωνι}, ``the world to come,'' says Schleusner never means in the New Testament the time of the Gospel, but the future world. See Matthew 12:32; Luke 18:30; Ephesians 1:21. He therefore explains the clause thus, ``The power and efficacy of the doctrine respecting the future felicity of Christians in heaven.'' It would have comported more with the ``eternal judgment'' in these converse, had he said, ``respecting the future state both of the saved and of the lost in the next world;'' for eternal judgment refers to both.

To ``taste,'' according to the usage of Scripture, is to know, to partake of, to experience, to possess, to enjoy. It does not mean here, as some have thought, slightly to touch a thing, or to sip it, but to know, to know experimentally, to feel, or to enjoy.

Thus we see that there is a complete correspondence between the particulars mentioned here and the things stated in verses 1 and 2.

Appendix U

APPENDIX U

Chapter 6: 49. On the subject handled in these verses, Stuart asks and answers a question thus, ``Does the whole paragraph pertain to real Christians, or to those who are such only by profession? To the former beyond all reasonable doubt.'' The question is not suitable, for the Apostle only speaks of those who had enjoyed certain privileges, and as to whether they were real or merely professing Christians, he does not treat of. Paul addressed the Corinthians as ``the Church of God;'' and it might in the same way be asked, ``Did he address them as real Christians, or as those who were only such by profession t'' and it might be answered, ``Doubtless as real Christians.'' And yet we find that he says, ``Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith.'' What is spoken of here is the enjoyment of certain privileges and the danger of not making a right use of them, and even the awful doom of those who disregarded them and turned away from the truth.

Our author indeed fully admits the doctrine of the perseverance of the saints; but a question of this kind, not relevant to the subject, tends only to create embarrassment. He indeed afterwards somewhat modifies it by saying, that ``God treats Christians as free agents and rational beings, and guards them against defection, not by mere physical force, but by moral means adapted to their nature as free and rational agents.'' No doubt God thus acts according to the whole current of Scripture; but this in no way contravenes the truth, clearly taught in many passages, that his elect people, real Christians, shall never perish.

Appendix X

APPENDIX X

Chapter 6:10. And labor of love, etc Though Griesbach and others have excluded {τοῦ} {χόπου}, ``labor,'' from the text, yet Bloomfield thinks that there are sufficient reasons for retaining the words. The greatest number of MSS. contain them, and they seem necessary to render the passage complete, though the meaning without them would be the same. There is here an instance of an arrangement similar to what is found often in the Prophets, as will be seen by putting the verse in lines, ---

``For not unrighteous is God, To forget your work, And the labor of that love Which ye have shewed to his name, Having ministered and ministering to the saints.''

Excluding the first line, we see that the first and last are connected, and the two middle lines. Their ``work'' was to minister to the saints; and in addition to this there was ``the labor of that love'' which they manifested towards God. He would not forget their work in aiding the saints, nor the love which they had shewn towards his name by an open profession of it, and activity and zeal

in God's service. Grotius says that ``the labor of love'' was in behalf of the Christian faith.

Stuart says that ``work'' was the outward act, and that ``love'' was the principle from which it emanated. Examples of this kind no doubt occur often in Scripture, the not being first stated, and then the inward principle or motive; but if ``labor'' be retained, this view cannot be maintained.

Appendix Y

APPENDIX Y

Chapter 6:11. To the full assurance, etc. The preposition {πρὸς}, ``to,'' may be rendered ``with regard to, in respect of'' If this meaning be given to it, then the diligence required was with reference to the full assurance of hope: they were to exercise diligence in order that they might enjoy the assurance of hope to the end. But if the preposition be rendered ``for the sake of,'' as by Stuart, then the meaning is, that they were to exercise the same diligence as they had already exhibited in the work and labor of love, for the purpose of attaining the full assurance of hope.

Now Calvin takes the first meaning; he considers that the Apostle now refers to the full assurance of hope or of faith as he regards it, as he had before spoken of the works of benevolence. What follows seems to favor this view, for the Apostle proceeds to speak of faith and patience as exemplified by the fathers, especially by Abraham.

Some, as Beza, connect ``to the end'' with ``shewing the same diligence,'' but it is more suitable to connect them with ``the assurance of hope,'' as it is done by most.

The remarks of Scott on the difference of ``the assurance of hope,'' of ``the understanding,'' and of ``faith,'' are so clear and discriminating that they shall be added, ---

``He who so understands the Gospel as to perceive the relation of each part to all the rest, and its use as a part of some great design, in something of the same manner that a skillful anatomist understands the use and office of every part of the human body, in relation to the whole, has the full assurance of understanding; and those things willful appear inconsistent, useless, or superfluous to others, he perceives essentially necessary to the system or the great design. The man who is fully convinced that this consistent and harmonious though complicated design is the work and revelation of God, and has no doubt the things testified are true, that the promises and threatenings will be fulfilled, and that Christ will certainly save all true believers, has the full assurance of faith, though he may through misapprehension, or temptation, or other causes, doubt of his own personal interest in this salvation. But he, who beyond doubt or hesitation is assured that he himself is a true believer, interested in all the precious promises, sealed by the sanctifying Spirit, and `a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed,' has the full assurance of hope.''

Appendix Z

APPENDIX Z

Chapter 7:14 For under it the people received the Law, etc These words are variously explained. The preposition {ἐπὶ} often means ``for,'' or ``on the account of,'' as {ἐπ᾽} {ἐλπίδι}, ``for the hope,'' (Acts 26:6;) and so Macknight renders it here ``on account of it the people received the Law.'' It is not true that the people were under the priesthood when they were subjected to the Law; for the Law was given before the Levitical priesthood was established: it was after the tabernacle was made and set up that Aaron and his sons were consecrated priests. See Exodus 40:12-15

Stuart gives another rendering, ``For the Law was given to the people in connection with this,'' or ``on this condition,'' as he explains himself in a note. And he observes, ``The meaning is, that the Levitical priesthood and the Mosaic Law are closely and inseparably linked together.''

As the Apostle speaks afterwards of the change of the Law, that is, respecting the priesthood, it is more consistent to regard the same law as intended here, ``though the people had received a law respecting it,'' that is, the priesthood. This is parenthetically put in for two reasons, --- to anticipate an objection on the ground of a divine appointment, and to introduce the subject for the purpose of shewing that it was an appointment intended to be changed.

Appendix A2

APPENDIX A 2

Chapter 7:1117. This passage may be thus rendered, ---

11. ``Now if indeed perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (though the people had received a law respecting it,) what need was there still that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and not to be named after the order

12. of Aaron? The priesthood then being changed, there is of

13. necessity a change also of the law; for he of whom these things are said belongs to another tribe, from whom no one

14. attended at the altar. It is indeed evident that our Lord sprang from Judah, of which tribe Moses said nothing

15. respecting the priesthood. And this is still more manifest, since according to the likeness of Melchisedec rises another

16. priest; who is made, not according to the law of carnal

17. precept, but according to the power of perpetual life; for he testifies, `Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec.'''

``The law of carnal precept'' is the rule that refers to the present life, life in the flesh, which is frail and uncertain; and contrasted with it is ``perpetual life, which belongs to Christ as a priest, according to the quotation which follows. The meaning is, that Christ was not made a priest according to that law which

regulates things belonging to dying men, (see verse 23,) but in accordance with what was suitable to one endued with permanent life or existence.

The argument of the whole passage seems to be as follows, --- There is no perfection in the Levitical priesthood, for another priest has been appointed. This being the case, the law respecting the priesthood must necessarily be changed; and that it is changed is proved by two things, --- by the fact that Christ did not spring from the tribe of Levi, and by the prophetic announcement that he was to be a priest according to the order of Melchisedec, and consequently a perpetual priest, and not like the sons of Aaron, who were priests in succession, being all subject to death.

Appendix B2

APPENDIX B 2

Chapter 7:19. But the bringing in, etc. Theophylact, Luther, Capellus, and others have rendered this noun as in the same predicament with ``disannulling'' or abrogation in the former verse, ---

18. ``There is therefore an abrogation of the preceding commandment, on account of its weakness and uselessness, (for

19. the law perfected nothing,) and an introduction of a better hope, through which we draw nigh to God.''

This passage forms an inference or a conclusion from what has been said. The ``commandment'' abrogated was respecting the Levitical priesthood. Its ``weakness'' was, that it could not really atone for sin; and its uselessness, that it could not make men holy or confer life. The same thing is expressed in the words included in the parenthesis. But what has been said does not only prove that the Levitical priesthood is abolished, but also that there is brought in or introduced a better hope; which means that a better thing than the Levitical priesthood, which was an object of hope to the ancient saints, is introduced after that priesthood, and was expressly mentioned by David in the Psalms many years after the Levitical priesthood was established. This appears to be the genuine meaning of the passage.

Then the following verses come in very suitably, as the ``introduction'' is mentioned here, ---

20. ``And inasmuch as it was not without an oath, (for they

21. indeed were made priests without an oath, but he with an oath, made by him who said to him, 'The Lord hath sworn and will not repent, Thou art a priest for ever, according

22. to the order of Melchisedec,') of a covenant so much the

23. better is Jesus the surety. They are also many who are made priests, because they are not suffered by death to continue; but he, because he abideth for ever, hath a priesthood that passeth not to another, (or more literally, hath an intransmissible priesthood.)''

What was not ``without an oath'' was ``the introduction,'' etc. There are

here two additional things stated as proving the superiority of Christ's priesthood: the oath proved that he was the surety of a better covenant; and his priesthood, unlike that of Aaron, which passed from one to another, was intransmissible or unsuccessive, as the word means, and not ``unchangeable,'' as in our version.

Appendix C2

APPENDIX C 2

Chapter 7:27. Who needeth not daily, etc A difficulty has been raised as to this verse. It is said that Christ did not, like the priests, offer up a daily sacrifice, first for his own sins and then for the sins of the people, ``for this he did once when he offered up himself.'' It seems hence, it is said, that he offered a sacrifice for himself as well as for the people. In order to explain this, it has been proposed to take in the following verse; and it has been said that there is here an arrangement similar to what often occurs in the Prophets; that is, when two things are stated, the last is first referred to, and then the first. The two things here are the priest's own sins and those of the people. The Apostle is supposed to speak first of what Christ did as to the sins of the people, and then that in the following verse he shews that Christ had no sins of his own, for he became or was made ``a perfect priest,'' and that ``for ever,'' being sinless not only when he actually offered the great sacrifice, but also sinless as our intercessor in heaven.

This is the explanation of Bishop Jebb, and is adopted by Bloomfield. That arrangements of this kind are found in the New Testament, and even in this Epistle is what cannot be doubted. But the last word, ``perfected,'' will not admit of the meaning given to it, ``he is and was, and shall be everlastingly perfect and free from sin.'' Were this its meaning, there would be a complete correspondence with the former part. Perfection is twice before applied to Christ in this Epistle, (chapter 2:10; 5:9,) but not in the sense above stated. When Christ is said to be perfected or made perfect, the meaning is that he is completely fitted and qualified for his undertaking, or that he has fully completed his work of expiation. Here the meaning seems to be that he is for ever made perfect as a priest, having not only once for all made an adequate atonement for the sins of his people, but also continues a priest for ever.

As to the 27th verse, it may be thus rendered, ---

27. ``Who has no need daily to offer sacrifices, as the high priests, (first for their own sins, and then for those of the people:) for this he did once for all, when he offered up himself''

``This he did'' refers only to the offering of a sacrifice, and ``for their own sins,'' etc., apply only to the high priests. Thus we avoid the difficulty alluded to.

From an idea that the high priest offered sacrifices only once a year, i.e., on the day of expiation, Macknight renders {καθ} {ἡμέραν} ``from time to

time,'' etc. He considers it as equivalent to {κατ} {ἐναυτὸν} ``from year to year,'' in chapter 10:1, and refers to Exodus 13:10, where ``from year to year'' is in Hebrew from ``days to days,'' and the same in the Sept., {ἀφ᾽} {ἡμερῶν} {εἰς} {ἡμέρας}. Whether the high priest offered sacrifices daily, is what cannot be ascertained from Scripture, though Stuart refers to Leviticus 6:19-22, and Numbers 28:3, 4, where nothing satisfactory is found. He quotes indeed some words from Philo, who says that this was the case. Scott considered that what was done daily by the priests is here attributed to the high priest, they being his coadjutors. But Macknight's explanation is the most satisfactory, especially as the comparison throughout is between Christ and the high priest.

The 28th verse may be thus rendered,---

``For the law made men high priests, who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, the Son, perfected for ever.''

``Perfected,'' or completely qualified, that is, as a priest. The word, perfected, depends as to its specific meaning on the context. The subject here is the perpetuity of the priest. The high priests under the Law did not continue because of death, (verse 23,) and this is the ``infirmity'' mentioned here, though in another place, (chapter 5:2,) it means sinfulness. Then the perfection of the Son is the perpetuity of his life, referred to in verses 16 and 24. The high priests died, and hence were not fitted for their work; but Christ lives, and therefore continues for ever fully qualified for his office. See verse 26.

Appendix D2

APPENDIX D 2

Chapter 8:1. This is the sum, etc Many think that the word {κεφάλαιον} does not mean here a sum in the sense of a summary, but a principal thing. So Chrysostom understood it. Macknight's version is, ``Now of the things spoken the chief is;'' Stuart's is substantially the same. But the idea seems to be somewhat different: the literal rendering is, ``Now the head as to the things said is,'' etc.; that is, the sum total, the whole amount.

Parkhurst quotes a passage from Menander which is very similar to the first part of this verse, {Τὸ} {δὲ} {κεφάλιιον} {τῶν} {λόγων} {῾Ανθρωπος} {εἶ}--- ``But the sum of my discourse is, Thou art a man,'' etc. The word means here the substance or the sum total. The word {ראש{, read, in Hebrew, has a like meaning, the total number of the people, Exodus 30:12; Numbers 4:2

Appendix E2

APPENDIX E 2

Chapter 8:9. And I regarded them not, etc The Apostle here follows the Sept., though in some other parts of this quotation he follows more closely the Hebrew. Our version in Jeremiah 31:32, is, ``although I was a husband to them,'' which is not countenanced by any of the earlier versions. The phrase is

peculiar, not found anywhere else except in Jeremiah 4:17; which is rendered by Kimchi, ``I have abhorred them.''

The verb means to have, to possess, to rule, to exercise dominion, to marry; and Pocock and some others think, that it means to loathe, to disdain, to abhor, when followed as here by the preposition {ב{ and it is said that its cognate in Arabic has this meaning. The Vulg. here is, ``and I have ruled over them;'' and the Syr., ``and I have despised them.'' The expression is softened by the Sept., ``and I have disregarded (or cared not) for them.'' The same is done as to the preceding clause, ``because they continued not in my covenant,'' which is in Hebrew, though not as rendered in our version, ``because they broke my covenant.'' So {אשר{ rendered by the Syr. and the Targ. ``Which my covenant'' has been derived from the Vulg., and is a construction which the original will not bear.

Still the most probable and the easiest solution is, to suppose a typographical mistake in Jeremiah 31:32, the word {בעלתי{: being used instead of {בחלתי{: there being only one letter different. The reasons for this supposition are these: --- All the versions are different here from what they are in Jeremiah 4:17, where the same phrase is supposed to occur, --- and this latter verb is found in Zechariah 11:8, followed by: as here, and means to ``abhor,'' or according to some, to ``reject.''

There is also another word, {נעלתי{ which has been mentioned, and has but one letter different; and as it is used by Jeremiah himself in chapter 14:19, and with {ב{, in the sense of abhorring or loathing, it may justly be deemed as the most probable word.

But Newcome suggests another thing, a typographical mistake in the Greek. There is another reading in some copies of the Sept., and that is, {εμελησα}, ``I have cared for them;'' and this would in substance agree with ``I was a husband to them.'' This conjecture is less probable; for it involves a mistake both in the Sept. and in this Epistle. But either of these suppositions would reconcile the passages; and it is singular that in both cases the change required is only in one letter!

Appendix F2

APPENDIX F 2

Chapter 9:2 The first, etc. Doddridge, Macknight, and Stuart, connect ``the first'' with ``tabernacle,'' but improperly. The rendering ought to be no doubt as in our version, or as follows, ``For a tabernacle was made; the first, in which were the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread, which is called holy.'' We find in verse 3, that ``the Holy of holies'' is also called a tabernacle, which was as it were the second tabernacle, or the second part of it, see verse 7. The word ``holy,'' followed by ``of holies,'' is an adjective agreeing in gender with tabernacle; and ``of holies'' seem to mean holy things; so that it might be rendered, ``The holy tabernacle of holy things.'' The accents are of no authority.

The word ``holy'' in the plural with an article, as in verse 8 and 12, designates the Holy of holies; or it may refer to both places, the sanctuary and the Holy of holies, for the people were excluded from both; and no access, strictly speaking, applied to them only.

Appendix G2

APPENDIX G 2

Chapter 9:9, 10. These two verses have greatly tried the ingenuity of critics, not as to the general meaning, but as to the construction. All agree as to the general import of the passage, and yet they find a difficulty in the syntax. This has arisen from not apprehending the style of the Apostle; he often arranges his sentences according to the practice of the ancient prophets. So he does here. In verse ninth he mentions two things, ``gifts'' or oblations and ``sacrifices;'' then he refers first to ``sacrifices,'' and afterwards to the ``gifts.'' Of the ``sacrifices,'' he says, that they could not perfect or justify ``the worshipper,'' for so {λατρευόντα} ought to be rendered here; but of ``the gifts,'' together with meats, etc., he says, that they were only imposed until the time of reformation. Here syntax is satisfied. The two verses may be thus rendered, ---

9. ``Which is a type for the present time, while gifts and sacrifices are offered, which (sacrifices) cannot perfect the

10. worshipper as to his conscience, being imposed (gifts) only, together with meats, and drinks, and divers washings, even ordinances of the flesh, until the time of reformation.''

Now, there is here a consistency in every part; {δυνάμεναι} is in the same gender with {θυσίαι}, and what is said is suitable to sacrifices, they being not able to atone for sin; and then {ἐπικείμενα} is of the same gender with {δῶρά}, and what is said of them is also suitable, that they were imposed or required only, together with meats, etc., which were rituals referring to the flesh or body, and not to the conscience or the soul, until the time of reforming or rectifying all things came.

Doddridge rightly states the efficacy of the Jewish sacrifices when he says, that they averted ``temporal evils,'' but did expiate offenses in the court above; they removed offenses against the government under which the Jews lived, and restored them to the privileges of eternal communion with the Church; and thus they were types and symbols of the efficacy of the true sacrifices by which we are restored to the favor of God, and to a spiritual communion with him.

Appendix H2

APPENDIX H 2

Chapter 9:16, 17. Much has been written on the meaning of the word {διαθήκη} in this passage. It is rendered ``covenant'' throughout by Doddridge, Macknight, Scholefield, etc.; and Scott is disposed to take the same

view. Macknight's version is this, ---

16. ``For where a covenant is, there is a necessity that the

17. death of the appointed sacrifice be brought in; for a covenant is firm over dead sacrifices, since it never hath force whilst the appointed sacrifice liveth.''

The difficulty here is as to the word {διαθέμενος}, rendered above, ``the appointed sacrifice,'' --- by Doddridge, ``he by whom the covenant is confirmed,'' --- and by Scholefield, ``the mediating sacrifice.'' But the word is never found to have such meanings in the New Testament, in the Sept., or in the classics. It is therefore impossible to accede to such a view of the passage.

It is then said, on the other hand, that {διαθήκη} does not mean a testament or a will in the New Testament nor in the Sept. This is not true; for it clearly means a testament or a will in Galatians 3:15, and in connection, too, with its common meaning, a covenant, see verse 17. Besides it has commonly, if not always, this meaning in the classics.

These two verses are to be viewed as an illustration, and may be regarded as parenthetic; and were {γὰρ} rendered ``in fact,'' or indeed, this would appear more evident, ``Where indeed a testament is,'' etc. As an illustration, a reference to a testament is exceedingly suitable; for with regard to Christ, his death was really the ratification of the covenant; as by death a Will attains its validity, so by Christ's death the covenant of which he is the Mediator. Death in both instances has a similar effect. And this, and no more than this, seems to have been the intention of the Apostle. The different meaning of the same word in the same passage is to be found out by words connected with it; in the present instance {διαθέμενος} is sufficient, independently of the 17th verse, which can be rightly applied to nothing but to a will or a testament.

Many agree with Calvin on these verses, such as Erasmus, Beza, Schleusner, Stuart, Bloomfield, etc.

Appendix I2

APPENDIX I 2

Chapter 10:5 But a body hast thou prepared me The words in the Psalm are, ``Mine ears hast thou opened,'' 40:6; or more literally, ``Ears hast thou opened for me.'' Calvin seems to have discarded the idea of an allusion to the boring of the ear in sign of servitude. The two verbs are certainly different. He evidently refers to Isaiah 50:5, ``The Lord hath opened mine ear, and I was not rebellious;'' which clearly applies to Christ. He therefore makes the meaning of the phrase to be, ``Thou hast made me teachable and obedient.'' This view has been adopted by Merrick, Bishop Horne, and Stuart. But how to make the words, ``a body hast thou prepared for me,'' to bear an analogous meaning, does not very clearly appear. Bishop Horne gives this version, ``Thou hast prepared'' or fitted ``my body,'' that is, to be obedient and to do thy will.

Mede conceived that the allusion is to the practice of boring the ear in token

of servitude, mentioned in Exodus 21:6; and that as that practice was unknown to the Greeks, the Seventy rendered the words in conformity with what they did as to their slaves; which was, to set a mark on the body; ``Thou hast fitted (or adapted) a body for me;'' that is, that I might be thy servant. That Christ assumed ``the form of a servant,'' is expressly declared in Philippians 2:7. There is in this case an agreement as to meaning; but the difficulty is: as to the verb {כרה{ which does not mean to bore or to perforate, but to dig, to hollow out, and in a secondary sense, to form or to make a thing, such as a well, a pit, a grave, or a cave. As to ``ears'' instead of an ``ear,'' as in Exodus 21:6, that might be accounted for by saying, that the object was to shew the entire willingness of Christ to become a servant.

These have been the two ways proposed to reconcile the passages as they now stand. There are no different readings in Hebrew, nor in the Sept., nor in this Epistle. Proposals have therefore been made as to a change in the texts on the supposition of typographical mistakes.

Some, as Grotius, Hammond, and Dr. Owen, have proposed {ὠτία}, ears, instead of {σῶμα}, body, in the Sept. When did this change take place? Before or after the Apostle's time? If before, then the Apostle adopted a false reading; if after, then the same mistake must have been made in the Sept. and in this Epistle; which is not credible.

Others have supposed a mistake in the Hebrew text; and this conjecture has been approved by Kennicott, Doddridge, Bishop lowth, Adam Clarke, and Pye Smith. It is no objection to say that the Syr., Vulg., and the Targ., confirm the present reading; for the mistake might have been made long before any of these were in existence. Such a change might indeed have been made in the first ages of Christianity, and might have been made intentionally, through a wish to obscure the testimony of Scripture respecting Christ.

The words are supposed to have been {גוה} {אז{ instead of {אזנים{, as the text now is. There would in this case be a literal agreement; the passage in the Psalm might then be thus rendered, ---

6. ``Sacrifice and offering thou hast not delighted in, Then a body hast thou formed for me; Burntoffering and sinoffering thou hast not required,

7. Then I said, Behold, I am coming.'' ---

There is here a consistency throughout. ``Behold, I am coming,'' that is, in the body designed for him. And then the Apostle says, ``When coming into the world, he saith,'' etc., clearly referring to our Saviors incarnation. And this ``body'' is afterwards expressly mentioned in verse 10, in opposition to sacrifices. It is true that in his argument in verse 9, he dwells on the words, ``I come;'' but then his coming was in the body prepared for him.

Appendix K2

APPENDIX K 2

Chapter 10:14 He hath perfected, etc The word simply means to complete,

to finish, to perfect; and it depends on the context what that completion or perfection means. To perfect the sanctified or the expiated, or those atoned for, was completely to free them from the imputation of sin, to make them fully clear from guilt, or in other words, fully to take away their sins, which was never done by the sacrifices of the law, verse 11. This is the point here handled. Stuart gives the real meaning by the following free translation, --- ``By one offering, then, he hath fully accomplished for ever what was needed by those for whom expiation is (was) made.''

The perfecting ``for ever'' by one offering in this verse, proves that ``for ever,'' {εἰς} {τὸ} {διηνεκὲς}, in verse 12, is to be connected with the offering of one sacrifice, and not with the sitting on God's right hand; the verse may be thus rendered, ---

12. ``But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins for perpetuity, (or, according to Beza and Stuart, 'one perpetual sacrifice for sins,') sat down on the right hand of God, henceforth waiting until his enemies be made his footstool.''

Some copies have {αὐτὸς}; --- ``he;'' and some, {οὗτος}; --- ``this.'' If the latter be adopted, it ought not to be rendered ``this man,'' but ``this priest,'' such being the word used before. As one sacrifice is opposed to many sacrifices, so a perpetual sacrifice, that is, a sacrifice perpetually efficacious, is opposed to those sacrifices which were often made.

Appendix L2

APPENDIX L 2

Chapter 10:19 21. Of these verses the following rendering is offered, ---

19. ``Having then, brethren, liberty as to an entrance into the

20. holiest through the blood of Jesus, which he has consecrated for us, a way new and leading to life, through the

21. veil, that is, his flesh, --- and having a great priest over the house of God, let us approach,'' etc.

It is rather ``liberty'' or freedom than ``boldness,'' and so it is rendered by Beza, Doddridge, and Stuart. The Vulgate has ``confidence.'' The word for ``consecrated'' is literally ``initiated:'' Christ first opened the way, and opened it for his people. The ``way'' is in apposition with ``entrance.'' It was ``new,'' in contrast with the old under the Law, and living or ``leading to life:'' so {ζῶσαν} evidently means here. It has often a causative sense. The ``living bread'' in John 6:51, is said in verse 33 to be the bread that ``giveth life.'' So here the living way may be said to be that which leads to life.

There is a division of opinion as to the ``veil.'' Calvin, Doddridge, Stuart, and others, take the veil as a figurative expression for the human nature of Christ; and they ground their opinion on the following texts, John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; Philippians 2:6. Others give this explanation, ``As the veil was removed for the entrance of the high priest, so Christ s body was removed by death, in order to open an entrance into heaven.'' But the easiest and the most natural way is

to consider it an allusion to what took place at our Saviors death, the rending asunder of the veil of the temple, (Matthew 27:51,) which was a significant intimation and a striking symbol of what was done by Christ when he died on the cross. It was by his flesh or body being torn and rent, when suffering for us, that a way to the holiest was opened to us, and the same is ascribed to his blood in the former verse, so that one part corresponds with the other. The way was opened through the veil being rent, which symbolized his rent or torn flesh.

Appendix M2

APPENDIX M 2

Chapter 10:22. With pure water It is evident that baptism is not here referred to, because the Apostle is instructing the Hebrews, who had been baptized, how they were daily to draw nigh to God.

The words ``pure water'' are not found elsewhere in the New Testament, nor in the Sept. but once, Ezekiel. 36:25, where our version is ``purifying water,'' and no doubt correctly, though the early versions have ``pure water.'' It was a command as to Aaron, ``He shall wash ({λούσεται}) with water his whole body ({πάν} {τὸ} {σῶμα};)'' So the Sept., but the Hebrew is ``his flesh,'' ({בשרו},) though the Samaritan text has ``all,'' ({כל}) before it, Leviticus 16:4. See also Leviticus 16:24. The terms here used are sacerdotal or Levitical. The ``sprinkled'' with blood were the priests at their consecration, and not those who brought their offerings. See Leviticus 8:30. In no other case were any sprinkled with blood except the lepers, and the people when the covenant was made. Washing with water was also done by the priests at their consecration, (see Leviticus 8:6,) and whenever they ministered. (Exodus 30:20, 21.)

The reason of this allusion especially to what was done as to the priests, seems to have been this, to shew that all who now draw nigh to God through Christ are priests, for they all serve God as it were in the sanctuary, and like the high priest, enter as it were into the holiest, not once a year, but daily and constantly, whenever they hold communion with God.

As sprinkling in the case of Christians is continually needed, so is washing, as the daily washing of the priests before they engaged in their duties. (Exodus 40:32.) The sprinkling betokens forgiveness, and washing, sanctification or cleansing. See 1 Peter 1:2; and 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:23.

It may be added that as ({ζῶσαν}, living, seems to have been used in verse 20 in a causative sense, so {καθαρὸν} in this passage; and it may be rendered, as in Ezekiel 36:25, ``purifying.'' The priests after washing were said to be clean, and were deemed to have been thereby purified, which proves that washing was nothing more than a symbol. Pure or purifying water signifies the sanctifying effect of divine grace.

Appendix N2

APPENDIX N 2

Chapter 10:26. Willfully, etc. It is rendered by the Vulg., ``voluntarie --- voluntarily;'' by Beza, ``ultro --- of one's own accord;'' by Doddridge and Macknight, as in our version, and by Stuart, ``voluntarily.''

It occurs in one other place, (1 Peter 5:2,) and is rendered ``willingly;'' it is found as an adjective in Philemon 14, and is rendered willingly; and in both instances in opposition to ``constraint.'' So that Schleusner's explanation seems right, ``with no compelling force --- nulla vi cogente.'' It is used in the Sept. for a Hebrew word which means freely, with free will, spontaneously. We may therefore thus render the words, ``For if we sin of our own free will, (that is, renounce the faith, which is clearly the sin intended,) after having received the knowledge of the truth, there remains no more a sacrifice for sins.''

According to this verse the case of the persecuted is not here contemplated, for they are under constraint; but such are spoken of here as renounced the faith willingly, freely, by their own free choice; so that ``willfully'' is not what is meant, but spontaneously, without any outward constraining force or influence.

The fathers, such as Chrysostom, Theophylact, and Augustine, sadly blundered on this passage, because they did not understand the sin that is here intended, though it be evidently that of apostasy according to the drift of the whole context; and hence they said some strange things about sin after baptism, though baptism is neither mentioned nor alluded to in the whole passage. How many errors and absurdities have been introduced by the fathers into the world!

Appendix O2

APPENDIX O 2

Chapter 10:30 The Lord shall judge The same meaning is given to ``judge'' here by Beza as by Calvin; but Doddridge, Grotius, and Macknight think it means to avenge, to vindicate, or defend. The argument is considered to be this, --- ``If God would avenge the injury done to his people, much more the injury or reproach done to his Son and the Holy Spirit.'' Stuart and Bloomfield give the verb the sense of condemning or punishing; that is, his apostatizing people, --- ``The Lord will condemn (or punish) his people.''

The two quotations are connected in Deuteronomy 32:35, 36. ``Vengeance'' refers to idolaters; and lest an advantage should have been taken of this, he added, as it seems, these words, ``The Lord will judge his people;'' that is, he will call his people to an account, so as to reward some, and to punish others. The apostates might have said, ``Though we leave the Christian, and turn to the Jewish religion, we shall not be idolaters; therefore the vengeance you threaten will not belong to us. To prevent this kind of evasion, the Apostle adds, ``The Lord will summon to judgment his own people, and give to each

according to their works. The fact, that God is a judge, who will reward some and punish others, is what is meant; and this view accords with the passage in Deuteronomy, and also with the design of the Apostle here.

The two verbs also, the Hebrew {ידין{, and the Greek {κρινεῖ}, will admit of this meaning. The first, indeed, though not the second, often means to vindicate, to defend; but the context in Deuteronomy 32:36, requires its sense to be that of executing what is right and just to all. See Genesis 30:6

Appendix P2

APPENDIX P 2

Chapter 12:1. Which doth so easily beset us, etc. Calvin follows the Vulg., ``which surrounds us, or stands around us. It is rendered by Chrysostom, ``which easily surrounds us; by Beza, ``which is ready to encompass us;'' by Doddridge, ``which in present circumstances hath the greatest advantage against us;'' by Macknight, ``easily committed.''

The word {εὐπερίστατον} means literally, ``wellstandingaround.'' But {εὐ} in composition often means readily, easily, aptly. Then we may render it, ``the readily surrounding sin,'' that is, the sin which readily surrounds us, and thereby entangle us, so as to prevent as, like long garments, to run our course. The runners threw aside every weight or burden, and also their long garments. These two things seem to have been alluded to. Therefore the second clause is not explanatory of the preceding, as some consider it, but is wholly a distinct thing; there was the burden and the readily entangling sin. The burden was probably worldly cares, or as Theophylact says, ``the baggage of earthly concerns;'' and the easily encircling sin seems to have been the fear of persecution as Doddridge suggests; which, if allowed to prevail, would lead them to apostasy.

If the word be taken in an active sense, then what is meant is the deceptive power of sin, it being that which readily surrounds and allures us; but if it be taken passively, then what is specifically meant is, that the sin referred to is that which stands fairly and plausibly around us; for ``wellstandingaround'' is what presents on every side a fair and plausible appearance. And apostasy might have been so represented; for the Jews could produce many plausible arguments. Scapula says that {ἀπερίστατος} is applied by the Greek rhetoricians to a question barely or briefly stated, unaccompanied with any circumstances; then, if instead of the negative, {ευ}, well, be prefixed to it, the meaning would be that it is something well stated and plausibly represented. The version in this case would be, ``the sin that plausibly presents itself'' If this meaning be received, then there seems to be a striking contrast in the passage; we are surrounded by a throng of witnesses, and also by sin with its plausible pretenses. It is usual with Paul to personify sin.

Appendix Q2

APPENDIX Q 2

Chapter 12:2. Who for the joy, etc. Hardly any agree with Calvin in the view he takes of this clause. The preposition is, indeed, used in both senses; but the words, ``set before him,'' and the argument, evidently favor the other view. The subject handled is, that the prospect of future glory ought to sustain us under the evils of the present life; and Christ is referred to as an example; and the Apostle says, that he for the sake of the joy set before him endured the cross. The same word is here used and rendered, ``set before him,'' as in chapter 6:18

The first clause of the verse is rendered by Calvin, ``the prince and perfecter of the faith;'' by Beza, ``the leader and consummator of the faith;'' by Doddridge, ``the leader and finisher of our faith;'' by Macknight, ``the captain and perfecter of the faith,'' and by Stuart, ``the author and perfecter of our faith.'' The first word is rendered ``author'' by the Vulg., and ``the beginner'' by Erazmus. Following this meaning we may render thus, ``the beginner and perfecter of the faith,'' that is, of the Gospel, or of the religion we profess. Christ being the author or originator, and also the complete revealer of the faith, of what we profess to believe, may fitly be set forth as our example. This is the view of Stuart.

Doddridge takes faith as a principle, that is, subjective faith, faith in us; so Theophylact did, ``He at first gives us faith, and afterwards brings it to perfection.'' Scott mentions this view, and then adds, ``From him as the great Prophet, the doctrine of faith had been delivered from the beginning, and perfected in the revelation made in the Gospel; and this none would ever be authorized to change, add to, or deduct from.''

But the reference here seems to be to what Christ did in his own person, as it appears from what follows; he endured the cross, which seems to refer to the first word, ``leader;'' and his sitting down at God's right hand appears to be explanatory of his being the consummator of the faith. The Apostle's subject is the race, that is, the race of faith, or in behalf of the faith we profess. Christ is the captain or leader in this race of faith; and though he had the cross to endure, he yet completed it, and is now at God's right hand. This is the example that is presented to us. Schleusner explains {τελειωτὴν} as one who brings anything to an end, a finisher, a completer. Christ is the captain or leader in the contest of faith, and the completer of it, having brought it to a triumphant issue.

Appendix R2

APPENDIX R 2

Chapter 12:6 For whom the Lord loveth, etc The quotation is from Proverbs 3:11, 12, made from the Sept., consistently with the Hebrew, except in the last clause; which in Hebrew is, ``As a father, the Son in whom he delights.'' Some

have unwisely attempted to amend one of the words in Hebrew, while there are three words which must be altered if we attach importance to verbal identity; and even the amended word can hardly answer the purpose, a sense being given to it, which it has nowhere else.

If we make {כאב{: a verb, it will not be suitable, for its meaning is to be sore, to be sad, to be sorrowful, and is ever used intransitively; and if like Schleusner, we make it a {יכאיב{, it will hardly bear the meaning here required; it is used in the sense of making sore, sad, or sorrowful. This, indeed, approaches to a verbal identity; but then there is ``every'' to be put in, and ``delights in'' is to be changed into ``receiveth.'' To be overscrupulous about words, when the general meaning is the same, is neither wise nor reasonable, but wholly puerile; it is a disposition clearly discountenanced by the usage of Scripture, there being many passages in which the meaning is given but not the words. Even in this Epistle the same passage is quoted twice, but in different words. See chapter 8:12; 10:17

The Vulg., the Syr., and the Targ., materially agree with the Hebrew text as it is. The Arab. alone favors the Sept. Macknight quotes Hallet as saying, that the Syr. and the Targ., as well as the Arab., coincide with the Sept.; which is quite a mistake. The Syr. is, ``For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, like a father who correcteth his own son;'' and the Targ. is nearly the same, the word ``father'' being retained. And then what this author says as to the meaning of the verb {כאב{: is not true; there is no instance in which it is used in the sense of scourging. We must not pervert the meaning of words, or invent a new meaning, to gratify a fond desire for verbal agreement.

But there is in this quotation what deserves special notice. ``Correction'' was by the rod; so we find the rod and correction joined together in Proverbs 22:15. In Hebrew it is ``the rod of correction ({מוסר{),'' and in the Sept., ``rod and correction ({παιδεία}.)'' In Proverbs 23:13, correction and beating with the rod are represented as the same thing. Bearing this in mind, we shall understand the connection and meaning of this passage, ---

11. The correction of the Lord, my Son, despise not, --- And fret not at his chastisement;

12. For whom the Lord loveth he chastiseth, And corrects as a father the Son he graciously accepts.

The middle lines are evidently connected; chastisement is the subject of both, the noun and the verb are from the same root. Then the first and the fourth are also connected; the ``Son'' is mentioned in both; and the verb in the last line must be borrowed from the subject of the first line, and that is correction. We hence see the reason why {μαστιγοῖ} is introduced, it being nothing more than to supply what is left to be understood in Hebrew.

Appendix S2

APPENDIX S 2

Chapter 12:11. Peaceable fruit of righteousness, etc This is a phrase which is commonly understood as to its general import, and yet it is difficult to explain it satisfactorily. Some take ``of righteousness'' as the exegetic genitive case, ``the peaceable fruit,'' that is, as Macknight explains it, ``which is righteousness;'' and he adds, ``Righteousness is denominated peaceful, because it is productive of inward peace to the afflicted person himself, and of outward peace to them with whom he lives; also it is called the fruit of God's chastisements, because afflictions have a natural tendency to produce virtues in the chastised, which are the occasion of joy far greater than the pain arising from the chastisement.'' Psalm 119:67, 71, 75

Doddridge also seems to have understood the phrase in the same sense, for he says, that chastisement ``produces and improves those virtues which afford joy and peace to the mind.'' To the same effect are the remarks of Scott, and Calvin's view seems to be similar.

The phrase admits of another meaning: ``The fruit of righteousness,'' according to the more frequent usage of Scripture, means the fruit which belongs to righteousness, or in the words of Stuart, ``such as righteousness produces,'' or in the words of an author quoted by Poole, ``which proceeds from righteousness.'' Righteousness seems to mean here what is just and right, or what ought to be done according to the will of God, as when our Savior says, ``For thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness,'' Matthew 3:15. What may be deemed as especially referred to here, is submission or subjection to the divine will mentioned in verse 9. This subjection was righteousness; it was right according to the statement in verse 7. It was said before that the object of correction is to make us partakers of God's holiness; now he mentions righteousness; they are connected. We must be made holy, we must be cleansed from pride, worldliness, and selfwill, in order that we may do what is right and just, that is, submit to God's will when he chastises us; and when this submission or righteousness takes place, then correction produces a peaceable or a blessed fruit, that is, such an effect, or such a blessing, as peace or happiness. Peace and happiness are both signified by the word; but ``blessed'' or happy is more suitably applied to ``fruit'' than ``peaceable'' or peaceful.

Then the meaning may be thus conveyed, ``but it afterwards yields to those who are exercised (or trained, that is, unto holiness) by it, a blessed fruit, such as righteousness (that is, subjection to our Father's will) brings forth.''

Appendix T2

APPENDIX T 2

Chapter 12:13. And make straight paths, etc. If this be a quotation, and not an appropriation of certain words, it is taken from Proverbs 4:26, where the Hebrew is, ``Make direct the path of thy feet;'' and the Sept., ``Make straight the paths for thy feet,'' the very words of this passage. That the verb in Hebrew means to ``make direct,'' and not to ``ponder,'' as in our version, is evident

from a similar phrase in Psalm 78:50, ``He made (or made direct) a way to his anger.'' The verb is the same as in Proverbs. The noun means a balance, or rather the beam of a balance, (see Proverbs 16:11,) which is straight, and is used to equalize what is weighed. The verb may therefore include the idea of making straight or of making even. The verse that follows in Proverbs 4:26, favors this idea of a straight path, ``Turn not to the right hand nor to the left,'' which implies that it is a straight course that is to be taken. See verse 25

``Make direct the path of thy feet,'' or ``Make straight the paths for thy feet,'' evidently means, ``Let the path or paths along which you go, be direct or straight.'' The ways of error and sin are called crooked paths: see Proverbs 2:15; Isaiah 59:8. So the way of truth and holiness is compared to a straight line, from which we are not to deviate either to the right hand or to the left.

It is remarkable what the Apostle says in Galatians 2:14, of Peter and those who dissembled with him, that they ``did not walk uprightly (or literally, did not foot straightly, {οὐκ} {ὀρθοποδοῦσι}) according to the truth of the Gospel;'' they deviated from the straight line prescribed by the Gospel. The idea, therefore, of removing impediments, of making their paths plain or smooth, as Macknight and others render it, seems not to be here intended; nor does it comport with what follows, ``that the lame,'' or the feeble, ``may not turn aside, but rather be healed,'' that is, of his lameness, or his weakness. For were those reputed strong in the faith not to walk straightly, but to turn into the crooked ways of dissimulation, like Peter and others at Antioch, the lame, the weak in faith, would be tempted to do the same, instead of having their lameness healed, or their weakness strengthened by the example of others walking in a straight course.

The idea of dislocation given to {ἐκτραπῶ} by Schleusner, Macknight, and others, is one invented for the purpose of suiting what they conceived to be the meaning of this passage, which is by no means necessary, and is indeed inappropriate to the context when rightly understood. ``That which is lame,'' {τὸ} {χωλὸν}, is a neuter instead of a masculine, an idiom we often meet with in the New Testament.

Appendix U2

APPENDIX U 2

Chapter 12:15 Lest any root, etc This quotation, made from Deuteronomy 29:18, seems to be an adoption of some words, and nothing more; for it is neither literally the Hebrew nor the Sept. ``Root'' refers not to a principle in Deuteronomy, but to an individual, to a person given to idolatry. A person also seems to be intended here. The clause in Hebrew is, ``Lest there be among you a fruitbearing root, hemlock or wormwood;'' and in the Sept., ``Lest there be among you a root springing up in gall and bitterness.'' As the idea only of a growing bitter or poisonous root is borrowed, it is not necessary to suppose that the application here is the same as in Deuteronomy. What is there applied

to an idolater, is here applied to a person disturbing the peace of the Church.

Some understand this passage as referring to defection or apostasy; and therefore render the first clause, ``Lest any one recede (or depart) from the grace of God,'' that is, the Gospel, or Christian faith. But the words can hardly admit of this meaning. Hence most give this version, ``Lest any one fall short of the grace of God.'' But what is this ``grace of God?'' Various answers have been given, --- God's favor to those who cultivate holiness; God's mercy offered in the Gospel; the promised rest; eternal life. But taking this verse, as we certainly ought, in connection with the preceding, we may justly say, that it is God's sanctifying grace, or ``the holiness ``mentioned before; and then, according to the inverted order which we often find in Scripture, the next clause refers to ``peace,'' ``lest any root of bitterness, growing up, should disturb you, and many by it (or by this) be polluted (or infected.)''

Then follow examples of these two evils in the same order: the first, ``the fornicator,'' is the violator of ``holiness,'' or is deficient as to this grace of God; and the second, ``the profane,'' is a disturber of the peace of the Church, as Esau was, of the peace of his own family, being ``a root of bitterness.''

But observe, ``peace'' was to be with ``all men;'' yet the example as to the disturber of it refers to the peace of the Church; so with respect to ``holiness,'' what is universal is inculcated; but the example as to the violator of it is particular. For want of seeing this, no doubt some of the fathers regarded ``holiness'' in the former verse us meaning chastity.

Esau became ``a root of bitterness'' by being profane; and to be profane in this instance was to despise holy things, to regard them of no value, so as to prefer to them the gratification of the flesh. This was Esau's profaneness, which led eventually to a dreadful discord in his family; and to shew the evil which follows such profaneness, the Apostle points out the loss he sustained as a warning to others.

Appendix X2

APPENDIX X 2

Chapter 12:1824. In this comparison between the Law and the Gospel, it would no doubt be more consonant to what is said in Exodus and also to the comparison here made, to regard {μὴ} as a part of the text, though omitted in all the copies already examined. Very seldom indeed is there any sufficient ground for a conjecture of this kind; nor can it be said that there is here an indispensable necessity for it, only that the comparison would be more complete, --- ``Ye are not come to a mount not to be touched under the peril of destruction; but to a mount to which you have a free access.'' So terrible was the delivery of the Law, that to touch the mountain was instant death; to approach Sion is what we are graciously invited to do, it being the city of God, who giveth life.'' The participle {ζῶν} seems to have this meaning here, as there appears no other reason why the word is here applied to God.

In describing the superiority of the Gospel to the Law, the Apostle borrows expressions from the former dispensation; and though Mount Sion and Jerusalem seemed to belong to the Law, yet they are taken here in contrast with Sinai, where the Law was proclaimed. Sion is, indeed, an evangelical term, and the whole ceremonial Law, though added to the Law proclaimed on Mount Sinai, was yet the Gospel typically, and existed in part before the Law was given.

The contrast here is very striking: terror and death were to the Israelites at Sinai; but a free approach and life are to those who come to Sion: there were on Sinai angels, surrounded with fire, darkness, and tempest; but myriads of them, an innumerable host, are now ministering spirits to the inhabitants of Sion: the whole assembly at the foot of Sinai were only the children of Israel; but the assembly in Sion is the general assembly and Church of the firstborn, the saints of God gathered from all nations: God appeared on Sinai as the judge, ruler, and governor of one people; but the God of Sion is the judge and governor of all who come there from all the various nations of the earth: to those at Sinai the state of departed saints was imperfectly known; but to those who are come to Sion their condition is well known, they being a part of that body --- the Church --- of which Christ is the head: the mediator at Sinai was Moses, a faithful servant, and no more; but the Mediator of the New Covenant, which belongs to Sion, is Jesus, by virtue of whose blood all sins are forgiven, and all pollutions removed --- a blood which pleads for mercy and not for vengeance as the blood of Abel. All the parts of the first contrast are not mentioned, but they may easily be gathered from the second.

That the Church on earth is here meant by Sion, seems very clear. The Church is often called the kingdom of heaven, and its subjects are called the citizens of heaven. That angels and saints departed are mentioned as those to whom we are come, is no objection, because everything that belongs to Sion is seen only by faith. Our connection with distant believers, living on the earth, is maintained only by faith, exactly in the same manner as our connection with angels or departed spirits. Whether the angels mentioned here are ministering spirits, or the hosts above who serve God in heaven, it makes no difference, as they are fellowservants and fellowcitizens as it were with all the family on earth. See Colossians 1:16, 17. It is the same company, though one is now on earth and the other in heaven; they will finally be more closely united.

To the notion that some, as Macknight and others, have entertained, that Sion here means the Church in its glorified state after the resurrection, there are insuperable objections: the contrast in that case would not be suitable; for the object of the Apostle is evidently to set forth the excellency of the Gospel dispensation in comparison with that of the Law; no satisfactory difference on such a supposition could be made between the Church of the firstborn and the spirits of just men made perfect; the expression, ``the enrolled in heaven,'' is more suitably applied to those on earth than to those in glory; and there would be no propriety in that case in mentioning Christ as the Mediator, or that his

blood speaks a language different from that of Abel.

Appendix Y2

APPENDIX Y 2

Chapter 12:27 As of things that are made, etc The meaning of {ὡς} {πεποιημένων}, as given by Doddridge, Scott, and Stuart, is, that they were things created, and therefore perishable, appointed only for a time. Macknight considered the expression elliptical for things ``made with hands;'' which denotes what is of an imperfect nature. But the explanation of Schleusner is the most natural and most suitable to the passage. He says that {ποιέω} means sometimes to accomplish, to finish, to bring to an end. (Romans 4:21; 9:28; Ephesians 3:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:24.) Then the rendering would be, ``as of things to be completed,'' or brought to an end. They were things to be shaken or changed, as things to be finished or terminated. The corresponding verb in Hebrew, {עשה{, has evidently this meaning, ``all his works which he had made,'' ({עשה{,) or completed, or finished. (Genesis 2:2; see Isaiah 41:4.)

Appendix Z2

APPENDIX Z 2

Chapter 12:28. let us have grace, etc So Beza, Grotius, Doddridge, and Scott. The Vulg. and Calvin are no doubt wrong. The authority as to MSS. is altogether in favor of the verb being in the imperative mood. Macknight gives this singular rendering, ``Let us hold fast a gift whereby we can worship God,'' etc. He explains the ``gift'' as denoting the dispensation of religion. No less unsuitable is the version of Stuart, though countenanced by some of the fathers, ``Let us manifest gratitude (by which we may serve God acceptably) with reverence and godly fear.'' When ``{χάρις}'' means gratitude, it is ever followed by a dative case, which is not the case here. To have faith, {ἔχειν} {πίστιν} is to possess it, (Matthew 17:20;) to have eternal life is to possess it, (Matthew 19:16;) to have hope is to enjoy or possess it, (Romans 15:4;) and so to have grace is to possess it. And this alone comports with what follows; it is the possession of that by which we may ``serve God acceptably.'' By ``grace'' we are to understand the gracious help and assistance which God promises to all who seek it.

To receive a kingdom is to obtain a right or a title to it; and having the promise of this kingdom we ought to seek, attain, and possess that grace, that divine help, by which we may in the meantime serve God acceptably. This is the obvious meaning of the passage.

Appendix A3

APPENDIX A 3

Chapter 12:28. With reverence and godly fear The first word, {αἰδως}, means ``modesty,'' as rendered in 1 Timothy 2:9, and it is not found elsewhere in the New Testament. It has in the classics the meaning of respect and reverence. The second word, {εὐλαθεία}, properly means caution, circumspection, awfulness, and hence dread and fear. It is found only here, and chapter 5:7. It occurs as a passive participle twice, in Acts 23:10, and in chapter 11:7, and means to be influenced or moved with fear. Neither ``godly'' nor ``religious'' ought to be added to it.

It may seem difficult to reconcile this ``fear'' or dread with that love, and confidence, and delight with which God is to be served according to the evident testimony of Scripture, especially of the New Testament. But were we to take the first word as meaning ``modesty,'' (or humility,) as rendered by Beza, we might regard the words as describing what we ought to feel in considering what we are in ourselves, and what the danger is to which we are exposed. The meaning then would be, that we are to serve God under a deep consciousness of our own weakness, and under a fear or dread of the danger of apostasy, though that dread may arise in part from an apprehension of what God will be to apostates, according to what is said in the following verse. Without these two feelings it is indeed impossible for us in our present state to serve God acceptably; for without humility arising from a sense of unworthiness and weakness, we shall not be capable of appreciating his mercy; and without the dread of sin, and especially of apostasy, we shall never depend as we ought on God's power to preserve us.

These feelings do not in the least degree interfere with the exercise of love, gratitude, or confidence, but on the contrary strengthen them. The weak shall be supported, but he must feel his weakness; and those who dread sin (not God) shall be kept and preserved; but they must feel this dread. And the more our weakness is felt, the stronger we shall be, as Paul says, ``When I am weak, then am I strong;'' and the more we fear and dread sin, the safer we shall be. But, like Peter, we shall stumble and fall if we become selfconfident and exempt from the dread of sin.

No other meaning but that of fear or dread belongs to {εὐλαθεία}, wherever found, either as a noun or a participle. It is the fear of evil and not the fear of God. See the Sept., in Joshua 22:24; and 1 Macc. 3:30; 12:42. There is no place found where it denotes the fear of God.

Appendix B3

APPENDIX B 3

Chapter 13:5 let your conversation, etc. It is rendered by Macknight ``behavior;'' and by Stuart ``conduct.'' But {τρόπος}; means not only way, manner, conduct, but also a turn as it were of the mind, disposition, ingenium, as given by Schleusner. Parkhurst quotes a passage from Demosthenes, in which it evidently bears this sense. This version may then be given, ``Let there be no

moneyloving disposition;'' or, ``Let your disposition be free from the love of money.'' The Syr. is, ``Let not your heart love money.'' The Vulg. gives a loose version, ``Let the conduct be without avarice.'' Beza's is nearly the same. ``Be content,'' or ``be satisfied, with what you have;'' that is, deem what you have sufficient or enough.

Appendix C3

APPENDIX C 3

Chapter 13:5 I will never leave thee, etc There are three places where these words with some variety are found, Deuteronomy 31:6; Joshua 1:5; 1 Chronicles 28:20. In the first, they are the words of Moses to the people of Israel; in the second, the words of God to Joshua; and in the third the words of David to Solomon. The Hebrew in the three places is exactly the same, excepting the change of person; but in none is the version of the Sept. the same. The words, as here given, is literally the Hebrew in Joshua 1:5, where the Greek version is wholly different; only the Apostle introduces the treble negatives as found in that version in Deuteronomy 31:6, but not given in that version in either of the two other instances. Then the quotation is from Joshua 1:5, except that the Apostle follows the Sept. in Deuteronomy 31:6, as to the three negatives.

The Hebrew could not be rendered as to the verbs more correctly than what is done by the Apostle, which are the same in the Sept., except in Joshua 1:5. The first verb means to relax, and in a transitive sense, to let go, to dismiss, to give up, to surrender; and the second verb means to leave, to forsake, to desert. The verbs in Greek bear a similar meaning. To give a distinct sense to each, we may render the clause thus, ---

``I will not dismiss thee,
Nor will I by any means desert thee.''

That is, I will not give thee up so as to separate myself from thee; nor will desert thee, no, by no means, when thou art in difficulties and trials.

The three negatives with the last verb are remarkable. There is in Hebrew what somewhat corresponds with them. The {ו{ when preceded by a negative may often be rendered and not, nor, neither. Then the version would be this, ``I will not dismiss thee, nor will I, no, forsake thee.'' It is indeed a promise, that God will continue to be our God, so as not to give us up, and that he will by no means forsake us in time of need.

The quotation in the next verse is from Psalm 118:6, and is literally the Sept. The Hebrew is somewhat different, ``The Lord is mine, and I will not fear; what can man do to me?'' Then the next verse shews that the Lord who was his was also a help to him, ``The Lord, mine, is my help, (literally, for my help;) and I shall look on my haters;'' a phrase which signifies that he should gain the victory over them. The word ``help'' is borrowed by the Sept. from the seventh verse; and as it was evidently the Apostle's design to confirm the last clause of the previous citation, ``I will not forsake thee,'' he deemed it sufficient to quote

the words of the Sept.

Appendix D3

APPENDIX D 3

Chapter 13:7 Rule over you, etc. The word {ἡγουμένοι} means properly leaders, conductors, guides, such as lead the way, and according to its secondary meaning, presidents, chiefs, governors, rulers. It is rendered ``prefects --- praefectorum,'' by the Vulg.; ``leaders --- ductorum,'' by Beza and Stuart; and ``rulers'' by Macknight; Doddridge paraphrases it, ``Who have presided over you.'' The version most suitable to the context is ``your leaders;'' for they are spoken of as persons to be followed; they were such as took the lead in religion and were examples to others. But in verse 17 the idea of a ruler is most suitable, for they were to be obeyed. The specific meaning of a word which has various senses is ever to be ascertained from the context. The leaders here referred to were those who had finished their course; for they were to remember them, and not to observe their conduct then as though they were living; and contemplating the end or conclusion of their life, they were to follow their faith.

The word {ἔχθασις}; means an outlet, a way of escape, also the end, conclusion, or termination of a thing, or the issue; and {ἀναστροφὴ} signifies manner of life, intercourse, behavior, conduct, the way in which one lives. There is no English word that can suitably express it. It may be rendered here ``life,'' --- ``and contemplating the end of their life, follow their faith;'' that is, what they believed. They ended their life in peace, and were enabled to triumph over all evils by means of the faith which they professed and possessed.

Appendix E3

APPENDIX E 3

Chapter 13:8 Jesus Christ the same, etc The connection of this verse is differently viewed, and also its meaning. Some connect it with the preceding verse thus, --- ``Jesus Christ is even the same in power, grace, and faithfulness; he supported your leaders and guides, who have completed their trials victoriously; he being still the same will support you.'' Such is the view taken by Grotius, Doddridge, Macknight, Scott, and Stuart. Others, as Scholefield, Bloomfield, and some German divines, connect the verse with what follows in this sense, --- ``Jesus Christ is the same, therefore be ye the same, and be not carried about by divers and strange doctrines.''

But there is no need of this exclusive connection, as the verse appears connected with the preceding and the following verse. Those who adopt the first view seem to be wrong as to the main subject of the passage. What the Apostle exhorted the Hebrews to do was to follow the faith of their leaders who were gone to rest, and the contemplation of their happy and victorious end was introduced for the purpose of encouragement in following their faith. And that

this is the particular and the chief point handled here is evident from the ninth verse, where this doctrine is as it were applied, ``Be ye not carried about,'' etc. Then the meaning of the whole passage may be given thus, --- ``Follow the faith of your departed guides; there is no change in it, Christ is ever the same in his mind, will, and purpose as to the faith: suffer not, therefore, yourselves to be led astray by various and strange doctrines, different from the faith of those who taught you and have attained a happy end.'' Thus the passage appears consistent throughout and suitably connected, ---

7. Remember your leaders, who have spoken to you the word of God, and contemplating the end of their life, follow their

8. faith: Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, is the same, and

9. will be for ever: Be not carried about by various and strange (new) doctrines; for it is good that the heart should be made firm by grace, not by meats, by which they have not profited who have been so occupied.

If the auxiliary verb be put in at all in the eighth verse, it ought to be put in twice. But the words may be rendered as a nominative case absolute, ``Jesus Christ being the same yesterday, and today, and for ever;'' as though he had said, ``I exhort you to follow their faith, inasmuch as Jesus Christ, our teacher, mediator, and Savior never changes, but is ever the same.''

The MSS. are more in favor {μὴ} {παραφέρεσθε}, ``Be ye not carried away,'' than of {μὴ} {περιφέρεσθε}, ``Be ye not carried about;'' but as the latter verb is used on the same subject in Ephesians 4:14, it is better to adopt it here: the difference indeed is very trifling.

The passage, as thus explained, bears strongly against every innovation in the faith, in the doctrine of the Gospel, Christ its teacher being ever the same. There are to be no strange or new doctrines; for such is the meaning of strange here, that is, what is alien to the Gospel, and therefore new. And what are all the additions which have been made by the fathers, and especially by the Church of Rome, but various doctrines, foreign to the Gospel, which ever continues the same? Their variety is as great as their novelty. Christ was, is, and will ever be the same as teacher, mediator, and Savior; hence the faith, once delivered to the saints, must continue unchangeably the same.

Appendix F3

APPENDIX F 3

Chapter 13:9. For it is a good thing, etc There seems to be some obscurity in the latter part of this verse, and in the following verses. There appears, however, to be an intimation of what the Apostle means in the term ``strange'' or new, as applied to the doctrines here referred to. There was probably an attempt made to unite some parts of the ceremonial law, especially the feasts, with the Gospel. The distinction of meats was not new, but this kind of mixture might have been so termed, that is, a participation in those sacrifices, part of which was allowed to be eaten by those who presented them, Leviticus 7:11-

21. This was probably one of the strange or new doctrines. Such a compliance must have been made for the sake of avoiding reproach and persecution.

The Apostle says in verse 10, that those who did eat of the sacrifices could not be partakers of what Christians feed on. Then in verse 11, he mentions the sacrifice made annually by the high priest, no part of which was eaten, but the whole was burnt without the camp, (referring to the state of things when the tabernacle was erected in the wilderness,) intimating that the chief sacrifice was not partaken of either by the priests or by the people. Taking this fact as an intimation, and a symbol of what was to be, he says that Christ had offered the great and the real sacrifice without the gate, (alluding now to the temple at Jerusalem,) where we are to follow him, bearing the reproach to which he was subjected; and we are not to return as it were to the tabernacle, and to partake of such sacrifices as were there eaten.

As an inducement to bear reproach, he reminds them that life is but short, and that Christians expect their home in another country; and at last he states what sacrifices they were still to offer to God, not the sacrifices of peace-offerings, but those of praise and thanksgiving, and also of good works.

The ``meats'' according to this view, mentioned in verse 9, must have been the meats eaten when freewillofferings were presented. Admitting that the great sacrifice for sin had been offered by Christ, some might have still supposed and taught that such offerings as these were still allowed; and to eat of such offerings might have been thought a very profitable thing, calculated to produce a great benefit. In opposition to such a sentiment, the Apostle may be supposed to have said, that it was good that the heart should be strengthened by grace, not by meats, which did not prove profitable to those who usually partook of them.

The ``altar'' is to be taken for the sacrifices offered on it. He declares that it was not possible to partake of the Christian's food, and of the offerings made on the altar. The literal rendering of the 11th and 12th verses is as follows, ---

11. ``Moreover, of the animals whose blood for sin is brought into the holiest by the high priest, the bodies of these are

12. burnt without the camp. Therefore Jesus also, that he might make expiation for the people by his own blood, suffered without the gate.''

The purpose for which these words seem to have been added, was to shew that no eating, no meats, were connected with the sacrifice for sin; and by saying in the following verse that we are to follow Christ without the camp, bearing his reproach, the Apostle intimates that this reproach ought not to be avoided by joining those in the tabernacle, engaged in offering peaceofferings on which they feasted.

The import of the whole passage, 9-16, may be thus stated: --- ``Be not led away by various kinds of doctrines, and such as are new; grace, and not eating of offerings, strengthens the heart to enable it to maintain the faith and to endure trials; and this grace, the meat that belongs to our altar, cannot be partaken of by those who are still wedded to the altar of the earthly tabernacle.

And as to the annual sacrifice for sin, it is not eaten, but all burnt, not in the tabernacle, but without the camp, --- an intimation of what Christ did when he suffered without the gate. Thither we must follow him, and not return again to the tabernacle in order to avoid reproach; and this reproach will not be long, for we are hastening to another world; and instead of presenting freewill offerings and eating of them, what we are to offer now are the sacrifices of praise, of thanksgiving, and of good works.''

Appendix G3

APPENDIX G 3

Chapter 13:17 That they may do it with joy, etc. There is a difference of opinion as to this sentence. Some, as Theophylact, Grotius, and Doddridge refer ``it,'' or ``this,'' to watching; others, as Macknight, Scott, and Stuart, apply ``it'' to the account that is to be given by ministers. The first view, which Calvin evidently takes, is alone consistent with the rest of the passage. The concluding words of the verse are wholly inappropriate, if the account at the day of judgment be considered as intended, but in every way suitable when we regard watching as referred to. To say that an unfavorable account at the last day would be ``unprofitable'' to the people, would be to use an expression in no way congruous; but to represent the watching of ministers, when rendered ``grievous'' by the perverseness and refractory conduct of the people, as unprofitable to the people themselves, is altogether appropriate; and it is a very important consideration, and affords a strong argument in favor of obedience. The people by insubordination, not only grieve those who watch over them, but also injure themselves, prevent their own improvement, and render the watching care of their ministers useless. Reference is made by Macknight to 1 Thessalonians 2:19; but ``joy'' only is mentioned there; and Doddridge justly observes, ``It is not possible for any perverseness of the people to prevent a faithful minister from giving up his account with joy; nor can any groans be mingled with the triumphant songs which God will put into the mouths of all his people.'' No doubt the ``grief'' here mentioned shews clearly the meaning of the passage.

Appendix H3

APPENDIX H 3

Chapter 13:20 Through the blood of the covenant, etc The Vulg., our version, Calvin, and Scott, connect the words with ``bringing again from the dead;'' only the Vulg. and Calvin render the preposition in, and our version and Scott, through. The idea conveyed by in is explained by Calvin, and the same is given by Theodoret, and what is meant by through is thus explained by Scott, --- ``In order to shew that his ransom was accepted, and that he might perform his gracious work as the great Shepherd of the sheep, God the Father

had raised him from the dead `through the blood of the everlasting covenant.'''

Others, as Beza, Doddridge and Stuart, connect the words with ``the great Shepherd,'' that is, that Christ became the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of an everlasting covenant; and Acts 20:28, and John 10:11-19, have been referred to as favorable to this view. Stuart's version is the following, ---

20. ``Now may the God of peace, that raised from the dead our Lord Jesus, (who by the blood of an everlasting covenant

21. has become the great Shepherd of the sheep,) prepare you for every good work, that ye may do his will; working in you that which is wellpleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.''

But a more literal rendering may be given thus, ---

20. ``Now the God of peace, who has restored from the dead the Shepherd of the sheep (the chief through the blood of

21. the everlasting covenant) our Lord Jesus, --- may he fit you for every good work to do his will, forming in you what is wellpleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever.''

The word {μέγας} great, means sometimes ``chief,'' summus, as given by Schleusner; and it has this meaning in chapter 4:14. In John 10:11, etc., our Savior refers to his death, the shedding of his blood, as an evidence that he was the good Shepherd. It may then be rightly said, that he became the chief by or through the blood of the everlasting covenant, that is, through the blood that sealed and rendered effectual a covenant that is permanent, and not temporary like that of Moses.

His prayer was that God would fit, adapt, or prepare them for every good work; and this he afterwards explains, ``forming,'' producing, or creating ``in you,'' etc.; for the verb, {ποιέω}, to make, is often used in this sense. He means an internal influence or operation, as expressed more fully in Philippians 2:13, ``For it is God who worketh in you both to will and to do (literally, to work) of his good pleasure.'' And this forming or creating in them what was pleasing in his sight was to be done through Jesus Christ, through him as a Mediator, he having become the chief Shepherd of the sheep by shedding his blood for them.

END OF ANNOTATIONS

Calvin's Translation of Hebrews

A TRANSLATION OF
CALVIN'S VERSION OF
THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 God having formerly spoken many times and in many ways to the fathers by the prophets,

2 Has in these last days spoken to us by the Son, whom he has constituted the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds;

3 Who being the effulgence of his glory, and the impress of his person, and sustaining all things by his powerful word, having by himself effected the purgation of our sins, sat down on the right hand of Majesty on high;

4 Being so much superior to the angels, as he has inherited a name more excellent than they.

5 For to whom of the angels has he ever said, ``My Son art thou, I have this day begotten thee?''

6 And again, ``I will be to him a Father, and he shall be to me a Son?'' and again, when he introduces the firstbegotten into the world, he says, ``And adore him let all the angels of God.

7 And of the angels he saith, ``Who makes his angels spirits, and his ministers a flame of fire:''

8 But of the Son, ``Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of thy kingdom:

9 Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God hath anointed thee, even thy God, with the oil of joy above thy companions:''

10 And, ``Thou art from the beginning, O Lord, thou hast founded the earth, and the works of thine hands are the heavens;

11 They shall perish, but thou continuest; and all as a garment shall become old,

12 And as a vesture shalt thou roll them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.''

13 But to whom of the angels has he ever said, ``Sit at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool?''

14 Are they not all administrative spirits, who are sent forth to minister for those who are to inherit salvation?

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 Wherefore we ought to attend more to those things which we hear, lest at any time we let them flow away.

2 For if the word which had been declared by angels, was sure, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward;

3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great a salvation? which, having first been begun to be declared by the Lord, has been confirmed to as by those who had heard him;

4 While God was at the same time bearing a testimony by signs and wonders and various miracles, and gift distributed by the Holy Spirit, according to his will.

5 For to the angels has he not subjected the future world of which we speak:

6 But one has in a certain place testified, saying, ``What is man, that thou art mindful of him'' or the son of man, that thou visitest him?

7 Thou hast made him a little inferior to the angels; with glory and honor hast thou crowned him, and hast set him over the works of thine hands:

8 All things hast thou made subject under his feet.'' Doubtless in making subject all things to him, he left nothing that is not made subject: notwithstanding we do not as yet see all things made subject to him;

9 But we behold Jesus, who was made a little inferior to the angels, (crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death,) that he might by the grace of God taste death for all.

10 For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in leading many sons to glory, to consecrate the leader of their salvation by sufferings:

11 For he who sanctifies and they who are sanctified are all of one; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren;

12 Saying, ``I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I sing to thee:'' and again, ``I will trust in him;''

13 And again, ``Behold I and the children whom God has given me.''

14 Since then the children partake of flesh and blood, he also in like manner was partaker of the same, that by death he might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil;

15 And might deliver them who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage.

16 For he nowhere takes hold on angels; but on the seed of Abraham does he take hold.

17 It hence behooved him to become in all things like his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things respecting God, in order to atone for the sins of the people:

18 For as it happened to him to be tried, he is able to succor them who are tried.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 Therefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the Apostle and the High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus:

2 Who was faithful to him who had appointed him, as Moses also was in his whole house.

3 For of greater glory was he counted worthy than Moses, as the builder has greater honor than the house itself

4 Every house is indeed built by some one; but he who has built all things is God.

5 And Moses was indeed faithful in his whole house as a minister, for a testimony to those things which were afterwards to be declared;

6 But Christ as a Son over his own house; whose house we are, if we hold firm the confidence and the glorying of our hope to the end.

7 Therefore (as the Holy Spirit saith, ``Today, if ye will hear his voice,

8 Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness,

9 When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years:

10 I was therefore offended with that generation, and said, They always err in heart, and they have not known my ways;

11 So I swore in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest'')

12 See, brethren, that there be not at any time in any of you the wicked heart of unbelief, by departing from the living God:

13 But exhort one another daily, while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deception of sin.

14 For we are become partakers of Christ, if indeed we hold firm the beginning of our confidence to the end,

15 since it is said, ``Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation:''

16 For some, when they had heard, did provoke; but not all who had come out of Egypt by Moses.

17 With whom then was he offended for forty years? was it not with them who had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness

18 And to whom did he swear that they should not enter into his rest, except to the unbelieving?

19 We then see that they could not enter in on account of unbelief.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Let us then fear, lest, when a promise of entering into his rest remains, any of us should seem to be disappointed of it;

2 For to us has the promise been announced as well as to them; but the word

heard did not profit them, for it was not connected with faith in those who heard it.

3 For we enter into his rest when we believe; as he has said, ``As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest;'' though the works were done at the creation of the world;

4 For he has said thus in a certain place of the seventh day, ``And God rested on the seventh day from all his works:''

5 And here again, ``If they shall enter into my rest.''

6 Seeing then it remains that some do enter into it, but they to whom it was first preached did not enter in on account of unbelief.

7 Again he defines a certain day, saying by David, ``Today,'' after so long a time, (as it is said,) ``Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.''

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, he would not have spoken of another after those days.

9 Then there remains a Sabbathrest for the people of God;

10 For he who is entered into his rest, has also himself rested from his own works, as God from his.

11 Let us then strive to enter into that rest, lest no one fail according to the same example of unbelief.

12 For living is the word of God and efficacious, and more penetrating than any twoedged sword, reaching even to the dividing of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions of the heart:

13 For there is no creature which does not appear before him; nay, all things are naked and open to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

14 Having then a great high priest, who has entered into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession:

15 For we have not a high priest who cannot sympathize with our infirmities; but was in all things tempted like as we are, yet without sin.

16 Let us then come with confidence to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace for a seasonable help.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 For every high priest, taken from men, is appointed for men as to things pertaining to God, that he may offer gifts and sacrifices for sins;

2 Who can render himself gentle to the ignorant and the erring, since he himself is also surrounded with infirmity:

3 And on this account he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins.

4 And no one takes to himself this honor, but he, who is called by God, as Aaron also was.

5 So also Christ glorified not himself that he became a high priest, but he

who said to him, ``My Son art thou, I have this day begotten thee;''

6 As also he says in another place, ``Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchisedec:''

7 Who in the days of his flesh, when he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and was heard in what he feared;

8 Though he was a Son, yet learned obedience from those things which he suffered;

9 And being sanctified, he became to all who obey him the author of eternal salvation;

10 Having been called by God a priest according to the order of Melchisedec:

11 If whom we have much to say to you, and difficult to be explained, since ye are dull of hearing.

12 For when ye ought for the time to be teachers, ye have again need that one should teach you the elements of the beginning of God's words, and are become such as have need of milk, And not of strong meat:

13 For every one who partakes of milk is inexperienced in the word of righteousness, for he is an infant;

14 But strong meat is for the perfect, who through practice have their senses exercised so as to distinguish between good and evil.

Chapter 6

CHAPTER 6

1 Therefore, passing by the first doctrine of Christ, let us be born onward to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith in God,

2 (of the doctrine of baptisms and of the imposition of hands,) and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment;

3 And this we shall do, if God will permit.

4 For it is impossible that those who have been once enlightened, and have tasted the heavenly gift, and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit,

5 And have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come,

6 And have fallen away, should be renewed again into repentance, they having again crucified to themselves the Son of God, and exposed him to open shame.

7 For the earth, which drinketh the rain which often cometh upon it, and bringeth forth a blade meet for them by whom it is cultivated, receiveth a blessing from God:

8 But that which beareth thorns and briers is worthless and nigh a curse, the end of which is to be burned.

9 But we are persuaded, beloved, of better things respecting you, and those connected with salvation, though we thus speak:

10 For God is not unjust, that he should forget your work, and the labor of that love which yon have shewed towards his name, since ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

11 But we desire that every one of you should shew the same diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end;

12 So that ye may not become slothful, but be followers of those who by faith and patience have inherited the promises.

13 For when God made a promise to Abraham, since he bad none greater by whom he could swear, he swore by himself,

14 Saying, ``Blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee:''

15 And so after having patiently waited, he obtained the promise.

16 For men indeed swear by one who is greater, and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all dispute:

17 Therefore God, willing more abundantly to shew to the heirs of salvation the immutability of his counsel, interposed an oath;

18 That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible that God should lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled to lay hold on the hope set before us:

19 Which we have as an anchor of the soul, safe and firm, and entering into what is within the veil;

20 Where our forerunner, Jesus, has entered, having been made a high priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec.

Chapter 7

CHAPTER 7

1 For this Melchisedec, the king of Salem, was a priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him,

2 To whom also Abraham divided the tenth of all; who is first indeed, by interpretation, called the King of righteousness, and then also the King of Salem, that is, the King of peace;

3 Without father, without mother, without kindred, having neither beginning of days nor end of life, but being made like to the Son of God, he remains a priest perpetually.

4 Now consider how great is he, to whom the patriarch Abraham gave even the tenth of the spoils.

5 And they indeed who receive the priesthood, even those who are of the sons of Levi, have a command to take the tenth, according to the law from the people, that is, from their brethren, though they have come forth from the loins of Abraham:

6 But he whose kindred is not counted from them, took the tenth from Abraham, and blessed him who had the promises:

7 And without all controversy, the less is blessed by the greater.

8 And here indeed men who die receive the tenth; but there he, of whom it

is testified that he liveth;

9 And as I may so say, Levi who is wont to receive the tenth, paid the tenth in Abraham;

10 For he was as yet in the loins of his father when Melchisedec met him.

11 If then there was perfection by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what need there was still, that another priest should rise after the order of Melchisedec, and should not be called after the order of Aaron?

12 For when the priesthood is changed, there is also necessarily a change of the law.

13 Doubtless he of whom these things are said, was from another tribe, from which no one attended at the altar:

14 For it is clear that our Lord descended from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe Moses has said nothing as to the priesthood;

15 And it is still more clear, since another priest was to rise according to the order of Melchisedec;

16 Who was not made according to the law of a carnal command, but according to the power of a permanent life;

17 For he thus testifies, ``Thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedec.''

18 For there is an abrogation of the former command, on account of its weakness and uselessness;

19 For the law perfected nothing, but was an introduction to a better hope, by which we draw nigh to God;

20 And this is better, because it was not done without an oath:

21 For they indeed are made priests without an oath; but he with an oath by him who said to him, ``Thou art a priest for ever, according to the order of Melchisedec.''

22 Of so much a better covenant is Jesus made the surety.

23 And they indeed being many were made priests, for they were not suffered by death to continue:

24 But he, as he remains perpetually, has an unchangeable priesthood.

25 Hence he is able also to save for ever those who through him come to God, always living, that he may intercede for them.

26 For such a high priest became us, being holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners, and higher than the heavens;

27 Who has no need, as the priests, daily to offer sacrifices, first for their own sins, and then for the sins of the people; for this he did once when he offered up himself.

28 The law indeed makes men priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was after the Law, the Son, made perfect for ever.

Chapter 8

CHAPTER 8

1 Now of the things which have been said the sum is, --- Such an high priest have we, that hath sat down on the right hand of the throne of majesty in the heavens,

2 A minister of the sanctuary, even of the true tabernacle, which the Lord has pitched and not man.

3 For every high priest is appointed to offer gifts and sacrifices: it is hence necessary that he also should have that which he might offer.

4 If indeed he were on earth, he could not be a priest, since there are priests who offer gifts according to the law;

5 Who minister in [that which is] the exemplar and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was warned by the oracle, when he was about to make the tabernacle, ``See,'' he says, ``that thou make all things according to the pattern which was shewn to thee in the mount.''

6 But now he has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as he is the Mediator of a better covenant, which has been established on better promises.

7 For if the first had been faultless, there would have been no place sought for the second.

8 For finding fault with them, he says, ``Behold, the days are coming, saith the Lord, when I shall make with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant;

9 Not according to the covenant I made with their fathers in the day when I laid hold on their hand to lead them up from the land of Egypt; because they have not continued in my covenant and I disregarded them, saith the Lord:

10 For this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws in their mind, and in their hearts will I write them; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people;

11 And they shall not teach every one his neighbor, and every one his brother, saying, Know thou the Lord; for all shall know me, from the least among them to the greatest;

12 For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and iniquities will I no more remember.'' By calling it new, he hath made old the first; and that which is old and aged is on the eve of vanishing.

Chapter 9

CHAPTER 9

1 The first then had indeed ordinances of worship and a worldly sanctuary:

2 For there was made the first tabernacle in which were the candlestick, and the table, and the shewbread, which is called the sanctuary;

3 And after the second vail, the tabernacle which is called the Holy of holies, which has the golden censer, and the ark

4 Of the covenant covered around with gold, in which is the golden pot which has manna, and Aaron's rod which had budded, and the tables of the covenant;

5 And over it the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercyseat: of which it is not for us now to speak particularly.

6 Now these things being thus set in order, into the first tabernacle the priests always enter who perform the service;

7 But into the second, the high priest alone once a year, not without blood, which he offers for the ignorances of himself and of the people;

8 The Holy Spirit intimating this, --- That the way to the holiest was not yet made manifest while the first tabernacle was yet standing;

9 Which was a likeness for the time present, in which gifts and sacrifices are offered, which cannot as to conscience sanctify the worshipper,

10 Being imposed only with meats and drinks, and divers washings and sanctifications of the flesh, until the time of emendation.

11 But Christ, having afterwards come a high priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of this creation,

12 Nor by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, entered once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption.

13 For if the blood of bulls and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkled on the unclean, sanctifies to the purifying of the flesh;

14 How much more shall the blood of Christ, who by the eternal Spirit offered himself, being faultless, to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

15 And for this reason he is the Mediator of a new testament, that by means of death for the redemption of transgressions under the first testament, they who were called might receive the promise of the eternal inheritance

16 For where a testament is, there must necessarily be the death of the testator:

17 For a testament is of force as to the dead, for it is never valid as long as the testator is living.

18 Hence the first was not dedicated without blood:

19 For when every command according to the law had been spoken by Moses to the whole people, taking the blood of calves and of goats, with water, and scarlet wool, and hyssop, he sprinkled the book and all the people,

20 Saying, ``This is the blood of the testament which God hath commanded you.''

21 And he sprinkled also in a like manner with blood the tabernacle and all the vessels of the ministry;

22 And nearly all things are cleansed by blood according to the law: and without shedding of blood there is no remission.

23 It is then necessary that the exemplars of those things which are in heaven should be cleansed with these, but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these.

24 For Christ has not entered into holy places made with hands, the exemplars of the true, but into heaven itself, that he may now appear before God for us;

25 Not indeed that he may often offer himself, as the high priest who enters into the holiest every year with another's blood,

26 (for then he must have often suffered since the creation of the world;) but now at the end of the ages hath he once appeared for the destruction of sin by the sacrifice of himself.

27 And as it is appointed to men once to die, and after this the judgment;

28 So Christ, having been once offered, that he might take away the sins of many, will appear the second time without sin unto salvation, to those who wait for him.

Chapter 10

CHAPTER 10

1 For the law, having the shadow of good things to come, not the very living image of things, can never by the sacrifices which are offered continually every year, sanctify those who come;

2 Would they not have otherwise ceased to be offered? because the worshippers, once cleansed, would have no more conscience of sins

3 But in these there is a remembrance of sins every year;

4 For it is impossible that the blood of bulls and goats should take away sins.

5 Therefore when coming into the world, he saith, ``Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared for me;

6 Burntofferings and sacrifices for sin thou hast not approved;

7 Then said I, Lo, I am coming (in the volume of the book it is written of me) that I may do, O God, thy will.''

8 After having said above, ``Sacrifice and offering, burntoffering and sacrifices for sin thou wouldest not, nor hast thou approved,'' which are offered according to the law;

9 Then he said, ``Lo, I am coming that I may do, O God, thy will,'' ---he takes away the first, that he may establish the second;

10 By which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once made.

11 And every priest stands, indeed, daily to minister and to offer often the same sacrifices which can never take away sins;

12 But he, having offered one sacrifice for sins, sits down perpetually at the right hand of God,

13 Henceforth waiting until his enemies be made his footstool:

14 For by one offering he hath consecrated for ever those who are sanctified.

15. Now the Holy Spirit also bears witness to us; for after having previously said,

16 ``This is the covenant which I will make with them after those days, saith

the Lord; I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds will I write them,'' [he adds,]

17 ``And their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more.''

18 Now, where there is remission of these, there is no more offering for sin.

19 Having then, brethren, confidence to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus,

20 By a new and living way which he hath consecrated for us through the veil, that is, his flesh,

21 And having a great priest over the house of God,

22 Let us draw near with a sincere heart, in a full assurance of faith, sprinkled in our hearts from an evil conscience, and washed in our body with pure water;

23 Let us hold the confession of our hope with out wavering, for faithful is he who has promised;

24 And let us consider one another for the purpose of emulation in love and in good works;

25 Nor let us neglect the assembling of ourselves together, as the custom with some is; but let us exhort one another, and so much the more as ye see the day approaching.

26 For to those who willingly sin, after having received the knowledge of the truth, there is no more left a sacrifice for sins,

27 But a dreadful expectation of judgment, and a fiery indignation which shall devour the adversaries.

28 He who cast aside the law of Moses died without mercy under two or three witnesses: of how much heavier punishment,

29 Think ye, shall he be deemed worthy, who has trodden under foot the Son of God, and counted unholy the blood of the testament by which he has been sanctified, and has treated scornfully the Spirit of grace?

30 For we know who says, ``Mine is vengeance, I will repay,'' saith the Lord; and again, ``The Lord will judge his people.''

31 It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

32 But remember the former days, in which, after being illuminated, ye endured a great conflict of sufferings; partly when ye were exposed to public shame by reproaches and distresses,

33 And partly when ye became the companions of those who were thus treated:

34 For ye sympathized with me in my bonds, and took the plunder of your goods with joy, knowing that ye have a better and an enduring substance in heaven.

35 Cast not then away your confidence which has a great recompense of reward.

36 Ye have truly need of patience, so that having done the will of God, ye may obtain the promise:

37 For it will yet be a little while, when he who is coming will come, and will

not delay.

38 But the just, by faith shall he live; and if he draws back, my soul shall have no delight in him.

39 But we are not of those who draw back to perdition, but of those who believe to the salvation of the soul.

Chapter 11

CHAPTER 11

1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the demonstration of things not seen:

2 For by it the elders obtained a testimony.

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were set in order by the Word of God, so that of things not visible they became visible.

4 By faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained a testimony that he was righteous, God bearing a testimony to his gifts; and by it, he being dead, yet speaketh.

5 By faith Enoch was translated, so as not to see death; nor was he found, because God had translated him; for before his translation he had received a testimony that he pleased God.

6 But without faith it is impossible to please him; for he who comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is the rewarder of those who seek him.

7 By faith Noah, having been warned by God of things which did not as yet appear, being moved with fear, prepared an ark for the preservation of his house; by which he condemned the world, and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.

8 By faith Abraham, when he was called, obeyed, so that he went out into the place which he was to receive for an inheritance; and he went out, not knowing where he was going.

9 By faith he sojourned in the promised land, as though it was a foreign country, dwelling in tents together with Isaac and Jacob, coheirs to the same promise;

10 For he expected a city having foundations, whose masterbuilder and maker is God.

11 By faith also Sarah herself received power to conceive seed; and beyond the time of age she brought forth, because she counted him faithful who had promised.

12 Therefore there have been begotten even of one, and him indeed dead, those in multitude as the stars of heaven, and as the numberless sand which is on the seashore.

13 All these died in faith, not having received the promises, but having afar off seen, and believed, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth:

14 Verily they who say such things shew that they seek a country.

15 And if indeed they had remembered that from which they had come out, they had time to return:

16 But they now desire a better, even that which is heavenly: hence God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.

17 By faith Abraham offered up Isaac, when he was tried; and he offered up the onlybegotten after having received the promises,

18 Respecting whom it had been said, ``In Isaac shall thy seed be called;''

19 Accounting that God was able to raise him even from the dead; whence also he received him in a type.

20 By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when dying,

21 Blessed both the sons of Joseph, and worshipped on the head of his couch.

22 By faith Joseph, when dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave an order respecting his bones.

23 By faith Moses, when born, was hid three months by his parents, because they saw that he was a beautiful child, and feared not the decree of the king.

24 By faith Moses, when grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 Choosing rather to suffer evils with the people of God than to have the temporary pleasures of sin;

26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt; for he looked on the recompense of reward.

27 By faith he left Egypt, having not feared the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.

28 By faith he appointed the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, that he who destroyed the firstborn should not touch them.

29 By faith they passed through the Red Sea as through a dry land; which when the Egyptians attempted, they were drowned.

30 By faith the walls of Jericho fell, having been surrounded seven days.

31 By faith Rahab the harlot perished not with the unbelieving, after having received the explorers in peace.

32 And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak, of Samson and Jephthae; of David, and of Samuel, and the Prophets;

33 Who by faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, closed the mouths of lions,

34 Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became strong in weakness, were made valiant in battle, put to flight the armies of aliens:

35 Women, by a resurrection, received their dead; and some were tortured, not having received deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection;

36 And others experienced mockings and scourgings, and further, bonds and imprisonment:

37 They were stoned, sawn asunder, tempted, slain with the sword: they wandered in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, oppressed, illtreated,

38 (of whom the world was not worthy;) wandering in deserts, and on mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

39 And all these, having received a testimony by faith, did not obtain the promise:

40 God having provided some better thing for us, that they might not without us be made perfect.

Chapter 12

CHAPTER 12

1 Therefore, as we are surrounded by such a cloud of witnesses, laying aside every weight, and the sin which besets us, let us also run with patience in the race set before us,

2 Looking to Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith; who, for the joy set before him, endured the cross, having despised shame, and sat down on the right hand of the throne of God:

3 For consider who he was who endured from sinners such contradiction against himself,

4 That ye may not be wearied, being faint in your souls; ye have not as yet resisted unto blood, while striving against sin.

5 And ye have forgotten the exhortation which speaks to you as to children, ``My son, despise not the chastening of the Lord, nor be faint when thou art reproved by him:

6 For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth; and he scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.''

7 If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons: for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?

8 But if ye be without chastisement, of which all [sons] are partakers, then ye are bastards, and not sons.

9 Since we had the fathers of our flesh as our chastisers, and we reverenced them, shall we not much more be subject to the Father of spirits, and live?

10 For they indeed for a few days chastised us according to their own will: but he for our benefit, that he may impart to us his holiness.

11 But no chastening seems indeed for the present to be joyful, but grievous; yet afterwards it renders the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who are by it exercised.

12 Raise ye up, therefore, the remiss hands, and the relaxed knees,

13 And make straight paths for your feet, that halting may not lead you astray, but rather that it may be healed.

14 Follow peace with all, and holiness, without which no one shall see the Lord;

15 Taking heed, lest any one should come short of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness, growing up, should disturb you, and many be through it defiled;

16 Lest there should be any fornicator or a profane person, like Esau, who for one meal sold his birthright:

17 For ye know that when afterwards he wished to inherit the blessing, he was rejected; for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it with tears.

18 For we have not come to the mount that might be touched, and to the burning fire, and to blackness, and darkness, and tempest,

19 And to the sound of a trumpet, and the voice of words, which they having heard entreated that the word should not be proclaimed to them;

20 For they could not bear what was enjoined, ``If a beast touch the mountain, it shall be stoned or pierced through with a dart;''

21 And so terrible was the sight, that Moses said, ``I fear and tremble.''

22 But ye have come to Mount Sion, the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to the company of innumerable angels,

23 And to the Church of the firstborn, who are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect,

24 And to Jesus the Mediator of the New Testament, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks better things than that of Abel.

25 See that ye despise not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who despised him who spoke on earth, how much less we, if we turn away from him who speaks from heaven?

26 Whose voice then shook the earth; but now he has promised, saying, ``Yet once I shake, not only the earth, but also heaven:''

27 And this, ``Set once,'' signifies the removal of the things shaken, that the things unshaken might remain.

28 Hence we, who receive a kingdom which is not shaken, have grace, by which we serve God acceptably with reverence and fear:

29 ``For our God is a consuming fire.''

Chapter 13

CHAPTER 13

1 Let brotherly love continue.

2 Be not unmindful of hospitality; for by this some have unawares received angels.

3 Remember those in bonds, as bound with them, and the afflicted, as ye yourselves are in the body.

4 Honorable is marriage in all, and the unpolluted bed; but fornicators and adulterers God will condemn.

5 Let your conduct be without avarice; be content with what ye have; for he has said, ``I will not leave thee, nor forsake thee;''

6 So that we may confidently say, ``The Lord is to me a helper, nor will I fear what man may do to me.''

7 Remember those who are set over you, who have spoken to you the Word

of God; whose faith follow, considering the end of their conduct.

8 Jesus Christ, yesterday and today, is even the same for ever;

9 Be not carried about by various and foreign doctrines; for it is good that the heart should be strengthened by grace, not by meats, which have not profited those who have been conversant in them.

10 We have an altar, from which they have no right to eat who serve the tabernacle.

11 For the beasts, whose blood for sin is brought by the high priest into the holiest, their bodies are burnt without the camp.

12 Hence Jesus also, that he might sanctify the people by his own blood, suffered without the camp.

13 Let us then go forth to him without the gate, bearing his reproach.

14 For we have not here an abiding city, but we seek one to come.

15 By him, then, let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name:

16 But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

17 Obey those who are set over you, and be submissive; for they watch for your souls, as those who are to render an account; so that they may do this with joy, and not with grief, for that would be unprofitable to you.

18 Pray for us; for we trust that we have a good conscience, desiring in all things to live honestly:

19 But I beseech you the more to do this, that I may the sooner be restored to you.

20 Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great pastor of the sheep in the blood of the eternal covenant,

21 Even our Lord Jesus, confirm you in every good work, that ye may do his will, doing in you what is acceptable before him through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

22 But I beseech you, brethren, bear the word of exhortation; for a few words have I written to you.

23 Know ye that brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he comes shortly, I shall see you.

24 Salute all those who are set over you, and all the saints; they from Italy salute you.

25 Grace be with you all. Amen.

WRITTEN TO THE HEBREWS FROM ITALY BY TIMOTHY

Calvin's Scripture Translations of the Catholic Epistles

First Peter

A TRANSLATION OF
CALVIN'S VERSION OF
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the sojourners who are scattered through Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithyuia,

2 Elected according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctification of the Spirit, unto obedience and the sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ: Grace to you and peace be multiplied.

3 Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, according to his great mercy hath begotten us again to a living hope, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and unfading, laid up in heaven for you;

5 Who by the power of God are kept through faith unto salvation, which is ready to be revealed at the last time:

6 On account of which ye exult, though now for a little while, if it be necessary, ye are made sorrowful through various temptations;

7 That the probation of your faith, much more precious than gold which perisheth, though even it be proved by fire, may be found unto praise, and honour, and glory, when Jesus Christ shall be revealed:

8 Whom, though ye have not seen, ye love; on whom believing, though ye see him not, ye exult with joy unspeakable and glorious;

9 Receiving the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

10 Of which, salvation the prophets inquired and searched, who prophesied of future grace to us;

11 Searching what or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ who was in them did signify, previously testifying of the sufferings of Christ, and of the glories which were to follow:

12 To whom it was revealed, that not to themselves, but to us they ministered the things which have been now declared to you by those who have preached

to you the gospel, through the Holy Spirit sent from heaven; into which things the angels desire to look.

13 Therefore, girding up the loins of your mind, being sober, perfectly hope for the grace which is to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

14 As obedient children, not conformed to former lusts which prevailed during your ignorance:

15 But as he who has called you is holy, be ye also yourselves holy in your whole conduct;

16 Because it is written, ``Be ye holy, for I sin holy.''

17 And since ye call on the Father, who, without respect of persons, judgeth the work of every one, puss in fear the time of your

18 Sojourning; knowing that not with corruptible things, silver or gold, you have been redeemed from your vain way of living, delivered down from the fathers;

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb unspotted and undefiled:

20 Who had been, indeed, foreordained before the world was founded, but has been manifested in the last times for you,

21 Who through him believe in God, who has raised him from the dead, and has given him glory, that your faith and hope may be in God:

22 Purifying your souls by obedience to the truth through the Spirit, with an unfeigned brotherly love, love ye one another from a pure heart fervently;

23 Having been begotten again, not from a seed that is corruptible, but incorruptible, through the word of the living God, which abideth for ever.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all his glory as the flower of the grass: wither does the grass, and its flower fades;

25 but the word of the Lord remains for ever: and this is the word which has been declared to you.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 Laying aside, therefore, all wickedness, and all guile, and dissimulations, and envyings, and all slanderings,

2 As infants lately born, desire the milk that is rational and guileless, that by it ye may grow;

3 If indeed ye have tasted that the Lord is gracious:

4 To whom coming as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious,

5 Ye also yourselves as living stones are built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

6 Therefore also the Scripture contains this, ``Behold, I lay in Sion a cornerstone, chosen, precious; and he who believeth in him shall not be ashamed.''

7 To you, then, who believe, he is precious; but to the unbelieving, the stone

which the builders rejected, this has become the head of the corner;

8 And a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense to those who stumble at the word, being unbelieving; to which also they had been appointed.

9 But ye are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye may declare the virtues of him who has called you out of darkness

10 Into his marvelous light: who sometimes were not a people, but now are the people of God; who had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

11 Beloved, I exhort you as sojourners and strangers, to abstain from carnal desires, which war against the soul;

12 Having your behavior good among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may, considering your good works, glorify God in the day of visitation.

13 Be then subject to every human ordinance for the Lord's sake;

14 Whether to the king, as supreme; or to governors, as those who are sent by him, for the punishment indeed of evil-doers, but for the praise of those who do well:

15 For so is the will of God, that by well-doing ye should put a stop to the ignorance of foolish men;

16 As free, and not having liberty as a cloak for wickedness, but as the servants of God.

17 Honor all, love the brotherhood, fear God, honor the king.

18 The servants, let them be subject with all fear to their lords, not only to the good and humane, but also to the perverse.

19 For this is acceptable, if for conscience towards God any one bears sorrows, suffering unjustly:

20 For what sort of glory is it, if ye bear it when having done evil ye be buffeted? but if, having done well and suffering, ye bear it, this is acceptable with God.

21 For to this end you have been called; because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, that ye may follow his footsteps;

22 Who did no sin, nor was guile found in his mouth; who, when reviled, reviled not again;

23 When suffering, threatened not; but committed his cause to him who judgeth righteously;

24 Who bare himself our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, may live to righteousness; by whose bruise have ye been healed.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but ye have been now turned to the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 In like manner the wives, let them be subject to their own husbands, that even if any believe not the word, they may without the word be gained by the

behavior of their wives,

2 While observing your pure behavior and fear:

3 Whose adorning, let it not be the outward, in the plaiting of the hair and the encircling of gold, or the putting on of cloaks;

4 But the inner man of the heart, which is in the incorruption of a placid and quiet spirit, which before God is precious.

5 For so formerly also holy women who hoped in God, adorned themselves, being subject to their own husbands;

6 As Sara, who obeyed Abraham, calling him lord; whose daughters ye become, when ye do well, and are not terrified by any dread.

7 Let husbands in like manner dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honor to the wife as the weaker vessel, and as joint-heirs of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

8 Finally, be ye of one mind, compassionate, loving to the brethren, merciful, humble-minded;

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing, but on the contrary, bless ye, knowing that you have been called for this end, that ye may inherit a blessing.

10 For let him who would love life and see good days, keep his tongue from evil and his lips from speaking guile; let him turn away from evil and do good;

11 Let him seek peace and pursue it:

12 Because the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous, and his cars to their prayers; but the face of the Lord is against them who do evil.

13 And who is he who can do you harm, if ye be followers of what is good?

14 But if ye also suffer for righteousness, happy are ye; and the fear of them fear not, nor be troubled;

15 But sanctify the Lord of hosts in your hearts, and be ready always for an answer to any one asking you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

16 Having a good conscience, that whereas they speak against you as evildoers, they may be ashamed who slander your good behavior in Christ.

17 For it is better to suffer, if so be the will of God, for doing good than for doing evil:

18 Because Christ also once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God, having indeed been put to death in the flesh, but brought to life by file Spirit:

19 By whom having also gone, he preached to the spirits who were in prison,

20 When there were formerly unbelievers, when once the patience of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was prepared; in which a few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water;

21 Corresponding to which, baptism saves us also now (not the casting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ;

22 Who is at the right hand of God, having gone into heaven, angels and

dominions and powers being made subject to him.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Christ then having suffered for us in the flesh, be ye also armed with the same mind: because he who hath suffered in the flesh hath ceased from sin;

2 That he may no longer live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

3 For it is enough for us, that we have wrought, in the past time of life, the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excesses in wine, revellings, banquetings, and wicked idolatries:

4 On account of which they think it strange, that ye run not with them into the same excess of riot, speaking evil of you;

5 Who shall give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.

6 For the gospel has for this end been also preached to the dead, that they may indeed be judged according to men in the flesh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

7 But the end of all things is near; be ye then sober, and watchful to pray;

8 And above all things having fervent love among yourselves; for love will cover a multitude of sins.

9 Be hospitable towards one another, without murmurings.

10 As every one has received a gift, minister the same one to another, as good dispensers of the manifold grace of God;

11 If any one speak, let him speak as the oracles of God; if any one minister, let him do so as by the power which God supplies; that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory and the dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

12 Beloved, think it not strange when ye are tried by fire for the purpose of proving you, as though some new thing had happened to you;

13 But inasmuch as ye are partakers of the sufferings of Christ, rejoice; that at the revelation also of his glory ye may exultingly rejoice.

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory and of God rests upon you: by them, indeed, he is slandered, but by you he is glorified.

15 But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or an evil-doer, or as a coveter of another man's goods; but if as a Christian, let him not be ashamed;

16 Nay, let him in this case glorify God: for it is the time, when judgment begins at the house of God;

17 But if it be first on us, what will be the end of those who obey not the gospel of God?

18 And if the righteous be hardly saved, the ungodly and the sinner, where will they appear?

19 Let therefore those who suffer according to the will of God, commit their souls to him, in doing good, as to a faithful possessor.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 The elders who are among you I exhort, who am also an elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker of the glory which shall be revealed:

2 Feed as much as in you lieth the flock of God, discharging the office of bishops, not constrainedly, but willingly; not for the sake of filthy lucre, but liberally;

3 And not as exercising tyranny over God's heritages, but that ye may be patterns to the flock:

4 And when the Chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive an unfading crown of glory.

5 In like manner the younger, be ye subject to the elder; yea, be ye all subject to one another: put ye on humility of mind; because God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

6 Be ye then humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time;

7 All your care being cast on him, for he cares for you.

8 Be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary, the Devil, as a roaring lion, goeth around, seeking whom he may devour:

9 Whom resist ye, being firm in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are accomplished in your brethren in the world.

10 Now the God of all grace, who hath called us to his eternal glory through Christ Jesus, --- may he perfect you, while suffering for a short time, confirm, strengthen, and establish you:

11 To him be the glory and the dominion, for ever and ever. Amen.

12 By Sylvanus, a faithful brother to you, as I suppose, I have written in a few words, exhorting you and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which ye stand.

13 The church, elected together with you, which is in Babylon, saluteth you, and Marcus my son.

14 Salute ye one another with the kiss of love. Grace be to you all who are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

First John

A Translation OF
John Calvin's Version OF
THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 What has been from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked on, what our hands have handled, concerning the word of life;

2 (And the life has been manifested, and we have seen, and do testify, and declare to you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and has been manifested to us) ---

3 What we have seen and heard, declare we to you, that ye also may have fellowship with us; and our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ:

4 And we write these things to you, that your joy may be complete.

5 And this is the message which we have heard from him, and declare to you, that God is light, and in him there is not any darkness.

6 If we say that we have fellowship with him, and walk in darkness, we lie, and do not tell the truth.

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship one with another, and the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin.

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us:

9 If we confess our sins, faithful is he and just, so as to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness:

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 My little children, I write these things to you, that you may not sin; but if any one sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ, the righteous one:

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world.

3 And by this we know that we have known him, if we keep his commandments.

4 He who says, ``I know him,'' and keeps not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him:

5 But he who keeps his word, verily in him the love of God is perfected;

6 By this we know that we are in him. He who says that lie abides in him, ought also himself so to walk as he walked.

7 Brethren, no new commandment do I write to you, but an old commandment, which you have had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which you have heard from the beginning.

8 Again, a new commandment do I write to you; which is true in him and in you, because the darkness is passing away, and the true light now shines.

9 He who says that he is in the light, and hates his brother, is still in darkness.

10 He who loves his brother abides in the light, and to him there is no stumbling:

11 But lie who hates his brother, walks in darkness; and he knows not where he goeth, because darkness hath blinded his eyes.

12 I write to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

13 I write to you, fathers, because ye have known him who is from the beginning. I write to you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write to you, children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written to you, fathers, because ye have known him who is from the beginning. I have written to you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and ye have overcome the evil one.

15 Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world: if any one loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For whatever is in the world, (even the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life,) is not from the Father, but from the world.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust of it; but he who doeth the will of God, abides for ever.

18 Little children, it is the last hour; and as you have heard that Antichrist is to come, even now there are many Antichrist is:

19 Hence we know that it is the last hour. From us have they gone out, but of us they were not, for had they been of us, they would surely have remained with us; but they have gone out, that they might be made manifest that they were not of us.

20 But ye have an unction from the Holy One, and ye know all things.

21 I have not written to you, because ye know not the truth, but because ye know it, and that everything false is not from the truth.

22 Who is a liar, but he who denies Jesus to be the Christ? He is an Antichrist, who denies the Father and the Son:

23 Every one who denies the Son hath not the Father.

24 Let, then, what you have heard from the beginning remain in you: if what you have heard from the beginning remain in you, ye shall also remain in the Son, and in the Father;

25 And this is the promise which he hath promised to us. even eternal life.

26 These things have I written to you respecting them who seduce you: but the unction which ye have received from him remains in you, so that ye have no need that any one should teach you;

27 But as the unction teaches you all things, and is truth, and is not a lie, and as it has taught you? so remain in him.

28 And now, little children, continue in him, that when lie shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed at his presence.

29 Since ye know that he is righteous, know ye that every one who doeth righteousness has been born of him.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 See what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God! the world for this reason knoweth us not, because it did not know him.

2 Beloved, we are now the sons of God, and it does not yet appear what we shall be; but we know, that when lie shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is:

3 And every one who hath this hope in him purifieth himself, inasmuch as he is pure.

4 Whosoever doeth sin, doeth also iniquity; and sin is iniquity.

5 But ye know that he appeared that he might take away our sins, and sin is not in him.

6 Whosoever abides in him doth not sin; whosoever sins, hath not seen him, nor known him.

7 Little children, let no one deceive you, --- he who doeth righteousness is righteous, inasmuch as he is righteous:

8 He who doeth sin, is of the devil, for the devil sins from the beginning. The Son of God was for this end manifested, that he might undo the works of the devil.

9 Whosoever has been born of God, doth not do sin, because his seed remains in him; and he cannot sin, because he has been born of God.

10 By this are made manifest the sons of God, and the sons of the devil, --- every one who doeth not righteousness, is not of God, nor he who loves not his brother.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we love one another:

12 Not as Cain, who was of the wicked one, and slew his brother; and why did he slay him? because his works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

13 Wonder not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

14 We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren; he who loves not his brother, remains in death.

15 Every one who hates his brother, is a murderer; and ye know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him.

16 By this we know love, that he laid down his own life for us; and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But when any one has this world's goods, and seeth his brother in want, and closeth up his bowels from him, how abideth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word, nor in tongue, but in deed and in truth:

19 And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

20 For if our heart accuse us, doubtless God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

21 Beloved, if our heart do not accuse us, we have confidence towards God:

22 And if we ask anything, we receive it from him, because we keep his commandments, and do the things which are pleasing in his sight.

23 And this is his commandment, that we believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

24 And he who keepeth his commandment, abideth in him, and he in him; and by this we know that he abideth in us, even by the Spirit whom he hath given us.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Beloved, believe not every spirit, but prove the spirits whether they are from God; because many false prophets have gone forth into the world.

2 By this know ye the Spirit of God, --- Every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is from God;

3 And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh, is not from God; and this is the Antichrist, of whom you have heard that he is to come, and he is now already in the world.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is he who is in you than he who is in the world.

5 They are of the world; therefore of the world do they speak, and the world heareth them.

6 We are of God; he who knoweth God heareth us; he who is not of God, doth not hear us: by this we know the spirit of truth and the spirit of error.

7 Beloved, let us love one another; because love is from God; and every one who loveth has been born of God, and knoweth God.

8 He who loveth not, knoweth not God, because God is love.

9 In this has appeared the love of God to us, that God has sent his only-begotten Son into the world, that we may live through him.

10 In this is love, not that we have loved God, but that God has loved us and sent his Son a propitiation for our sins.

11 Beloved, if God has so loved us, we ought also to hive one another.

12 No one hath ever seen God: if we love one another, God abides in us, and his love has been perfected in us.

13 By this we know that we abide in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world.

15 He who shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God abideth in him,

and he in God.

16 And we have known and have believed the love which God hath to us: God is love; and he who abideth in love, abideth in God, and God in him.

17 By this has love in us been perfected, that we may have confidence in the day of judgment, because as He is, so are we in this world.

18 Fear is not in love: but perfect love casteth out fear; because fear hath torment; and he who fears, has not been perfected in love.

19 We love him, because he has first loved us.

20 If any one say, ``I love God,'' and hate his neighbour, he is a liar; for he who loves not his brother whom he sees, how can he love God whom he sees not?

21 And this commandment we have from Him, that he who loves God should also love his brother.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 Every one who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God; and every one who loves Him who has begotten, loves him also who has been begotten by Him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments:

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

4 For, whatever has been born of God overcometh the world; and this is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith.

5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

6 This is he who has come by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood; and the Spirit is

7 He who testifies, inasmuch as the Spirit is truth. For there are three who testify in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one.

8 And there are three who testify on earth, the Spirit, the water, and the blood;

9 And these three agree in one. If we receive the testimony of men, the testimony of God is greater.

10 Moreover, this is the testimony of God, which lie hath testified respecting his own Son (He who believes on the Son of God hath the testimony in himself;

11 He who believes not God, makes him a liar, because he hath not believed the testimony which God hath testified respecting his own Son,) even this is the testimony, that God hath given to us eternal life;

12 And this life is in his Son. He who hath the Son, hath life; he who hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

13 These things have I written to you who believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence which we have towards Him, that when we ask anything according to his will, he heareth us:

15 And if we know that he hears us when we ask any thing, we know that we have the petitions which we have desired of him.

16 If any one see his brother sinning a sin not to death, he shall ask, and he will give to him life for him who sins not to death: there is a sin to death, I do not say that any one shall pray for that.

17 Every unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not to death.

18 We know that every one who has been born of God, sins not; but he who has been born of God, keeps himself, and the wicked one touches him not.

19 We know that we are of God; and the whole world lieth in the wicked one.

20 And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given to us an understanding, that we may know him who is true; anti we are in him who is true, in his Son Jesus Christ: this is the true God and eternal life.

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

James

A TRANSLATION OF
CALVIN'S VERSION OF
THE EPISTLE OF JAMES.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are in the dispersion, health:

2 Count it all joy, my brethren, when ye fall into various temptations;

3 Knowing that the trying of your faith works patience:

4 But let patience have its perfect work, so that ye may be perfect and entire, in nothing deficient.

5 But if any of you be deficient in wisdom, let him ask it from God, who giveth to all freely, and does not upbraid: and it shall be given to him.

6 But let him ask in faith, by no means doubting; for he who doubts, is like a wave of the sea, which by the wind is driven and tossed to and fro.

7 Let not, then, that man think that he shall receive anything from the Lord.

8 A man of a double mind is unstable in all his ways.

9 Now, let a brother who is low, rejoice in his exaltation; and the rich in his lowness:

10 Because as a flower of grass shall he pass away:

11 For the sun rises with heat and withers the grass, and the flower falls,

and the beauty of its appearance perishes; so also shall the rich fade away in his riches.

12 Blessed is the man, who endures temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the crown of life: which the Lord hath promised to them who love him.

13 Let no one, when he is tempted, say, ``By God I am tempted:'' for God cannot be tempted by evils, nor does he tempt any one.

14 But every one is tempted, when he is drawn away by his own lusts, and is ensnared.

15 Then lust, having conceived, brings forth sin; and sin, being perfected, begets death.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren:

17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, descending from the Father of lights, with whom there is no change nor shadow of turning.

18 Of his own will has he begotten us by the word of truth, that we might be some firstfruits of his creatures.

19 Let every man, therefore, my beloved brethren, be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of God.

21 Laying aside then all filthiness and redundancy of wickedness, receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

22 And be ye doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

23 For if any one be a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks on his natural face in a glass;

24 For he hath looked on himself and departed, and hath immediately forgotten what manner of man he was.

25 But he who attentively looks on the perfect law of liberty and continues to do so,--this man, being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, shall be blessed in his work.

26 If any one seems to be religious among you and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, his religion is vain.

27 Pure religion and undefiled before God even the Father, is this,--To visit the orphans and widows in their affliction, to keep himself unspotted from the world.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect of persons on account of reputation.

2 For if there enter into your assembly a man wearing gold rings, having on a splendid dress, and there enter in also a poor man in sordid clothing;

3 And ye have respect to him who wears a splendid dress, and say to him, ``Sit thou here honorably,'' and ye say to the poor, ``Stand thou there,'' or, ``Sit here under my foot- stool;''

4 Are ye not condemned in yourselves, and become judges of evil thoughts?

5 Hear, my beloved brethren, Has not God chosen the poor of this world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them who love Him?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not the rich domineer over you, and draw you before judgment-seats?

7 Do they not blaspheme the good name which is called on you?

8 If indeed ye fulfill the royal law, according to Scripture,

9 ``Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,'' ye do well: but if ye respect persons, ye commit sin, and are reproved by the law as transgressors.

10 For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one thing, becomes guilty of all:

11 For he who hath said, ``Thou shalt not commit adultery,'' hath said also, ``Thou shalt not kill.'' Now if thou committest no adultery, yet if thou killest, thou becomest a transgressor of the law.

12 So speak ye and so do, as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty.

13 For judgment will be without mercy to him who hath not shewed mercy; and mercy glorieth against judgment.

14 What does it avail, my brethren, if any one say that he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith save him?

15 Now, if a brother or a sister be naked and in want of daily bread, and one of you say to them, ``Go away in peace, be warmed and be filled;''

16 Though ye give them not those things which are necessary for the body, what does it avail?

17 Even so faith, if it hath no works, being by itself, is dead.

18 Nay, rather, one may say, *``Thou* hast faith and I have works; shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will by my works shew thee my faith.''

19 Then believest that there is one God; thou doest right: the devils also believe and tremble.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?

21 Abraham our father, was he not justified by works, when he offered up Isaac his son on the altar?

22 Seest thou that faith co-operated with his works, and faith was by works made perfect?

23 And fulfilled was the Scripture which saith, ``Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him for righteousness:'' and he was called the Friend of God

24 Ye then see, that by works is man justified, and not by faith only

25 In like manner also Rahab the harlot, was not she justified by works, when she received the messengers, and sent them forth another way?

26 For as the body without the soul is dead, so also faith without works is dead.

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 Be not many masters, my brethren, knowing that we shall receive greater judgment:

2 For in many things we all offend. If any one offend not in word, he is a perfect man, as one who can bridle also the whole body.

3 Behold, we put bridles in horses' months, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body.

4 Behold also the ships, however large they may be and driven by fierce winds, yet they are turned about by a very small helm wherever the will of the pilot wishes.

5 So also the tongue is a very small member and boasts great things.

6 Behold, a little fire, what quantity of wood it burns! And the tongue is a fire, and a world of iniquity. So is the tongue among our members; it defiles the whole body and sets on fire the whole course of nature, and it is set on fire by hell.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed and has been tamed by mankind:

8 But the tongue no man can tame, an unrestrainable evil, full of deadly poison.

9 By it we bless God, even the Father; and by it we curse men made after his likeness!

10 From the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing! These things, my brethren, ought not to be so.

11 Does a fountain from the same opening send forth the sweet and the bitter?

12 Can a fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries; or a vine, figs? so no fountain can bring forth briny and sweet water.

13 Who is wise and intelligent among you? Let him shew by a good conduct his works with meekness of wisdom.

14 But if ye have bitter emulation and contention in your heart, glory not, and lie not against the truth.

15 This is not the wisdom which comes from above, but earthly, animal, demoniacal:

16 For where emulation and contention are, there is confusion and every evil work.

17 But the wisdom which is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, humane, tractable, full of mercy and of good works, not officiously prying, not dissembling:

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace.

Chapter 4

CHAPTER 4

1 Whence wars and fightings among you? are they not hence,--from your lusts which war in your members?

2 Ye covet and have not; ye envy and emulate, and cannot obtain; ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye do not ask;

3 Ye ask and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may spend it on your lusts.

4 Adulterers and adulteresses! know ye not, that the friendship of the world is enmity to God? Whosoever then will be a friend of the world, becomes the enemy of God.

5 Do ye think that the Scripture speaks in vain? Does the Spirit who dwells in us, lust to envy?

6 Nay, he giveth more grace: hence He saith, God resists the proud, but giveth grace to the humble.

7 Be ye then subject to God; resist the devil and he will flee from you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you: cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded.

9 Be afflicted and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to sorrow.

10 Be humbled before God, and he will exalt you.

11 Defame not one another, brethren; he who defames a brother and judges his brother, defames the law and judges the law; but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

12 One is the lawgiver, who can save and destroy; who art thou who judgest another?

13 Come now ye who say, ``To-day, or, to-morrow, we shall go into the city and pass there a year, and trade and make gain:'' who know not what is to be to-morrow; for what is your life?

14 It is indeed a vapor, which for a short time appears, and then vanishes away.

15 On the contrary ye ought to say, ``If the Lord will, and we live, we shall do this or that.'' But now ye glory in your presumptions: all such glorying is evil. He then who knows to do good and doeth it not, is guilty of sin.

Chapter 5

CHAPTER 5

1 Come now ye rich, weep and howl for your miseries, which shall come upon you.

2 Your riches are become rotten, and your garments are eaten by moths;

3 Your gold and silver are rusted, and their rust will be a witness against you, and shall eat all your flesh as fire: ye have heaped together a treasure for

the last days.

4 Behold the wages of the workmen, who have reaped your fields, fraudulently kept back by you, loudly cry; and the cries of those who have been reaping have entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth.

5 In pleasures have ye lived on the earth, and have been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts as in a day of slaughter.

6 Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he does not resist you.

7 Be patient then, brethren, until the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waits for the precious fruit of the earth, having long patience for it, until he receives the early and the latter rain.

8 Be ye then also patient; strengthen your hearts; because the coming of the Lord is nigh.

9 Groan not one against another, brethren, lest ye be condemned; behold, the Judge stands before the door.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have spoken in the name of the Lord, as an example of suffering affliction, and of patience.

11 Behold, we count them blessed who endure: ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord, that he is very merciful and compassionate.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, nor by the earth, nor by any other oath; but let yours be, yea, yea; no, no; lest ye fall into condemnation.

13 Is any one afflicted among you? let him pray: is any cheerful? let him sing psalms:

14 Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord;

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up: and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

16 Confess mutually your sins, and pray for one another, that ye may be healed: the efficacious prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

17 Elias was a man subject to passions in the like manner as we; and he earnestly prayed that it might not rain; and it rained not on the earth for three years and six months:

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth its fruit.

19 My brethren, if any one among you err from the truth, and some one convert him;

20 Let him know, that he who converts a sinner from the error of his way shall save a soul from death, and shall cover a multitude of sins.

Second Peter

A Translation Of
Calvin's Version OF

THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

Chapter 1

CHAPTER 1

1 Simeon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to those who have obtained an equally precious faith with us, through the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ;

2 Grace to you and peace be multiplied, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord;

3 As his divine power has given us all things which pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who hath called us by his own glory and power;

4 By which also very great and precious promises have been freely given us, that through these ye might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.

5 And for this purpose using all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;

7 And to godliness, brotherly affection; and to brotherly affection, love:

8 For if these be in you, and be abounding, they make you to be neither idle nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ;

9 But he in whom these things are wanting is blind, and cannot see afar off, having forgotten the cleansing of his old sins.

10 Therefore, brethren, strive the more to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall:

11 For thus shall abundantly be supplied to you an entrance into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

12 I will not, therefore, neglect always to remind you of these things, though ye know them, and have been confirmed in the present truth.

13 Yea, I think it right, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up by reminding you;

14 Since I know that I am shortly to put away this tabernacle, as also our Lord Jesus Christ hath made manifest to me.

15 I will, however, endeavor, that ye may also be able to have these things always in remembrance after my departure.

16 For it was not cunningly-devised fables that we followed, when we made known to you the power and the corning of our Lord Jesus Christ; but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty:

17 For he received from God the Father honor and glory, when such a voice as this came to him from the magnificent glory, ``This is my beloved Son, in whom I have been well pleased.''

18 And this voice we heard, when we were with him on the holy mount.

19 And we have the more sure word of prophecy, to which ye do well in attending, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts;

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the Scripture is of a private suggestion:

21 For prophecy came not formerly by the will of man; but holy men of God spoke, being moved by the Holy Spirit.

Chapter 2

CHAPTER 2

1 There were, however, false prophets also among the people; as there will also be false teachers among you, who will stealthily bring in opinions of perdition, denying even the Lord who has redeemed them, bringing on themselves swift destruction.

2 And many shall follow their ruinous courses, through whom the way of truth shall be blasphemed.

3 And through avarice they shall make a trade of you by feigned words; whose judgment a long ago ceases not, and whose perdition does not slumber.

4 For if God spared not the angels who had sinned, but having cast them into hell in chains of darkness, delivered them to be kept for judgment;

5 And if he spared not the old world, but saved Noah, the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, having brought in the flood on the world of the ungodly;

6 And if having turned into ashes the cities of the Sodomites and of Gomorrah, he condemned them with an overthrew, having made them an example to those who would live ungodly,

7 And delivered the righteous Lot, who was vexed by the wicked through their lascivious conduct;

8 For that righteous man, while dwelling among them, had by seeing and hearing his righteous soul daily tormented by their iniquitous deeds;

9 The Lord. knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust for the day of judgment to be punished;

10 And especially those who walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: audacious and refractory, they fear not to blaspheme dignities,

11 When angels, who are greater in strength and power, bring no railing judgment against them before the Lord.

12 But these, as brute animals, naturally made to be taken and destroyed, blaspheming those things which they understand not, shall perish in their own corruption, receiving the reward of unrighteousness;

13 Deeming riot in the day-time a pleasure, they are blots and stains, rioting in their own errors, while feasting with you;

14 Having eyes full of adultery, which cease not from sin, ensnaring unstable

souls, having a heart exercised in lusts, accursed children;

15 Who having left the right way, have gone astray, following the way of Balaam, the son of Bosor, who loved the reward of unrighteousness;

16 But was reproved for his iniquity; a mute beast of burden, speaking with the human voice, restrained the madness of the prophet.

17 These are fountains without, water, clouds driven by a tempest, for whom has been prepared thick darkness for ever.

18 For when they speak most haughty words of vanity, they ensnare through the lusts of the flesh, by lasciviousness, those who had really escaped from such as live in error;

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the slaves of corruption; for by whom any one is overcome, to him is he brought into bondage.

20 For if they who had escaped from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, become again entangled with these, and are overcome, the last pollutions become worse to them than the former:

21 For it would have been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than to have known it, and to turn away from the holy commandment delivered to them.

22 But what is said in the true proverb has happened to them, ``The dog has returned to his own vomit, and the washen sow to her wallowing in the mire.''

Chapter 3

CHAPTER 3

1 This second Epistle, beloved, I now write to you; in both which I stir up your pure mind by admonition,

2 That ye may remember the words which have been foretold by the holy Prophets and the commandment of us who are the apostles of the Lord and Savior;

3 Knowing this first, that scoffers will come in the last days, walking according to their own lusts,

4 And saying, ``Where is the promise of his coming? for since the fathers have slept, all things remain as from the beginning of the creation.''

5 For of this they are wilfully ignorant, that by the word of God the heavens were formerly, and the earth, subsisting by water and through water;

6 Through which the world, which then was, perished, being overflowed with water.

7 But the heavens and the earth, which are now, are reserved by the word of the same, and are kept for fire against the day of judgment and of the perdition of the ungodly.

8 But of this one thing, beloved, be ye not ignorant, that one day with the Lord is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.

9 The Lord does not delay as to his promise, as some count delay, but is

patient towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens with a tempest shall pass away, and the elements shall melt with heat, and the earth and all its works shall be burnt up.

11 Since then all these things shall be dissolved, what ought we to be in all holy conduct and all godliness;

12 Waiting in haste for the coming of the day of God; on account of which the heavens being on fire, shall be dissolved, and the elements shall be consumed with heat.

13 But according to his promise we look for new heavens and a new earth, in which righteousness dwells.

14 Therefore, beloved, since ye look for these things, labor to be found by him in peace, unpolluted and blameless;

15 And regard the patience of our Lord as salvation, as also our beloved brother Paul has written to you according to the wisdom given to him; as also in all his Epistles, speaking of these things; in which there are some things hard to be understood, which the unlearned and the unstable pervert,

16 As also other scriptures, to their own ruin.

17 Do ye then, beloved, being forewarned, take heed, lest ye, being led away by the error of the wicked, should fall from your own steadfastness.

18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: to him be glory both now and for ever. Amen.

Jude

A translation of
John Calvin's Version
The Epistle of Jude.

Chapter 1

1 Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and the brother of James, to the called, who are sanctified by God the Father, and preserved by Jesus Christ;

2 Mercy to you and peace and love be increased.

3 Beloved, when I was applying all care to write to you of the common salvation, I deemed it necessary to write to you in order to exhort you, that ye should by contending help the faith once delivered to the saints.

4 For crept in stealthily have certain men, ordained of old to this judgment, ungodly, turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness, and denying God, the only sovereign, and our Lord Jesus Christ.

5 Now I wish to remind you, though ye once knew this, that the Lord, after having saved the people from the land of Egypt, afterwards destroyed the unbelieving;

6 And the angels, who had not kept their own pre-eminence, but left their own abode, he has reserved under darkness in eternal chains for the judgment of the great day.

7 As Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities around them, having in like manner committed fornication and gone after strange flesh, have been set forth for an example, undergoing the judgment of eternal fire:

8 In like manner also do these, deluded with dreams, pollute the flesh, reject government, and heap curses on dignities:

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when, contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, dared not to bring against him a reviling judgment, but said,

10 ``The Lord rebuke thee.'' But these revile those things which they know not, but what things they know naturally, as brute beasts; in these they corrupt themselves.

11 Woe to them! for they have gone in the way of Cain, and abandoned themselves to the error of Balaam's reward, and perished in the gainsaying of Core.

12 These are stains in your brotherly feasts, feasting with you, heedlessly feeding themselves; clouds without water, driven about by winds; withering trees of autumn, fruitless, twice dead, rooted up;

13 Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, for whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever:

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, formerly prophesied of these, saying, ``Behold, the Lord cometh with thousands of his saints,

15 To execute judgment on all, and to convict all the ungodly of the ungodly deeds of ungodliness which they have in an ungodly manner done, and of all the hard things which ungodly sinners have spoken against God.''

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaks swelling words, admiring persons for the sake of gain.

17 But ye, beloved, remember the words which have been spoken before by the Apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ;

18 For they have told you, that in the last time scoffers would come, walking after their own ungodly lusts.

19 These are they who separate themselves, being sensual, having not the Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And on some have mercy, making a difference;

23 But others save by fear, snatching them from the fire, hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

24 Now to him who can keep you free from sin and set you faultless before the presence of his glory with exultation

25 To the only wise God our Savior, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and to all ages. Amen.

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- {ἀγάπαις}: 1
- {ἀγαθοῖς}: 1
- {ἀγαπῶμεν}: 1
- {ἀγγελία}: 1
- {ἀδιύκριτος}: 1
- {ἀκαταστασία}: 1
- {ἀληθής}: 1
- {ἀληθινὸς}: 1
- {ἀλλὰ}: 1 2
- {ἀλλά} {γε}: 1
- {ἀλλοτριοεπίσκοπος}: 1
- {ἁμαρτωλὸς}: 1
- {ἀναρχίαν}: 1
- {ἀναστροπὴ}: 1
- {ἀνομία}: 1
- {ἀντίστροφον}: 1
- {ἀντίτυπον}: 1
- {ἀπεξεδέχετο}: 1
- {ἀπογενόμενοι}: 1
- {ἀποδιορίζω}: 1
- {ἀρετὴ}: 1 2
- {ἀρχὴ}: 1
- {ἀσεβὴς}: 1
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- {ἁπλότης}: 1
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- {ἄδολον}: 1
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- {ἐκεῖνος}: 1
- {ἐν}: 1 2 3 4
- {ἐν} : 1
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- {ἐν} {ταῖς} {πορείαις}: 1
- {ἐνέργεια}: 1
- {ἐνεργὴς}: 1

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- {ἐντολὴ}: 1
- {ἐξουσία}: 1
- {ἐπόπται}: 1
- {ἐπαγγελία}: 1 2
- {ἐπηλύσεως}: 1
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- {ἐπιλύσεως}: 1
- {ἐπισκέψομαι}: 1
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- {ἠγαπημένοις}: 1
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- {ὁλόχληζοι},: 1
- {ὁμοίως}: 1
- {ὁμοούσιος}: 1
- {ὁρμὴ}: 1
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- {ὃν}: 1
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- {Θεὸν}: 1
- {Κύριος}: 1
- {Καὶ} {ἔχομεν} {βεβαιότερον} {τὸν} {προφητικὸν} {λόγον}: 1
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- {αὐτόπιστος}: 1
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- {αὐτοῦ}: 1
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- {εἰς} {ὑπόκρισιν}: 1
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- {κατὰ}: 1 2
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- {κολαζομένους}: 1
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- {κτίστης}: 1
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- {λίθον}: 1

- {λίθος}: 1
- {λόγοι}: 1
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- {οὗτος}: 1
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- {πᾶν}: 1
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- {περιέχειν}: 1
- {περιέχω}: 1
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- {περισσεύω}: 1
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- {πορίαις}: 1
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- {σκολιῶις}: 1
- {σοφίζεσθαι}: 1
- {σοφίσω}: 1
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- {σπουδάσατε}: 1
- {σπουδὴν} {ποιούμενος}: 1
- {στηρίξει}, {σθενώσει}, {θεμελιώσει},: 1
- {συμπάθεια}: 1
- {συνεργέω}: 1
- {τὼς} {δόξης}: 1
- {τέκνα}: 1
- {τέλειοι}: 1
- {τέλος}: 1

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- {τῷ}: 1
- {ταῦτα}: 1
- {ταπεινόφρονες}: 1 2
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- {τεκνία} {μου}: 1
- {τινὰ}: 1
- {τούτοις}: 1
- {τοῦ} {λόγου}: 1
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- {φθορὰ}: 1
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- {φονεύετε}: 1
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- {φυλακὴ}: 1
- {χαίρειν}: 1
- {χωρῶσαι}: 1
- {χωρὶς}: 1
- ({ἀνυπόκριτον}): 1

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- {{הימים}: אחרית} 1
- {ברא}: 1
- {חוטא}: 1
- {חז}: 1
- {יבש}: 1
- {יחיש}: 1
- {יתר}: 1
- {כל}: 1
- {רשע}: 1
- {כהנים}: 1
- {לעולם}: 1
- {{גוה}: אז} 1
- {אזנים}: 1
- {{בו}: אחסה} 1
- {אשר}: 1
- {ב 1 2 3 4 5}:
- {{המים}: באחרית} 1
- {בחלתי}: 1
- {בעלתי}: 1
- {ברית}: 1
- {בשרו}: 1
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- {זונה}: 1
- {חוקים}: 1
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- {יכאיב}: 1
- {כאב 1 2}: 1
- {כל}: 1
- {כרה}: 1
- {{לעולם} : 1
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- {מועד}: 1
- {מסה}: 1
- {מרבה}: 1
- {נעלתי}: 1
- {{המטה}: {ראש} על} 1
- {עלפה}: 1
- {על}-{דברתי}: 1

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- {:עשב 1}
- {:עשה 1 2 3}
- {:פסה 1}
- {:ראש 1}
- {:רע 1}
- {:שגגה 1}
- {:תעודה 1}

Latin Words and Phrases

- Arguite dijudicatos: 1
- Cera velit versu: 1
- Inquilinis: 1
- Invidia Siculi non invenere tyranni Majus tormentum: 1
- Quisquis ingentes oculo irretorto: 1
- Sic tamen ut limis rapias quid prima secundo : 1
- Spectat acervos: 1
- cleros: 1
- curam illius agentes: 1
- dyscolos: 1
- ex: 1
- ex opinione: 1
- facta sunt illis postrema pejora prioribus: 1
- festina lente: 1
- fictas: 1
- fulciendo, roborando, stabiliendo: 1
- in spem vitae: 1
- manu palpans: 1
- manu tentans: 1
- multam: 1
- patiebatur: 1
- pietatibus: 1
- pudefieri: 1
- quin: 1
- rotunde: 1
- sine dijudicatione: 1
- totum Deum: 1
- vita: 1
- Deus: 1
- Non ignara mali, miseris succurrere disco: 1
- O Deus: 1
- aptata: 1
- compati: 1
- ductorum: 1
- frustratus: 1
- imagines: 1
- ing: 1
- nulla vi cogente: 1

- obsecundate: 1
- praefectorum: 1
- summus: 1
- tacite: 1
- tutam ac firmam: 1
- ultro: 1
- umbratilem: 1
- usus loquendi: 1
- voluntarie: 1