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*Commentaries*

**CLARKE'S COMMENTARY  
HEBREWS — REVELATION**

By

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*“Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without  
which no man shall see the Lord” Heb 12:14*

**Spreading Scriptural Holiness to the World**

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A COMMENTARY AND CRITICAL NOTES

ON THE

# HOLY BIBLE

OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS

DESIGNED AS A HELP TO A BETTER UNDERSTANDING  
OF THE SACRED WRITINGS

BY ADAM CLARKE, LL.D., F.S.A., &c.

A NEW EDITION, WITH THE  
AUTHOR'S FINAL CORRECTIONS

**For whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.—Rom. xv. 4.**

**INTRODUCTION  
TO THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE  
HEBREWS.**

THE chief points in controversy, relative to the Epistle to the Hebrews, though discussed by many, have not in my opinion been treated so successfully by any writer as by Dr. Lardner; he has entered into the whole controversy, and brought his knowledge from far. I shall avail myself of his labours as the best on the subject, and generally use his own words.

"I shall," says he, "inquire, 1. To *whom* it was written. 2. In what *language*. 3. By *whom*. 4. The *time* and *place* of writing it.

"I. In the first place, let us consider to whom this epistle was written.

"Dr. *Lightfoot* thought that this epistle was sent by Paul to the believing Jews of Judea; 'a people,' says he, 'that had been much engaged to him, for his care of their poor, getting collections for them all along in his travels.' He adds, 'It is not to be doubted, indeed, that he intends the discourse and matter of this epistle to the Jews throughout their dispersion. Yet does he endorse it and send it chiefly to the Hebrews, or the Jews of Judea, the principal part of the circumcision, as the properest centre to which to direct it, and from whence it might be best diffused in time to the whole circumference of the dispersion.' *Whitby*, in his preface to the Epistle to the Hebrews, is of the same opinion, and argues much after the same manner as *Lightfoot*.

"So likewise *Mill*, *Pearson*, *Lewis Capellus*, and *Beza*, in his preface to this epistle, and *Beausobre* and *L'Enfant*, the editors of the French New Testament at Berlin, in their general preface to St. Paul's epistles, and in their preface to this epistle in particular.

"Of this Mr. Hallet had no doubt, who in his synopsis of the epistle, says, that this epistle was particularly designed for the Hebrew Christians, who dwelt in one certain place, and was sent thither, as appears from the apostle's saying, **#Heb 13:19, 23**: 'I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner: I will see you.' And what particular place can this be supposed to be but Judea? There, the Christians were continually persecuted by the unbelieving Jews, as we read in the Acts of the Apostles; and as St. Paul takes notice, **#1Th 2:14; #Heb 10:32-36; 12:4, 5**. By these persecutions the Hebrew Christians were tempted to *apostatize* from Christianity, and to think there was strength in the arguments used by the persecutors in favour of Judaism. The apostle, therefore, sets himself to guard against both these dangers.

"This appears to me to be the most probable opinion: for, 1. It is the opinion of the ancient Christian writers who received this epistle. It may be taken for granted, that this was the opinion of *Clement of Alexandria*, and *Jerome*, and *Euthalius*, who supposed this epistle to have been first written in Hebrew, and afterwards translated into Greek. It may be allowed to have been also the

opinion of many others who quote this epistle, to have been written to Hebrews, when they say nothing to the contrary. Nor do I recollect any of the ancients, who say it was written to Jews living *out* of Judea.

"*Chrysostom* says that the epistle was sent to the believing Jews of Palestine, and supposes that the apostle afterwards made them a visit. *Theodoret*, in his preface to the epistle, allows it to have been sent to the same Jews; and *Theophylact*, in his argument of the epistle, expressly says, as *Chrysostom*, that it was sent to the Jews of Palestine. So that this was the general opinion of the ancients.

"There are in this epistle many things especially suitable to the believers in Judea; which must lead us to think it was written to *them*. I shall select such passages.

"1. **#Heb 1:2**: 'Has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son.'

"2. **#Heb 4:2**: 'For unto us was the Gospel preached, as well as unto them.'

"3. **#Heb 2:1-4**: 'Therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard: How then 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; God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost.'

"Does not this exhortation, and the reason with which it is supported, peculiarly suit the believers of Judea, where Christ himself first taught, and then his disciples after him; confirming their testimony with very numerous and conspicuous miracles?

"4. The people to whom this epistle is sent were well acquainted with our Saviour's sufferings, as they of Judea must have been. This appears in **#Heb 1:3; 2:9,18; 5:7, 8; 9:14, 28; 10:11; #Heb 12:2,3; 13:12**.

"5. **#Heb 5:12**: 'For when ye ought to be teachers of others,' and what follows, is most properly understood of Christians in Jerusalem and Judea, to whom the Gospel was first preached.

"6. What is said, **#Heb 6:4-6**, and **#Heb 10:26, 29**, is most probably applicable to *apostates* in Judea.

"7. **#Heb 10:32-34**: 'But to call to remembrance the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of afflictions;' to the end of **#Heb 10:34**. This leads us to the Church of Jerusalem, which had suffered much, long before the writing of this epistle, even very soon after they had received the knowledge of the truth. Compare **#Ac 8:1; 9:1, 2; 11:19**, and **#1Th 2:14**. *Grotius* supposes as much.

"8. Those exhortations, **#Heb 13:13, 14**, must have been very suitable to the case of the Jews at Jerusalem, at the supposed time of writing this epistle; a few years before the war in that country broke out.

"9. The regard shown in this epistle to the rulers of the Church or Churches to which it is sent, is very remarkable. They are mentioned twice or thrice, first in **#Heb 13:7**: 'Remember your rulers, who have spoken unto you the word of God; whose faith imitate, considering the end of their conversation.' These were dead, as Grotius observes. And Theodoret's note is to this purpose. He intends the saints that were dead-Stephen the proto-martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. Consider these, says he, and, observing their example, imitate their faith. Then again, at **#Heb 13:17**: 'Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves. For they watch for your souls.' And once more, **#Heb 13:24**: 'Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.' Upon which Theodoret says: This way of speaking intimates, that their rulers did not need such instruction; for which reason he did not write to them, but to their disciples. That is a fine observation. And Whitby upon that verse says: Hence it seems evident that this epistle was not sent to the bishops or rulers of the Church, but to the whole Church, or the laity; and it may deserve to be considered whether this repeated notice of the rulers among them does not afford ground to believe that some of the *apostles* were still in Judea. Whether there be sufficient reason to believe that or not, I think these notices very proper and suitable to the state of the Jewish believers in Judea; for I am persuaded, that not only James, and all the other apostles, had exactly the same doctrine with Paul, but that all the elders likewise, and all the understanding men among the Jewish believers, embraced the same doctrine. They were, as I understand, the multitude only, *πληθος*, *plebs*, or the men of lower rank among them, who were attached to the peculiarities of the Mosaic law and the customs of their ancestors. This may be argued from what James and the elders of Jerusalem say to Paul, **#Ac 21:20-22**: 'Thou seest, brother, how many thousands of Jews there are that believe; and they are all zealous of the law. What is it, therefore? The multitude must needs come together.' It is hence evident that the zeal for the law, which prevailed in the minds of many, was not approved by James or the elders. That being the case, these recommendations of a regard for their rulers, whether apostles or elders, were very proper in an epistle sent to the believers in Judea.

"For these reasons, I think that this epistle was sent to the Jewish believers at Jerusalem and in Judea. But there are objections which must be considered.

"*Obj.* 1. **#Heb 6:10**: 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love-in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Upon which Dr. *Wall* remarks: Here again we are put upon thinking to what Church or what Christians this is said; for as to those of Jerusalem, we read much in Paul's former letters of their poverty, and of their being ministered to by the Gentile Christians of Galatia, Macedonia, and Corinth; and in the Acts, by the Antiochians; but nowhere of their ministering to other saints. This objection, perhaps, might be strengthened from **#Heb 13:2**: 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers.' And from **#Heb 13:16**: 'To do good, and to communicate, forget not.'

"*Ans.* But the poverty of the Jews in Judea, and the contributions of the Gentile Churches for their relief, are no reasons why such admonitions as these should not be sent to them. They are properly directed to all Christians, that they may be induced to exert themselves to the utmost. The Gentile Churches, among whom St. Paul made collections for the saints in Judea, were not rich. As he says, **#1Co 1:26**: 'For ye know your calling, brethren-not many mighty, not many noble, are called.' And of the Churches in Macedonia, he says, **#2Co 8:2**: 'How that, in a great trial of affliction, the

abundance of their joy, and their deep poverty, had abounded unto the riches of their liberality.' In like manner, there might be instances of liberality to the distressed among the believers in Judea. There is a very fine example recorded, **#Ac 9:36, 39**; nor was there ever any city or country in the world to whom that exhortation, 'Be not forgetful to entertain strangers,' or, Be not unmindful of hospitality, *της φιλοχενιας μη επιλανθανεσθε*, could be more properly given, than Jerusalem and Judea. For the people there must have been much accustomed to it at their festivals, when there was a great resort thither from all countries; and the writer of an epistle to the Christian inhabitants of Jerusalem and Judea would naturally think of such an admonition; being desirous that they should not fall short of others in that respect. And we may here, not unfitly, recollect the history of St. Paul's going to Jerusalem; and how he and his fellow travellers were entertained at Cæsarea, in the house of Philip the evangelist and at Jerusalem, in the house of Mnason, an old disciple, as related **#Ac 21:8-16**.

"Obj. 2. Upon **#Heb 13:18,19**, the same Dr. Wall says: One would think that Paul should have prayed and purposed to go anywhere rather than to Jerusalem, where he had been so used, and where he fell into that five years' imprisonment, from which he was but just now delivered.

"Ans. But there is not any improbability that Paul might now desire to see his countrymen in Judea, if he might go thither with safety, as I think he might. Almost three years had now passed since he left Judea; and his trial, or apology, had been over two years; and he was now set at liberty by the emperor himself. No man, not very presumptuous would admit a thought of disturbing him.

"Obj. 3. St. Peter's epistles were written to the Hebrew Christians, scattered in Asia and Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, and Bithynia. St. Paul must have written an epistle to those Hebrew Christians to whom St. Peter writes his two epistles. For St. Peter, **#2Pe 3:15**, cites to them what *Paul had written unto them*. No epistle of Paul was written to the Hebrews particularly but this; so that these must be the Hebrews of the above named countries. To which I answer: That St. Peter's epistles were not sent to Jews, but to Gentiles, or to all Christians in general, in the places above mentioned, as will be clearly shown hereafter. When St. Peter says, *As Paul has written unto you*, he may intend Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, and some other epistles written to Gentiles. If he refers at all to this Epistle to the Hebrews, it is comprehended under that expression, **#2Pe 3:16**. *As also in all his epistles*.

"Obj. 4. This Epistle to the Hebrews seems to have been written in *Greek*. But if it had been sent to the Jewish believers in Judea, it would have been written in *Hebrew*. To which I answer: That, allowing the epistle to have been written in Greek, it might be sent to the believers in Judea. If St. Paul wrote to the Jewish believers in Palestine he intended the epistle for general use-for all Christians, whether of Jewish or Gentile original. Many of the Jews in Judea understood Greek; few of the Jews out of Judea understood Hebrew. The Greek language was almost universal, and therefore generally used. *All* St Paul's epistles are in *Greek*, even that to the *Romans*. And are not both St. Peter's epistles in Greek. And St. John's, and St. Jude's? Did not St. James likewise write in Greek, who is supposed to have resided in Jerusalem from the time of our Lord's ascension to the time of his own death? His epistle is inscribed *to the twelve tribes scattered abroad*. But I presume that they of the twelve tribes who dwelt in Judea are not excluded by him, but intended. Nor could he be unwilling that this epistle should be read and understood by those who were his especial

charge. The epistle written by Barnabas, a Levite, or ascribed to him, was written in Greek; not now to mention any other Jewish writers who have used the Greek language.

"II. Thus we are unawares brought to the inquiry, in what *language* was this epistle written? For there have been doubts about it, among both ancients and moderns. Yet many learned and judicious moderns have been of opinion that *Greek*, and not *Hebrew*, was the original language of this epistle; *Beausobre*, *James Capellus*, *S. Basnage*, *Mill*, in his Prolegomena to the New Testament, and the late *Mr. Wetstein*, and also *Spanheim*, in his Dissertation concerning the author of this epistle, which well deserves to be consulted. One argument for this, both of *Spanheim* and *Wetstein*, is taken from the Greek paronomasias in the epistle, or the frequent concurrence of Greek words of like sound; which seem to be an argument not easy to be answered.

"Some ancient Christian writers were of opinion that the Epistle to the Hebrews was written in the *Hebrew* language, and translated into Greek by *Luke* or *Clement* of Rome. *Jerome*, in particular, seems to have supposed that this epistle was written in Hebrew; and *Origen* is also sometimes reckoned among those who were of this opinion. But I think I have shown it to be probable that he thought it was written in Greek. It seems likewise that they must have been of the same opinion who considered the elegance of the Greek language of this epistle as an objection against its having been written by St. Paul; for if the Greek epistle had been supposed to be a *translation*, the superior elegance of the style of this epistle above that of the other epistles of Paul, could have afforded no objection against his being the author of it. Indeed the ancients, as *Beausobre* said, formerly had no other reason to believe that St. Paul wrote in Hebrew, but that he wrote to the *Hebrews*. So, likewise, says *Capellus*. The title deceived them. And because it was written to *Hebrews*, they concluded it was written IN *Hebrew*; for none of the ancients appear to have seen a copy of this epistle in that language.

"III. I now proceed to the third inquiry, Who is the writer of this epistle? And many things offer in favour of the Apostle PAUL.

"1. It is ascribed to him by many of the ancients. Here I think myself obliged briefly to recollect the testimonies of ancient authors; and I shall rank them under two heads: First, the testimonies of writers who used the *Greek tongue*; then the testimonies of those who lived in that part of the Roman empire where the *Latin* was the vulgar language.

"There are some passages in the epistles of *Ignatius*, about the year 107, which may be thought, by some to contain allusions to the Epistle to the Hebrews. This epistle seems to be referred to by *Polycarp*, bishop of Smyrna, in his epistle written to the Philippians, in the year 108, and in the relation of his martyrdom, written about the middle of the second century. This epistle is often quoted as Paul's by *Clement* of *Alexandria*, about the year 194. It is received and quoted as Paul's by *Origen*, about 230. It was also received as the apostle's by *Dionysius*, bishop of *Alexandria*, in 247. It is plainly referred to by *Theognostus*, of *Alexandria*, about 282. It appears to have been received by *Methodius* about 292; by *Pamphilius*, about 294; and by *Archelaus*, bishop in Mesopotamia, at the beginning of the *fourth* century; by the *Manichees* in the *fourth*; and by the *Paulicians*, in the *seventh* century. It was received and ascribed to Paul by *Alexander*, bishop of *Alexandria*, in the year 313; and by the *Arians*, in the *fourth* century. *Eusebius*, bishop of *Cæsarea*,

about 315, says: 'There are fourteen epistles of Paul manifest and well known; but yet there are some who reject that to the Hebrews, alleging in behalf of their opinion, that it was not received by the Church of Rome as a writing of Paul.' It is often quoted by *Eusebius* himself as Paul's, and sacred Scripture. This epistle was received by *Athanasius*, without any hesitation. In his enumeration of St. Paul's fourteen epistles, this is placed next after the two to the Thessalonians, and before the Epistles to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon. The same order is observed in the *Synopsis of Scripture*, ascribed to him. This epistle is received as Paul's by *Adamantius*, author of a dialogue against the Marcionites, in 380; and by *Cyril* of Jerusalem, in 347; by the *council of Laodicea*, in 363; where St. Paul's epistles are enumerated in the same order as in *Athanasius* just noticed. This epistle is also received as Paul's by *Epiphanius*, about 368 by the *apostolical constitutions*, about the end of the fourth century; by *Basil*, about 370; by *Gregory Nazianzen*, in 370; by *Amphilochius* also. But he says it was not received by all as Paul's. It was received by *Gregory Nyssen*, about 370; by *Didymus*, of Alexandria, about the same time; by *Ephrem*, the Syrian, in 370, and by the *Churches of Syria*; by *Diodorus*, of Tarsus, in 378; by *Hierax*, a learned *Egyptian*, about the year 302; by *Serapion*, bishop of Thumis, in Egypt, about 347; by *Titus*, bishop of Bostria, in Arabia, about 362; by *Theodore*, bishop of Mopsuestia, in Cilicia, about the year 394; by *Chrysostom*, about the year 398; by *Severian*, bishop of Gabala, in Syria, in 401; by *Victor*, of Antioch, about 401; by *Palladius*, author of a Life of Chrysostom, about 408; by *Isidore*, of Pelusium, about 412; by *Cyril*, bishop of Alexandria, in 412; by *Theodoret*, in 423; by *Eutherius*, bishop of Tiana, in Cappadocia, in 431; by *Socrates*, the ecclesiastical historian, about 440; by *Euthalius*, in Egypt, about 458; and probably by *Dionysius*, falsely called the *Areopagite*, by the author of the *Questiones et Responsiones*, commonly ascribed to *Justin Martyr*, but rather written in the fifth century. It is in the *Alexandrian manuscript*, about the year 500; and in the *Stichometry of Nicephorus*, about 806; is received as Paul's by *Cosmas*, of Alexandria, about 535; by *Leontius*, of Constantinople, about 610; by *John Damascen*, in 730; by *Photius*, about 858; by *Æcumenius*, about the year 950; and by *Theophylact*, in 1070. I shall not go any lower.

"I shall now rehearse such authors as lived in that part of the Roman empire where the *Latin* was the vulgar tongue.

"Here, in the first place, offers *Clement*, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, written about the year 96, or as some others say, about the year 70. For though he wrote in *Greek*, we rank him among Latin authors, because he was *bishop of Rome*. In his epistle are many passages, generally supposed to contain allusions or references to the Epistle to the Hebrews. *Irenæus*, bishop of Lyons, about 178, as we are assured by *Eusebius*, alleged some passages out of this epistle, in a work now lost; nevertheless it does not appear that he received it as St. Paul's. By *Tertullian*, presbyter of Carthage, about the year 200, this epistle is ascribed to *Barnabas*. *Caius*, about 212, supposed to have been presbyter in the Church of Rome, reckoning up the epistles of St. Paul, mentions *thirteen* only, omitting that to the Hebrews. Here I place *Hippolytus*, who flourished about 220; but it is not certainly known where he was bishop, whether of *Porto*, in Italy, or of some place in the east: we have seen evidences that he did not receive the Epistle to the Hebrews as St. Paul's, and perhaps that may afford an argument that, though he wrote in Greek, he lived where the *Latin* tongue prevailed. This epistle is not quoted by *Cyprian*, bishop of Carthage about 248, and afterwards; nor does it appear to have been received by *Novatus*, otherwise called *Novation*, presbyter of Rome about 251. Nevertheless it was in after times received by his followers. It may be thought by some that this

epistle is referred to by *Arnobius*, about 306, and by *Lactantius* about the same time. It is plainly quoted by another *Arnobius*, in the *fifth* century. It was received as Paul's by *Hilary*, of Poitiers, about 354, and by *Lucifer*, bishop of Cagliari, in Sardinia, about the same time, and by his followers: it was also received as Paul's by *C. M. Victorianus*. Whether it was received by *Optatus*, of Milevi, in Africa, about 370, is doubtful. It was received as Paul's by *Ambrose*, bishop of Milan, about 374; by the *Priscillianists*, about 378. About the year 380 was published a Commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul only, ascribed to *Hilary*, deacon of Rome. It was received as Paul's by *Philaster*, bishop of Brescia, in Italy, about 380; but he takes notice that it was not then received by all. His successor, *Gaudentius*, about 387, quotes this epistle as Paul's; it is also readily received as Paul's by *Jerome*, about 392, and he says it was *generally received by the Greeks, and the Christians in the east*, but not by *all the Latins*. It was received as Paul's by *Rufinus*, in 397; it is also in the *Catalogue* of the *third council of Carthage*, in 397. It is frequently quoted by *Augustine* as St. Paul's. In one place he says: 'It is of doubtful authority with some; but he was inclined to follow the opinion of the Churches in the east, who received it among the canonical Scriptures. It was received as Paul's by *Chromatius*, bishop of Aquileia, in Italy, about 401; by *Innocent*, bishop of Rome, about 402; by *Paulinus*, bishop of Nola, in Italy, about 403. *Pelagias*, about 405, wrote a commentary upon thirteen epistles of Paul, omitting that to the Hebrews; nevertheless it was received by his *followers*. It was received by *Cassian*, about 424; by *Prosper*, of Aquitaine, about 434, and by the *authors* of the works ascribed to him; by *Eucherius*, bishop of Lyons, in 434; by *Sedulius*, about 818; by *Leo*, bishop of Rome, in 440; by *Salvian*, presbyter of Marseilles, about 440; by *Geladius*, bishop of Rome, about 496; by *Facundus*, an *African* bishop, about 540; by *Junilius*, an *African* bishop, about 556; by *Cassiodorus*, in 556, by the *author* of the *imperfect work* upon St. Matthew, about 560; by *Gregory*, bishop of Rome, about 590; by *Isidore*, of Seville, about 596; and by *Bede*, about 701, or the beginning of the *eighth century*.

"Concerning the *Latin writers*, it is obvious to remark, that this epistle is not expressly quoted as Paul's by any of them in the three first centuries; however, it was known by *Iranæus* and *Tertullian* as we have seen, and possibly to others also. But it is manifest that it was received as an epistle of St. Paul by many Latin writers, in the *fourth, fifth, and following centuries*.

"The reasons of doubting about the genuineness of this epistle probably were the *want of a name at the beginning*, and the difference of argument or subject matter, and of the style, from the commonly received epistles of the apostle, as is intimated by *Jerome*. Whether they are sufficient reasons for rejecting this epistle will be considered in the course of our argument.

"2. There is nothing in the epistle itself that renders it impossible or unlikely to be his; for the epistle appears to have been written before the destruction of Jerusalem, as was of old observed by *Chrysostom* and *Theodoret*, and has been argued also by many moderns. That the temple was still standing, and sacrifices there offered, may be inferred from **#Heb 8:4**: 'For if he were on earth, he should not be a priest, seeing that there are priests that offer according to the law;' and from **#Heb 13:10**: 'We have an altar, whereof they have no right to eat, which serve the tabernacle.' If the temple had been destroyed, and the worship there abolished, the writer would not have failed to take some notice of it in support of his argument, and for abating the too great attachment of many to the rites of the Mosaic institution. To this purpose speaks *Spanheim*. It is also probable that those words, **#Heb 3:13**, 'While it is called to-day,' refer to the patience which God yet continued to exercise

toward the Jewish nation; he seems to have had in view the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, which would put an end to that *to-day*, and finish the time which God gave to the Jews, as a nation, to *hear his voice*. And Lightfoot argues, from **#Heb 12:4**, 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood,' that the epistle was written *before* the war in Judea was begun.

"Indeed, those words have been the ground of an objection against this epistle having been sent to the believing Jews in Judea, because there had been already several martyrdoms in that country. That difficulty I would now remove; and I have received from a learned friend the following observation, which may be of use: 'It seems to me,' says he, 'that the apostle here, as well as in the preceding context, alludes to the Grecian games or exercises; and he signifies that they to whom he writes had not been called out to the most dangerous combats, and had not run the immediate hazard of their lives; which, I suppose, might be said of them as a body or Church.' And I shall transfer hither M. *Beausobre's* note upon this place: 'There had been martyrs in Judea, as Stephen and the two James; but, for the most part, the Jews did not put the Christians to death for want of power; they were imprisoned and scourged; see **#Ac 5:40**, and here, **#Heb 13:3**. And they endured reproaches, and the loss of their substance, **#Heb 10:32, 34**. These were the sufferings which they had met with. The apostle, therefore, here indirectly reproves the Hebrews, that though God treated them with more indulgence than he had done his people in former times, and even than his own Son, they nevertheless wavered in their profession of the Gospel. See **#Heb 12:12**.

"3. There are many exhortations in this epistle much resembling some in the epistles of St. Paul. 1. **#Heb 12:3**: 'Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.' **#Ga 6:9**: 'And let us not be weary in well-doing; for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.' And see **#2Th 3:13**, and **#Eph 3:13**. 2. **#Heb 12:14**: 'Follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.' An exhortation very suitable to Paul, and to the Jewish believers in Judea; admonishing them not to impose the rituals of the law upon others, that is, the Gentile believers; and to maintain friendship with them, though they did not embrace the law. It has also a resemblance to **#Ro 12:18**, but the words of the original are different. 3. **#Heb 13:1**: 'Let brotherly love continue,' and what follows to the end of **#Heb 13:3**. Then, in **#Heb 13:4**: 'Marriage is honourable; but fornicators and adulterers God will judge.' Here is an agreement with **#Eph 5:2, 3, 4**: 'And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us-but fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not once be named among you. For this ye know, that no fornicator, nor unclean person, nor covetous man-has any inheritance in the kingdom of God.' 4. **#Heb 13:16**: 'But to do good, and to communicate, forget not; for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' That exhortation is very suitable to Paul's doctrine, and has an agreement with what he says elsewhere, as **#Php 4:18**: 'An odour of a sweet smell; a sacrifice acceptable, well pleasing to God.' Moreover, as is observed by Grotius upon this text, the word *communicate* or *communion* is found in a like sense in the Acts, and in other epistles of St. Paul. See **#Ac 2:42**; **#Ro 15:26**; **#2Co 8:4**; **9:13**.

"4. In the next place, I observe some instances of agreement in the *style* or *phrases*, of the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the acknowledged epistles of St. Paul. 1. **#Heb 2:4**: 'God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost: -*signs and wonders*, together, seldom occur in other books of the New Testament; but they are found several times in the Acts, and in St. Paul's epistles. The phrase is in **#Mt 24:24**, and **#Mr 13:22**, and once likewise in St. John's Gospel, **#Joh 4:48**; but it is several times in the Acts, **#Ac 2:19**; **#Ac 4:30**;

**5:12; 6:8; 8:13; 14:3; 15:12.** The most remarkable are these where there are three different words, **#Ac 2:22:** 'A man approved of God among you, by miracles, and wonders, and signs.' **#Ro 15:19:** 'Through mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God.' **#2Co 12:12:** 'In signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds.' **#2Th 2:9:** 'With all power, and signs, and lying wonders.' 2. **#Heb 2:14:** 'That, through death, he might destroy him who had the power of death.' The word *καταργεω* or *καταργεομαι* is, I think, nowhere used in the New Testament, except in **#Lu 13:7**, and St. Paul's epistles, where it is several times; and is sometimes used in a sense resembling this place, particularly **#2Ti 1:10:** 'Who has abolished death;' *καταργησαντος μεν τον θανατον*, and **#1Co 15:26.** Compare Dr. *Doddridge's* Family Expositor, vol. iv., upon **#1Co 15:24.** 3. **#Heb 3:1:** 'Holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.' **#Php 3:14:** 'The prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.' **#2Ti 1:9:** 'Who has called us with a holy calling.' 4. **#Heb 5:12:** 'And are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat.' **#1Co 3:2:** 'I have fed you with milk, and not with meat.' However, in the original, there is no great agreement in the words, except that in both places *milk* is used for the first rudiments of the Christian doctrine. 5. **#Heb 8:1:** 'Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty on high.' **#Eph 1:20:** 'And set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.' 6. **#Heb 8:6; 9:15;** and **#Heb 12:24**, Jesus Christ is styled *Mediator*. So likewise in **#Ga 3:19,20; #1Ti 2:5;** and in no other books of the New Testament. 7. **#Heb 8:5:** 'Who serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things; *και σκια των επουρανιων.* **#Heb 10:1:** 'For the law, having a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things;' *σκιαν εχω των μελλοντων αγαθων, ουκ αυτην την εικονα των πραγματων.* **#Col 2:17.** 'Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ;' *α εστι σκια των μελλοντων το δε σωμα του χριστου.* 8. **#Heb 10:33:** 'Whilst ye were made a gazing-stock, or spectacle, both by reproaches and afflictions;' *ονειδισμοις τε και θλιψεσι θεατριζομενοι.* **#1Co 4:9:** 'For we are made a spectacle unto the world;' *οτι θεατρον εγενηθημεν τω κοσμο.* 9. St. Paul, in his acknowledged epistles, often alludes to the exercises and games which were then very reputable and frequent in Greece and other parts of the Roman empire. There are many such allusions in this epistle, which have also great elegance. So **#Heb 6:18:** 'Who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us;' or the reward of eternal life, proposed to animate and encourage us. And, **#Heb 12:1, 2, 3:** 'Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which does so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us. Looking unto Jesus-who, for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross. Lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.' And, **#Heb 12:12:** 'Wherefore lift up the hands that hang down, and the feeble knees.' All these texts seem to contain allusions to the celebrated *exercises* and *games* of those times. And to these may be added, if I mistake not, the place before noticed, **#Heb 12:4:** 'Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' 10. **#Heb 13:9:** 'Be not carried about with divers and strange doctrines;' *διδαχαις ποικιλαις και χεναις μη περιφερεσθε.* **#Eph 4:14:** 'That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine;' *κλυδωνιζομενοι και περιφερομενοι παντι ανεμω της διδασκαλιας.* 11. **#Heb 13:10:** 'We have an altar whereof they have no right to eat.' **#1Co 9:13:** 'And they that wait at the altar are partakers with the altar.' And, **#1Co 10:18:** 'Are not they which eat of the sacrifices partakers of the altar?' 12. **#Heb 13:20, 21:** 'Now the God of peace make you perfect;' which is a title of the Deity nowhere found in the New Testament but in St. Paul's epistles, and in them it is several times, and near the conclusion, as here: so **#Ro 15:33:** 'Now the God of peace be with you all.' See likewise **#Ro 16:20;**

**#Php 4:9** and **#1Th 5:23**: 'And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly;' and **#2Co 13:11**: 'And the God of love and peace shall be with you.'

"5. The *conclusion* of this epistle has a remarkable agreement with the *conclusions* of St. Paul's epistles in several respects. 1. He here desires the Christians to whom he is writing to pray for him, **#Heb 13:18**: 'Pray for us.' So **#Ro 15:30**; **#Eph 6:18, 19**; **#Col 4:3**; **#1Th 5:25**; **#2Th 3:1**. 2. It is added in the same **#Heb 13:18**: 'For we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly;' which may well come from Paul, some of the Jewish believers not being well affected to him, or being even offended with him. So says *Theodoret* upon this place, and *Chrysostom* to the like purpose, very largely. To which might be added, **#Heb 13:22**: 'And I beseech you, brethren, to suffer the word of exhortation.' It is also observable that St. Paul makes a like profession of his sincerity in pleading against the Jews before Felix, **#Ac 24:16**. 3. Having desired the prayers of these Christians for himself, he prays for them, **#Heb 13:20, 21**: 'Now the God of peace make you perfect, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.' So **#Ro 15:30, 32**, having asked their prayers for him, he adds, **#Ro 15:33**: 'Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.' Compare **#Eph 6:19, 23**, and **#1Th 5:23**; **#2Th 3:16**. 4. **#Heb 13:24**: 'Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints. They of Italy salute you.' The like salutations are in many of St. Paul's epistles, Rom. 16:; **#1Co 16:19-21**; **#2Co 13:13**; **#Php 4:21, 22**; not to refer to any more. 5. The *valedictory benediction* at the end is that which Paul had made the token of the *genuineness* of his epistles; **#2Th 3:18**. So here, **#Heb 13:25**: 'Grace be with you all. Amen.' Indeed, sometimes it is 'The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.' But at other times it is more contracted. So **#Col 4:18**: 'Grace be with you.' **#1Ti 6:21**: 'Grace be with thee.' See likewise, **#Eph 6:24**; **#2Ti 4:22**; **#Tit 3:15**. The same observation is in *Theodoret*.

"6. The circumstances of this epistle lead us to the Apostle Paul. 1. **#Heb 13:24**: 'They of Italy salute you.' The writer, therefore, was then in *Italy*, whither we know Paul was sent a prisoner, and where he resided two years, **#Ac 28:30**; where also he wrote several epistles still remaining. 2. **#Heb 13:19**: He desires them *the rather to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner*. Paul had been brought from Judea to Rome. And he was willing to go thither again, where he had been several times. And though the original words are not the name, there is an agreement between this and **#Phm 1:22**: 'I trust that through your prayers I shall be given unto you.' This particular is one of the arguments of *Euthalius*, that this epistle is Paul's, and written to the Jews of Palestine. 3. **#Heb 13:23**: 'Know ye, that our brother Timothy is set at liberty; with whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.' Timothy was with Paul during his imprisonment at Rome, as is allowed by all: for he is expressly mentioned at the beginning of the Epistles to the *Philippians*, *Colossians*, and *Philemon*, written when he was in *bonds*. He is mentioned again, **#Php 2:19**. When the apostle writes to Timothy, he calls him his *son*, or *dearly beloved son*, **#1Ti 1:2**; **#2Ti 1:2**. But when he mentions him to others, he calls him *brother*; **#2Co 1:1**; **#Col 1:1**; **#1Th 3:2**. In like manner Titus. Compare **#Tit 1:4** and **#2Co 2:13**.

This mention of *Timothy* has, led many, not only *moderns*, but *ancients* likewise, to think of Paul as writer of the epistle, particularly *Euthalius*; and, undoubtedly, many others have been confirmed in that supposition by this circumstance.

"The original word *απολελυμενον* is ambiguous, being capable of two senses: one of which is, that of our translation, *set at liberty*, that is, from *imprisonment*; the other is *dismissed, sent abroad on an errand*. In this last sense it was understood by *Euthalius*, who, in the place just cited, says: 'That scarcely any one can be thought of, besides Paul, who would send Timothy abroad upon any service of the Gospel.' And indeed this passage does put us in mind of what Paul says to the Philippians, **#Php 2:19**: 'But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me; but I trust in the Lord, that I also myself shall come shortly,' **#Php 2:23, 24**, which induced *Beausobre* to say in the preface to this epistle: 'The sacred author concludes with asking the prayers of the Hebrews, **#Heb 13:19**, that he may be restored to them. These words intimate that he was still *prisoner*, but that he hoped to be set at liberty: therefore, he adds, in **#Heb 13:23**, that he intended to come and see them, with Timothy, as soon as he should be returned. If this explication be right, this epistle was written at Rome, some time after the Epistle to the Philippians, and since the departure of Timothy for Macedonia.'

"All these considerations just mentioned, added to the testimony of many ancient writers, make out an argument of great weight, (though not decisive and demonstrative,) that the Apostle Paul is the writer of this epistle. An objection against this epistle being St. Paul's is, that it is supposed to have in it *an elegance superior to that of his other writings*. This has been judged, by *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, sufficient to show that this was not written by Paul.

"The opinion of *Origen*, in his homilies upon this epistle, as cited by *Eusebius*, and by us from him, is, 'that the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews has not the apostle's rudeness of speech, but, as to the texture of it, is elegant Greek, as every one will allow who is able to judge of the differences of style.' Again, he says: 'The sentiments of the epistle are admirable, and not inferior to the acknowledged writings of the apostle. This will be assented to by every one who reads the writings of the apostle with attention.' Afterwards he adds: 'If I were to speak my opinion, I should say, that the sentiments are the apostle's, but the language and composition another's, who committed to writing the apostle's sense, and, as it were, reduced into commentaries the things spoken by his master,' &c.

"*Eusebius* himself, speaking of *Clement's* Epistle to the Corinthians, says: 'Paul having written to the Hebrews in their own language, some think that the Evangelist Luke, others, that this very *Clement* himself, translated it into Greek: which last is most likely, there being a great resemblance between the style of the epistle of *Clement* and the Epistle to the Hebrews: nor are the sentiments of those two writings very different. This passage has been already twice quoted by us; once in the chapter of *Clement*, bishop of Rome, and again in that of *Eusebius*.'

"*Philaster*, bishop of Brescia, about 380, says: 'There are some who do not allow the Epistle to the Hebrews to be Paul's, but say it is either an epistle of the Apostle *Barnabas*, or of *Clement*, bishop of Rome; but some say it is an epistle of *Luke* the evangelist: moreover, some reject it, as more eloquent than the apostle's other writings.'

"*Jerome*, about 392, in his article of St. Paul, in the book of *Illustrious Men*, says: 'The Epistle called to the Hebrews is not thought to be his, because of the difference of the argument and style;

but either *Barnabas's*, as *Tertullian* thought; or the Evangelist *Luke's*, according to some others; or *Clement's*, bishop of Rome; who, as some think, being much with him, clothed and adorned Paul's sense in his own language. Moreover, he wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, in pure Hebrew, it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being translated, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.'

"Some learned men of late times, as *Grotius* and *Le Clerc*, have thought this to be an insuperable objection. Of this opinion also was *Jacob Tollius*; who, in his notes upon *Longinus*, of the sublime, has celebrated the sublimity of this epistle, and particularly the elegance of the beginning of it; which alone he thinks sufficient to show that it was not Paul's.

"It remains, therefore, it seems to me, that if the epistle be Paul's, and was originally written in Greek, as we suppose, the apostle must have had some assistance in composing it; so that we are led to the judgment of *Origen*, which appears to be as ingenious and probable as any. 'The sentiments are the apostle's, but the language and composition of some one else, who committed to writing the apostle's sense; and, as it were, rendered into commentaries the things spoken by his master.' According to this account the epistle is St. Paul's, as to the *thoughts* and *matter*; but the *words* are *another's*.

"*Jerome*, as may be remembered, says: 'He wrote as a Hebrew to the Hebrews, pure Hebrew; it being his own language; whence it came to pass that, being *translated*, it has more elegance in the Greek than his other epistles.' My conjecture, which is not very different, if I may be allowed to mention it, is, that St. Paul dictated the epistle in Hebrew, and another, who was a great master of the Greek language, immediately wrote down the apostle's sentiments in his own elegant Greek. But who this assistant of the apostle was is altogether unknown.

"The ancients, besides Paul, have mentioned *Barnabas*, *Luke*, and *Clement*, as *writers* or *translators* of this epistle; but I do not know that there is any remarkable agreement between the style of the Epistle to the Hebrews and the style of the epistle commonly ascribed to *Barnabas*. The style of *Clement*, in his Epistle to the Corinthians, is verbose and prolix. St. *Luke* may have some words which are in the Epistle to the Hebrews; but that does not make out the same style. This epistle, as *Origen* said, as to the texture of the style, is *elegant Greek*; but that kind of texture appears not in *Luke*, so far as I can perceive; there may be more art and labour in the writings of Luke than in those of the other evangelists, but not much more elegance that I can discern. This Epistle to the Hebrews is bright and elegant from the beginning to the end, and surpasses as much the style of St. Luke as it does the style of St. Paul in his acknowledged epistles. In short, this is an admirable epistle, but singular in sentiments and language; somewhat different in both respects from all the other writings of the New Testament; and whose is the language seems to me altogether unknown; whether that of *Zenas*, or *Apollos*, or some other of the Apostle Paul's assistants and fellow labourers.

"There still remains one objection more against this epistle being written by St. Paul, which is, *the want of his name*; for to all the thirteen epistles, received as his, he prefixes his name, and generally calls himself apostle. This objection has been obvious in all ages; and the omission has been differently accounted for by the ancients who received this epistle as a genuine writing of St. Paul.

"*Clement of Alexandria*, in his *Institutions*, speaks to this purpose: 'The Epistle to the Hebrews,' he says, 'is Paul's, but he did not make use of that inscription *Paul the Apostle*; for which he assigns this reason: writing to the Hebrews, who had conceived a prejudice against him, and were suspicious of him, he wisely declined setting his name at the beginning lest he should offend them. He also mentions this tradition: 'forasmuch as the Lord was sent, as the apostle of almighty God, to the Hebrews, Paul, out of modesty, does not style himself the apostle to the Hebrews, both out of respect to the Lord, and that, being preacher and apostle of the Gentiles, he over and above wrote to the Hebrews.'

"*Jerome* also speaks to this purpose: 'That Paul might decline putting his name in the inscription on account of the Hebrews being offended with him;' so in the article of St. Paul, in his book of *Illustrious Men*. In his *Commentary* in the beginning of his Epistle to the Galatians, he assigns another reason: 'That Paul declined to style himself apostle at the beginning of the Epistle to the Hebrews, because he should afterwards call Christ the High Priest and Apostle of our profession,' **#Heb 3:1**.

"*Theodoret* says, that Paul was especially the apostle of the Gentiles; for which he alleges **#Ga 2:9**, and **#Ro 11:13**. 'Therefore writing to the Hebrews, who were not intrusted to his care, he barely delivered the doctrine of the Gospel without assuming any character of authority, for they were the charge of the other apostles.'

"*Lightfoot* says, 'Paul's not affixing his name to this, as he had done to his other epistles, does no more deny it to be his than the First Epistle of John is denied to be John's on that account.'

"*Tillemont* says, 'Possibly Paul considered it to be a book rather than a letter, since he makes an excuse for its brevity, (**#Heb 13:22**), for indeed it is short for a *book*, but long for a *letter*.'

"It is, I think, observable, that there is not at the beginning of this epistle any salutation. As there is no name of the writer, so neither is there any description of the people to whom it is sent. It appears, from the conclusion, that it was sent to some people at a certain place; and undoubtedly they to whom it was sent, and by whom it was received, knew very well from whom it came, nevertheless there might be reasons for omitting an inscription and a salutation at the beginning. This might arise from the circumstances of things; there might be danger of offence at sending at that time a long letter to Jews in Judea; and this omission might be in part owing to a regard for the bearer, who too is not named. The only person named throughout the epistle is *Timothy*; nor was he then present with the writer. Indeed I imagine that the two great objections against this being an epistle of St. Paul—the *elegance of the style*, and the *want of a name and inscription*, are both owing to some particular circumstance of the writer, and the people to whom it was sent. The people to whom it was sent are plainly Jews in Judea; and the writer very probably is St. Paul, whose circumstances at the breaking up of his confinement at Rome, and his setting out upon a new journey, might be attended with some peculiar embarrassments, which obliged him to act differently from his usual method,

"IV. Thus we are brought to the *fourth* and *last* part of our inquiry concerning this epistle—the *time* and *place* of writing it. *Mill* was of opinion that this epistle was written by Paul, in the year 63, in some part of Italy, soon after he had been released from his imprisonment at Rome. Mr. *Wetstein*

appears to have been of the same opinion. *Tillemont* likewise places this epistle in 63, immediately after the apostle's being set at liberty, who, as he says, was still at Rome, or at least in Italy. *Basnage* speaks of this epistle at the year 61, and supposes it to be written during the apostle's imprisonment, for he afterward speaks of the Epistle to the Ephesians, and says it was the last letter the apostle wrote during the time of his *bonds*. *L'Enfant* and *Beausobre*, in their general preface to St. Paul's epistles, observe, 'That in the subscription at the end of the epistle it is said to have been written *from Italy*; the only ground of which, as they add, is what is said **#Heb 13:24**: *They of Italy salute you*. This has made some think that the apostle wrote to the Hebrews after he had been set at liberty, and when he had got into that part of Italy which borders upon Sicily, and in ancient times was called *Italy*. Nevertheless there is reason to doubt this. When he requests the prayers of the Hebrews, that *he might be restored to them the sooner*, he intimates that he was not yet set at liberty.' Accordingly they place this epistle in the year 62.

"There is not any great difference in any of these opinions concerning the *time* or *place* of this epistle, all supposing that it was written by the apostle either at *Rome* or *Italy*, near the end of his imprisonment at Rome, or soon after it was over, before he removed to any other country.

"I cannot perceive why it may not be allowed to have been written at *Rome*. St. Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians was written at Ephesus; nevertheless he says, **#1Co 16:19**: 'The Churches of Asia salute you.' So now he might send salutations from the Christians of *Italy*, not excluding, but including, those at Rome, together with the rest throughout that country. The argument of *L'Enfant* and *Beausobre*, that Paul was not yet set at liberty, because he requested the prayers of the *Hebrews that he might be restored to them the sooner*, appears to me not of any weight. Though Paul was no longer a prisoner, he might request the prayers of those to whom he was writing, that he might have a prosperous journey to them whom he was desirous to visit, and that all impediments of his intended journey might be removed; and many such there might be, though he was no longer under confinement. Paul was not a prisoner when he wrote his Epistle to the Romans; yet he was very fervent in his prayers to God, that he might have a prosperous journey, and come to them, **#Ro 1:10**.

"For determining the *time* of this epistle, it may be observed that, when the apostle wrote the Epistle to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon, he had hopes of deliverance. At the writing of all these epistles Timothy was present with him; but now he was absent, as plainly appears from **#Heb 13:23**. This leads us to think that this epistle was written *after them*. And it is not unlikely that the apostle had now obtained that liberty which he expected when they were written.

"Moreover, in the Epistle to the Philippians, he speaks of sending Timothy to them, **#Php 2:19-23**: 'But I trust in the Lord Jesus, to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.' Timothy, therefore, if sent, was to come back to the apostle. 'Him, therefore, I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.'

"It is probable that Timothy did go to the Philippians, soon after writing the above mentioned epistles, the apostle having gained good assurance of being quite released from his confinement. And this Epistle to the Hebrews was written during the time of that absence; for it is said, **#Heb 13:23**: 'Know ye that our brother Timothy is set at liberty, *or* has been sent abroad.' The word is

capable of that meaning, and it is a better and more likely meaning, because it suits the coherence. And I suppose that Timothy did soon come to the apostle, and that they both sailed to Judea, and after that went to Ephesus, where Timothy was left to reside with his peculiar charge.

"Thus this epistle was written at Rome, or in Italy, soon after that Paul had been released from his confinement at Rome, in the beginning of the year 63. And I suppose it to be the last written of all St. Paul's epistles which have come down to us, or of which we have any knowledge."-*Dr. Lardner's WORKS*, vol. vi., p. 381.

After this able and most circumstantial investigation I think it would be a mere *actum agere* to enter farther into this discussion; all that the *ancients*, both Grecian and Roman, and all that the most intelligent of the *moderns*, have produced, both for and against the argument stated above, has been both judiciously and candidly stated by Dr. Lardner; and it is not going too far to say that few readers will be found who will draw conclusions different from those of Dr. Lardner, from the same premises.

As all the epistles of St. Paul have an evident *object* and *occasion*, it is natural to look for these in the Epistle to the Hebrews as well as in those to other Churches. We have already seen that it was most probably written to the *converted Jews in Judea*, who were then in a state of *poverty, affliction, and persecution*; and who, it appears, had been assailed by the strongest arguments to apostatize from the faith, and turn back to the poor elementary teaching furnished by Mosaic rites and ceremonies. That in such circumstances they might begin to *halt* and *waver*, will not appear strange to any considerate person; and that the apostle should write to guard them against *apostasy*, by showing them that the religious system which they had embraced was the *completion* and *perfection* of all those which had preceded it, and particularly of the Mosaic, is what might be naturally expected. This he has done in the most effectual and masterly manner, and has furnished them with arguments against their opponents which must have given them a complete triumph.

His arguments against *backsliding* or *apostasy* are the most awful and powerful that can well be conceived, and are as *applicable now* to guard Christian believers against *falling from grace* as they were in the apostolic times, and, from the general *laxity* in which most professors of religion indulge themselves, not less *necessary*.

A late sensible writer, Mr. *Thomas Olivers*, in a discourse on **#Heb 2:3** of this epistle has considered this subject at large, and treated it with great cogency of reasoning. I shall borrow his *Analysis* of the different chapters, and a few of his concluding remarks, a perusal of the whole work will amply repay the serious reader. After one hundred and thirty-two pages of previous discussion he goes on thus:—

"I shall," says he, "sum up all that has been said upon this head by giving a brief account of the OCCASION and DESIGN of this epistle, and of the apostle's *manner* of reasoning therein.

"The Christian religion being so contrary to the corrupt principles and practices of the world, those who embraced and propagated it were, on those accounts, rendered very odious wherever they came. The consequence of this was, that heavy persecutions were raised against them in most places.

The converted Hebrews, because they had turned their backs on the law of Moses, and embraced the religion of Jesus whom their rulers had crucified, were exceedingly persecuted by their countrymen. Sometimes the unconverted Hebrews persecuted their converted brethren *themselves*; at other times they stirred up the *heathen* who were round about to do it. By these means the believing Hebrews had a *great fight of afflictions*, #**Heb 10:32**; and were *made gazing-stocks, both by reproaches and afflictions*, #**Heb 10:33**; and experienced *the spoiling of their goods*, which for a while they took joyfully, #**Heb 10:34**. But this was not all; for, as the Christian religion was then a new thing in the world, it is natural to suppose that the new converts had a great many scruples and reasonings in themselves concerning the lawfulness of what they had done in embracing it: and what added to these scruples was, the constant endeavour of the Judaizing teachers to lay stumbling blocks in the way of these Hebrews, which they too often effected by means of their divers and strange doctrines, mentioned #**Heb 13:9**. The consequence of this opposition, both from within and without, was, that great numbers of the Hebrews *apostatized* from Christ and his Gospel, and went back to the law of Moses; while the fluctuating state of the rest gave the apostles too much reason to fear a general, if not *universal apostasy*. Now this apparent danger was the OCCASION of this epistle, and the DESIGN of it was to prevent the threatened evil if possible.

"That this account is true will fully appear from a more particular survey of the contents of the whole epistle.

"Chap. 1. The apostle shows that all former dispensations were delivered to the world by *men and angels*, who were only *servants* in what they did; but that the Gospel salvation was delivered by *Christ*, who is the *Son of God*, and the *Heir* of all things. How naturally does he then infer the *superiority of the Gospel* over the *law*; and, of consequence, the great absurdity of leaving the former for the sake of the latter!

"Chap. 2. He obviates an objection which might be made to the superior excellency of Christ on account of his humiliation. To this end he shows that this humiliation was voluntary; that it was intended for many important purposes, *viz.* that we might be sanctified, #**Heb 2:11**; that through his death we might be delivered from death, #**Heb 2:14, 15**; and that Christ, by experiencing our infirmities in his own person, might become a *faithful and merciful High Priest*, #**Heb 2:17, 18**. The inference then is, that his taking our nature upon him, and dying therein, is no argument of his inferiority either to the *prophets* or to the *angels*; and therefore it is no excuse for those who *apostatize* from the *Gospel* for the sake of the *law*.

"Chap. 3. Here *Christ* is particularly compared with *Moses*, and shown to be superior to him in many respects. As, 1. *Christ* is shown to be the *great Builder* of that house of which *Moses* is only a *small part*, #**Heb 3:3, 4**. 2. *Christ* is as a *son* in his *own house*; but *Moses* was only as a *servant* in his *master's house*, #**Heb 3:5**. Therefore *Christ* and his salvation are superior to *Moses* and his law, and ought not to be neglected on account of any thing inferior. From #**Heb 3:7** of this chapter to #**Heb 4:14**, the apostle shows the great danger of *apostatizing* from *Christ*, by the severe sentence which was passed on those who rebelled against *Moses*, and *apostatized* from his law.

"Chap. 5. *Christ* is compared to *Aaron*, and preferred to him on several accounts. As, 1. *Aaron* offered for his *own*, as well as for the *sins* of the *people*; but *Christ* offered only for the *sins* of

others, having none of his own to offer for, **#Heb 5:3**. 2. Christ was not a *priest* after the order of Aaron, but after the order of *Melchisedec*, which was a *superior order*, **#Heb 5:10**. Concerning *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, the apostle observed that, through the dulness of the *Hebrews*, there were some things which they could not easily understand, **#Heb 5:11-14**.

"He therefore calls on them, chap. vi., to labour for a more perfect acquaintance therewith; withal promising them his farther assistance, **#Heb 6:1-3**. The necessity of their doing this, of their thus *going on unto perfection*, he enforced by the following consideration, that, if they did not go forward, they would be in danger of *apostatizing* in such manner as would be irrecoverable, **#Heb 6:7, 8**. From thence to the end of the chapter he encourages them to patience and *perseverance*, by the consideration of the *love, oath, and faithfulness* of GOD; and also by the *example* of their father *Abraham*.

"Chap. 7. The apostle resumes the parallel between *Melchisedec* and *Christ*, and shows that they agree in title and descent, **#Heb 7:1-3**; and then, from instances wherein the priesthood of *Melchisedec* was preferable to the priesthood of *Aaron*, he infers the superiority of Christ's priesthood over that of *Aaron*, **#Heb 7:4-17**. From thence to the end of the chapter, he shows that the priesthood of *Aaron* was only subservient to the priesthood of *Christ*, in which it was consummated and abolished; and of consequence, that all those legal obligations were thereby abolished. How naturally then did the apostle infer the absurdity of *apostatizing* from the Gospel to the law, seeing they who did this, not only left the *greater* for the *lesser*, but also left that which remained in *full force*, for the sake of that which was *disannulled*.

"Chap. 8. is employed partly in recapitulating what had been demonstrated before concerning the superior dignity of our great High Priest, **#Heb 8:1-5**; and partly in showing the Superior excellency of the new covenant, as established in *Christ*, and as containing better promises; **#Heb 8:6** to the end of the chapter. From this last consideration, the impropriety of going from the new covenant to the old is as naturally inferred as from any other of the afore-mentioned considerations.

"With the same view the apostle, chap. ix., compares *Christ* and his priesthood to the *tabernacle* of old, and to what the high priest did therein on the *great day of atonement*, in all things giving *Christ* the preference; from **#Heb 9:1** to the end.

"Chap. 10. The apostle sets down the difference between the legal sacrifices and the sacrifice of *Christ*: the legal sacrifices were *weak*, and could not *put away sin*, **#Heb 10:1-4**; but the sacrifice of *Christ* was *powerful*, doing that which the other *could not do*, **#Heb 10:5-10**.

"The next point of difference was between the legal priests who offered these sacrifices, and the High Priest of our profession. And *first*, the legal priests were *many*; ours is *one*. *Secondly*, they *stood* when they presented their offerings to God; *CHRIST sits* at the right hand of his Father. *Thirdly*, they offered *often*; but *CHRIST, once for all*. *Fourthly*, they, with all their offerings, could not put away the smallest sin; but *Christ*, by his one offering, put away all sin, **#Heb 10:11-18**. Now, from all these considerations, the apostle infers the great superiority of the Gospel over the law; and, consequently, the impropriety of leaving the former for the latter.

"The next thing that the apostle does is to improve his doctrine; this he does by showing that, for the reasons above given, the Hebrews ought to cleave to *Christ*, to hold fast their profession, and *not to forsake the assembling themselves together*, #**Heb 10:19-25**. And, as a farther inducement to cleave to *Christ*, and to *persevere unto the end*, he urges the consideration of the difficulties which they had already overcome, and also of the love which they had formerly shown towards *Christ* and his Gospel, #**Heb 10:32-34**. He also encouraged them not to *cast away their confidence*, seeing it had a great recompense of reward, which they should enjoy if they *persevered* unto the end, #**Heb 10:35-37**. Another consideration which he urged was, that they ought not to depart from *faith* to the *works* of the law, because it is by *faith* that a *just man liveth*, and not by the *works of the law*; because God has no pleasure in those who draw back from faith in him; and because every one who does this exposes himself to eternal perdition, #**Heb 10:36-39**.

"Another inducement which he laid before them, to *continue* to expect salvation by *faith* and *patience*, was the consideration of the powerful effects of these graces as exemplified in the patriarchs of old, and the rest of the ancient worthies; chap. xi. throughout. 'This chapter,' according to Mr. *Perkins*, 'depends on the former; thus we may read in the former chapter that many Jews, having received the faith and given their names to *Christ*, did afterwards *fall away*; therefore, towards the end of the chapter, there is a notable exhortation, tending to persuade the Hebrews to *persevere* in faith unto the end. Now in this chapter he continues the same exhortation; and the whole chapter (*as I take it*) is *nothing else*, in substance, but one reason to urge the former exhortation to *perseverance* in faith, and the reason is drawn from the excellency of it; for this chapter, in divers ways, sets down what an excellent *gift* of GOD *faith* is; his *whole scope*, therefore, is manifest to be *nothing else* but to urge them to *persevere* and *continue* in *that faith*, proved at large to be so excellent a thing.'

"As a farther encouragement to patience and *perseverance* he adds the example of *Christ*, #**Heb 12:1-3**: and as to the afflictions they met with on the Gospel's account, he tells them they ought not to be discouraged and driven away from *Christ* on their account, seeing they were signs of the Divine favour, and permitted to come upon them merely for their good, #**Heb 12:4-11**. He then exhorts them to encourage one another to *persevere* in *well doing*, #**Heb 12:12-14**. To watch over one another lest any of them *fall from the grace of God*, #**Heb 12:15-18**. And, seeing they were then in possession of privileges, Gospel privileges, such as the law of *Moses* could not give, he exhorts them to *hold fast the grace* they had, that thereby they might serve God in such a manner as the great obligation they were under required, which alone would be acceptable to him; and this they ought to do, the rather because, if they did not, they would find God to be as much more severe to *them* as his *Gospel* is superior to the *law*; #**Heb 12:19** to the end of the chapter.

Chap. 13. He exhorts them, instead of *apostatizing*, to *continue* their brotherly affection one for another, #**Heb 13:1-3**. To *continue* their purity of behaviour, their dependence on God, and their regard for their teachers, #**Heb 13:4-8**. He exhorts them not to suffer themselves to be *carried about* (from *Christ* and his Gospel) by *diver's and strange doctrines*, but rather to strive to be established in grace, which they would find to be of more service to them than running about after Jewish ceremonies, #**Heb 13:9**. Again he exhorts them to *cleave to* and to follow JESUS *without the camp*, and continually to give praise to God through him, #**Heb 13:9-16**. And instead of *turning away* after seducers, that they might avoid persecution and the scandal of the cross, he exhorts them to submit

to and obey their own Christian teachers, and to pray for their success and welfare, **#Heb 13:17-19**, concluding the whole with some salutations and a solemn benediction from **#Heb 13:20** to the end.

"Now, if we closely attend to these general contents of the epistle, we shall find that *every argument and mode of reasoning*, which would be *proper* in a treatise written professedly on the *sin and danger of apostasy*, is made use of in this epistle.

For, 1. As great temptations to prefer the law of *Moses* to the Gospel of *Christ* was one circumstance which exposed them to the danger of apostasy, nothing could be more to the purpose than to show them that the Gospel is *superior to the law*. Now we have seen how largely this argument is prosecuted in chap. i., ii., iii., v., vii., viii., ix., x. If we reduce it to form, it runs as follows: No one ought to prefer that which is less excellent to that which is more so: but the law is less excellent than the Gospel; therefore none ought to prefer the law to the Gospel, by apostatizing from the latter to the former.

"2. Another argument, equally proper on such an occasion, is that taken from the consideration of the *punishment* which all apostates are exposed to. This argument is urged **#Heb 2:2, 3; #Heb 3:7-19; 4:1-14; 6:4, 8; 10:26-31; 12:25, 28, 29**. In most of these places the apostle compares the punishment which will be inflicted on apostates from *Christ* and his Gospel to that which was inflicted on the apostate Israelites of old, and he frequently shows that the former will be far greater than the latter. This argument is as follows: You ought not to do that which will expose you to as great and greater punishment than that which God inflicted on the rebellious Israelites of old: but total and final apostasy from Christ will expose you to this; therefore you ought not to apostatize from Christ.

"3. Another argument proper on such an occasion is that taken from the consideration of the *great reward* which God has promised to perseverance. This the apostle urges, **#Heb 3:6-14; 4:1-9; #Heb 5:9; 6:9, 11; 9:28; 10:35-39**. This argument runs thus: You ought to be careful to do that which God has promised greatly to reward: but he has promised you this on condition of your perseverance in the Gospel of his Son; therefore you ought to be careful to persevere therein.

"4. A fourth argument, which must operate powerfully on such an occasion, is taken from the consideration of losing their present privileges by apostatizing. This argument is insisted on, **#Heb 2:11-18; 3:1; 4:3-16; 6:18-20; 7:19; 8:10, 12; 9:14, 15; #Heb 10:14, 22; 12:22, 24, 28; 13:10, 14**. This argument runs thus: You ought not to do that for which you will lose the Gospel privileges you now enjoy: but if you apostatize from Christ and his Gospel you will lose them; therefore you ought not to apostatize from *Christ* and his Gospel.

"5. A fifth argument, very proper in such a work, is taken from the consideration of their former zeal and diligence in cleaving to *Christ*, and in professing his religion. This argument is handled **#Heb 6:10; 10:32-34**. The argument here is: Those who have formerly been zealous in well-doing ought not to grow weary, but rather to be steadfast therein unto the end; but you have formerly been zealous in your adherence to *Christ*, and in professing his religion; therefore you ought not to grow weary of adhering to *Christ*, or of professing his religion.

"6. Another argument, proper on such an occasion, is taken from the example of such persons as are held in very high esteem. Now this argument is urged, #**Heb 6:12-15**; 9: throughout; #**Heb 12:1-3**. Here the argument is: Whatever you esteem as an excellency in the example of holy men of old you ought to imitate: but you esteem it as an excellency in their example that they were *steadfast*, and did not *apostatize* from God and his ways; therefore you ought to imitate their example in being steadfast, and in not apostatizing from *Christ* and his Gospel.

"From all that has been said in these several surveys of this epistle, it undeniably appears, 1. That the apostle apprehended these Hebrews to be in danger of total and final apostasy; 2. That he wrote this epistle to them on purpose to prevent it if possible; and 3. That it was total and final apostasy from Christ and his Gospel, of which the believing Hebrews were in danger, and which the apostle endeavours to prevent."

For other matters relative to this subject see the preface, and the notes on all the passages referred to.

**PREFACE  
TO THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE  
HEBREWS.**

THE Epistle to the Hebrews, on which the reader is about to enter, is by far the most important and useful of all the apostolic writings; all the doctrines of the Gospel are in it embodied, illustrated, and enforced in a manner the most lucid, by references and examples the most striking and illustrious, and by arguments the most cogent and convincing. It is an *epitome* of the dispensations of God to man, from the foundation of the world to the advent of Christ. It is not only the sum of the GOSPEL, but the sum and completion of the LAW, on which it is also a most beautiful and luminous comment. *Without* this, the law of Moses had never been fully understood, nor God's design in giving it. *With* this, all is clear and plain, and the ways of God with man rendered consistent and harmonious. The apostle appears to have taken a portion of one of his own epistles for his text—CHRIST is the END of the LAW for RIGHTEOUSNESS to them that BELIEVE, and has most amply and impressively demonstrated his proposition. All the rites, ceremonies, and sacrifices of the Mosaic institution are shown to have had *Christ* for their *object* and *end*, and to have had neither *intention* nor *meaning* but in reference to *him*; yea, as a *system* to be without *substance*, as a *law* to be without *reason*, and its *enactments* to be both *impossible* and *absurd*, if taken out of this reference and connection. Never were *premises* more clearly stated; never was an *argument* handled in a more masterly manner; and never was a *conclusion* more legitimately and satisfactorily brought forth. The *matter* is everywhere the most interesting; the *manner* is throughout the most engaging; and the *language* is most beautifully adapted to the whole, everywhere appropriate, always nervous and energetic, dignified as is the subject, pure and elegant as that of the most accomplished Grecian orators, and harmonious and diversified as the music of the spheres.

So many are the *beauties*, so great the *excellency*, so instructive the *matter*, so pleasing the *manner*, and so exceedingly interesting the *whole*, that the work may be read a hundred times over without perceiving any thing of *sameness*, and with new and increased information at each reading. This latter is an excellency which belongs to the whole revelation of God; but to no part of it in such a peculiar and supereminent manner as to the Epistle to the Hebrews.

To explain and illustrate this epistle multitudes have toiled hard; and exhibited much industry, much learning, and much piety. I also will show my opinion; and ten thousand may succeed me, and still bring out something that is new. That it was written to *Jews*, naturally such, the whole structure of the epistle proves. Had it been written to the *Gentiles*, not one in ten thousand of them could have comprehended the argument, because unacquainted with the Jewish system; the knowledge of which the writer of this epistle everywhere supposes. He who is well acquainted with the Mosaic law sits down to the study of this epistle with double advantages; and he who knows the *traditions of the elders*, and the *Mishnaic illustrations* of the written, and pretended *oral law* of the Jews, is still more likely to enter into and comprehend the apostle's meaning. No man has adopted a more likely way

of explaining its phraseology than *Schoettgen*, who has traced its peculiar diction to Jewish sources; and, according to him, the proposition of the whole epistle is this:—

### JESUS OF NAZARETH IS THE TRUE GOD.

And in order to convince the Jews of the truth of this proposition, the apostle uses but *three arguments*: 1. Christ is superior to the *angels*. 2. He is superior to *Moses*. 3. He is superior to *Aaron*.

These arguments would appear more distinctly were it not for the improper division of the chapters; as he who divided them in the middle ages (a division to which we are still unreasonably attached) had but a superficial knowledge of the word of God. In consequence of this it is that one peculiar excellency of the apostle is not noticed, viz. his *application* of every argument, and the strong exhortation founded on it. *Schoettgen* has very properly remarked, that commentators in general have greatly misunderstood the apostle's meaning through their unacquaintance with the Jewish writings and their peculiar phraseology, to which the apostle is continually referring, and of which he makes incessant use. He also supposes, allowing for the immediate and direct inspiration of the apostle, that he had in view this remarkable saying of the rabbins, on **#Isa 52:13**: "Behold, my servant will deal prudently." *Rab. Tanchum*, quoting *Yalcut Simeoni*, part ii., fol. 53, says: **זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַמְּשִׁיחַ**, "*This is the King Messiah*, who shall be greatly extolled, and elevated: he shall be elevated beyond *Abraham*; shall be more eminent than *Moses*; and more exalted than **מַמְלֵאכֵי הַשָּׂרָה** *the ministering angels*." Or, as it is expressed in *Yalcut Kadosh*, fol. 144: **מְשִׁיחַ גָּדוֹל מִן הָאֲבוֹתָהּ וּמִן מֹשֶׁה וּמִן מַלְכֵי הַשָּׂרָה** *Mashiach gadol min ha-aboth; umin Mosheh; umin Malakey hashshareth*. "The Messiah is greater than the patriarchs; than *Moses*; and than the ministering angels." These sayings he shows to have been fulfilled in *our Messiah*; and as he dwells on the superiority of our Lord to all these illustrious persons because they were at the very *top* of all *comparisons* among the Jews; he, according to their opinion, who was greater than all these, must be greater than all created beings.

This is the point which the apostle undertakes to prove, in order that he may show the Godhead of Christ; therefore, if we find him proving that Jesus was *greater* than the *patriarchs*, *greater* than *Aaron*, *greater* than *Moses*, and *greater* than the *angels*, he must be understood to mean, according to the Jewish phraseology, that Jesus is an uncreated Being, infinitely greater than all others, whether *earthly* or *heavenly*. For, as they allowed the greatest eminence (next to God) to *angelic beings*, the apostle concludes "that he who is greater than the angels is truly God: but Christ is greater than the angels; therefore Christ is truly God." Nothing can be clearer than that this is the apostle's grand argument; and the proofs and illustrations of it meet the reader in almost every verse.

That the apostle had a *plan* on which he drew up this epistle is very clear, from the close connection of every part. The grand divisions seem to be *three*:—

I. The *proposition*, which is very short, and is contained in **#Heb 1:1-3**. The majesty and pre-eminence of Christ.

II. The *proof* or *arguments* which support the proposition, viz.:—

*Christ is greater than the ANGELS.*

1. Because he has a more excellent name than they, **#Heb 1:4, 5**.
2. Because the *angels* of God *adore him*, **#Heb 1:6**.
3. Because the *angels* were *created by him*, **#Heb 1:7**.
4. Because, in his human nature, he was endowed with *greater gifts* than they, **#Heb 1:8, 9**.
5. Because he is *eternal*, **#Heb 1:10-12**.
6. Because he is more *highly exalted*, **#Heb 1:13**.
7. Because the *angels* are only the *servants* of God; *he, the Son*, **#Heb 1:14**.

In the *application* of this argument he exhorts the Hebrews not to *neglect Christ*, **#Heb 2:1**, by arguments drawn, :—

1. From the minor to the major, **#Heb 2:2, 3**.
2. Because the preaching of Christ was confirmed by *miracles*, **#Heb 2:4**.
3. Because, in the *economy* of the New Testament, angels are not the *administrators*; but the *Messiah* himself, to whom all things are subject, **#Heb 2:5**.

Here the apostle inserts a twofold *objection*, professedly drawn from Divine revelation:—

1. Christ is man, and is less than the angels. *What is man-thou madest him a little lower than the angels*, **#Heb 2:6, 7**. Therefore he cannot be *superior* to them.

To this it is answered: 1. Christ as a mortal man, by his death and resurrection, overcame all enemies, and subdued all things to himself; therefore he must be *greater than the angels*, **#Heb 2:9**.

2. Though Christ died, and was in this respect inferior to the angels, yet it was necessary that he should take on him this mortal state, that he might be of the same nature with those whom he was to redeem; and this he did without any prejudice to his Divinity, **#Heb 2:10-18**.

*Christ is greater than MOSES.*

1. Because Moses was only a *servant*; Christ, the *Lord*, **#Heb 3:2-6**.

The *application* of this argument he makes from **#Ps 95:7-11**, which he draws out at length, **#Heb 3:7-18; 4:1-13**.

*Christ is greater than AARON, and all the other high priests.*

1. Because he has not gone through the *veil* of the tabernacle to make an atonement for sin, but has entered for this purpose into *heaven* itself, **#Heb 4:14**.

2. Because he is the *Son of God*, **#Heb 4:14**.

3. Because it is from him we are to implore grace and mercy, **#Heb 4:15, 16**, and **#Heb 4:1-3**.

4. Because he was consecrated High Priest by God himself, **#Heb 5:4-10**.

5. Because he is not a priest according to the *order* of Aaron, but according to the *order* of Melchisedec, which was much more ancient, and much more noble, chap. vii. For the excellence and prerogatives of this order, see the notes.

6. Because he is not a *typical* priest, prefiguring good things to come, but the *real* Priest, of whom the others were but *types* and *shadows*, **#Heb 8:1-9:11**. For the various reasons by which this argument is supported, see also the notes.

In this part of the epistle the apostle inserts a *digression*, in which he reproves the ignorance and negligence of the Hebrews in their mode of treating the sacred Scriptures. See **#Heb 5:11**, and chap. vi.

The *application* of this part contains the following exhortations:—

1. That they should carefully retain their faith in Christ as the true Messiah, **#Heb 10:19-23**.

2. That they should be careful to live a godly life, **#Heb 10:24, 25**.

3. That they should take care not to incur the punishment of disobedience, **#Heb 10:32-37**, and **#Heb 12:3-12**.

4. That they should place their whole confidence in God, live by faith, and not turn back to perdition **#Heb 10:38; 12:2**.

5. That they should consider and imitate the faith and obedience of their eminent ancestors, chap. xi.

6. That they should take courage, and not be remiss in the practice of the true religion, **#Heb 12:12-24**.

7. That they should take heed not to despise the Messiah, now speaking to them from heaven, **#Heb 12:25-29**.

III. *Practical and miscellaneous exhortations* relative to sundry duties, chap. xiii.

All these subjects, (whether immediately designed by the apostle himself, in this particular order, or not,) are pointedly considered in this most excellent epistle; in the whole of which the *superiority* of CHRIST, his *Gospel*, his *priesthood*, and his *sacrifice*, over *Moses*, the *law*, the *Aaronic priesthood*, and the various *sacrifices* prescribed by the law, is most clearly and convincingly shown.

Different writers have taken different views of the order in which these subjects are proposed, but most commentators have produced the same results.

For other matters relative to the *author* of the epistle, the *persons* to whom it was sent, the *language* in which it was composed, and the *time* and *place* in which it was written, the reader is referred to the *introduction*, where these matters are treated in sufficient detail.

**THE  
EPISTLE OF PAUL THE APOSTLE  
TO THE  
HEBREWS.**

*Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5571.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5565.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5555.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4067.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4291.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3823.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4422
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2411.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3165.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1003.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 3.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 810.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 814.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 815.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 816.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 375.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 111.
- Year of the Julian era, 108.
- Year of the Spanish era, 101.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 67.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 63.
- Year of Albinus, governor of the Jews, 2.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 14.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 4.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 64.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 7; or the second after the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 4, or the first after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 16.
- Dominical Letter, it being the third after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the IIIId of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the thirtieth of March, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.

- Easter Sunday, the III<sup>d</sup> of the nones of April, named by the Jews the 19<sup>th</sup> of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 3<sup>d</sup> of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22<sup>d</sup> of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 6.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 13.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 13,15,14,15,16,17,18, 19,20,20,22,22.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 9.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 10.
- Roman Consuls, C. Memmius Regulus and L. Verginius Rufus.

## CHAPTER I.

*Different discoveries made of the Divine will to the ancient Israelites by the prophets, 1. The discovery now perfected by the revelation of Jesus Christ, of whose excellences and glories a large description is given, 2-13. Angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **God, who at sundry times and in divers manners]** We can scarcely conceive any thing more dignified than the opening of this epistle; the sentiments are exceedingly elevated, and the language, harmony itself! The infinite God is at once produced to view, not in any of those attributes which are essential to the Divine nature, but in the manifestations of his love to the world, by giving a revelation of his will relative to the salvation of mankind, and thus preparing the way, through a long train of years, for the introduction of that most glorious Being, his own Son. This Son, in the fulness of time, was manifested in the flesh that he might complete all vision and prophecy, supply all that was wanting to perfect the great scheme of revelation for the instruction of the world, and then die to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. The description which he gives of this glorious personage is elevated beyond all comparison. Even in his *humiliation*, his suffering of death excepted, he is infinitely exalted above all the angelic host, is the object of their unceasing adoration, is permanent on his eternal throne at the right hand of the Father, and from him they all receive their commands to minister to those whom he has redeemed by his blood. in short, this first chapter, which may be considered the introduction to the whole epistle is, for importance of subject, dignity of expression, harmony and energy of language, compression and yet distinctness of ideas, equal, if not superior, to any other part of the New Testament.

**Sundry times]** πολυμερως, from πολυς, *many*, and μέρος, *a part*; giving portions of revelation at different times.

**Divers manners]** πολυτροπως, from πολυς, *many*, and τροπος, *a manner, turn, or form of speech*; hence *trope*, a figure in rhetoric. *Lambert Bos* supposes these words to refer to that part of music which is denominated *harmony*, viz. that general consent or union of musical sounds which is made

up of different parts; and, understood in this way, it may signify the *agreement* or *harmony* of all the Old Testament writers, who with one consent gave testimony to Jesus Christ, and the work of redemption by him. *To him gave all the prophets witness, that, through his name, whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins; #Ac 10:43.*

But it is better to consider, with *Kypke*, that the words are rather intended to point out the *imperfect* state of Divine revelation under the Old Testament; it was not *complete*, nor can it without the New be considered a sufficiently ample discovery of the Divine will. Under the Old Testament, revelations were made *πολυμερως και πολυτροπως*, at *various* times, by *various* persons, in *various* laws and forms of teaching, with *various* degrees of clearness, under *various* shadows, types, and figures, and with *various* modes of revelation, such as by angels, visions, dreams, mental impressions, &c. See **#Nu 12:6, 8**. But under the New Testament all is done *απλως*, *simply*, by *one person*, i.e. JESUS, who has fulfilled the prophets, and completed prophecy; who is the way, the truth, and the life; and the founder, mediator, and governor of his own kingdom.

One great object of the apostle is, to put the *simplicity* of the Christian system in opposition to the *complex* nature of the Mosaic economy; and also to show that what the law could not do because it was weak through the flesh, Jesus has accomplished by the merit of his death, and the energy of his Spirit.

*Maximus Tyrius*, Diss. 1, page 7, has a passage where the very words employed by the apostle are found, and evidently used nearly in the same sense: *τη ρος ανθρωπου ψυχη δυο οργανων ουτων προς συνεσιν, του μεν απλου, ον καλουμεν νουν, του δε ποικιλου και πολυμερους και πολυτροπου, ας αισθησεις καλουμεν*. "The soul of man has two organs of intelligence: one *simple*, which we call *mind*; the other *diversified*, and acting in *various modes* and *various ways*, which we term *sense*."

A similar form of expression the same writer employs in Diss. 15, page 171: "The city which is governed by the mob, *πολυφωνον τε εινα και πολυμερη και πολυπαθη*, is full of noise, and is divided by various factions and various passions."

The excellence of the *Gospel* above the *law* is here set down in three points: 1. God spake unto the faithful under the Old Testament by Moses and the prophets, worthy *servants*, yet servants; now the *Son* is much better than a servant, **#Heb 1:4**. 2. Whereas the body of the Old Testament was long in compiling, being about a thousand years from Moses to Malachi; and God spake unto the fathers by piecemeal, one while raising up one prophet, another while another, now sending them one parcel of prophecy or history, then another; but when Christ came, all was brought to perfection in one age; the apostles and evangelists were alive, some of them, when every part of the New Testament was completely finished. 3. The *Old Testament* was delivered by God in divers manners, both in utterance and manifestation; but the delivery of the *Gospel* was in a more simple manner; for, although there are various penmen, yet the subject is the same, and treated with nearly the same phraseology throughout; James, Jude, and the Apocalypse excepted. See *Leigh*.

Verse 2. **Last days**] The Gospel dispensation, called the *last days* and the *last time*, because not to be followed by any other dispensation; or the conclusion of the Jewish Church and state now at their termination.

**By his Son]** It is very remarkable that the pronoun *αυτου*, *his*, is not found in the text; nor is it found in any MS. or version. We should not therefore supply the pronoun as our translators have done; but simply read *εν Υιω*, BY A SON, OR IN A SON, *whom he hath appointed heir of all things*. God has many *sons* and daughters, for he is *the Father of the spirits of all flesh*; and he has many *heirs*, for *if sons, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ*; but he has no Son who is *heir of all things*, none *by whom he made the worlds*, none *in whom he speaks*, and by whom he has delivered a complete revelation to mankind, but Jesus the Christ.

The apostle begins with the lowest state in which Christ has appeared: 1. His being a SON, born of a woman, and made under the law. He then ascends, 2. So his being an *Heir*, and an Heir of *all things*. 3. He then describes him as the *Creator* of all worlds. 4. As the *Brightness of the Divine glory*. 5. As the *express Image of his person, or character of the Divine substance*. 6. As sustaining the immense fabric of the universe; and this by the word of his power. 7. As having made an *atonement* for the sin of the world, which was the most stupendous of all his works.

"Twas great to speak a world from nought;  
Twas greater to redeem."

8. As being on the *right hand* of God, infinitely exalted above all created beings; and the object of *adoration* to all the angelic host. 9. As having an *eternal throne*, neither his *person* nor his *dignity* ever *changing* or decaying. 10. As continuing to *exercise dominion*, when the earth and the heavens are no more! It is only in God manifested in the flesh that all these excellences can possibly appear, therefore the apostle begins this astonishing *climax* with the simple *Sonship* of Christ, or his *incarnation*; for, on *this*, all that he is to man, and all that he has done for man, is built.

Verse 3. **The brightness of his glory]** *απαυγασμα της δοξης* The resplendent outbeaming of the essential glory of God. *Hesychius* interprets *απαυγασμα* by *ηλιου φεγγος*, the *splendour of the sun*. The same form of expression is used by an apocryphal writer, *Wisdom Wisdom 7:26*, where, speaking of the uncreated wisdom of God, he says: "For she is the *splendour of eternal light*, *απαυγασμα γαρ εστι φωτος αιδιου*, and the unsullied mirror of the energy of God, and the image of his goodness." The word *αυγασμα* is that which has splendour *in itself* *απαυγασμα* is the splendour *emitted from it*; but the *inherent* splendour and the *exhibited* splendour are radically and essentially the same.

**The express image of his person]** *χαρακτηρ της υποστασεως αυτου* *The character or impression of his hypostasis or substance*. It is supposed that these words expound the former; *image* expounding *brightness*, and *person or substance, glory*. The *hypostasis* of God is that which is essential to him as God; and the *character or image* is that by which all the likeness of the original becomes manifest, and is a perfect *fac-simile* of the whole. It is a metaphor taken from sealing; the *die* or *seal* leaving the full impression of its every part on the wax to which it is applied.

From these words it is evident, 1. That the apostle states Jesus Christ to be of the *same essence* with the Father, as the *απαυγασμα*, or *proceeding splendour*, must be the same with the *αυγασμα*, or *inherent splendour*.

2. That Christ, though proceeding from the Father, is of the same essence; for if one *αυγη*, or *splendour*, produce another *αυγη*, or *splendour*, the produced splendour must be of the same essence with that which produces it.

3. That although Christ is thus of the same essence with the Father, yet he is a *distinct person* from the Father; as the splendour of the sun, though of the same essence, is distinct from the sun itself, though each is essential to the other; as the *αυγασμα*, or *inherent splendour*, cannot subsist without its *απαυγασμα*, or *proceeding splendour*, nor the *proceeding splendour* subsist without the *inherent splendour* from which it proceeds.

4. That Christ is *eternal* with the Father, as the proceeding splendour must necessarily be coexistent with the inherent splendour. If the one, therefore, be *uncreated*, the other is *uncreated*; if the one be *eternal*, the other is *eternal*.

**Upholding all things by the word of his power]** This is an astonishing description of the infinitely energetic and all pervading power of God. He *spake*, and all things were created; he *speaks*, and all things are sustained. The Jewish writers frequently express the perfection of the Divine nature by the phrases, *He bears all things, both above and below; He carries all his creatures; He bears his world; He bears all worlds by his power.* The Hebrews, to whom this epistle was written, would, from this and other circumstances, fully understand that the apostle believed Jesus Christ to be truly and properly God.

**Purged our sins]** There may be here some reference to the great transactions in the wilderness.

1. Moses, while in communion with God on the mount, was so impressed with the Divine glories that his face shone, so that the Israelites could not behold it. But Jesus is infinitely greater than Moses, for he is the splendour of God's glory; and,

2. Moses found the government of the Israelites such a burden that he altogether sank under it. His words, **#Nu 11:12**, are very remarkable: *Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, CARRY them in thy BOSOM-unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers?* But Christ not only *carried* all the Israelites, and all mankind; but *he upholds ALL THINGS by the word of his power.*

3. The Israelites murmured against Moses and against God, and provoked the heavy displeasure of the Most High; and would have been consumed had not Aaron made an *atonement* for them, by offering *victims* and *incense*. But Jesus not only makes an atonement for Israel, but for the whole world; not with the blood of bulls and goats, but with his own blood: hence it is said that *he purged our sins δι αυτου*, by himself his own body and life being the victim. It is very likely that the apostle had all these things in his eye when he wrote this verse; and takes occasion from them to show the infinite excellence of Jesus Christ when compared with Moses; and of his *Gospel* when compared with the *law*. And it is very likely that the Spirit of God, by whom he spoke, kept in view those maxims of the ancient Jews, concerning the Messiah, whom they represent as being infinitely greater than Abraham, the patriarchs, Moses, and the ministering angels. So Rabbi Tanchum, on **#Isa 52:13**, *Behold my servant shall deal prudently*, says, *זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַמַּשִּׁיחַ* *Zeh melek hammashiach*, this is

the King Messiah; *and shall be exalted, and be extolled, and be very high.* "He shall be *exalted* above Abraham, and shall be *extolled* beyond Moses, and shall be more *sublime* than the ministering angels-." See the preface.

**The right hand of the Majesty on high]** As it were associated with the supreme Majesty, in glory everlasting, and in the government of all things in time and in eternity; for the *right hand* is the place of the greatest eminence, #1Ki 2:19. The king himself, in eastern countries, sits on the throne; the *next* to him in the kingdom, and the highest *favourite*, sits on his *right hand*; and the third greatest personage, on his *left*.

Verse 4. **So much better than the angels]** Another argument in favour of the Divinity of our Lord. The Jews had the highest opinion of the transcendent excellence of angels, they even associate them with God in the creation of the world, and suppose them to be of the privy council of the Most High; and thus they understand #Ge 1:26: *Let us make man in our own image, in our own likeness;* "And the Lord said to the ministering angels that stood before him, and who were created the second day, *Let us make man,*" &c. See the Targum of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*. And they even allow them to be worshipped for the sake of their Creator, and as his representatives; though they will not allow them to be worshipped for their own sake. As, therefore, the Jews considered them next to God, and none entitled to their adoration but God; on their own ground the apostle proves Jesus Christ to be God, because God commanded all the angels of heaven to worship him. He, therefore, who is greater than the angels, and is the object of their adoration, is God. But Jesus Christ is greater than the angels, and the object of their adoration; therefore Jesus Christ must be God.

**By inheritance obtained]** κληρονομηκεν ονομα. The verb κληρονομειν signifies generally to *participate, possess, obtain, or acquire*; and is so used by the purest Greek writers: Kypke has produced several examples of it from *Demosthenes*. It is not by *inheritance* that Christ possesses a more excellent name than angels, but as God: he has it *naturally and essentially*; and, as *God manifested in the flesh*, he has it in consequence of his humiliation, sufferings, and meritorious death. See #Php 2:9.

Verse 5. **Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee]** These words are quoted from #Ps 2:7, a psalm that seems to refer only to the Messiah; and they are quoted by St. Paul, #Ac 13:33, as referring to the *resurrection of Christ*. And this application of them is confirmed by the same apostle, #Ro 1:4, as by his resurrection from the dead he *was declared*-manifestly proved, *to be the Son of God with power*; God having put forth his miraculous energy in raising that body from the grave which had truly died, and died a violent death, for Christ was put to death as a malefactor, but by his *resurrection* his innocence was demonstrated, as God could not work a miracle to raise a wicked man from the dead. As Adam was *created* by God, and because no natural generation could have any operation in this case, therefore he was called the *son of God*, #Lu 3:38, and could never have seen *corruption* if he had not sinned, so the human nature of Jesus Christ, formed by the energy of the eternal Spirit in the womb of the virgin, without any human intervention, was for this very reason called the Son of God, #Lu 1:35; and because it had not *sinned*, therefore it could not see corruption, nor was it even *mortal*, but through a miraculous display of God's infinite love, for the purpose of making a sacrificial atonement for the sin of the world and God, having raised this sacrificed human nature from the dead, declared that same Jesus (who was, as above stated, *the Son*

of God) to be his Son, the promised Messiah; and as coming by the Virgin Mary, the right heir to the throne of David, according to the uniform declaration of all the prophets.

The words, *This day have I begotten thee*, must refer either to his *incarnation*, when he was miraculously conceived in the womb of the virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit; or to his *resurrection* from the dead, when God, by this sovereign display of his almighty energy, declared him to be his Son, vindicated his innocence, and also the purity and innocence of the blessed virgin, who was the mother of this son, and who declared him to be produced in her womb by the power of God. The *resurrection* of Christ, therefore, to which the words most properly refer, not only gave the fullest proof that he was an *innocent* and *righteous* man, but also that he had accomplished the purpose for which he died, and that his *conception* was miraculous, and his mother a pure and unspotted virgin.

This is a subject of infinite importance to the Christian system, and of the last consequence in reference to the conviction and conversion of the Jews, for whose use this epistle was sent by God. Here is the rock on which they split; they deny this *Divine Sonship* of Jesus Christ, and their blasphemies against *him* and his *virgin mother* are too shocking to be transcribed. The *certainty* of the *resurrection* of Jesus refutes their every calumny; proves his miraculous conception; vindicates the blessed virgin; and, in a word, *declares him to be the Son of God with power*.

This most important use of this saying has passed unnoticed by almost every Christian writer which I have seen; and yet it lies here at the foundation of all the apostle's proofs. If Jesus was not thus the Son of God, the whole Christian system is vain and baseless: but his *resurrection* demonstrates him to have been the Son of God; therefore every thing built on this foundation is more durable than the foundations of heaven, and as inexpugnable as the throne of the eternal King.

**He shall be to me a Son?]** As the Jews have ever blasphemed against the *Sonship* of Christ, it was necessary that the apostle should adduce and make strong all his proofs, and show that this was not a new revelation; that it was that which was chiefly intended in several scriptures of the Old Testament, which, without farther mentioning the places where found, he immediately produces. This place, which is quoted from **#2Sa 7:14**, shows us that the *seed* which God promised to David, and who was to *sit upon his throne*, and whose *throne should be established for ever*, was not Solomon, but Jesus Christ; and indeed he quotes the words so as to intimate that they were so understood by the Jews. See among the observations at the end of the chapter.

Verse 6. **And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten]** This is not a correct translation of the Greek, ὅταν δε παλιν εισαγαγη τον πρωτοτοκον εις την οικουμενην. *But when he bringeth again, or the second time, the first-born into the habitable world*. This most manifestly refers to his *resurrection*, which might be properly considered a *second incarnation*; for as the human soul, as well as the fulness of the Godhead bodily, dwelt in the man, Christ Jesus on and during his incarnation, so when he expired upon the cross, both the *Godhead* and the *human spirit* left his dead body; and as on his resurrection these were reunited to his revived manhood, therefore, with the strictest propriety, does the apostle say that the resurrection was a *second bringing of him into the world*.

I have translated *οικουμενη* the *habitable world*, and this is its proper meaning; and thus it is distinguished from *κοσμος*, which signifies the *terraqeous globe*, independently of its inhabitants; though it often expresses both the inhabited and uninhabited parts. Our Lord's *first coming* into the world is expressed by this latter word, #**Heb 10:5**: *Wherefore when he cometh into the world, διοεισερχομενος εις τον κοσμος*, and this simply refers to his being *incarnated*, that he might be capable of *suffering* and *dying* for man. But the word is changed on this *second coming*, I mean his *resurrection*, and then *οικουμενη* is used; and why? (fancy apart) because he was now *to dwell with man*; to send his gospel everywhere to all the inhabitants of the earth, and to *accompany* that Gospel wherever he sent it, and to *be* wherever two or three should be gathered together in his name. Wherever the messengers of Jesus Christ go, preaching the kingdom of God, even to the farthest and most desolate parts of the earth where human beings exist, there they ever find Christ; he is not only in *them*, and with *them*, but he is in and among all who believe on him through their word.

**Let all the angels of God worship him.]** The apostle recurs here to his former assertion, that Jesus is higher than the angels, #**Heb 1:4**, that he is none of those who can be called ordinary angels or messengers, but one of the most extraordinary kind, and the object of worship to all the angels of God. To worship any *creature* is idolatry, and God resents idolatry more than any other evil. Jesus Christ can be no creature, else the angels who worship him must be guilty of idolatry, and God the author of that idolatry, who commanded those angels to worship Christ.

There has been some difficulty in ascertaining the place from which the apostle quotes these words; some suppose #**Ps 97:7**: *Worship him, all ye gods*; which the Septuagint translate thus: *προσκυνησατε αυτω, παντες αγγελοι αυτου*. *Worship him, all ye his angels*; but it is not clear that the Messiah is intended in this psalm, nor are the words precisely those used here by the apostle. Our marginal references send us with great propriety to the *Septuagint* version of #**De 32:43**, where the passage is found *verbatim et literatim*; but there is nothing answering to the words in the present Hebrew text. The apostle undoubtedly quoted the *Septuagint*, which had then been for more than 300 years a version of the highest repute among the Jews; and it is very probable that the copy from which the Seventy translated had the corresponding words. However this may be, they are now sanctioned by Divine authority; and as the verse contains some singular *additions*, I will set it down in a parallel column with that of our own version, which was taken immediately from the Hebrew text, premising simply this, that it is the last verse of the famous prophetic song of Moses, which seems to point out the *advent of the Messiah* to discomfit his enemies, purify the land, and redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

De 32:43, from the Hebrew.

. . . . .  
 . . . . . Rejoice, O ye nations, with  
 his people; . . . . .  
 . . . . . for he will avenge  
 the blood of his servants; . . . and will render  
 vengeance to his adversaries: . and . .  
 will be merciful to his land and to his people.

De 32:43, from the Septuagint.

*Rejoice, ye heaven, together with him; and let  
 all the angels of God worship him. Rejoice, ye  
 Gentiles, with his people; and let the children of  
 God be strengthened in him; for he will avenge  
 the blood of his children; he will avenge, and  
 will repay judgment to his adversaries; and  
 those who hate him will he recompense: and the  
 Lord will purge the land of his people.*

This is a very important verse; and to it, as it stands in the Septuagint, St. Paul has referred once before; see **#Ro 15:10**. This very verse, as it stands now in the Septuagint, thus referred to by an inspired writer, shows the great importance of this ancient version; and proves the necessity of its being studied and well understood by every minister of Christ. In Rom. 3: there is a large quotation—from Psalm 14:; where there are six whole verses in the apostle's quotation which are not found in the present Hebrew text, but are preserved in the Septuagint! How strange it is that this venerable and important version, so often quoted by our Lord and all his apostles, should be so generally neglected, and so little known! That the common people should be ignorant of it, is not to be wondered at, as it has never been put in an English dress; but that the ministers of the Gospel should be unacquainted with it may be spoken to their shame.

Verse 7. **Who maketh his angels spirits]** They are so far from being superior to Christ, that they are not called God's sons in any *peculiar* sense, but his *servants*, as *tempests* and *lightnings* are. In many respects they may have been made inferior even to *man* as he came out of the hands of his Maker, for *he* was made in the *image* and *likeness* of *God*; but of the angels, even the highest order of them, this is never spoken. It is very likely that the apostle refers here to the opinions of the Jews relative to the angels. In *Pirkey R. Elieser*, c. 4, it is said: "The angels which were created the second day, when they minister before God, **נְעֻשֵׁי שֵׁן שֶׁ אֵשׁ** *become fire*." In *Shemoth Rabba*, s. 25, fol. 123, it is said: "God is named *the Lord of hosts*, because with his angels he doth whatsoever he wills: when he pleases, he makes them *sit down*; **#Jud 6:11**: *And the angel of the Lord came, and sat under a tree*. When he pleases, he causes them to *stand*; **#Isa 6:2**: *The seraphim stood*. Sometimes he makes them like *women*; **#Zec 5:9**: *Behold there came two women, and the wind was in their wings*. Sometimes he makes them like *men*; **#Ge 18:2**: *And, lo, three men stood by him*. Sometimes he makes them spirits; **#Ps 104:4**: *Who maketh his angels spirits*. Sometimes he makes them *fire*; *ibid*. *His ministers a flame of fire*."

In *Yalcut Simeoni*, par. 2, fol. 11, it is said: "The angel answered Manoah, I know not in whose image I am made, for God changeth us every hour: sometimes he makes us *fire*, sometimes *spirit*, sometimes *men*, and at other times *angels*." It is very probable that those who are termed *angels* are not confined to any specific form or shape, but assume various forms and appearances according to the nature of the work on which they are employed and the will of their sovereign employer. This seems to have been the ancient Jewish doctrine on this subject.

Verse 8. **Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever]** If this be said of the Son of God, i.e. Jesus Christ, then Jesus Christ must be God; and indeed the design of the apostle is to prove this. The words here quoted are taken from **#Ps 45:6, 7**, which the ancient Chaldee paraphrast, and the most intelligent rabbins, refer to the Messiah. On the third verse of this Psalm, *Thou art fairer than the children of men*, the *Targum* says: "Thy beauty, **מַלְכָּא מְשִׁיחָא** *malca Meshicha*, O King Messiah, is greater than the children of men." *Aben Ezra* says: "This Psalm speaks of David, or rather of his son, the *Messiah*, for this is his name," **#Eze 34:24**: *And David my servant shall be a Prince over them for ever*. Other rabbins confirm this opinion.

This verse is very properly considered a proof, and indeed a strong one, of the Divinity of Christ; but some late versions of the New Testament have endeavoured to avoid the evidence of this proof

by translating the words thus: *God is thy throne for ever and ever*; and if this version be correct, it is certain the text can be no proof of the doctrine. Mr. Wakefield vindicates this translation at large in his *History of Opinions*; and ο θεος, being the *nominative* case, is supposed to be a sufficient justification of this version. In answer to this it may be stated that the *nominative* case is often used for the *vocative*, particularly by the Attics; and the whole scope of the place requires it should be so used here; and, with due deference to all of a contrary opinion, the original Hebrew cannot be consistently translated any other way, כִּסֵּאךְ אֱלֹהִים עוֹלָם וָעֶד *kisaca Elohim olam vaed*, *Thy throne, O God, is for ever, and to eternity*. It is in both worlds; and extends over all time; and will exist through all endless duration. To this our Lord seems to refer, #Mt 28:18: *All power is given unto me, both in HEAVEN and EARTH*. My *throne*, i.e. my *dominion*, extends from the creation to the consummation of all things. These I have made, and these I uphold; and from the end of the world, throughout eternity, I shall have the same glory-sovereign, unlimited power and authority, which I had with the Father before the world began; #Joh 17:5. I may add that none of the ancient versions has understood it in the way contended for by those who deny the Godhead of Christ, either in the Psalm from which it is taken, or in this place where it is quoted. Aquila translates אֱלֹהִים *Elohim*, by θεε, *O God*, in the *vocative* case; and the Arabic adds the sign of the *vocative* [Arabic] *ya*, reading the place thus: [Arabic] *korsee yallahho ila abadilabada*, the same as in our version. And even allowing that ο θεος here is to be used as the *nominative* case, it will not make the sense contended for, without adding εστι to it, a reading which is not countenanced by any *version*, nor by any MS. yet discovered. Wiclif, Coverdale, and others, understood it as the *nominative*, and translated it so; and yet it is evident that this *nominative* has the power of the *vocative*: *forsothe to the sone God thi troone into the world of world: a gerde of equite the gerde of thi reume*. I give this, pointing and all, as it stands in my old MS. Bible. Wiclif is nearly the same, but is evidently of a more modern cast: *but to the sone he seith, God thy trone is into the world of world, a gherd of equyte is the gherd of thi reume*. Coverdale translates it thus: *But unto the sonne he sayeth, God, thi seate endureth for ever and ever: the cepter of thi kyngdome is a right cepter*. Tindal and others follow in the same way, all reading it in the *nominative* case, with the force of the *vocative*; for none of them has inserted the word εστι, *is*, because not authorized by the original: a word which the opposers of the Divinity of our Lord are obliged to *beg*, in order to support their interpretation. See some farther criticisms on this at the end of this chapter.

**A sceptre of righteousness]** The sceptre, which was a sort of staff or instrument of various forms, was the ensign of government, and is here used for government itself. This the ancient Jewish writers understand also of the Messiah.

Verse 9. **Thou hast loved righteousness]** This is the characteristic of a just governor: he abhors and suppresses iniquity; he countenances and supports righteousness and truth.

**Therefore God, even thy God]** The original, δια τουτο εχρισε σε ο θεος, ο θεος σου, may be thus translated: *Therefore, O God, thy God hath anointed thee*. The form of speech is nearly the same with that in the preceding verse; but the sense is sufficiently clear if we read, *Therefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee, &c.*

**With the oil of gladness]** We have often had occasion to remark that, anciently, *kings, priests, and prophets* were consecrated to their several offices by anointing; and that this signified the gifts and influences of the Divine Spirit. Christ, ο χριστος, signifies *The Anointed One*, the same as the

Hebrew Messiah; and he is here said to be *anointed with the oil of gladness above his fellows*. None was ever constituted *prophet, priest, and king*, but himself; some were kings only, prophets only, and priests only; others were kings and priests, or priests and prophets, or kings and prophets; but none had ever the *three offices* in his own person but Jesus Christ, and none but himself can be a King over the universe, a Prophet to all intelligent beings, and a Priest to the whole human race. Thus he is infinitely exalted *beyond his fellows*-all that had ever borne the regal, prophetic, or sacerdotal offices.

Some think that the word *μετοχους*, *fellows*, refers to *believers* who are made partakers of the same Spirit, but cannot have its infinite plenitude. The first sense seems the best. *Gladness* is used to express the *festivities* which took place on the inauguration of kings, &c.

Verse 10. **And, Thou, Lord]** This is an address to the *Son* as the *Creator*, see #**Heb 1:2**; for this is implied in *laying the foundation* of the earth. The heavens, which are the work of his hands, point out his infinite wisdom and skill.

Verse 11. **They shall perish]** Permanently fixed as they seem to be, a time shall come when they shall be *dissolved*, and afterward *new heavens* and a *new earth* be formed, in which righteousness alone shall dwell. See #**2Pe 3:10-13**.

**Shall wax old as doth a garment]** As a garment by long using becomes unfit to be longer used, so shall all visible things; they shall *wear old*, and *wear out*; and hence the necessity of their being *renewed*. It is remarkable that our word *world* is a contraction of *wear old*; a term by which our ancestors expressed the sentiment contained in this verse. That the word was thus compounded, and that it had this sense in our language, may be proved from the most competent and indisputable witnesses. It was formerly written [Anglo-Saxon] *weorold*, and [Anglo-Saxon] *wereld*. This *etymology* is finely alluded to by our excellent poet, *Spencer*, when describing the primitive age of innocence, succeeded by the age of depravity:—

"The lion there did with the lambe consort,  
And eke the dove sat by the faulcon's side;  
Ne each of other feared fraude or tort,  
But did in safe security abide,  
Withouten perill of the stronger pride:  
But when the WORLD *woxe old*, it *woxe warre old*,  
Whereof it *hight*, and having shortly tride  
The trains of wit, in wickednesse *woxe bold*,  
And dared of all sinnes, the secrets to unfold."

Even the heathen poets are full of such allusions. See *Horace*, Carm. lib. iii., od. 6; *Virgil*, *Æn.* viii., ver. 324.

**Thou remainest]** Instead of *διαμεινεις*, some good MSS. read *διαμεινεις*, the first, without the circumflex, being the present tense of the indicative mood; the latter, with the circumflex, being the *future-thou shalt remain*. The difference between these two readings is of little importance.

Verse 12. **And they shall be changed]** Not *destroyed* ultimately, or *annihilated*. They shall be *changed* and *renewed*.

**But thou art the same]** These words can be said of no being but God; all others are *changeable* or *perishable*, because temporal; only that which is *eternal* can continue *essentially*, and, speaking after the manner of men, *formally* the *same*.

**Thy years shall not fail.]** There is in the Divine duration no circle to be run, no space to be measured, no time to be reckoned. All is eternity-infinite and onward.

Verse 13. **But to which of the angels]** We have already seen, from the opinions and concessions of the Jews, that, if Jesus Christ could be proved to be *greater than the angels*, it would necessarily follow that he was God: and this the apostle does most amply prove by these various quotations from their own Scriptures; for he shows that while he is the supreme and absolute Sovereign, they are no more than his *messengers* and *servants*, and *servants* even to his *servants*, i.e. to mankind.

Verse 14. **Are they not all ministering spirits]** That is, *They are all* ministering spirits; for the Hebrews often express the strongest *affirmative* by an interrogation.

All the angels, even those of the highest order, are employed by their Creator to serve those who believe in Christ Jesus. What these services are, and how performed, it would be impossible to state. Much has been written on the subject, partly founded on Scripture, and partly on conjecture. They are, no doubt, constantly employed in *averting evil* and *procuring good*. If God help *man by man*, we need not wonder that he helps man by *angels*. We know that he needs none of those helps, for he can do all things himself; yet it seems agreeable to his infinite wisdom and goodness to use them. This is part of the economy of God in the government of the world and of the Church; and a part, no doubt, essential to the harmony and perfection of the whole. The reader may see a very sensible discourse on this text in vol. ii., page 133, of the Rev. John Wesley's works, American edition. Dr. Owen treats the subject at large in his comment on this verse, vol. iii., page 141, edit. 8vo., which is just now brought to my hand, and which appears to be a very learned, judicious, and important work, but by far too diffuse. In it the words of God are drowned in the sayings of man.

THE Godhead of Christ is a subject of such great importance, both to the faith and hope of a Christian, that I feel it necessary to bring it full into view, wherever it is referred to in the sacred writings. It is a prominent article in the apostle's creed, and should be so in ours. That this doctrine cannot be established on **#Heb 1:8** has been the assertion of many. To what I have already said on this verse, I beg leave to subjoin the following criticisms of a learned friend, who has made this subject his particular study.

BRIEF REMARKS ON HEBREWS, chap. i., ver. 8.

Ὁ θρονός σου, ὁ Θεός, εἰς τοὺς αἰῶνας.

It hath ever been the opinion of the most sound divines, that these words, which are extracted from the 45th Psalm, are addressed by God the Father unto God the Son. Our translators have

accordingly rendered the passage thus: "Thy throne, O God, is for ever." Those who deny the Divinity of Christ, being eager to get rid of such a testimony against themselves, contend that ο Θεος is here the nominative, and that the meaning is: "God is thy throne for ever." Now it is somewhat strange, that none of them have had critical acumen enough to discover that the words cannot possibly admit of this signification. It is a rule in the Greek language, that when a substantive noun is the subject of a sentence, and something is predicated of it, the article, if used at all, is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate. The Greek translators of the Old, and the authors of the New Testament, write agreeably to this rule. I shall first give some examples from the latter:—

θεος ην ο λογος.-"The Word was God." #Joh 1:1.

ο λογος σαρξ εγενετο.-"The Word became flesh." #Joh 1:14.

πνευμα ο θεος.-"God is a Spirit." #Joh 4:24.

ο θεος αγαπη εστι.-"God is love." #1Jo 4:8.

ο θεος φως εστι.-"God is light." #1Jo 1:5.

If we examine the Septuagint version of the Psalms, we shall find, that in such instances the author sometimes places the article before the subject, but that his usual mode is to omit it altogether. A few examples will suffice:—

ο θεος κριτης δικαιος.-"God is a righteous judge." #Ps 7:11.

ο θεος ημων καταφυγη και δυναμις,-"God is our refuge and strength." #Ps 46:1.

κυριος βοηθος μου.-"The Lord is my helper." #Ps 28:7.

κυριος στερεωμα μου και καταφυγη μου.-"The Lord is my firm support and my refuge." #Ps 18:2.

θεος μεγας κυριος.-"The Lord is a great God." #Ps 95:3.

We see what is the established phraseology of the Septuagint, when a substantive noun has something predicated of it in the same sentence. Surely, then, we may be convinced that if in #Ps 45:6, the meaning which they who deny our Lord's Divinity affix, had been intended, it would rather have been written θρονος σου, ο θεος, or θρονος σου, θεος. This our conviction will, if possible, be increased, when we examine the very next clause of this sentence, where we shall find that the article is prefixed to the subject, but omitted before the predicate.

ραβδος ευθυτηρος η ραβδος της βασιλειας σου.-"The sceptre of thy kingdom is a sceptre of rectitude."

"But it may be doubted whether *θεος* with the article affixed be ever used in the vocative case." Your doubt will be solved by reading the following examples, which are taken not promiscuously from the Septuagint, but all of them from the Psalms.

*κρινον αυτους, ο θεος*.-"Judge them, O God." #Ps 5:10.

*ο θεος, ο θεος μου*.-"O God, my God." #Ps 22:1.

*σοι ψαλω, ο θεος μου*.-"Unto thee will I sing, O my God." #Ps 59:17.

*υψωσω σε, ο θεος μου*.-"I will exalt thee, O my God." #Ps 145:1.

*κυριε, ο θεος μου*.-"O Lord my God." #Ps 104:1.

I have now removed the only objection which can, I think, be started. It remains, that the son of Mary is here addressed as the God whose throne endures for ever.

I know that a *pronoun* sometimes occurs with the article prefixed to its predicate; but I speak only of *nouns substantive*.

I must not fail to observe, that the rule about the subject and predicate, like that of the Greek prepositive article, pervades all classes of writers. It will be sufficient, if I give three or four examples. The learned reader may easily collect more.

*προσκηνιον μεν ο ουρανος απας, θεατρον δ' η οικουμενη*. "The whole heaven is his stage, and the world his theatre." Chrysostom. We have here two instances in one sentence. The same is the case in the following examples:-

*βραχυς μεν ο ξυλλογος, μεγας δ ο ποθος*.-"Small indeed is the assembly, but great is the desire." Chrysostom.

*καλον γαρ το αθλον, και η ελπις μεγαλη*.-"For the prize is noble, and the hope is great." Plato.

*το τ' αισχρον εχθρον, και το χρηστον ευκλεες*.-"That which is base is hateful; and that which is honest, glorious." Sophocles.

Having spoken of nouns substantive only, I ought to state that the rule applies equally to adjectives and to participles. Near the opening of the fifth of Matthew, we find eight consecutive examples of the rule. In five of these the subject is an adjective, and in the other three, a participle. Indeed one of them has two participles, affording an instance of the rule respecting the prepositive article, as well as of that which we are now considering. *μακαριοι οι πεινωντες και διψωντες*. "Blessed are they who hunger and thirst." In the Apocalypse there are four examples of the rule with participles, and in all these twelve cases the predicate is placed first. See the supplement to my Essay on the Greek Article, at the end of Dr. A. Clarke's commentary on Ephesians.

I am aware that an exception now and then occurs in the sacred writings; but I think I may assert that there are no exceptions in the Septuagint version of the book of Psalms. As the words ο θρονος σου, ο θεος, occur in the book of Psalms, the most important question is this: Does that book always support the orthodox interpretation? With regard to the deviations which are elsewhere occasionally found, I think there can be little doubt that they are owing to the ignorance or carelessness of transcribers, for the rule is unquestionably genuine.-H. S. BOYD.

The preceding remarks are original, and will be duly respected by every scholar.

I have shown my reasons in the note on "**Lu 1:35**", why I cannot close in with the common view of what is called the *eternal Sonship* of Christ. I am inclined to think that from this tenet *Arianism* had its origin. I shall here produce my authority for this opinion. Arius, the father of what is called *Arianism*, and who flourished in A. D. 300, was a presbyter of the Church of Alexandria, a man of great learning and eloquence, and of deeply mortified manners; and he continued to edify the Church by his teaching and example till the circumstance took place which produced that unhappy change in his religious sentiments, which afterwards gave rise to so much distraction and division in the Christian Church. The circumstance to which I refer is related by *Socrates Scholasticus*, in his supplement to the History of Eusebius, lib. i., c. 5; and is in substance as follows: Alexander, having succeeded Achillas in the bishopric of Alexandria, self-confidently philosophizing one day in the presence of his presbyters and the rest of his clergy concerning the holy Trinity, among other things asserted that there was a Monad in the Triad, φιλοτιμότερον περι της αγιας τριαδος, ες τριαδι Μοναδα ειναι φιλοσοφων εθεολογει. What he said on the derived nature or *eternal Sonship* of Christ is not related. Arius, one of his presbyters, a man of considerable skill in the science of logic, ανηρ ουκ αμοιρος της διαλεκτικης λεσχης, supposing that the bishop designed to introduce the dogmas of Sabellius, the Libyan, who denied the personality of the Godhead, and consequently the Trinity, sharply opposed the bishop, arguing thus: "If the Father begot the Son, *he* who was thus begotten had a beginning of his existence; and from this it is manifest, that there was a time in which the Son was not. Whence it necessarily follows, that he has his subsistence from what exists not." The words which Socrates quotes are the following, of which the above is as close a translation as the different idioms will allow: ει ο πατηρ εγεννησε τον υιον, αρχην υπαρξεως εχει ο γεννηθεις και εκ τουτου δηλον, οτι ην οτε ουκ ην ο υιος: ακολουθει τε εξ αναγκης, εξ ουκ οντων εχειν αυτον την υποστασιν. Now, it does not appear that this had been previously the doctrine of Arius, but that it was the *consequence* which he logically drew from the doctrine laid down by the bishop; and, although Socrates does not tell us what the bishop stated, yet, from the *conclusions* drawn, we may at once see what the *premises* were; and these must have been some incautious assertions concerning the *Sonship* of the *Divine nature* of Christ: and I have shown elsewhere that these are fair deductions from such premises. "But is not God called Father; and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ? "Most certainly. That God graciously assumes the name of *Father*, and acts in that character towards mankind, the whole Scripture proves; and that the title is given to him as signifying *Author*, *Cause*, *Fountain*, and *Creator*, is also sufficiently manifest from the same Scriptures. In this sense he is said to be the *Father of the rain*, #**Job 38:28**; and hence also it is said, *He is the Father of spirits*, #**Heb 12:9**; and he is the Father of men because he created them; and Adam, the first man, is particularly called *his son*, #**Lu 3:38**. But he is the Father of the *human nature* of our blessed Lord in a peculiar sense, because by his energy this was produced in the womb of the virgin. #**Lu 1:35**, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*; THEREFORE also

that HOLY THING WHICH SHALL BE BORN OF THEE *shall be called* THE SON OF GOD. It is in consequence of this that our blessed Lord is so frequently termed the *Son of God*, and that *God* is called *his Father*. But I know not any scripture, fairly interpreted, that states the *Divine nature* of our Lord to be *begotten* of God, or to be the *Son of God*. Nor can I see it possible that he could be *begotten* of the Father, in *this sense*, and be *eternal*; and if not *eternal*, he is not God. But numberless scriptures give him every attribute of Godhead; his own works demonstrate it; and the whole scheme of salvation requires this. I hope I may say that I have demonstrated his supreme, absolute, and unoriginated Godhead, both in my note on **#Col 1:16, 17**, and in my *Discourse on Salvation by Faith*. And having seen that the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* produced *Arianism*, and *Arianism* produced *Socinianism*, and *Socinianism* produces a kind of *general infidelity*, or disrespect to the sacred writings, so that several parts of them are rejected as being uncanonical, and the inspirations of a major part of the New Testament strongly suspected; I find it necessary to be doubly on my watch to avoid every thing that may, even in the remotest way, tend to so deplorable a catastrophe.

It may be said: "Is not God called the *eternal Father*? And if so, there can be no eternal Father if there be no eternal Son." I answer: God is not called in any part of Scripture, as far as I can recollect, either the *eternal* or *everlasting Father* in reference to our blessed Lord, nor indeed in reference to any thing else; but this very title, strange to tell, is given to Jesus Christ himself: *His name shall be called the EVERLASTING FATHER*, **#Isa 9:6**; and we may on this account, with more propriety, look for an *eternal filiation* proceeding from *him*, than from any other person of the most holy Trinity.

Should it be asked: "Was there no *trinity* of persons in the Godhead before the incarnation!" I answer: That a *trinity of persons* appears to me to belong *essentially* to the eternal Godhead, neither of which was *before*, *after*, or *produced* from another; and of this the Old Testament is full: but the distinction was not fully evident till the incarnation; and particularly till the baptism in Jordan, when on *him*, in whom dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead, the *Holy Ghost* descended in a *bodily shape*, like a dove; and a *voice* from *heaven* proclaimed *that baptized person* God's beloved Son: in which transaction there were *three persons* occupying *distinct places*; as the *person* of *Christ* in the *water*, the *Holy Spirit* in a *bodily shape*, and the *voice* from *heaven*, sufficiently prove; and to each of these *persons* various scriptures give all the essential attributes of God.

On the doctrine of the *eternal Sonship* of the Divine nature of Christ I once had the privilege of conversing with the late reverend John Wesley, about three years before his death; he read from a book in which I had written it, the argument against this doctrine, which now stands in the note on **"Lu 1:35"**. He did not attempt to reply to it; but allowed that, on the *ground* on which I had taken it, the argument was conclusive. I observed, that the proper, essential Divinity of Jesus Christ appeared to me to be so absolutely necessary to the whole Christian scheme, and to the faith both of penitent sinners and saints, that it was of the utmost importance to set it in the clearest and strongest point of view; and that, with my present light, I could not credit it, if I must receive the common doctrine of the *Sonship of the Divine nature* of our Lord. He mentioned two eminent divines who were of the same opinion; and added, that the eternal Sonship of Christ had been a doctrine very generally received in the Christian Church; and he believed no one had ever expressed it better than his brother Samuel had done in the following lines:—

"From whom, in one eternal *now*,  
The Son, thy offspring, flow'd;  
An *everlasting Father* thou,  
An *everlasting God*."

He added not one word more on the subject, nor ever after mentioned it to me, though after that we *had* many interviews. But it is necessary to mention his own note on the text, that has given rise to these observations; which shows that he held the doctrine as commonly received, when he wrote that note; it is as follows:-

**"Thou art my Son]** God of God, Light of Light. *This day have I begotten Thee*-I have begotten Thee from eternity, which, by its unalterable permanency of duration, is one continued unsuccessful day." Leaving the point in dispute out of the question, this is most beautifully expressed; and I know not that this great man ever altered his views on this subject, though I am certain that he never professed the opinion as many who quote his authority do; nor would he at any time have defended what he did hold in *their way*. I beg leave to quote a fact. In 1781, he published in the fourth volume of the Arminian Magazine, p. 384, an article, entitled "An Arian Antidote;" in this are the following words: "Greater or lesser in infinity, is not; inferior Godhead shocks our sense; Jesus was inferior to the Father as touching his manhood, #**Joh 14:28**; he was a son given, and slain intentionally from the foundation of the world, #**Re 13:8**, and the first-born from the dead of every creature, #**Col 1:15, 18**. But, our Redeemer, from everlasting (#**Isa 63:16**) *had not the inferior name of Son*; in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God from eternity, and the Word, made flesh, was God," &c. This is pointedly against the *eternal Sonship* of the *Divine nature*. But why did Mr. W. insert this? and if by haste, &c., why did he not correct this when he published in 1790, in the 13th vol. of the Magazine, eight tables of errata to the eight first volumes of that work? Now, although he had carefully noticed the slightest errors that might affect the sense in those preceding volumes, yet no fault is found with the *reasoning* in the *Arian Antidote*, and the sentence, "But, our Redeemer, from everlasting, had not the inferior name of Son," &c., is passed by without the slightest notice! However necessary this view of the subject may appear to me, I do not presume to say that others, in order to be saved, must view it in the same light: I leave both opinions to the judgment of the reader; for on such a point it is necessary that every man should be clear in his own mind, and satisfied in his own conscience. Any opinion of mine my readers are at perfect liberty to receive or reject. I never claimed infallibility; I say, with St. Augustine, *Errare possum; hæreticus esse nolo*. Refined Arians, with some of whom I am personally acquainted, are quite willing to receive all that can be said of the dignity and glory of Christ's nature, provided we admit the doctrine of the eternal Sonship, and omit the word *unoriginated*, which I have used in my demonstration of the Godhead of the Saviour of men; but, as far as it respects myself, I can neither *admit* the one, nor *omit* the other. The proper essential Godhead of Christ lies deep at the foundation of my Christian creed; and I must sacrifice ten thousand *forms of speech* rather than sacrifice the *thing*. My opinion has not been formed on slight examination.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER II.

*The use we should make of the preceding doctrine, and the danger of neglecting this great salvation, 1-4. The future world is not put in subjection to the angels, but all is under the authority of Christ, 5-8. Jesus has tasted death for every man, 9. Nor could he accomplish man's redemption without being incarnated and without dying; by which he destroys the devil, and delivers all that believe on him from the fear of death and spiritual bondage, 10-15. Christ took not upon him the nature of angels, but the nature of Abraham, that he might die, and make reconciliation for the sins of the people, 16-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

Verse 1. **Therefore]** Because God has spoken to us by his Son; and because that Son is so great and glorious a personage; and because the subject which is addressed to us is of such infinite importance to our welfare.

**We ought to give the more earnest heed]** We should hear the doctrine of Christ with care, candour, and deep concern.

**Lest at any time we should let them slip.]** μη ποτε παραρρωμεν· "Lest at any time we should leak out." This is a metaphor taken from unstanch vessels; the staves not being close together, the fluid put into them leaks through the chinks and crevices. Superficial hearers lose the benefit of the word preached, as the unseasoned vessel does its fluid; nor can any one hear to the saving of his soul, unless he give *most earnest heed*, which he will not do unless he consider the dignity of the speaker, the importance of the subject, and the absolute necessity of the salvation of his soul. St. Chrysostom renders it μη ποτε απολωμεθα, εκπεσωμεν, lest we perish, lest we fall away.

Verse 2. **If the word spoken by angels]** The *law*, (according to some,) which was delivered by the *mediation of angels*, God frequently employing these to communicate his will to men. See #Ac 7:53; and #Ga 3:19. But the apostle probably means those particular messages which God sent by angels, as in the case of *Lot*, "**Ge 19:12**" &c., and such like.

**Was steadfast]** Was so confirmed by the Divine authority, and so strict, that it would not tolerate any offence, but inflicted punishment on every act of *transgression*, every case in which the *bounds* laid down by the law, were *passed over*; and every act of *disobedience* in respect to the *duties* enjoined.

**Received a just recompense]** That kind and degree of punishment which the law prescribed for those who broke it.

Verse 3. **How shall we escape]** If they who had fewer privileges than we have, to whom God spoke in divers manners by angels and prophets, fell under the displeasure of their Maker, and were often punished with a sore destruction; how shall we escape wrath to the uttermost if we neglect the

salvation provided for us, and proclaimed to us by the Son of God? Their offence was *high*; ours, indescribably *higher*. The *salvation* mentioned here is the whole system of Christianity, with all the privileges it confers; properly called a *salvation*, because, by bringing such an abundance of heavenly *light* into the world, it *saves* or *delivers* men from the kingdom of *darkness, ignorance, error, superstition, and idolatry*; and provides all the requisite means to *free* them from the *power, guilt, and contamination* of sin. This salvation is great when compared with that granted to the Jews: 1. The Jewish dispensation was provided for the *Jews* alone; the Christian dispensation for all mankind. 2. The Jewish dispensation was full of significant types and ceremonies; the Christian dispensation is the substance of all those types. 3. The Jewish dispensation referred chiefly to the *body and outward* state of man-washings and external cleansings of the flesh; the Christian, to the inward state-purifying the heart and soul, and purging the conscience from dead works. 4. The Jewish dispensation promised *temporal happiness*; the Christian, *spiritual*. 5. The Jewish dispensation belonged chiefly to *time*; the Christian, to *eternity*. 6. The Jewish dispensation had its glory; but that was nothing when compared to the exceeding glory of the Gospel. 7. Moses administered the former; Jesus Christ, the Creator, Governor, and Saviour of the world, the latter. 8. This is a great salvation, infinitely beyond the Jewish; but how great no tongue or pen can describe.

Those who neglect it, *αμελησαντες*, are not only they who oppose or *persecute* it, but they who *pay no regard* to it; who do not *meddle with* it, do not *concern themselves* about it, do not lay it to heart, and consequently do not get their hearts changed by it. Now these cannot *escape* the coming judgments of God; not merely because they oppose his will and commandment, but because they sin against the very *cause and means* of their deliverance. As there is but *one* remedy by which their diseased souls can be saved, so by refusing to apply that one remedy they must necessarily perish.

**Which at the first began to be spoken]** Though John the Baptist went before our Lord to prepare his way, yet he could not be properly said to preach the Gospel; and even Christ's preaching was only a *beginning* of the great proclamation: it was his own Spirit in the apostles and evangelists, the men who heard him preach, that opened the whole mystery of the kingdom of heaven. And all this testimony had been so confirmed in the land of Judea as to render it indubitable; and consequently there was no excuse for their unbelief, and no prospect of their *escape* if they should continue to *neglect* it.

Verse 4. **God also bearing them witness]** He did not leave the confirmation of these great truths to the testimony of *men*; he bore his *own* testimony to them by *signs, wonders, various miracles, and distributions of the Holy Ghost, πνευματος ἁγίου μερισμοις*. And all these were proved to come from *himself*; for no *man* could do those miracles at *his own pleasure*, but the power to work them was given according to God's *own will*; or rather, God himself wrought them, in order to accredit the ministry of his servants.

For the meaning of *signs, wonders, &c.*, See the note on "De 4:34".

Verse 5. **The world to come]** That *עולם הבא* *olam habba, the world to come*, meant the *days of the Messiah* among the Jews, is most evident, and has been often pointed out in the course of these notes; and that the administration of this kingdom has not been intrusted to *angels*, who were frequently employed under the law, is also evident, for the government is on the shoulder of Jesus

Christ; he alone has the keys of death and hell; he alone shuts, and no man opens; opens, and no man shuts; he alone has the residue of the Spirit; he alone is the Governor of the universe, the Spirit, Soul, Heart, and Head of the Church: all is in his authority, and under subjection to him.

But some think that the *world to come* means *future glory*, and suppose the words are spoken in reference to the *Angel of God's presence*, #Ex 23:20, who introduced the Israelites into the *promised land*, which land is here put in opposition to the *heavenly inheritance*. And it is certain that in this sense also we have an entrance into the holiest *only* by the blood of Jesus. Dr. Macknight contends for this latter meaning, but the former appears more consistent with the Jewish phraseology.

Verse 6. **But one in a certain place]** This *one* is *David*; and the *certain place*, #Ps 8:4-6. But why does the apostle use this indeterminate mode of quotation? Because it was common thus to express the testimony of any of the inspired writers; אָמַר הָהוּא כְּתָב *amar hahu kethab*, thus saith a certain scripture. So *Philo*, De Plant. Noe: ἔπει γὰρ πού, *he saith somewhere*; ἔπει θὰ π τίς, *a certain person saith*. Thus even the heathens were accustomed to quote *high authorities*; so *Plato*, Tim.: ὧς ἐφη τίς, *as a certain person saith*, meaning *Heraclitus*. See in *Rosenmuller*. It is such a mode of quotation as we sometimes use when we speak of a very eminent person who is well known; as *that very eminent person*, *that great philosopher*, *that celebrated divine*, *that inspired teacher of the Gentiles*, *the royal psalmist*, *the evangelical prophet*, hath said. The mode of quotation therefore implies, not *ignorance*, but *reverence*.

**What is man]** This quotation is verbatim from the *Septuagint*; and, as the Greek is not as emphatic as the Hebrew, I will quote the original: מַה אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וּבֶן אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֶנּוּ *mah enosh ki thizkerennu, uben Adam ki thiphkedennu*; *What is miserable man, that thou rememberest him? and the son of Adam, that thou visitest him?* The variation of the terms in the original is very emphatic. *Adam*, אָדָם, is the name given to man at his creation, and expresses his origin, and generic distinction from all other animals. *Enosh*, אֱנוֹשׁ, which signifies *sick, weak, wretched*, was never given to him till after his fall. The *son of Adam* means here, any one or all of the fallen posterity of the first man. That God should *remember* in the way of mercy these *wretched* beings, is great condescension; that he should *visit* them, *manifest* himself to them, yea, even  *dwell among them*, and at last *assume their nature*, and give up his *life* to ransom them from the bitter pains of eternal death, is mercy and love indescribable and eternal.

Verse 7. **Thou madest him a little lower than the angels]** We must again have recourse to the original from which this quotation is made: וַתַּחַסְרֶהוּ מֵעֵט מַאֲלָהִים *vattechasserehu meat meelohim*. If this be spoken of *man* as he came out of the hands of his Maker, it places him at the *head* of all God's works; for literally translated it is: *Thou hast made him less than God*. And this is proved by his being made in the *image and likeness of God*, which is spoken of no other creature either in heaven or earth; and it is very likely that in his original creation he stood at the head of all the works of God, and the next to his Maker. This sentiment is well expressed in the following lines, part of a paraphrase on this psalm, by the Rev. C. Wesley:—

"Him with glorious majesty  
Thy grace vouchsafed to crown:  
Transcript of the One in Three,  
He in thine image shone.  
Foremost of created things,  
Head of all thy works he stood;  
Nearest the great King of kings,  
And *little less than God.*"

If we take the words as referring to *Jesus Christ*, then they must be understood as pointing out the time of his humiliation, as in #**Heb 2:9**; and the *little lower*, βραχυ τι, in both verses, must mean *for a short time*, or *a little while*, as is very properly inserted among our *marginal readings*. Adam was originally made higher than the angels, but by sin he is now brought *low*, and subjected to death; for the angelic nature is not *mortal*. Thus, taking the words in their common acceptation, man in his present state may be said to be *lessened below the angels*. Jesus Christ, as the eternal Logos, or God with God, could not *die*, therefore a *body* was prepared for him; and thus βραχυ τι, for *a short while*, he was *made lower than the angels*, that he might be capable of *suffering death*. And indeed the whole of the passage suits *him* better than it does any of the children of men, or than even Adam himself in a state of innocence; for it is only *under the feet of Jesus that all things are put in subjection*, and it was in consequence of his humiliation that he had *a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, #Php 2:9-11*. Therefore he must be infinitely *higher than the angels*, for they, as well as all the *things in heaven*, bow in subjection to him.

**Thou crownedst him with glory and honour]** This was strictly true of *Adam* in his state of innocence, for he was set over all things in this *lower world; all sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, the fowl of the air, the fish of the sea, and whatsoever passeth over the paths of the seas, #Ps 8:7, 8*. So far all this perfectly applies to Adam; but it is evident the apostle takes *all* in a much higher sense, that of *universal dominion*; and hence he says, *he left nothing that is not put under him*. These verses, collated with the above passage from the Epistle to the Philippians, mutually illustrate each other. And the *crowning Christ with glory and honour* must refer to his *exaltation* after his resurrection, in which, as the victorious Messiah, he had all power given to him in heaven and earth. And although *we do not yet see all things put under him*, for evil men, and evil spirits, are only under the *subjection of control*, yet we look forward to that time when the whole world shall be bowed to his sway, and when the stone cut out of the mountain without hands shall become great, and fill the whole earth. What was never true of the first Adam, even in his most exalted state, is true of the second Adam, the Lord Jesus Christ; and to him, and to him alone, it is most evident that the apostle applies these things; and thus he is higher than the *angels*, who never had nor can have such dominion and consequent glory.

Verse 9. **Should taste death for every man.]** In consequence of the fall of Adam, the whole human race became sinful in their *nature*, and in their *practice* added *transgression* to *sinfulness* of disposition, and thus became exposed to endless perdition. To redeem them Jesus Christ took on him the nature of man, and suffered the penalty due to their sins.

It was a custom in ancient times to take off criminals by making them *drink a cup of poison*. Socrates was adjudged to drink a cup of the juice of hemlock, by order of the Athenian magistrates: ΠΙΝΕΙΝ ΤΟ ΦΑΡΜΑΚΟΝ, ΑΝΑΓΚΑΖΟΥΝΤΩΝ ΤΩΝ ΑΡΧΟΥΝΤΩΝ. The sentence was one of the most unjust ever pronounced on man. Socrates was not only innocent of every crime laid to his charge, but was the greatest benefactor to his country. He was duly conscious of the iniquity of his sentence, yet cheerfully submitted to his appointed fate; for when the officer brought in the poison, though his friends endeavoured to persuade him that he had yet a considerable time in which he might continue to live, yet, knowing that every purpose of life was now accomplished, he refused to avail himself of a few remaining moments, seized the cup, and drank off the poison with the utmost cheerfulness and alacrity; ΕΠΙΣΧΟΜΕΝΟΣ ΚΑΙ ΜΑΛΑ ΕΥΧΕΡΩΣ ΚΑΙ ΕΥΚΟΛΩΣ ΕΞΕΠΙΕ. Plato, Phæd. sub. fin. The reference in the text seems to point out the whole human race as being accused, tried, found guilty, and condemned, each having his own *poisoned cup* to drink; and Jesus, the wonderful Jesus, takes the cup out of the hand of each, and cheerfully and with alacrity drinks off the dregs! Thus having drunk every man's *poisoned cup*, he *tasted* that *death* which they must have endured, had not their *cup* been drunk by *another*. Is not this the *cup* to which he refers, #Mt 26:39: *O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me?* But without his drinking it, the salvation of the world would have been *impossible*; and therefore he cheerfully drank it in the place of every human soul, and thus made atonement for the sin of the whole world: and this he did, χαριτι θεου, by the grace, mercy, or infinite goodness of God. Jesus Christ, incarnated, crucified, dying, rising, ascending to heaven, and becoming our Mediator at God's right hand, is the full proof of God's infinite love to the human race.

Instead of χαριτι θεου, by the grace of God, some MSS. and the Syriac have χωρις θεου, *without God*, or *God excepted*; i.e. the *manhood died*, not the *Deity*. This was probably a marginal gloss, which has crept into the text of many MSS., and is quoted by some of the chief of the Greek and Latin fathers. Several critics contend that the verse should be read thus: "But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made less than angels, that by the grace of God he might taste death for every man, for the suffering of death crowned with glory and honour." Howsoever it be taken, the sense is nearly the same: 1. Jesus Christ was incarnated. 2. He suffered death as an expiatory victim. 3. The persons in whose behalf he suffered were the whole human race; *every man*-all human creatures. 4. This Jesus is now in a state of the highest glory and honour.

Verse 10. **For it became him]** It was suitable to the Divine wisdom, the requisitions of justice, and the economy of grace, to offer Jesus as a sacrifice, in order to bring many sons and daughters to glory.

**For whom-and by whom]** God is the *cause* of all things, and he is the *object* or *end* of them.

**Perfect through sufferings.]** Without *suffering* he could not have *died*, and without *dying* he could not have made an *atonement for sin*. The sacrifice must be *consummated*, in order that he might be qualified to be the *Captain* or *Author* of the *salvation* of men, and lead all those who become children of God, through faith in him, into eternal glory. I believe this to be the sense of the passage; and it appears to be an answer to the grand objection of the Jews: "The Messiah is never to be conquered, or die; but will be victorious, and endure for ever." Now the apostle shows that this is not the counsel of God; on the contrary, that it was entirely *congruous* to the will and nature of

God, *by whom*, and *for whom are all things*, to bring men to eternal glory through the suffering and death of the Messiah. This is the decision of the Spirit of God against their prejudices; and on the Divine authority this must be our *conclusion*. Without the passion and death of Christ, the salvation of man would have been impossible.

As there are many different views of this and some of the following verses, I shall introduce a paraphrase of the whole from

Dr. Dodd, who gives the substance of what Doddridge, Pearce, and Owen, have said on this subject.

Verse 10. For it became him, &c.—"Such has been the conduct of God in the great affair of our redemption; and the beauty and harmony of it will be apparent in proportion to the degree in which it is examined; *for*, though the Jews dream of a temporal Messiah as a scheme conducive to the Divine glory, *it well became him*—it was expedient, that, in order to act worthy of himself, he should take this method; *Him, for whom are all things*, and *by whom are all things*—that glorious Being who is the first cause and last end of all, in pursuit of the great and important design he had formed, of *conducting many*, whom he is pleased to adopt as his *sons*, to the possession of that inheritance of *glory* intended for them, *to make* and constitute Jesus, his first-begotten and well beloved Son, the *Leader* and *Prince* of their salvation, and to make him *perfect*, or *completely fit* for the full execution of his office, *by a long train of various and extreme sufferings*, whereby he was, as it were, solemnly *consecrated* to it. Verse 11. *Now*, in consequence of this appointment, Jesus, *the great Sanctifier*, who engages and *consecrates* men to the service of God, and *they who are sanctified*, (i.e. consecrated and introduced to God with such acceptance,) *are all of one family*—all the descendants of Adam, and in a sense the seed of Abraham; *for which cause he is not ashamed to call them*, whom he thus redeems, and presents to the Divine favour, his *brethren*. Verse 12. *Saying*, in the person of David, who represented the Messiah in his sufferings and exaltation, *I will declare thy name to my brethren; in the midst of the Church will I praise thee*. Verse 13. *And again*, speaking as a mortal man, exposed to such exercises of faith in trials and difficulties as others were, he says, in a psalm which sets forth his triumph over his enemies: *I will trust in him*, as other good men have done in all ages; *and again*, elsewhere in the person of Isaiah: *Behold I, and the children which my God hath given me*, are for signs and for wonders. Verse 14. *Seeing then* those whom he represents in one place and another, as *the children* of the same family with himself, *were partakers of flesh and blood*, *he himself in like manner participated in them*, that thereby becoming capable of those sufferings to which, without such a union with flesh, this Divine Sanctifier could not have been obnoxious, *he might*, by his own voluntary and meritorious *death*, *abolish and depose him who*, by Divine permission, *had the empire of death*, and led it in his train when he made the first invasion on mankind; *that is, the devil*, the great artificer of mischief and destruction; at the beginning the murderer of the human race; who still seems to triumph in the spread of mortality, which is his work, and who may often, by God's permission, be the executioner of it. Verse 15. But Christ, the great Prince of mercy and life, graciously interposed, that he *might deliver those* miserable captives of Satan—mankind in general, and the dark and idolatrous Gentiles in particular, *who, through fear of death, were*, or justly might have been, *all their lifetime, obnoxious to bondage*; having nothing to expect in consequence of it, if they rightly understood their state, but future misery; whereas now,

changing their lord, they have happily changed their condition, and are, as many as have believed in him, the heirs of eternal life."

Verse 11. **For both he that sanctifieth]** The word *ο αγιαζων* does not merely signify one who sanctifies or makes holy, but one who makes atonement or reconciliation to God; and answers to the Hebrew *כִּפֵּר* *caphar*, to expiate. See #Ex 29:33-36. He that sanctifies is he that makes atonement; and they who are sanctified are they who receive that atonement, and, being reconciled unto God, become his children by adoption, through grace.

In this sense our Lord uses the word, #Joh 17:19: *For their sakes I sanctify myself; υπερ αυτων εγω αγιαζω εμαυτον*, on their account I consecrate myself to be a sacrifice. This is the sense in which this word is used generally through this epistle.

Are **all of one]** *εξ ενος παντες*. What this *one* means has given rise to various conjectures; *father, family, blood, seed, race, nature*, have all been substituted; *nature* seems to be that intended, see #Heb 2:14; and the conclusion of this verse confirms it. Both the *Sanctifier* and the *sanctified*-both Christ and his followers, are all of the same nature; for as the children were partakers of flesh and blood, i.e. of *human nature*, he partook of the same, and thus he was qualified to become a sacrifice for man.

**He is not ashamed to call them brethren]** Though, as to his Godhead, he is infinitely raised above men and angels; yet as he has become incarnate, notwithstanding his dignity, he blushes not to acknowledge all his true followers as his *brethren*.

Verse 12. **I will declare thy name]** See #Ps 22:22. The apostle certainly quotes this psalm as referring to Jesus Christ, and these words as spoken by Christ unto the Father, in reference to his incarnation; as if he had said: "When I shall be incarnated, I will declare thy perfections to mankind; and among my disciples I will give glory to thee for thy mercy to the children of men." See the fulfilment of this, #Joh 1:18: *No man hath seen God at any time; the ONLY-BEGOTTEN SON, which is in the bosom of the Father, HE HATH DECLARED HIM*. Nor were the perfections of God ever properly *known* or *declared*, till the manifestation of Christ. Hear another scripture, #Lu 10:21, 22: *In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes, &c.* Thus he gave praise to God.

Verse 13. **I will put my trust in him.]** It is not clear to what express place of Scripture the apostle refers: words to this effect frequently occur; but the place most probably is #Ps 18:2, several parts of which psalm seem to belong to the Messiah.

**Behold I and the children which God hath given me.]** This is taken from #Isa 8:18. The apostle does not intend to say that the *portions* which he has quoted have any particular reference, taken by themselves, to the subject in question; they are only *catch-words* of *whole paragraphs*, which, taken together, are full to the point; because they are prophecies of the Messiah, and are fulfilled in him. This is evident from the last quotation: *Behold I and the children whom the Lord hath given me are for signs and for wonders in Israel*. Jesus and his *disciples* wrought a multitude

of the most stupendous *signs and wonders* in Israel. The expression also may include all genuine Christians; they are for signs and wonders throughout the earth. And as to the 18th Psalm, the principal part of it seems to refer to *Christ's sufferings*; but the miracles which were wrought at his crucifixion, the destruction of the Jewish state and polity, the *calling of the Gentiles*, and the establishment of the *Christian Church*, appear also to be intended. See among others the following passages: SUFFERINGS-*The sorrows of death compassed me-in my distress I called upon the Lord.* MIRACLES at the crucifixion-*The earth shook and trembled-and darkness was under his feet.* DESTRUCTION of the Jewish state-*I have pursued mine enemies and overtaken them; they are fallen under my feet.* CALLING of the GENTILES-*Thou hast made me head of the heathen; a people whom I have never known shall serve me; as soon as they hear of me-they shall obey me, &c., &c.* A principal design of the apostle is to show that such scriptures are prophecies of the Messiah; that they plainly refer to his appearing in the flesh in Israel; and that they have all been fulfilled in Jesus Christ, and the calling of the Gentiles to the privileges of the Gospel. To establish these points was of great importance.

Verse 14. **The children are partakers of flesh and blood]** Since those children of God, who have fallen and are to be redeemed, are *human beings*; in order to be qualified to redeem them by suffering and dying in their stead, *He himself likewise took part of the same*-he became *incarnate*; and thus he who was *God with God*, became *man with men*. By the *children* here we are to understand, not only the *disciples* and all *genuine Christians*, as in #**Heb 2:13**, but also the *whole human race*; all Jews and all Gentiles; so #**Joh 11:51, 52**: *He prophesied that Jesus should die for that nation; and not for that nation only, but also that he should gather together in one the CHILDREN of GOD that were scattered abroad*; meaning, probably, all the *Jews* in every part of the earth. But collate this with #**1Jo 2:2**, where: the evangelist explains the former words: *He is the propitiation for our sins, (the Jews,) and not for ours only, but for the sins of the WHOLE WORLD*. As the apostle was writing to the *Hebrews* only, he in general uses a Jewish phraseology, pointing out to them *their own* privileges; and rarely introduces the *Gentiles*, or what the Messiah has done for the other nations of the earth.

**That through death]** That by the merit of his own death, making atonement for sin, and procuring the almighty energy of the Holy Spirit, he might *counterwork* *καταργηση*, or *render useless and ineffectual*, all the operations of him who *had the power*, *κρατος*, or *influence*, to bring death into the world; so that *death*, which was intended by him who was a murderer from the beginning to be the final ruin of mankind, becomes the instrument of their exaltation and endless glory; and thus the death brought in by Satan is *counterworked* and rendered *ineffectual* by the death of Christ.

**Him that had the power of death]** This is spoken in conformity to an opinion prevalent among the Jews, that there was a certain fallen angel who was called מלאך המורה *malak hammaveth*, the *angel of death*; i.e. one who had the *power* of separating the soul from the body, when God decreed that the person should die. There were two of these, according to some of the Jewish writers: one was the angel of death to the *Gentiles*; the other, to the Jews. Thus *Tob haarets*, fol. 31: "There are two angels which preside over death: one is over those who die out of the land of Israel, and his name is *Sammael*; the other is he who presides over those who die in the land of Israel, and this is *Gabriel*." *Sammael* is a common name for the devil among the Jews; and there is a tradition among them, delivered by the author of *Pesikta rabbetha* in *Yalcut Simeoni*, par. 2, f. 56, that the angel of

death should be destroyed by the Messiah! "Satan said to the holy blessed God: *Lord of the world, show me the Messiah.* The Lord answered: *Come and see him.* And when he had seen him he was terrified, and his countenance fell, and he said: *Most certainly this is the Messiah who shall cast me and all the nations into hell, as it is written #Isa 25:8, The Lord shall swallow up death for ever.*" This is a very remarkable saying, and the apostle shows that it is true, for the Messiah came to *destroy him who had the power of death.* Dr. Owen has made some collections on this head from other Jewish writers which tend to illustrate this verse; they may be seen in his comment, vol. i., p. 456, 8vo. edition.

Verse 15. **And deliver them who through fear of death]** It is very likely that the apostle has the Gentiles here principally in view. As *they* had no *revelation*, and no certainty of *immortality*, they were continually in bondage to the fear of death. They preferred *life* in any state, with the most grievous evils, to *death*, because they had no hope beyond the grave. But it is also true that all men naturally fear death; even those that have the fullest persuasion and certainty of a future state dread it: genuine Christians, who know that, if the earthly house of their tabernacle were dissolved, they have a house not made with hands, a building framed of God, eternal in the heavens, only *they* fear it not. In the assurance they have of God's love, the fear of death is removed; and by the purification of their hearts through faith, the sting of death is extracted. The people who know not God are in continual torment through the fear of death, and they fear death because they fear something beyond death. They are conscious to themselves that they are wicked, and they are afraid of God, and terrified at the thought of *eternity*. By these fears thousands of sinful, miserable creatures are prevented from hurrying themselves into the unknown world. This is finely expressed by the poet:—

"To die,—to sleep,—  
No more:—and, by a sleep, to say we end  
The heartache, and the thousand natural shocks  
That flesh is heir to,—'tis a consummation  
Devoutly to be wished. To die,—to sleep,—  
To sleep!—perchance to *dream*;—ay, there's the rub;  
For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause:--There's the respect  
That makes calamity of so long life:  
For who could bear the whips and scorns of time,  
The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,  
The pangs of despised love, the law's delay,  
The insolence of office, and the spurns  
That patient merit of the unworthy takes,  
When he himself might his quietus make  
With a bare bodkin? Who would fardels bear  
To grunt and sweat under a weary life;  
But that the *dread of something after death*,—  
The *undiscovered* country from whose bourn  
No traveller returns,—puzzles the will;  
And makes us rather bear those ills we have,

*Than fly to others that we know not of?  
Thus conscience does make cowards of us all;  
And thus the native hue of resolution  
Is sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought;  
And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
With this regard, their currents turn awry  
And lose the name of action."*

I give this long quotation from a poet who was well acquainted with all the workings of the human heart; and one who could not have described scenes of distress and anguish of mind so well, had he not passed through them.

Verse 16. **For verily he took not on him the nature of angels]** ου γαρ δηπου αγγελων επιλαμβανεται, αλλα σπερματος αβρααμ επιλαμβανεται· *Moreover, he doth not at all take hold of angels; but of the seed of Abraham he taketh hold.* This is the *marginal* reading, and is greatly to be preferred to that in the text Jesus Christ, intending not to redeem angels, but to redeem man, did not assume the angelic nature, but was made man, coming directly by the *seed* or *posterity* of *Abraham*, with whom the *original covenant* was made, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; and it is on this account that the apostle mentioned the *seed of Abraham*, and not the *seed of Adam*; and it is strange that to many commentators should have missed so obvious a sense. The word itself signifies not only to *take hold of*, but to *help, succour, save from sinking, &c.* The rebel *angels*, who sinned and fell from God, were permitted to *fall downe, alle downe*, as one of our old writers expresses it, till they fell into perdition: *man* sinned and fell, and was falling *downe, alle downe*, but Jesus laid hold on him and prevented him from falling into endless perdition. Thus he *seized on the falling human creature*, and prevented him from falling into the bottomless *pit*; but he did not *seize* on the falling angels, and they fell down into outer darkness. By assuming the nature of man, he prevented this final and irrecoverable fall of man; and by making an atonement in human nature, he made a provision for its restoration to its forfeited blessedness. This is a fine thought of the apostle, and is beautifully expressed. Man was falling from heaven, and Jesus caught hold of the falling creature, and prevented its endless ruin. In this respect he prefers men to angels, and probably for this simple reason, that the *human nature* was *more excellent* than the *angelic*; and it is suitable to the wisdom of the Divine Being to regard all the works of his hands in proportion to the dignity or excellence with which he has endowed them.

Verse 17. **Wherefore in all things]** Because he thus *laid hold* on man in order to redeem him, it was necessary that he should in all things become like to man, that he might suffer in his stead, and make an atonement in his nature.

**That he might be a merciful and faithful high priest]** ινα ελεημων γενηται· *That he might be merciful*-that he might be affected with a feeling of our infirmities, that, partaking of our nature with all its innocent infirmities and afflictions, he might know how to *compassionate* poor, afflicted, suffering man. And that he might be a *faithful high priest in those things which relate to God*, whose justice requires the punishment of the transgressors, or a suitable expiation to be made for the sins of the people. The proper meaning of *λασκεισθαι τας αμαρτιας* is *to make propitiation or atonement for sins by sacrifice*. See the note on this word, "**Lu 18:13**", where it is particularly explained.

Christ is the *great High Priest* of mankind; 1. He exercises himself in the *things pertaining* to GOD, taking heed that God's honour be properly secured, his worship properly regulated, his laws properly enforced, and both his justice and mercy magnified. Again, 2. He exercises himself in *things pertaining* to MEN, that he may make an *atonement* for them, apply this atonement to them, and liberate them thereby from the curse of a broken law, from the guilt and power of sin, from its inbeing and nature, and from all the evils to which they were exposed through it, and lastly that he might open their way into the holiest by his own blood; and he has *mercifully* and *faithfully* accomplished all that he has undertaken.

Verse 18. **For in that he himself hath suffered]** The maxim on which this verse is founded is the following: A state of suffering disposes persons to be compassionate, and those who endure most afflictions are they who feel most for others. The apostle argues that, among other causes, it was necessary that Jesus Christ should partake of human nature, exposed to trials, persecutions, and various sufferings, that he might the better feel for and be led to succour those who are afflicted and sorely tried. This sentiment is well expressed by a Roman poet:—

*Me quoque per multas similis fortuna labores  
Jactatam hac demum voluit consistere terra:  
Non ignara mali, miseris succurere disco.*  
VIRG. Æn. i., v. 632.

"For *I myself like you*, have been *distress'd*,  
Till heaven afforded me this place of rest;  
*Like you*, an *alien* in a land unknown,  
*I learn to pity woes so like my own.*"  
DRYDEN.

"There are three things," says Dr. Owen, "of which tempted believers do stand in need: 1. Strength to withstand their temptations; 2. Consolations to support their spirits under them; 3. Seasonable deliverance from them. Unto these is the succour afforded by our High Priest suited; and it is variously administered to them: 1. By his *word* or *promises*; 2. By his *Spirit*; (and, that, 1. By communicating to them *supplies of grace* or spiritual strength; 2. Strong *consolation*; 3. By *rebuking* their *tempters* and *temptations*;) and 3. By his *providence* disposing of all things to their good and advantage in the issue." Those who are peculiarly tempted and severely tried, have an especial interest in, and claim upon Christ. They, particularly, may go with boldness to the throne of grace, where they shall assuredly obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. Were the rest of the Scripture silent on this subject, this verse might be an ample support for every tempted soul.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER III.

*Jesus is the High Priest of our profession, 1. And is counted worthy of more honour than Moses, as the Son Israelites did, and were excluded from the earthly rest in Canaan, 7-11. We should be on our guard against unbelief, 12. And exhort each other, lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin; and we should hold fast the beginning of our confidence to the end, and not provoke God as the Israelites did, and who were destroyed in the wilderness, 13-17. They were promised the earthly rest, but did not enter because of unbelief, 18,19.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Verse 1. **Holy brethren**] Persons *consecrated to God*, as the word literally implies, and called, in consequence, to be *holy in heart, holy in life, and useful in the world*. The Israelites are often called a *holy people, saints, &c.*, because *consecrated* to God, and because they were bound by their profession to be holy; and yet these appellations are given to them in numberless instances where they were very *unholy*. The not attending to this circumstance, and the not discerning between actual positive *holiness*, and the *call* to it, as the *consecration* of the persons, has led many commentators and preachers into destructive mistakes. Antinomianism has had its origin here: and as it was found that many persons were called *saints*, who, in many respects, were miserable sinners, hence it has been inferred that they were called *saints* in reference to a holiness which they had in *another*; and hence the Antinomian imputation of Christ's righteousness to unholy believers, whose hearts were abominable before God, and whose lives were a scandal to the Gospel. Let, therefore, a due distinction be made between persons by their *profession holy*, i.e. *consecrated to God*; and persons who are *faithful* to that profession, and are both *inwardly* and *outwardly holy*. They are not all Israel who are of Israel: a man, by a literal circumcision, may be a Jew outwardly; but the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit makes a man a Jew inwardly. A man may be a Christian in profession, and not such in heart; and those who pretend that, although they are *unholy in themselves*, they are reputed *holy in Christ*, because his righteousness is imputed to them, most awfully deceive their own souls.

Dr. *Owen* has spoken well on the necessity of personal holiness against the Antinomians of his day. "If a man be not made holy he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. It is this that makes them meet for the inheritance of the saints in light; as without it they are not meet for their duty, so are they not capable of their reward. Yea, heaven itself, in the true light and notion of it, is undesirable to an unsanctified person. Such a one neither can nor would enjoy God if he might. In a word, there is no one thing required of the sons of God that an unsanctified person can do, and no one thing promised unto them that he can enjoy.

"There is surely then a woful mistake in the world. If Christ sanctify all whom he saves, many will appear to have been mistaken in their expectations at another day. It is grown amongst us almost an abhorrency to all flesh to say, *the Church of God is to be holy*. What! though God has promised that it should be so; that Christ has undertaken to make it so? What! if it be required to be so? What! if all the duties of it be rejected of God, if it be not so? It is all one, if men be

baptized, whether they will or not, and outwardly profess the name of Christ, though not one of them be truly sanctified, yet they are, it is said, the Church of Christ. Why then let them be so; but what are they the better for it? Are their persons or their services therefore accepted with God? Are they related or united to Christ? Are they under his conduct unto glory? Are they meet for the inheritance of the saints in light? Not at all: not all nor any of these things do they obtain thereby. What is it then that they get by the furious contest which they make for the reputation of this privilege? Only this: that, satisfying their minds by it, resting if not priding themselves in it, they obtain many advantages to stifle all convictions of their condition, and so perish unavoidably. A sad success, and for ever to be bewailed! Yet is there nothing at all at this day more contended for in this world than that Christ might be thought to be a *captain of salvation* to them, unto whom he is not a *sanctifier*; that he may have an *unholy Church*, a *dead body*. These things tend neither to the glory of Christ, nor to the good of the souls of men. Let none then deceive themselves; sanctification is a qualification indispensably necessary to them who will be under the conduct of the Lord Christ unto salvation; he leads none to heaven but whom he *sanctifies* on earth. The holy God will not receive unholy persons. This *living head* will not admit of *dead members*, nor bring men into possession of a glory which they neither love nor like."

**Heavenly calling]** The Israelites had an earthly calling; they were called out of Egypt to go into the promised land: Christians have a heavenly calling; they are invited to leave the bondage of sin, and go to the kingdom of God. These were made partakers of this calling; they had already embraced the Gospel, and were brought into a state of salvation.

**Apostle and High Priest of our profession]** Among the Jews the *high priest* was considered to be also *the apostle of God*; and it is in conformity to this notion that the apostle speaks. And he exhorts the Hebrews to *consider* Jesus Christ to be both their *High Priest* and *Apostle*; and to expect these offices to be henceforth fulfilled by him, and by him alone. This was the fullest intimation that the Mosaic economy was at an end, and the priesthood changed. By *της ομολογιας ημων*, *our profession*, or *that confession of ours*, the apostle undoubtedly means the *Christian religion*. Jesus was the Apostle of the Father, and has given to mankind the *new covenant*; and we are to consider the whole system of Christianity as coming immediately from him. Every system of religion must have a *priest* and a *prophet*; the one to *declare* the will of God, the other to *minister* in holy things. Moses was the *apostle* under the old testament, and Aaron the *priest*. When Moses was removed, the prophets succeeded him; and the sons of Aaron were the priests after the death of their father. This system is now annulled; and Jesus is the *Prophet* who declares the Father's will, and he is the *Priest* who ministers in the things pertaining to God, see **#Heb 2:17**; as he makes atonement for the sins of the people, and is the Mediator between God and man.

Verse 2. **Who was faithful to him]** In **#Nu 12:7**, God gives this testimony to Moses: *My servant Moses-is faithful in all my house*; and to this testimony the apostle alludes. *House* not only means the *place* where a *family dwells*, but also the *family* itself. The whole congregation of Israel was the *house* or *family of God*, and God is represented as *dwelling among them*; and Moses was his *steward*, and was faithful in the discharge of his office; strictly enforcing the Divine rights; zealously maintaining God's honour; carefully delivering the mind and will of God to the people; proclaiming his promises, and denouncing his judgments, with the most inflexible integrity, though often at the risk of his life. Jesus Christ has his *house*-the whole great *family of mankind*, for all of whom he

offered his sacrificial blood to God; and the *Christian Church*, which is especially his *own household*, is composed of his own *children* and *servants*, among and in whom he lives and constantly resides. He has been *faithful* to the trust reposed in him as the apostle of God; he has faithfully proclaimed the will of the Most High; vindicated the Divine honour against the corrupters of God's worship; testified against them at the continual hazard of his life; and, at last, not only died as a *victim* to cancel sin, but also as a *martyr* to his faithfulness. Christ's faithfulness, says Leigh, consists in this: "That he has as fully revealed unto us the doctrine of the Gospel, as Moses did that of the law; and that he hath faithfully performed and fulfilled all the types of himself and all the things signified by Moses' ceremonies, as Moses hath faithfully and distinctly set them down."

But there is a sense given to the word נֶאֱמָן *neeman*, #Nu 12:7, which we translate *faithful*, by several of the Jewish writers, which is well worthy of note: it signifies, say they, "*one to whom secrets are confided, with the utmost confidence of their being safely and conscientiously kept.*" The secret of God was with Moses, but all the treasures of *wisdom* and *knowledge* were in Christ. Life and immortality were comparatively *secrets* till Christ revealed and illustrated them, and even the *Divine nature* was but little known, and especially the *Divine philanthropy*, till Jesus Christ came; and it was Jesus alone who *declared* that GOD whom no man had ever seen. Moses received the secrets of God, and faithfully taught them to the people; Jesus revealed the *whole will of God to mankind*. Moses was thus *faithful* to a small part of mankind, viz. the Jewish people; but in this sense Jesus was *faithful* to all mankind: for he was the light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.

Verse 3. **For this man was counted]** As Jesus Christ, in the character of *apostle* and *high priest*, is here intended, the word *apostle*, or this *person* or *personage*, should have been supplied, if any, instead of *man*. Indeed, the pronoun οὗτος should have been translated *this person*, and this would have referred immediately to Jesus Christ, #Heb 3:1.

**More glory than Moses]** We have already seen that the apostle's design is to prove that Jesus Christ is *higher than the angels*, *higher than Moses*, and *higher than Aaron*. That he is higher than the *angels* has been already proved; that he is *higher than Moses* he is now proving.

**He who hath builded the house]** There can be no doubt that a man who builds a house for his own accommodation is more honourable than the house itself; but the *house* here intended is the *Church of God*. This Church, here called a *house* or *family*, is built by Christ; he is the Head, Governor, Soul and Life of it; he must therefore be *greater than Moses*, who was only a *member* and *officer* in that Church, who never put a stone in this spiritual building but was even himself put in it by the great Architect. Moses was in this house, and faithful in this house; but the house was the house of God, and builded and governed by Christ.

Verse 4. **For every house is builded by some man]** The literal sense is plain enough: "Every structure plainly implies an, *architect*, and an *end* for which it was formed. The architect may be employed by him for whose use the house is intended; but the *efficient* cause of the erection is that which is here to be regarded." The word *house*, here, is still taken in a *metaphorical* sense as above, it signifies *family* or *Church*. Now the general meaning of the words, taken in this sense, is: "Every family has an author, and a head or governor. Man may found families, civil and religious

communities, and be the head of these; but God alone is the Head, Author, and Governor, of all the families of the earth; he is the Governor of the universe. But the apostle has a more restricted meaning in the words *τα παντα*, *all these things*; and as he has been treating of the Jewish and Christian Churches, so he appears to have them in view here. Who could found the Jewish and Christian Church but God? Who could support, govern, influence, and defend them, but himself? Communities or societies, whether religious or civil, may be founded by *man*; but God alone can build his own Church. Now as *all these things* could be builded only by God, so he must be God who has built all these things. But as Jesus is the Founder of the Church, and the Head of it, the word GOD seems here to be applied to *him*; and several eminent scholars and critics bring this very text as a proof of the supreme Deity of Christ: and the apostle's argument seems to require this; for, as he is proving that Christ is *preferred before Moses* because *he built this house*, which Moses could not do, where he to be understood as intimating that this house was built by *another*, viz. the *Father*, his whole argument would fall to the ground; and for *all this*, Moses might be equal, yea, superior to Christ. On this ground Dr. Owen properly concludes: "This then is that which the apostle intends to declare; namely, the ground and reason whence it is that the house was or could be, in that glorious manner, built by Christ, even because he is GOD, and so able to effect it; and by this effect of his power, he is manifested so to be."

Verse 5. **As a servant**] The *fidelity* of Moses was the fidelity of a *servant*; he was not the framer of that Church or house; he was employed, under God, to arrange and order it: he was *steward* to the Builder and Owner.

**For a testimony of those things**] Every ordinance under the law was *typical*; every thing bore a *testimony* to the things which were to be spoken after; i.e. to Jesus Christ, his suffering, death, and the glory which should follow; and to his Gospel in all its parts. The *faithfulness* of Moses consisted in his scrupulous attention to every ordinance of God; his framing every thing according to the pattern showed him by the Lord; and his referring all to that Christ of whom he spoke as the prophet who should come after him, and should be raised up from among themselves; whom they should attentively hear and obey, on pain of being cut off from being the people of the Lord. Hence our Lord told the Jews, **#Joh 5:46**: *If ye had believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me*; "namely;" says Dr. Macknight, "in the figures, but especially in the prophecies, of the law, where the Gospel dispensation, the coming of its Author, and his character as Messiah, are all described with a precision which adds the greatest lustre of evidence to Jesus and to his Gospel."

Verse 6. **But Christ as a Son over his own house**] Moses was faithful as a *servant* IN the house; Jesus was faithful, as the *first-born Son*, OVER the house of which he is the Heir and Governor. Here, then, is the conclusion of the argument in reference to Christ's superiority over Moses. Moses did not found the house or family, Christ did; Moses was but *in* the house, or one of the family, Christ was *over* the house as its Ruler; Moses was but *servant* in the house, Christ was the *Son* and *Heir*; Moses was in the house of *another*, Christ in his *own house*.

It is well known to every learned reader that the pronoun *αυτου*, without an *aspirate*, signifies *his* simply; and that with the *aspirate*, *αυτου*, it signifies *his own*: the word being in this form a contraction, not uncommon, of *εαυτου*. If we read *αυτου* without the *aspirate*, then *his* must refer to *God*, **#Heb 3:4**.

*But Christ as a Son over his* (that is, God's) *house*: if we read *αυτου*, with the *aspirate*, as some editions do, then what is spoken refers to *Christ*; and the words above convey the same sense as those words, #Ac 20:28: *Feed the Church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood*. Some editions read the word thus; and it is evident that the edition which our translators used had the word *αυτου*, *his own*, and not *αυτου*, *his*. The Spanish and London Polyglots have the same reading. From the most ancient MSS. we can get no help to determine which is to be preferred, as they are generally written without accents. The two first editions of the Greek Testament, that of *Complutum*, 1514, and that of *Erasmus*, 1516, have *αυτου*, *his*; and they are followed by most other editions: but the celebrated edition of Robert *Stephens*, 1550, has *αυτου*, *his own*. The reading is certainly important; but it belongs to one of those difficulties in criticism which, if the context or collateral evidence do not satisfactorily solve it, must remain in doubt; and every reader is at liberty to adopt which reading he thinks best.

**Whose house are we]** We Christians are his *Church* and *family*; he is our Father, Governor, and Head.

**If we hold fast the confidence]** We are now his Church, and shall *continue* to be such, and be acknowledged by him IF we maintain our Christian profession, *την παρρησιαν*, *that liberty of access to God*, which we now have, and the *rejoicing of the hope*, i.e. of eternal life, which we shall receive at the resurrection of the dead. The word *παρρησια*, which is here translated *confidence*, and which signifies *freedom of speech, liberty of access, &c.*, seems to be used here to distinguish an important Christian privilege. Under the old testament no man was permitted to *approach to God*: even the very mountain on which God published his laws must not be touched by man nor beast; and only the high priest was permitted to enter the holy of holies, and that only once a year, on the great day of atonement; and even then he must have the blood of the victim to propitiate the Divine justice. Under the Christian dispensation the way to the holiest is now laid open; and we have *παρρησιαν*, *liberty of access*, even to the holiest, by the blood of Jesus. Having such access unto God, by such a Mediator, we may obtain all that grace which is necessary to fit us for eternal glory; and, having the witness of his Spirit in our heart, we have a well grounded hope of endless felicity, and exult in the enjoyment of that hope. But IF we *retain not* the *grace*, we shall not inherit the *glory*.

Verse 7. **Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today]** These words are quoted from #Ps 95:7; and as they were written by David, and attributed here to the Holy Ghost, it proves that David wrote, by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit. As these words were originally a warning to the Israelites not to provoke God, lest they should be excluded from that *rest* which he had promised them, the apostle uses them here to persuade the Christians in Palestine to hold fast their religious privileges, and, the grace they had received, lest they should come short of that state of future glory which Christ had prepared for them. The words strongly imply, as indeed does the whole *epistle*, the *possibility of falling from the grace of God*, and *perishing everlastingly*; and without this supposition these words, and all such like, which make more than *two-thirds* of the whole of Divine revelation, would have neither sense nor meaning. Why should God entreat man to receive his mercy, if he have rendered this impossible? Why should he exhort a believer to persevere, if it be impossible for him to fall away? What contemptible quibbling have men used to maintain a false and dangerous tenet against the whole tenor of the word of God! Angels fell-Adam fell-Solomon fell-and multitudes of believers have fallen, and, for aught we know, rose no more; and yet we are told that *we* cannot

finally lose the benefits of our conversion! Satan preached this doctrine to our first parents; they believed him, sinned, and fell; and brought a whole world to ruin!

Verse 8. **Harden not your hearts]** Which ye will infallibly do, if ye *will not* hear his voice.

**Provocation]** παραπικρασμος· From παρα, signifying *intensity*, and πικραίνω, to *make bitter*; the *exasperation*, or *bitter provocation*. "The Israelites provoked God *first* in the wilderness of Sin, (Pelusium,) when they murmured for want of bread, and had the manna given them, #Ex 16:4. From the wilderness of Sin they journeyed to Rephidim, where they provoked God a second time for want of water, and insolently saying, *Is the Lord God among us or not?* #Ex 17:2-9, on which account the place was called *Massah* and *Meribah*. See "1Co 10:4", note 1. From Rephidim they went into the wilderness of Sinai, where they received the law, in the beginning of the third year from their coming out of Egypt. Here they provoked God again, by making the golden calf, #Ex 32:10. After the law was given they were commanded to go directly to Canaan, and take possession of the promised land, #De 1:6, 7: *God spake unto us in Horeb, saying, Ye have dwelt long enough in this mount: turn you, and take your journey, and go to the mount of the Amorites, and unto all the places nigh thereunto, in the plain, in the hills, and in the vales, and in the south, and by the seaside, to the land of the Canaanites, and unto Lebanon, and unto the great river, the river Euphrates.* The Israelites, having received this order, departed from Horeb, and went forward three days' journey, #Nu 10:33, till they came to Taberah, #Nu 11:3, where they provoked God the fourth time, by murmuring for want of flesh to eat; and for that sin were smitten with a very great plague, #Nu 11:33; this place was called *Kibroth-hattaavah*, because there they buried the people who lusted. From Kibroth-hattaavah they went to Hazeroth, #Nu 11:35, and from thence into the *wilderness of Paran*, #Nu 12:16, to a place called *Kadesh*, #Nu 13:26. Their journey from Horeb to Kadesh is thus described by Moses, #De 1:19-21: *And when we departed from Horeb, we went through all that great and terrible wilderness, which you saw by the way of the mountain of the Amorites, as the Lord our God commanded us; and, we came to Kadesh-barnea. And I said unto you, Ye are come unto the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it.* But the people proposed to Moses to send spies, to bring them an account of the land, and of its inhabitants, #De 1:22. These after forty days returned to Kadesh; and, except Caleb and Joshua, they all agreed in bringing an evil report of the land, #Nu 13:25-32; whereby the people were so discouraged that they refused to go up, and proposed to make a captain, and return into Egypt, #Nu 14:4. Wherefore, having thus shown an absolute disbelief of God's promises, and an utter distrust of his power, he swore that not one of that generation should enter Canaan, except Caleb and Joshua, but should all die in the wilderness, #Nu 14:20; #De 1:34, 35; and ordered them to *turn, and get into the wilderness, by the way of the Red Sea.* In that wilderness the Israelites, as Moses informs us, sojourned thirty-eight years, #De 2:14: *And the space in which we came from Kadesh-barnea, until we were come over the brook Zereb, was thirty and eight years; until all the generation of the men of war were wasted out from among the host, as the Lord swore unto them.* Wherefore, although the Israelites provoked God to wrath in the wilderness, from the day they came out of the land of Egypt until their arrival in Canaan, as Moses told them, #De 9:7, their greatest provocation, the provocation in which they showed the greatest degree of evil disposition, undoubtedly was their refusing to go into Canaan from Kadesh. It was therefore very properly termed *the bitter provocation* and the *day of temptation*, by way of eminence; and justly

brought on them the oath of God, excluding them from his rest in Canaan. To distinguish this from the provocation at Rephidim, it is called *Meribah-Kadesh*," #De 32:51. See Dr. Macknight.

Verse 9. **When your fathers tempted me]** It would be better to translate *ou* *where* than *when*, as the Vulgate has done in its *ubi*; and this translation has been followed by *Wiclif*, *Coverdale*, *Tindal*, and our first translators in general. In my old MS. Bible the 7th, 8th, and 9th verses stand thus:- {#Heb 3:7-9}

*Wherefore as the Holy Gost seith, to-day gif yhe han herde his boyce: nye yhe herden ghour hertis as in wrath-thinge, after the day of temptacioun in desert. Where ghoure fadris temptiden me: probyden and saiden my werkis. Wherefore fourty peere I was offendid or wrothe to this generatoun.*

In behalf of this translation, Dr. Macknight very properly argues: "The word WHEN implies that, at the time of the *bitter provocation*, the Israelites had seen God's works *forty* years; contrary to the *history*, which shows that the *bitter provocation* happened, in the beginning of the *third* year after the Exodus: whereas the translation *where*, as well as the matter of fact, represents God as saying, by David, that the Israelites tempted God in the wilderness during forty years, notwithstanding all that time they had seen God's miracles."

Verse 10. **Wherefore I was grieved]** God represents himself as the *Father* of this great Jewish *family*, for whose comfort and support he had made every necessary provision, and to whom he had given every proof of *tenderness* and *fatherly affection*; and because, they disobeyed him, and walked in that way in which they could not but be miserable, therefore he represents himself as grieved and exceedingly displeased with them.

**They do alway err in their hearts]** Their affections are set on earthly things, and they do not acknowledge my ways to be *right*-holy, just, and good. They are radically evil; and they are evil, *continually*. They have every proof, of my power and goodness, and lay nothing to heart. They might have been saved, but they would not. God was grieved on this account. Now, can we suppose that it would have grieved him if, by a decree of his own, he had rendered their salvation impossible?

Verse 11. **So I swear in my wrath]** God's *grief* at their continued disobedience became *wrath* at their final impenitence, and therefore he excluded them from the promised rest.

Verse 12. **Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you]** Take warning by those disobedient Israelites; they were brought out of the house of bondage, and had the fullest promise of a land of prosperity and rest. By their disobedience they came short of it, and fell in the wilderness. Ye have been brought from the bondage of sin, and have a most gracious promise of an everlasting inheritance among the saints in light; through unbelief and disobedience they lost their rest, through the same ye may lose yours. An evil heart of unbelief will head away from the living God. What was possible in *their* case, is possible in *yours*. The apostle shows here *five* degrees of apostasy: 1. Consenting to sin, being deceived by its solicitations. 2. Hardness of heart, through giving way to sin. 3. Unbelief in consequence of this hardness which leads them to call even the truth of the Gospel in question. 4. This unbelief causing them to speak evil of the Gospel, and the provision God has made for the salvation of their souls. 5. Apostasy itself, or falling off from the living God; and

thus extinguishing all the light that was in them, and finally grieving the Spirit of God, so that he takes his flight, and leaves them to a seared conscience and reprobate mind. See *Leigh*. He who begins to give the least way to sin is in danger of final apostasy; the best remedy against this is to get the evil heart *removed*, as *one* murderer in the house is more to be dreaded than *ten* without.

Verse 13. **But exhort one another daily]** This supposes a state of chose Church fellowship, without which they could not have had access to each other.

**While it is called to-day]** Use time while you have: it, for by and by there will be no more present time; all will be future; all will be eternity. *Daily* signifies time continued. *To-day*, all present time. Your fathers said: Let us make ourselves a captain, and return back unto Egypt, #Nu 14:4. Thus *they* exhorted each other *to depart from the living God*. Be ye warned by their example; let not that unbelieving heart be in *you* that was in *them*; exhort each other daily to cleave to the living God; lest, if ye, do not, *ye*, like *them*, may be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Verse 14. **For we are made partakers of Christ]** Having believed in Christ as the promised Messiah, and embraced the whole Christian system, they were consequently made partakers of all its *benefits* in this life, and entitled to the fulfilment of all its exceeding great and precious promises relative to the glories of the eternal world. The former they actually possessed, the latter they could have only in case of their perseverance; therefore the apostle says, *If we hold fast the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end*, i.e. of our life. For our participation of glory depends on our continuing steadfast in the faith, to the end of our Christian race.

The word υποστᾱσις, which we here translate *confidence*, from υπο, *under*, and ἵστημι, *to place* or *stand*, signifies properly a *basis* or *foundation*; that on which something else is builded, and by which it is supported. Their *faith* in Christ Jesus was this *hypostasis* or *foundation*; on that all their peace, comfort, and salvation were builded. If this were not held fast to the end, Christ, in his saving influences, could not be held fast; and no Christ, no heaven. He who has Christ in him, has the well-founded hope of glory; and he who is found in the great day with Christ in his heart, will have an abundant entrance into eternal glory.

Verse 15. **While it is said, To-day]** You may see the necessity of perseverance from the saying, "Today, if ye will hear his voice," therefore *harden not your hearts*-do not neglect so great a salvation; hold fast what ye have obtained, and let no man take your crown. See on #Heb 3:7-9, and #Heb 3:12.

Verse 16. **For some, when they had heard, did provoke]** There is a various reading here, which consists merely in the different placing of an *accent*, and yet gives the whole passage a different turn:-τινες, from τις, *who*, if read with the accent on the *epsilon*, τινες, is the plural indefinite, and signifies *some*, as in our translation; if read with the accent on the *iota*, τινες, it has an *interrogative* meaning; and, according to this, the whole clause, τινες γαρ ακουσαντες παρεπικραναν: *But who were those hearers who did bitterly provoke?* ἀλλ' ος παντες οι εξελθοντες εξ αιγυπτου δια μωσεως; *Were they not all they who came out of the land of Egypt by Moses?* Or, the whole clause may be read with one interrogation: *But who were those hearers that did bitterly provoke, but all those who came out of Egypt by Moses?* This mode of reading is followed by some

*editions*, and by *Chrysostom* and *Theodoret*, and by several learned *moderns*. It is more *likely* that this is the true reading, as all that follows to the end of the 18th verse is a series of interrogations.

Should it be said that *all* did not provoke, for Joshua and Caleb are expressly excepted; I answer, that the term *all* may be with great propriety used, when out of many *hundreds of thousands* only two persons were found who continued faithful. To these also we may add the *priests* and the whole tribe of *Levi*, who, it is very likely, did not provoke; for, as Dr. Macknight very properly remarks, they were not of the number of those who were to fight their way into Canaan, being entirely devoted to the service of the sanctuary. See #Nu 1:3, 45, and #Nu 1:49. And therefore what remained of them after forty years, no doubt, entered Canaan; for it appears from #Nu 34:17, and #Jos 24:33, that *Eleazar*, the son of Aaron, was one of those who did take possession of Canaan. Should it be still said our version appears to be most proper, because *all* did not provoke; it may be answered, that the common reading, *τινες*, *some*, is too *contracted* in its meaning to comprehend the hundreds of thousands who did rebel.

Verse 17. **But with whom was he grieved forty years?**] I believe it was *Surenhusius* who first observed that "the apostle, in using the term forty years, elegantly alludes to the space of time which had elapsed since the ascension of our Lord till the time in which this epistle was written, which was about forty years." But this does not exactly agree with what appears to be the exact date of this epistle. However, God had now been a long time provoked by that race rejecting the manifested Messiah, as he was by the conduct of their forefathers in the wilderness; and as that provocation was punished by a very signal judgment, so they might expect this to be punished also. The analogy was perfect in the crimes, and it might reasonably be expected to be so in the punishment. And was not the destruction of Jerusalem a proof of the heinous nature of their crimes, and of the justice of God's outpoured wrath?

**Whose carcasses fell]** *ων τα κωλα επεσεν*. *Whose members fell*; for *τα κωλα* properly signifies the members of the body, and here may be an allusion to the scattered, bleached bones of this people, that were a long time apparent in the wilderness, continuing there as a proof of their crimes, and of the judgments of God.

Verse 18. **To whom sware he]** God never acts by any kind of caprice; whenever he pours out his judgments, there are the most positive reasons to vindicate his conduct.

Those whose carcasses fell in the wilderness were they who had sinned. And those who did not enter into his rest were those who *believed not*. God is represented here as *swearing* that *they should not enter in*, in order to show the *determinate nature* of his purpose, the reason on which it was founded, and the height of the *aggravation* which occasioned it.

Verse 19. **So we see that they could not enter in]** It was no *decree* of God that prevented them, it was no want of necessary *strength* to enable them, it was through no deficiency of *Divine counsel* to instruct them; all these they had in abundance: but they chose to sin, and would not believe. *Unbelief* produced *disobedience*, and disobedience produced *hardness of heart* and blindness of mind; and all these drew down the judgments of God, and wrath came upon them to the uttermost.

1. THIS whole chapter, as the epistle in general, reads a most awful lesson against *backsliders*, *triflers*, and *loiterers* in the way of salvation. Every believer in Christ is in danger of *apostasy*, while any remains of the *evil heart of unbelief* are found in him. God has promised to purify the heart; and the blood of Christ cleanses from all sin. It is therefore the highest wisdom of genuine Christians to look to God for the complete purification of their souls; this they cannot have too soon, and for this they cannot be too much in earnest.

2. No man should defer his salvation to any future time. If God speaks *to-day*, it is *to-day* that he should be *heard* and *obeyed*. To defer reconciliation to God to any *future* period, is the most reprehensible and destructive presumption. It supposes that God will indulge us in our sensual propensities, and cause his mercy to tarry for us till we have consummated our iniquitous purposes. It shows that we prefer, at least for the present, the devil to Christ, sin to holiness, and earth to heaven. And can we suppose that God will be thus mocked? Can we suppose that it can at all consistent with his *mercy* to extend forgiveness to such abominable provocation? What a man sows that shall he reap. If he sows to the flesh, he shall of the flesh reap corruption. Reader, it is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

3. *Unbelief* has generally been considered the *most damning of all sins*. I wish those who make this assertion would condescend to explain themselves. What is this *unbelief* that *damns* and *ruins mankind*? Their not *permitting their minds to be persuaded of the truths which God speaks*. *απιστια*, from *α*, negative, and *πιστις*, *faith*, signifies *faithless* or to be *without faith*. And this is an effect from another cause. In **#Heb 4:11**, these very people are said to have *fallen through unbelief*; but there the word is *απειθεια*, from *α*, negative, and *πειθω*, to *persuade*. They heard the Divine instructions, they saw God's stupendous miracles; but they would not suffer themselves to be persuaded, that he who said and did such things would perform those other things which he had either threatened or promised: hence they had *no faith*, because they were *unpersuaded*; and their *unbelief* was the *effect* of their *unpersuaded* or *unpersuadable* mind. And their minds were not persuaded of God's truth, because they had ears open only to the dictates of the flesh; see on **#Heb 4:2**. Here then is the damning sin, the not inferring, from what God has said and done, that he will do those other things which he has either threatened or promised. And how few are there who are not committing this sin daily! Reader, dost *thou* in this state dream of heaven? Awake out of sleep!

4. Where there are so many snares and dangers it is impossible to be too watchful and circumspect. Satan, as a roaring lion, as a subtle serpent, or in the guise of an angel of light, is momentarily going about seeking whom he may deceive, blind, and devour; and, when it is considered that the human heart, till entirely renewed, is on his side, it is a miracle of mercy that any soul escapes perdition: no man is safe any longer than he maintains the spirit of *watchfulness* and *prayer*; and to maintain such a spirit, he has need of all the means of grace. He who neglects any of them which the mercy of God has placed in his power, tempts the devil to tempt him. As a preventive of backsliding and apostasy, the apostle recommends *mutual exhortation*. No Christian should live for himself alone; he should consider his fellow Christian as a member of the same body, and feel for him accordingly, and have, succour, and protect him. When this is carefully attended to in religious society, Satan finds it very difficult to make an inroad on the Church; but when coldness, distance, and a want of brotherly love take place, Satan can attack each *singly*, and, by successive victories over *individuals*, soon make an easy conquest of the whole.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER IV.

*As the Christian rest is to be obtained by faith, we should beware of unbelief lest we lose it, as the Hebrews did theirs, 1. The reason why they were not brought into the rest promised to them, 2. The rest promised to the Hebrews was a type of that promised to Christians, 3-10. Into this rest we should earnestly labour to enter, 11. A description of the word of God, 12, 13. Jesus is our sympathetic High Priest, 15. Through him we have confidence to come to God, 16.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. **Let us therefore fear]** Seeing the Israelites lost the rest of Canaan, through obstinacy and unbelief, let us be afraid lest we come short of the heavenly rest, through the same cause.

**Should seem to come short of it.]** *Lest any of us should actually come short of it; i.e. miss it.* See the note on the verb *δοκειν*, to *seem*, #Lu 8:18. What the apostle had said before, relative to the *rest*, might be considered as an allegory; here he explains and applies that allegory, showing that Canaan was a type of the grand privileges of the Gospel of Christ, and of the glorious eternity to which they lead.

**Come short]** The verb *υστερειν* is applied here metaphorically; it is an allusion, of which there are many in this epistle, to the *races* in the Grecian games: he that *came short* was he who was any distance, no matter how small, *behind* the winner. Will it avail any of us how near we get to heaven, if the door be shut before we arrive? How dreadful the thought, to have only *missed* being eternally saved! To *run* well, and yet to permit the devil, the world, or the flesh, to hinder in the few last steps! Reader, watch and be sober.

Verse 2. **For unto us was the Gospel preached]** *και γαρ εσμεν ευηγγελισμενοι*: *For we also have received good tidings as well as they.* They had a gracious promise of entering into an earthly rest; we have a gracious promise of entering into a heavenly rest. God gave them every requisite advantage; he has done the same to us. Moses and the elders spoke the word of God plainly and forcibly to them: Christ and his apostles have done the same to us. They might have persevered; so may we: they disbelieved, disobeyed, and fell: and so may we.

**But the word preached did not profit them]** *αλλ ουκ ωφελησεν ο λογος της ακοης εκεινους*: *But the word of hearing did not profit them.* The word and promise to which the apostle most probably refers is that in #De 1:20, 21: *Ye are come unto to the mountain of the Amorites, which the Lord our God doth give unto to us. Behold, the Lord thy God hath set the land before thee; go up and possess it, as the Lord God of thy fathers hath said unto thee: fear not. Many exhortations they had to the following effect: Arise, that we may go up against them; for we have seen the land, and, behold, it is very good: and are ye still? Be not slothful to go, and to enter to possess the land; for God hath given it into your hands; a place where there is no want of any thing that is in the earth; #Jud 18:9, 10.* But instead of attending to the word of the Lord by Moses, the whole congregation murmured against him and Aaron, *and said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return*

into Egypt; #Nu 14:2, 4. But they were dastardly through all their generations. They spoke evil of the pleasant land, and did not give credence to his word. Their minds had been debased by their Egyptian bondage, and they scarcely ever arose to a state of mental nobility.

**Not being mixed with faith in them that heard]** There are several various readings in this verse, and some of them important. The principal are on the word συγκεκραμενος, *mixed*; which in the common text refers to ο λογος, *the word mixed*; but, in ABCD and several others, it is συγκεκραμενους, referring to, and agreeing with, εκεινους, and may be thus translated: *The word of hearing did not profit them, they not being mixed with those who heard it by faith*. That is, they were not of the same spirit with Joshua and Caleb. There are other variations, but of less importance; but the common text seems best.

The word συγκεκραμενος, *mixed*, is peculiarly expressive; it is a metaphor taken from the nutrition of the human body by mixing the aliment taken into the stomach with the saliva and gastric juice, in consequence of which it is concocted, digested, reduced into chyle, which, absorbed by the lacteal vessels, and thrown into the blood, becomes the means of increasing and supporting the body, all the solids and fluids being thus generated; so that on this process, properly performed, depend (under God) strength, health, and life itself. Should the most nutritive aliment be received into the stomach, if not *mixed* with the above juices, it would be rather the means of *death* than of life; or, in the words of the apostle, it would *not profit*, because not thus *mixed*. *Faith* in the word preached, in reference to that God who sent it, is the grand means of its becoming the power of God to the salvation of the soul. It is not likely that he who does not credit a *threatening*, when he comes to hear it, will be deterred by it from repeating the sin against which it is levelled; nor can he derive comfort from a *promise* who does not believe it as a pledge of God's veracity and goodness. Faith, therefore, must be *mixed* with all that we hear, in order to make the word of God effectual to our salvation.

This very use of the word, and its explanation, we may find in *Maximus Tyrius*, in his description of health, Dissert. x., page 101. "Health," says he, it is a certain disposition υγρων και ξηρων και ψυχρων και θερμων δυναμεων, η υπο τεχνης συγκραθεισων καλως, η υπο φυσεως απμοσθεισων τεξνικως, which consists in a *proper mixture* together of the wet and the dry, the cold and the hot, either by an artificial process, or by the skilful economy of nature."

Verse 3. **For we which have believed do enter into rest]** The great spiritual blessings, the forerunners of eternal glory, which were all typified by that earthly rest or felicity promised to the ancient Israelites, we Christians do, by believing in Christ Jesus, actually possess. We have peace of conscience, and joy in the Holy Ghost; are saved from the guilt and power of sin; and thus enjoy an inward rest.

But *this* is a rest differing from the *seventh day's* rest, or *Sabbath*, which was the original type of Canaan, the blessings of the Gospel, and eternal glory; seeing God said, concerning the unbelieving Israelites in the wilderness, I have sworn in my wrath that they shall not enter into my rest, notwithstanding the *works* of creation *were finished*, and the seventh day's rest was instituted *from the foundation of the world*; consequently the Israelites *had entered* into that rest before the oath was sworn. See *Macknight*.

We who believe, *οι πιστευσαντες*, is omitted by Chrysostom, and some few MSS. And instead of *εισερχομεθα γαρ*, for we do enter, AC, several others, with the Vulgate and Coptic, read *εισερχομεθα ουν*, therefore let us enter; and thus it answers to *φωβηθωμεν ουν*, therefore let us fear, #Heb 4:1; but this reading cannot well stand unless *οι πιστευσαντες* be omitted, which is acknowledged to be genuine by every MS. and version of note and importance. The meaning appears to be this: We Jews, who have believed in Christ, do actually possess that rest-state of happiness in God, produced by peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost-which was typified by the happiness and comfort to be enjoyed by the believing Hebrews, in the possession of the promised land. See before.

**From the foundation of the world.]** The foundation of the world, *καταβολη κοσμου*, means the completion of the work of creation in six days. In those days was the world, i.e. the whole system of mundane things, begun and perfected; and this appears to be the sense of the expression in this place.

Verse 4. **For he spake in a certain place]** This *certain place* or *somewhere*, *που*, is probably #Ge 2:2; and refers to the completion of the work of creation, and the setting apart the *seventh day* as a day of rest for man, and a *type* of everlasting felicity. See the notes on "Ge 2:1", &c., and see here "Heb 2:6".

Verse 5. **And in this place again]** In the ninety-fifth Psalm, already quoted, #Ps 95:3, 4. This was a second rest which the Lord promised to the believing, obedient seed of Abraham; and as it was spoken of in the days of David, when the Jews actually possessed this long promised *Canaan*, therefore it is evident that *that* was not the rest which God intended, as the next verse shows.

Verse 6. **It remaineth that some must enter therein]** Why our translators put in the word *must* here I cannot even conjecture. I hope it was not to serve a system, as some have since used it: "Some *must* go to heaven, for so is the doctrine of the decree; and there *must* be certain persons *infallibly* brought thither as a reward to Christ for his sufferings; and in this the will of man and free agency can have no part," &c, &c. Now, supposing that even all this was true, yet it does not exist either positively or by implication in the text. The words *επει ουν απολειπεται τινας εισελθειν εις αυτην*, literally translated, are as follows: *Seeing then it remaineth for some to enter into it; or, Whereas therefore it remaineth that some enter into it*, which is Dr. Owen's translation, and they to whom it was first preached (*οι προτερον ευαγγελισθεντες*, they to whom the promise was given; they who first received the good tidings; i.e., the Israelites, to whom was given the promise of entering into the rest of Canaan) *did not enter in because of their unbelief*; and the promise still continued to be repeated even in the days of David; therefore, some *other rest* must be intended.

Verse 7. **He limiteth a certain day]** The term *day* signifies not only *time* in general, but also *present time*, and a particular *space*. Day here seems to have the same meaning as *rest* in some other parts of this verse. The day or time of rest relative to the ancient Jews being over and past, and a *long time* having elapsed between God's displeasure shown to the disobedient Jews in the wilderness and the days of David, and the true rest not having been enjoyed, God in his mercy has *instituted another day*-has given *another dispensation* of mercy and goodness by Christ Jesus; and now it may be said, as formerly, *To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts*. God speaks now as

he spoke *before*; his *voice* is in the *Gospel* as it was in the *law*. Believe, love, obey, and ye shall enter into this rest.

Verse 8. **For if Jesus had given them rest]** It is truly surprising that our translators should have rendered the  $\text{Ἰησοῦς}$  of the text *Jesus*, and not *Joshua*, who is most clearly intended. They must have known that the  $\text{יְהוֹשֻׁעַ}$  *Yehoshua* of the Hebrew, which we write *Joshua*, is everywhere rendered  $\text{Ἰησοῦς}$ , *Jesus*, by the Septuagint; and it is their reading which the apostle follows. It is true the Septuagint generally write  $\text{Ἰησοῦς νᾱνη}$ , or  $\text{Ἰησοῦς νᾱνη}$ , *Jesus Nave*, or *Jesus, son of Nave*, for it is thus they translate  $\text{יְהוֹשֻׁעַ בֶּן נֹון}$  *Yehoshua ben Nun*, Joshua the son of Nun; and this is sufficient to distinguish it from *Jesus, son of David*. But as Joshua, the captain general of Israel, is above intended, the word should have been written *Joshua*, and not *Jesus*. One MS., merely to prevent the wrong application of the name, has  $\text{Ἰησοῦς ο τοῦ νᾱνη}$ , *Jesus the son of Nave*. *Theodoret* has the same in his comment, and one *Syriac* version has it in the text. It is *Joshua* in Coverdale's Testament, 1535; in Tindal's 1548; in that edited by Edmund Becke, 1549; in Richard Cardmarden's, Rouen, 1565; several modern translators, Wesley, Macknight, Wakefield, &c., read *Joshua*, as does our own in the *margin*. What a pity it had not been in the text, as all the smaller Bibles have no marginal readings, and many simple people are bewildered with the expression.

The apostle shows that, although Joshua did bring the children of Israel into the promised land, yet this could not be the intended rest, because *long after* this time the Holy Spirit, by David, speaks of this rest; the apostle, therefore, concludes,

Verse 9. **There, remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.]** It was not, 1. The rest of the *Sabbath*; it was not, 2. The *rest* in the *promised land*, for the psalmist wrote long after the days of Joshua; therefore there is *another rest*, a state of *blessedness*, for the people of God; and this is the *Gospel*, the blessings it procures and communicates, and the *eternal glory* which it prepares for, and has promised to, genuine believers.

There are two words in this chapter which we indifferently translate *rest*,  $\text{καταπαυσις}$  and  $\text{αἰσθησις}$ : the *first* signifying a *cessation from labour*, so that the weary body is *rested* and *refreshed*; the *second* meaning, not only a rest from labour, but a *religious rest*; *sabbatismus*, a rest of a sacred kind, of which both soul and body partake. This is true, whether we understand the rest as referring to *Gospel blessings*, or to *eternal felicity*, or to *both*.

Verse 10. **For he that is entered into his rest]** The man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest; the state of happiness which he has provided, and which is the forerunner of *eternal glory*.

**Hath ceased from his own works]** No longer depends on the observance of Mosaic rites and ceremonies for his justification and final happiness. He rests from all these *works of the law* as fully as God has rested from his works of *creation*.

Those who restrain the word *rest* to the signification of *eternal glory*, say, that *ceasing from our own works* relates to the *sufferings, tribulations, afflictions, &c.*, of this life; as in **#Re 14:13**. I understand it as including *both*.

In speaking of the *Sabbath*, as typifying a state of blessedness in the other world, the apostle follows the opinions of the Jews of his own and after times. The phrase **שְׁבַת עֲלֵאָה וְשְׁבַת תַּתִּיבָה** *shabbath illaah, veshabbath tethaah*, the *sabbath above*, and the *sabbath below*, is common among the Jewish writers; and they think that where the plural number is used, as in **#Le 19:30**: *Ye shall keep my Sabbaths*, that the *lower* and *higher sabbaths* are intended, and that the one is prefigured by the other. See many examples in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 11. **Let us labour therefore]** The word **σπουδασωμεν** implies every *exertion* of *body* and *mind* which can be made in reference to the subject. *Rebus aliis omissis, hoc agamus*; All things else omitted, this one thing let us do. We receive grace, improve grace, retain grace, that we may obtain eternal glory.

**Lest any man fall]** Lest he fall off from the grace of God, from the Gospel and its blessings, and perish everlastingly. This is the meaning of the apostle, who never supposed that a man might not make final shipwreck of faith and of a good conscience, as long as he was in a state of *probation*.

Verse 12. **For the word of God is quick, and powerful]** Commentators are greatly divided concerning the meaning of the phrase **ὁ λογος τοσ θεου**, *the word of God*; some supposing the whole of *Divine revelation* to be intended; others, *the doctrine of the Gospel faithfully preached*; others, the *mind of God* or the *Divine intellect*; and others, the *Lord Jesus Christ*, who is thus denominated in **#Joh 1:1**, &c., and **#Re 19:13**; the only places in which he is thus *incontestably* characterized in the New Testament. The disputed text, **#1Jo 5:7**, I leave at present out of the question. In the introduction to this epistle I have produced sufficient evidence to make it very probable that St. Paul was the author of this epistle. In this sentiment the most eminent scholars and critics are now agreed. That Jesus Christ, the *eternal, uncreated WORD*, is not meant here, is more than probable from this consideration, that St. Paul, in no part of his thirteen acknowledged epistles, ever thus denominates our blessed Lord; nor is he thus denominated by any other of the New Testament writers except St. John. Dr. Owen has endeavoured to prove the contrary, but I believe to no man's conviction who was able to examine and judge of the subject. He has not been able to find more than two texts which even appeared to look *his way*. The first is, **#Lu 1:2**: *Us, which-were eye witnesses, and ministers του λογου*, *of the word*; where it is evident the whole of our Lord's ministry is intended. The *second* is, **#Ac 20:32**: *I commend you to God, and to the word of his grace*; where nothing but the *gracious doctrine* of salvation by faith, the influence of the Divine Spirit, &c., &c., can be meant: nor is there any legitimate mode of construction with which I am acquainted, by which the words in either place can be personally applied to our Lord. That the phrase was applied to denominate the second subsistence in the glorious Trinity, by Philo and the rabbinical writers, I have already proved in my notes on John i., where such observations are alone applicable.

*Calmet*, who had read all that either the ancients or moderns have said on this subject, and who does not think that Jesus Christ is here intended, speaks thus: "None of the properties mentioned here can be denied to the Son of God, the eternal Word; he sees all things, knows all things, penetrates all things, and can do all things. He is the ruler of the heart, and can turn it where he pleases. He enlightens the soul, and calls it gently and efficaciously, *when* and *how* he wills. Finally, he punishes in the most exemplary manner the insults offered to his Father and himself by infidels, unbelievers, and the wicked in general. But it does not appear that the Divine Logos is here intended, 1. Because

St. Paul does not use that term to express the Son of God. 2. Because the conjunction *γὰρ, for*, shows that this verse is an inference drawn from the preceding, where the subject in question is concerning the eternal rest, and the *means* by which it is to be obtained. It is therefore more natural to explain the term of the *word, order, and will* of God, for the Hebrews represent the revelation of God as an *active being, living, all-powerful, illumined, executing vengeance, discerning and penetrating all things*. Thus **Wisd. 16:26**: 'Thy children, O Lord, know that it is not the growing of fruits that nourisheth man, but that it is *thy word* that preserveth them that put their trust in thee.' See **#De 8:3**. That is, the sacred Scriptures point out and appoint all the *means of life*. Again, speaking of the Hebrews who were bitten with the fiery serpents, the same writer says, **Wisd. 16:12**: 'For it was neither herb nor mollifying plaster that restored them to health, but *thy word*, O Lord, which healeth all things;' i.e. which describes and prescribes the means of healing. And it is very likely that the *purpose* of God, sending the destroying angel to slay the firstborn in Egypt is intended by the same expression, **Wisd. 18:15, 16**: 'Thine *almighty word* leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a *fierce man of war* into a land of destruction, and brought thine unfeigned commandment as a *sharp sword*, and, standing up, filled all things with death.' This however may be applied to the eternal Logos, or uncreated Word.

"And this mode of speech is exactly conformable to that of the Prophet Isaiah, **#Isa 55:10, 11**, where to the word of God, spoken by his prophets, the same kind of powers are attributed as those mentioned here by the apostle: *For as the rain cometh down and the snow from heaven, and returneth not thither, but watereth the earth, and maketh it bring forth and bud, that it may give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater; so shall my WORD BE that GOETH FORTH OUT OF MY MOUTH: it shall not return unto me void; but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it*. The centurion seems to speak a similar language, **#Lu 7:7**: *But say in a word, (αλλα ειπε λογω, speak to thy word,) and my servant shall be healed.*" This is the sum of what this very able commentator says on the subject.

In Dr. Dodd's collections we find the following:—

"*The word of God*, which promises to the faithful, an entrance into God's rest in David's time, and now to us, is not a thing which *died* or was *forgotten* as soon as it was uttered, but it *continues* one and the same to all generations; it is *ζων, quick or living*. So Isaiah says: *The word of our God shall stand for ever*; **#Isa 40:8**. Compare **#Isa 51:6; 55:11; 1Esdras 4:38; #Joh 3:34; #1Pe 1:23**. And *powerful, ενεργης, efficacious, active*; sufficient, if it be not actually hindered, to produce its effects; *effectual, #Phm 1:6*. See **#2Co 10:4; #1Th 2:13**. And *sharper than any two-edged sword; τομωτερος υπερ, more cutting than*. The word of God *penetrates deeper* into a man than any sword; it enters into the soul and spirit, into all our *sensations, passions, appetites*, nay, to our very *thoughts*; and sits as *judge* of the most *secret intentions, contrivances, and sentiments* of the heart. Phocylides has an expression very similar to our author, where he says, of reason, 'that it is a weapon which penetrates deeper into a man than a sword.' See also **#Isa 40:4; #Eph 6:17; #Re 1:16; 2:16**.

"*Piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit*.—When the *soul* is thus distinguished from the *spirit*, by the former is meant that *inferior faculty* by which we *think of and desire* what concerns our *present being and welfare*. By *spirit* is meant a *superior power* by which we *prefer future things to present*, by which we are directed to pursue *truth and right* above all things, and even

to despise what is agreeable to our present state, if it stand in competition with, or is prejudicial to, our *future happiness*. See #1Th 5:23. Some have thought that by the expression before us is implied that the *word of God* is able to bring death, as in the case of Ananias and Sapphira; for, say they, if the *soul and spirit*, or the *joints and marrow* are separated one from another, it is impossible that life can remain. But perhaps the meaning of the latter clause may rather be: 'It can divide the joints and divide the marrow; i.e. enter irresistibly into the soul, and produce some sentiment which perhaps it would not willingly have received; and sometimes discover and punish secret, as well as open wickedness.' Mr. *Pierce* observes that our author has been evidently arguing from a tremendous judgment of God upon the ancient Israelites, the ancestors of those to whom this epistle is directed; and in this verse, to press upon them that care and diligence he had been recommending, he sets before them the efficacy and virtue of the *word of God*, connecting this verse with the former by a *for* in the beginning of it; and therefore it is natural to suppose that what he says of the *word of God* may have a relation to somewhat remarkable in that sore punishment of which he had been speaking, particularly to the destruction of the people by *lightning*, or *fire from heaven*. See #Le 10:1-5; #Nu 11:1-3; 16:35; #Ps 78:21. All the expressions in this view will receive an additional force, for nothing is more *quick and living*, more *powerful and irresistible*, *sharp and piercing*, than *lightning*. If this idea be admitted, the meaning of the last clause in this verse will be, 'That the word of God is a judge, to censure and punish the evil thoughts and intents of the heart.' And this brings the matter home to the exhortation with which our author began, #Heb 3:12, 13; for under whatever disguise they might conceal themselves, yet, from such tremendous judgments as God executed upon their fathers, they might learn to judge as Moses did, #Nu 32:23: *If ye will not do so, ye have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out.*" See *Hammond, Whitby, Sykes, and Pierce*.

Mr. Wesley's note on this verse is expressed with his usual precision and accuracy:—

"For the word of God-preached, #Heb 4:2, and armed with threatenings, #Heb 4:3, is living and powerful-attended with the power of the living God, and conveying either life or death to the hearers; sharper than any two-edged sword-penetrating the heart more than this does the body; piercing quite through, and laying open, the soul and spirit, joints and marrow-the inmost recesses of the mind, which the apostle beautifully and strongly expresses by this heap of figurative words; and is a discerner, not only of the thoughts, but also of the intentions."

The law, and the word of God in general, is repeatedly compared to a two-edged sword among the Jewish writers, חֶרֶב שֶׁתֵּי פִּיּוֹת *chereb shetey piphioth*, the sword with the two mouths. By this sword the man himself lives, and by it he destroys his enemies. This is implied in its two edges. See also *Schoettgen*.

**Is a discerner of the thoughts]** και κριτικός εὐθυμησῶν και εὐνοισῶν καρδιας: *Is a critic of the propensities and suggestions of the heart*. How many have felt this property of God's word where it has been faithfully preached! How often has it happened that a man has seen the whole of his own character, and some of the most private transactions of his life, held up as it were to public view by the preacher; and yet the parties absolutely unknown to each other! Some, thus exhibited, have even supposed that their neighbours must have privately informed the preacher of their character and conduct; but it was the word of God, which, by the direction and energy of the Divine Spirit, thus searched them out, was a *critical examiner* of the propensities and suggestions of their

*hearts*, and had pursued them through all their public haunts and private ways. Every genuine minister of the Gospel has witnessed such effects as these under his ministry in repeated instances.

But while this effect of the word or true doctrine of God is acknowledged, let it not be supposed that *it*, of *itself* can produce such effects. The word of God is compared to a *hammer* that *breaks the rock in pieces*, #Jer 23:29; but will a *hammer* break a *stone* unless it is applied by the *skill* and *strength* of some powerful *agent*? It is here compared to a *two-edged sword*; but will a *sword* cut or *pierce* to the dividing of joints and marrow, or separation of soul and spirit, unless some *hand* push and *direct* it? Surely, no. Nor can even the words and doctrine of God produce any effect but as directed by the experienced teacher, and applied by the Spirit of God. It is an *instrument* the most apt for the accomplishing of its work; but it will do nothing, can do nothing, but as used by the *heavenly workman*. To this is the reference in the next verse.

Verse 13. **Neither is there any creature that is not manifest]** God, from whom this word comes, and by whom it has all its *efficacy*, is infinitely *wise*. He well knew how to construct his word, so as to suit it to the state of all *hearts*; and he has given it that infinite fulness of meaning, so as to suit it to all *cases*. And so infinite is he in his *knowledge*, and so *omnipresent* is he, that the whole creation is constantly *exposed to his view*; nor is there a *creature* of the *affections*, *mind*, or *imagination*, that is not constantly under his eye. He marks every rising thought, every budding desire; and such as these are supposed to be the *creatures* to which the apostle particularly refers, and which are called, in the preceding verse, the *propensities* and *suggestions of the heart*.

**But all things are naked and opened]** παντα δε γυμνα και τετραχλισμενα. It has been supposed that the phraseology here is *sacrificial*, the apostle referring to the case, of *slaying* and *preparing a victim* to be *offered to God*. 1. It is *slain*; 2. It is *flayed*, so it is *naked*; 3. It is *cut open*, so that all the intestines are exposed to view; 4. It is carefully *inspected* by the priest, to see that all is *sound* before any part is offered to him who has prohibited all *imperfect* and *diseased* offerings; and, 5. It is *divided* exactly into two equal parts, by being split down the chine from the nose to the rump; and so exactly was this performed, that the spinal marrow was cloven down the centre, one half lying in the divided cavity of each side of the backbone. This is probably the metaphor in #2Ti 2:15, where see the note.

But there is reason to suspect that this is not the metaphor here. The verb τεραχλιζω, from which the apostle's τετραχλισμενα comes, signifies to have the *neck bent back* so as to expose the face to full view, that every feature might be seen; and this was often done with *criminals*, in order that they might be the better *recognized* and *ascertained*. To this custom *Pliny* refers in the very elegant and important panegyric which he delivered on the Emperor Trajan, about A. D. 103, when the emperor had made him consul; where, speaking of the great attention which Trajan paid to the public morals, and the care he took to extirpate informers, &c., he says: *Nihil tamen gratius, nihil saeculo dignius, quam quod contigit desuper intueri delatorum supina ora, retortasque cervices. Agnoscebamus et fruebamur, cum velut piaculares publicae sollicitudinis victimae, supra sanguinem noxiorum ad lenta supplicia gravioresque penas ducerentur.* *Plin.* Paneg., cap. 34. "There is nothing, however, in this age which affects us more pleasingly, nothing more deservedly, than to behold from above the supine faces and reverted necks of the informers. We thus knew them, and were gratified when, as

expiatory victims of the public disquietude, they were led away to lingering punishments, and sufferings more terrible than even the blood of the guilty."

The term was also used to describe the action of *wrestlers* who, when they could, got their hand under the chin of their antagonists, and thus, by bending both the head and neck, could the more easily give them a fall; this stratagem is sometimes seen in ancient monuments. But some suppose that it refers to the custom of *dragging them by the neck*. Diogenes the philosopher, observing one who had been victor in the Olympic games often fixing his eyes upon a *courtezan*, said, in allusion to this custom: *ιδε κριον αρειμανιον, ως υπο του τυχοντος κορασιου τραχηλιζεται*. "See how this mighty champion (martial ram) *is drawn by the neck by a common girl*." See Stanley, page 305.

**With whom we have to do.]** *προς ον ημιν ο λογος*: *To whom we must give an account*. He is our *Judge*, and is well qualified to be so, as all our hearts and actions are *naked* and *open* to him.

This is the true meaning of *λογος* in this place; and it is used in precisely the same meaning in **#Mt 12:36; 18:23; #Lu 16:2. #Ro 14:12**: *So then every one of us λογος δωσει, shall give an account of himself to God*. And **#Heb 13:17**: *They watch for your souls, ως λογον αποδωσοντες, as those who must give account*. We translate the words, *With whom we have to do*; of which, though the phraseology is *obsolete*, yet the meaning is nearly the same. *Το whom a worde to us*, is the rendering of my old MS. and Wiclif. *Of whom we speake*, is the version of our other early translators.

Verse 14. **Seeing then that we have a great high priest]** It is contended, and very properly, that the particle *ουν*, which we translate *seeing*, as if what followed was an immediate inference from what the apostle had been speaking, should be translated *now*; for the apostle, though he had before mentioned Christ as the *High Priest of our profession*, **#Heb 3:1**, and as the *High Priest* who made *reconciliation for the sins of the people*, **#Heb 2:17**, does not attempt to prove this in any of the preceding chapters, but now enters upon that point, and discusses it at great length to the end of chap. x.

After all, it is possible that this may be a resumption of the discourse from **#Heb 3:6**; the rest of that chapter, and the preceding thirteen verses of this, being considered as a parenthesis. These parts left out, the discourse runs on with perfect connection. It is very likely that the words, here, are spoken to meet an objection of those Jews who wished the Christians of Palestine to apostatize: "You have no tabernacle-no temple-no high priest-no sacrifice for sin. Without these there can be no religion; return therefore to us, who have the perfect temple service appointed-by God." To these he answers: *We have a High Priest who is passed into the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God*; therefore *let us hold fast our profession*. See on **#Heb 3:1**, to which this verse seems immediately to refer.

*Three things the apostle professes to prove in this epistle:—*

1. That Christ is greater than the *angels*.
2. That he is greater than *Moses*.
3. That he is greater than *Aaron*, and all *high priests*.

The *two* former arguments, with their applications and illustrations, he has already despatched; and now he enters on the *third*. See the *preface* to this epistle.

The apostle states, 1. That we have a *high priest*. 2. That this high priest is Jesus, the *Son of God*; not a *son* or *descendant* of *Aaron*, nor coming in that way, but in a more transcendent line.

3. Aaron and his successors could only pass into the holy of holies, and that once a year; but our High Priest has passed into the heavens, of which that was only the type. There is an allusion here to the high priest going into the holy of holies on the great day of atonement. 1. He left the congregation of the people. 2. He passed through the veil into the holy place, and was not seen even by the priests. 3. He entered through the second veil into the holy of holies, where was the symbol of the majesty of God. Jesus, our High Priest, 1. Left the people at large. 2. He left his disciples by ascending up through the visible heavens, the clouds, as a veil, screening him from their sight. 3. Having passed through these veils, he went immediately to be our Intercessor: thus *he passed ουρανουσ*, the visible or ethereal heavens, into the presence of the Divine Majesty; *through the heavens*, *διεληλυθοτα τουσ ουρανουσ*, and the empyreum, or heaven of heavens.

Verse 15. **For we have not a high priest]** To the objection, "Your High Priest, if entered into the heavens, can have no participation with you, and no sympathy for you, because out of the reach of human feelings and infirmities," he answers: *ου γαρ εχομεν απχιερεα μη δυναμενον συμπαθησαι ταισ ασθενειαισ ημων*. *We have not a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weakness*. Though he be the Son of God, as to his *human nature*, and equal in his *Divine nature* with God; yet, having partaken of human nature, and having submitted to all its trials and distresses, and *being in all points tempted like as we are, without feeling or consenting to sin*; he is able to succour them that are tempted. See **#Heb 2:18**, and the note there.

The words *κατα παντα καθ' ομοιοτητα* might be translated, *in all points according to the likeness*, i.e. as far as his human nature could bear affinity to ours; for, though he had a perfect human body and human soul, yet that body was perfectly tempered; it was free from all morbid action, and consequently from all *irregular movements*. His *mind*, or *human soul*, being free from all sin, being every way perfect, could feel no *irregular temper*, nothing that was inconsistent with infinite purity. In all these respects he was different from us; and cannot, as *man*, sympathize with us in any feelings of this kind: but, as *God*, he has provided support for the *body* under all its trials and infirmities, and for the *soul* he has provided an *atonement* and *purifying sacrifice*; so that he cleanses the heart from all unrighteousness, and fills the soul with his Holy Spirit, and makes it his own temple and continual habitation. He took our flesh and blood, a human body and a human soul, and lived a human life. Here was the *likeness of sinful flesh*, **#Ro 8:5**; and by *thus* assuming human nature, he was completely qualified to make an atonement for the sins of the world.

Verse 16. **Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace]** The allusion to the high priest, and his office on the day of atonement, is here kept up. The *approach* mentioned here is to the *כפרת* *kapporeth*, *λασθηριον*, the *propitiatory* or *mercy-seat*. This was the covering of the ark of the testimony or covenant, at each end of which was a cherub, and between them the *shechinah*, or symbol of the Divine Majesty, which appeared to, and conversed with, the high priest. Here the apostle shows the great superiority of the privileges of the new testament above those of the old; for

there the high priest *only*, and he with *fear* and *trembling*, was permitted to approach; and that not without the blood of the victim; and if in any thing he transgressed, he might expect to be struck with death. The throne of grace in heaven answers to this propitiatory, but to *this* ALL may approach who feel their need of salvation; and they may approach *μετα παρρησιας*, *with freedom, confidence, liberty of speech*, in opposition to the *fear* and *trembling* of the Jewish high priest. Here, nothing is to be feared, provided the heart be right with God, truly sincere, and trusting alone in the sacrificial blood.

**That we may obtain mercy]** *ἵνα λαβωμεν ελεον*. *That we may take mercy*—that we may receive the pardon of all our sins; there is mercy for the *taking*. As Jesus Christ *tasted death for every man*, so *every man* may go to that propitiatory, and take the mercy that is suited to his degree of guilt.

**And find grace]** *Mercy* refers to the pardon of sin, and being brought into the favour of God. *Grace* is that by which the soul is supported after it has received this mercy, and by which it is purified from all unrighteousness, and upheld in all trials and difficulties, and enabled to prove faithful unto death.

**To help in time of need.]** *εις ευκαιρον βοηθειαν*. *For a seasonable support*; that is, *support when necessary*, and *as necessary*, and in *due proportion* to the necessity. The word *βοηθεια* is properly rendered *assistance, help, or support*; but it is an assistance in consequence of the *earnest cry* of the person in distress, for the word signifies to *run at the cry*, *θειν εις βοηην*, or *επι βοηην θειν*. So, even at the *throne of grace*, or great *propitiatory*, no help can be expected where there is no *cry*, and where there is no *cry* there is no *felt* necessity; for he that *feels* he is perishing will *cry aloud* for help, and to such a cry the compassionate High Priest will *run*; and the *time of need* is the time in which God will show mercy; nor will he ever delay it *when it is necessary*. We are not to cry *to-day* to be helped *to-morrow*, or at some *indefinite time*, or at the *hour of death*. We are to call for mercy and grace *when we need them*; and we are to expect to receive them *when we call*. This is a part of our *liberty* or *boldness*; we *come up* to the throne, and we *call aloud* for mercy, and God hears and dispenses the blessing we need.

That this exhortation of the apostle may not be lost on us, let us consider:—

1. That there is a *throne of grace*, i.e. a *propitiatory*, the place where God and man are to *meet*.
2. That this propitiatory or mercy-seat is sprinkled with the atoning blood of that *Lamb of God* which taketh away the sin of the world.
3. That we must *come up*, *προσερχωμεθα*, to this throne; and this implies *faith* in the efficacy of the sacrifice.
4. That we must *call aloud* on God for his mercy, if we expect him to *run* to our assistance.
5. That we must *feel* our spiritual necessities, in order to our *calling* with fervency and earnestness.

6. That calling thus we shall infallibly get what we want; for in Christ Jesus, as a sacrificial offering, God is ever well pleased; and he is also well pleased with all who take refuge in the atonement which he has made.

7. That thus coming, feeling, and calling, we may have the *utmost confidence*; for we have *boldness, liberty of access, freedom of speech*; may plead with our Maker without *fear*; and expect all that heaven has to bestow; because Jesus, who died, sitteth upon the throne! Hallelujah! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.

8. All these are reasons why we should persevere.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER V.

*The nature of the high priesthood of Christ; his pre-eminence, qualifications, and order, 1-10. Imperfect state of the believing Hebrews, and the necessity of spiritual improvement, 11-14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Verse 1. **For every high priest taken from among men]** This seems to refer to #Le 21:10, where it is intimated that the high priest shall be taken לֵוִי מֵאֶחָיו *meachaiiv*, from his brethren; i.e. he shall be of the tribe of Levi, and of the family of Aaron.

**Is ordained for men]** ὑπερ ἀνθρώπων καθίσταται τα πρὸς τὸν θεόν. Is appointed to preside over the Divine worship in those things which relate to man's salvation.

**That he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins]** God ever appeared to all his followers in two points of view: 1. As the author and dispenser of all temporal good. 2. As their lawgiver and judge. In reference to this twofold view of the Divine Being, his worship was composed of two different parts: 1. *Offerings* or *gifts*. 2. *Sacrifices*. 1. As the creator and dispenser of all good, he had *offerings* by which his *bounty* and *providence* were acknowledged. 2. As the *lawgiver* and *judge*, against whose injunctions offences had been committed, he had *sacrifices* offered to him to make atonement for sin. The δῶρα, or *gifts*, mentioned here by the apostle, included every kind of *eucharistical* offering. The θυσιαί, *sacrifices*, included *victims* of every sort, or *animals* whose *lives* were to be offered in sacrifice, and their blood poured out before God, as an atonement for sins. The high priest was the mediator between God and the people; and it was his office, when the people had brought these gifts and sacrifices, to offer them to God in their behalf. The people could not legitimately offer their own offerings, they must be all brought to the priest, and he alone could present them to God. As we have a high priest over the house of God, to offer all *our gifts* and his *own sacrifice*, therefore we may come with boldness to the throne of grace. See above.

Verse 2. **Who can have compassion on the ignorant]** The word μετριοπαθεῖν, signifies, not merely to have compassion, but to *act with moderation*, and to bear with each in *proportion* to his ignorance, weakness, and untoward circumstances, all taken into consideration with the offences he has committed: in a word, to *pity*, *feel for*, and *excuse*, as far as possible; and, when the provocation is at the highest, to *moderate one's passion* towards the culprit, and be *ready to pardon*; and when punishment must be administered, to do it in the *gentlest manner*.

Instead of ἀγνοοῦσι, *the ignorant*, one MS. only, but that of high repute, has ασθενοῦσι, *the weak*. Most men sin much through *ignorance*, but this does not excuse them if they have within reach the means of instruction. And the great majority of the human race sin through *weakness*. The principle of evil is *strong* in them; the occasions of sin are many; through their fall from God they are become exceedingly *weak*; and what the apostle calls, #Heb 12:1, that εὐπεριστατον ἀμαρτιαν, *the well-circumstanced sin*, often occurs to every man. But, as in the above ease, weakness itself is no excuse, when the means of strength and succour are always at hand. However, all these are

circumstances which the Jewish high priest took into consideration, and they are certainly not less attended to by the High Priest of our profession.

The reason given why the high priest should be slow to punish and prone to forgive is, that he himself is also *compassed with weakness*; *περικείται ασθενειαν*; *weakness lies all around him*, it is his *clothing*; and as he feels his clothing, so should he feel *it*; and as he feels it, so he should deplore it, and compassionate others.

Verse 3. **And by reason hereof]** As he is also a transgressor of the commands of God, and unable to observe the law in its spirituality, he must offer sacrifices for sin, not only for the people, but for himself also: this must teach him to have a fellow feeling for others.

Verse 4. **This honour]** *την τιμην* undoubtedly signifies here *the office*, which is one meaning of the word in the best Greek writers. It is here an *honourable office*, because the man is the high priest of God, and is appointed by God himself to that office.

**But he that is called of God, as was Aaron.]** God himself appointed the tribe and family out of which the high priest was to be taken, and Aaron and his sons were expressly chosen by God to fill the office of the high priesthood. As God alone had the right to appoint his own priest for the Jewish nation, and man had no authority here; so God alone could provide and appoint a high priest for the whole human race. Aaron was thus appointed for the Jewish people; Christ, for all mankind.

Some make this "an argument for the *uninterrupted succession of popes and their bishops* in the Church, who alone have the authority to ordain for the sacerdotal office; and whosoever is not thus appointed is, with them, illegitimate." It is idle to employ time in proving that there is no such thing as an *uninterrupted succession* of this kind; it does not exist, it never did exist. It is a silly fable, invented by ecclesiastical tyrants, and supported by clerical coxcombs. But were it even true, it has nothing to do with the text. It speaks merely of the appointment of a high priest, the succession to be preserved in the tribe of Levi, and in the family of Aaron. But even this succession was *interrupted and broken*, and the office itself was to cease on the coming of Christ, after whom there could be no high priest; nor can Christ have any successor, and therefore he is said to be a *priest for ever*, for he ever liveth the intercessor and sacrifice for mankind. The verse, therefore, has nothing to do with the *clerical office*, with preaching God's holy word, or administering the sacraments; and those who quote it in this way show how little they understand the Scriptures, and how ignorant they are of the nature of their own office.

Verse 5. **Christ glorified not himself]** The man Jesus Christ, was also appointed by God to this most awful yet glorious office, of being the High Priest of the whole human race. The Jewish high priest represented this by the sacrifices of beasts which he offered; the Christian High Priest must offer *his own life*: Jesus Christ did so; and, rising from the dead, he ascended to heaven, and there ever appeareth in the presence of God for us. Thus he has *reassumed the sacerdotal office*; and because he *never dies*, he can never have a *successor*. He can have no *vicars*, either in heaven or upon earth; those who pretend to be such are impostors, and are worthy neither of respect nor credit.

**Thou art my Son]** See on **#Heb 1:5**, and the observations at the end of that chapter. And thus it appears that God can have no high priest but his Son; and to that office none can now pretend without blasphemy, for the Son of God is still the High Priest in his temple.

Verse 6. **He saith also in another place]** That is, in **#Ps 110:4**, a psalm of extraordinary importance, containing a very striking prediction of the birth, preaching, suffering, death, and conquests of the Messiah. See the notes there. For the mode of quotation here, **See the note on "He 2:6"**.

**Thou art a priest for ever]** As long as the sun and moon endure, Jesus will continue to be high priest to all the successive generations of men, as he was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If he be a priest *for ever*, there can be no *succession of priests*; and if he have all power in heaven and in earth, and if he be present wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, he can have no *vicars*; nor can the Church need one to act in *his place*, when he, from the necessity of his nature, fills all places, and is everywhere present. This one consideration nullifies all the pretensions of the Romish pontiff, and proves the whole to be a tissue of imposture.

**After the order of Melchisedec.]** Who this person was must still remain a secret. We know nothing more of him than is written in **#Ge 14:18**, &c., where see the notes, and particularly the observations at the end of that chapter, in which this very mysterious person is represented as a type of Christ.

Verse 7. **Who in the days of his flesh]** The time of his incarnation, during which he took all the infirmities of human nature upon him, and was afflicted in his body and human soul just as other men are, irregular and sinful passions excepted.

**Offered up prayers and supplications]** This is one of the most difficult places in this epistle, if not in the whole of the New Testament. The labours of learned men upon it have been prodigious; and even in *their* sayings it is hard to find the meaning.

I shall take a *general view* of this and the two following verses, and then examine the particular expressions.

It is probable that the apostle refers to something in the agony of our Lord, which the evangelists have not distinctly marked.

The Redeemer of the world appears here as simply man; but he is the representative of the whole human race. He must make expiation for sin by *suffering*, and he can suffer only as man. *Suffering* was as necessary as *death*; for man, because he has *sinned*, must *suffer*, and because he has *broken the law*, should *die*. Jesus took upon himself the nature of man, subject to all the trials and distresses of human nature. He is now making atonement; and he begins with sufferings, as sufferings commence with human life; and he terminates with death, as that is the *end* of human existence in this world. *Though he was the Son of God*, conceived and born without sin, or any thing that could render him *liable* to suffering or death, and only suffered and died through infinite condescension; yet, to constitute him a complete Saviour, he must submit to whatever the law required; and therefore

he is stated to have *learned* OBEDIENCE *by the things which he suffered*, #Heb 5:8, that is, *subjection* to all the requisitions of the law; and being *made perfect*, that is, having *finished* the whole by *dying*, he, by these means, became the *author of eternal salvation to all them who obey him*, #Heb 5:9; to them who, according to his own command, repent and believe the Gospel, and, under the influence of his Spirit, walk in holiness of life. "But he appears to be under the most dreadful apprehension of death; for *he offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, unto him that was able to save him from death*, #Heb 5:7." I shall consider this first in the common point of view, and refer to the subsequent notes. This fear of death was in Christ a widely different thing from what it is in men; *they* fear death because of what lies *beyond* the grave; *they* have *sinned*, and they are afraid to meet their *Judge*. Jesus could have no fear on these grounds: he was now suffering for man, and he felt as *their* expiatory victim; and God only can tell, and perhaps neither men nor angels can conceive, how great the suffering and agony must be which, in the sight of infinite Justice, was requisite to make this atonement. *Death*, temporal and eternal, was the portion of man; and now Christ is to *destroy death* by agonizing and dying! The tortures and torments necessary to effect this destruction Jesus Christ alone could feel, Jesus Christ alone could sustain, Jesus Christ alone can comprehend. We are referred to them in this most solemn verse; but the apostle himself only drops *hints*, he does not attempt to explain them: he prayed; he supplicated with strong crying and tears; and he was *heard* in reference to that *which he feared*. His prayers, as our *Mediator*, were answered; and his sufferings and death were complete and effectual as our *sacrifice*. This is the glorious sum of what the apostle here states; and it is enough. We may hear it with awful respect; and adore him with silence whose grief had nothing common in it to that of other men, and is not to be estimated according to the measures of human miseries. It was:—

*A weight of wo, more than whole worlds could bear.*

I shall now make some remarks on particular expressions, and endeavour to show that the words may be understood with a shade of difference from the common acceptation.

**Prayers and supplications, &c.]** There may be an allusion here to the manner in which the Jews speak of prayer, &c. "Rabbi Yehudah said: All human things depend on repentance and the *prayers* which men make to the holy blessed God; especially if *tears* be poured out with the prayers. There is no *gate* which *tears* will not pass through." *Sohar, Exod.*, fol. 5.

"There are three degrees of prayer, each surpassing the other in sublimity; *prayer, crying, and tears*: prayer is made in silence; crying, with a loud voice; but tears surpass all." *Synops. Sohar*, p. 33.

The apostle shows that Christ made every species of prayer, and those especially by which they allowed a man must be successful with his Maker.

The word *ικετηριας*, which we translate *supplications*, exists in no other part of the New Testament. *ικετης* signifies a *supplicant*, from *ικομαι*, *I come* or *approach*; it is used in this connection by the purest Greek writers. Nearly the same words are found in Isocrates, *De Pace*: *ικετηριας πολλας και δεησεις ποιουμενοι*. *Making many supplications and prayers*. *ικετηρια*, says Suidas, *καλειται ελαιας κλαδος, στεμματι εστεμμενος*:---εστιν, ην οι δεομενοι κατατιθενται που,

η μετα χειρας εχουσις. "*Hiketeria* is a branch of olive, rolled round with wool-is what suppliants were accustomed to deposit in some place, or to carry in their hands." And *ικητης*, *hiketes*, he defines to be, ο δουλοπρεπως παρακαλων, και δεομενος περι τινος στουουν· "He who, in the most humble and servile manner, entreats and begs any thing from another." In reference to this custom the Latins used the phrase *velamenta pratendere*, "to hold forth these covered branches," when they made supplication; and *Herodian* calls them *ικητριας θαλλους*, "branches of supplication." *Livy* mentions the custom frequently; see lib. xxv. cap. 25: lib. xxix. c. 16; lib. xxxv. c. 34; lib. xxxvi. c. 20. The place in lib. xxix. c. 16, is much to the point, and shows us the full force of the word, and nature of the custom. "*Decem legati Locrensium, obsiti squalore et sordibus, in comitio sedentibus consulibus velamenta supplicium, ramos oleæ (ut Græcis mos est,) porrigentes, ante tribunal cum flebili vociferatione humi procubuerunt.*" "Ten delegates from the Locrians, squalid and covered with rags, came into the hall where the consuls were sitting, *holding out in their hands olive branches covered with wool*, according to the custom of the Greeks; and prostrated themselves on the ground before the tribunal, with weeping and loud lamentation." This is a remarkable case, and may well illustrate our Lord's situation and conduct. The Locrians, pillaged, oppressed, and ruined by the consul, *Q. Plemmius*, send their delegates to the Roman government to implore protection and redress they, the better to represent their situation, and that of their oppressed fellow citizens, take the *hiketeria*, or *olive branch wrapped round with wool*, and present themselves before the consuls in open court, and with wailing and loud outcries make known their situation. The senate heard, arrested Plemmius, loaded him with chains, and he expired in a dungeon. Jesus Christ, the representative of and delegate from the whole human race, oppressed and ruined by Satan and sin, with the *hiketeria*, or ensign of a most distressed suppliant, presents himself before the throne of God, with *strong crying and tears*, and prays against *death* and his ravages, in behalf of those whose representative he was; and he was *heard in that he feared*-the evils were removed, and the oppressor cast down. Satan was bound, he was spoiled of his dominion, and is reserved in chains of darkness to the judgment of the great day.

Every scholar will see that the words of the Roman historian answer exactly to those of the apostle; and the allusion in both is to the same custom. I do not approve of allegorizing or spiritualizing; but the allusion and similarity of the expressions led me to make this application. Many others would make more of this circumstance, as the allusion in the text is so pointed to this custom. Should it appear to any of my readers that I should, after the example of great names, have gone into this house of Rimmon, and bowed myself there, they will pardon their servant in this thing.

**To save him from death]** I have already observed that Jesus Christ was the *representative* of the human race; and have made some observations on the peculiarity of his sufferings, following the common acceptation of the words in the text, which things are true, howsoever the text may be interpreted. But here we may consider the pronoun *αυτον*, *him*, as implying the *collective body* of mankind; *the children who were partakers of flesh and blood*, #Heb 2:14; *the seed of Abraham*, #Heb 2:16, *who through fear of death were all their life subject to bondage*. So he made supplication with strong crying and tears to him who was able to save THEM from death; for I consider the *τουτους*, *them*, of #Heb 2:15, the same or implying the same thing as *αυτον*, *him*, in this verse; and, thus understood, all the difficulty vanishes away. On this interpretation I shall give a paraphrase of the whole verse: *Jesus Christ, in the days of his flesh*, (for he was incarnated that he might redeem the *seed of Abraham*, the fallen race of man,) and in his expiatory sufferings, when

representing the whole human race, *offered up prayers and supplications, with strong crying and tears, to him who was able to save THEM from death*: the intercession was prevalent, the passion and sacrifice were accepted, the sting of death was extracted, and Satan was dethroned.

If it should be objected that this interpretation occasions a very unnatural change of *person* in these verses, I may reply that the change made by my construction is not greater than that made between verses 6 and 7; in the first of which the apostle speaks of *Melchisedec*, who at the conclusion of the verse appears to be antecedent to the relative *who* in #Heb 5:7; and yet, from the nature of the subject, we must understand Christ to be meant. And I consider, #Heb 5:8, *Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered*, as belonging, not only to Christ considered in his *human nature*, but also to him in his *collective capacity*; i.e., belonging to all the sons and daughters of God, who, by means of suffering and various chastisements, *learn submission, obedience and righteousness*; and this very subject the apostle treats in considerable detail in #Heb 12:2-11, to which the reader will do well to refer.

Verse 8. **Though he were a Son]** See the whole of the preceding note.

Verse 9. **And being made perfect]** *και τελειωθεις*. And having *finished* all-having *died* and *risen again*. *τελειωθηναι* signifies to have *obtained the goal*; to have *ended one's labour*, and enjoyed the fruits of it. #Heb 12:23: *The spirits of just men made perfect*, *πνευμασι δικαιων τετελειωμενων*, means the souls of those who have gained *the goal*, and *obtained the prize*. So, when Christ had *finished* his course of tremendous sufferings, and consummated the whole by his death and resurrection, he became *αιτιος σωτηριας αιωνιος*, *the cause of eternal salvation unto all them who obey him*. He was consecrated both high priest and sacrifice by his offering upon the cross.

"In this verse," says Dr. Macknight, "three things are clearly stated: 1. That *obedience* to Christ is equally necessary to salvation with *believing* on him. 2. That he was made perfect as a high priest by offering himself a sacrifice for sin, #Heb 8:3. 3. That, by the merit of that sacrifice, he hath obtained pardon and eternal life for them who obey him." He *tasted death for every man*; but he is the *author* and *cause* of eternal salvation only to them who *obey him*. It is not merely *believers*, but obedient believers, that shall be finally saved. Therefore this text is an absolute, unimpeachable evidence, that it is not the imputed obedience of Christ that saves any man. Christ has bought men by his blood; and by the infinite merit of his death he has purchased for them an endless glory; but, in order to be prepared for it, the sinner must, through that grace which God withholds from no man, repent, turn from sin, believe on Jesus as being a sufficient ransom and sacrifice for his soul, receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, be a worker together with him, walk in conformity to the Divine will through this Divine aid, and continue faithful unto death, through him, out of whose fulness he may receive grace upon grace.

Verse 10. **Called of God a high priest]** *προσαγορευθεις*. Being *constituted, hailed, and acknowledged* to be a high priest. In *Hesychius* we find *προσαγορευει*, which he translates *ασπαζεταιαι* hence we learn that one meaning of this word is *to salute*; as when a man was constituted or anointed king, those who accosted him would say, *Hail king!* On this verse Dr. Macknight has the following note, with the insertion of which the reader will not be displeased: "As

our Lord, in his conversation with the Pharisees, recorded **#Mt 22:43**, spake of it as a thing certain of itself, and universally known and acknowledged by the Jews, that David wrote the 110th Psalm by inspiration, concerning the Christ or Messiah; the apostle was well founded in applying the whole of that Psalm to Jesus. Wherefore, having quoted the fourth verse, *Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec*, as directed to Messiah, David's Lord, he justly termed that speech of the Deity a *salutation* of Jesus, according to the true import of the word **προσαγορευθεις**, which properly signifies to *address* one by his *name*, or *title*, or *office*; accordingly *Hesychius* explains **προσαγορευομαι** by **απαζομαι**. Now, that the deep meaning of this *salutation* may be understood, I observe, *First*, that, by the testimony of the inspired writers, Jesus sat down at the right hand of God when he returned to heaven, after having finished his ministry upon earth; **#Mr 16:19; Ac 7:56; Heb 1:3; 8:1; 1Pe 3:22**. Not, however, *immediately*, but *after* that he had offered the sacrifice of himself in heaven, by presenting his crucified body before the presence of God; **#Heb 1:3; 10:10**. *Secondly*, I observe, that God's *saluting* Messiah *a priest after the order of Melchisedec*, being mentioned in the psalm after God is said to have invited him *to sit at his right hand*, it is reasonable to think the salutation was given him after he had offered the sacrifice of himself; and had taken his seat at God's right hand. Considered in this order, the *salutation* of Jesus, as a priest *after the order of Melchisedec*, was a public declaration on the part of God that he accepted the sacrifice of himself, which Jesus then offered, as a sufficient atonement for the sin of the world, and approved of the whole of his ministrations on earth, and confirmed all the effects of that meritorious sacrifice, And whereas we are informed in the psalm that, after God had *invited* his Son, in the human nature; to sit at his right hand as Governor of the world, and foretold the blessed fruits of his government, he published the *oath* by which he made him *a Priest for ever*, before he sent him into the world to accomplish the salvation of mankind; and declared that he would never repent of that oath: *The Lord hath sworn, and will not repent; Thou art a Priest for ever after the similitude of Melchisedec*. It was, in effect, a solemn publication of the method in which God would pardon sinners; and a promise that the effects of his Son's government as a *King*, and of his ministrations as a *Priest*, should be eternal; see **#Heb 6:20**. Moreover, as this solemn declaration of the dignity of the Son of God, as a King and a Priest for ever in the human nature, was made in the hearing of the angelical hosts, it was designed for this instruction, that they might understand their subordination to God's Son, and pay him that homage that is due to him as Governor of the world, and as Saviour of the human race; **#Php 2:9, 10; #Heb 1:6**. The above explanation of the import of God's *saluting* Jesus a Priest for ever, is founded on the apostle's reasonings in the *seventh* and following chapters, where he enters into the deep meaning of the *oath* by which that salutation was conferred."

Verse 11. **Of whom we have many things to say]** The words **περι ου**, which we translate of *whom*, are variously applied: 1. To *Melchisedec*; 2. To *Christ*; 3. To the *endless priesthood*. Those who understand the place of *Melchisedec*, suppose that it is in reference to this that the apostle resumes the subject in the *seventh* chapter, where much more is said on this subject, though not very difficult of comprehension; and indeed it is not to be supposed that the Hebrews could be more capable of understanding the subject when the apostle wrote the *seventh chapter* than they were when, a few hours before, he had written the *fifth*. It is more likely, therefore, that the words are to be understood as meaning *Jesus*, or that *endless priesthood*, of which he was a little before speaking, and which is a subject that carnal Christians cannot easily comprehend.

**Hard to be uttered]** δυσερμηνευτος· *Difficult to be interpreted*, because Melchisedec was a *typical* person. Or if it refer to the *priesthood of Christ*, that is still more difficult to be explained, as it implies, not only his being *constituted a priest* after this *typical order*, but his paying down the *ransom* for the sins of the whole world; and his *satisfying the Divine justice* by this sacrifice, but also thereby opening the kingdom of heaven to all believers, and giving the whole world an entrance to the holy of holies by his blood.

**Dull of hearing.]** νωθροι ταις ακοαις· Your souls do not *keep pace* with the doctrines and exhortations delivered to you. As νωθρος signifies a person *who walks heavily* and makes *little speed*, it is here elegantly applied to those who are called to the Christian race, have the road laid down plain before them, how to proceed specified, and the blessings to be obtained enumerated, and yet make no *exertions* to get on, but are always learning, and never able to come to the full knowledge of the truth.

Verse 12. **For when for the time]** They had heard the Gospel for *many years*, and had professed to be Christians for a *long time*; on these accounts they might reasonably have been expected to be well instructed in Divine things, so as to be able to instruct others.

**Which be the first principles]** τινα ρα στοιχεια· *Certain first principles or elements*. The word τινα is not the nominative plural, as our translators have supposed, but the accusative case, governed by διδασκειν· and therefore the literal translation of the passage is this: *Ye have need that one teach you a second time (παλιν) certain elements of the doctrines of Christ, or oracles of God*; i.e. the notices which the prophets gave concerning the *priesthood* of Jesus Christ, such as are found in Psa. 110:, and in Isa. 53: By the *oracles of God* the writings of the *Old Testament*, are undoubtedly meant.

**And are become such]** The words seem to intimate that they had once been better instructed, and had now forgotten that teaching; and this was occasioned by their being *dull of hearing*; either they had not *continued* to hear, or they had heard so *carelessly* that they were not profited by what they heard. They had probably totally omitted the preaching of the Gospel, and consequently forgotten all they had learned. Indeed, it was to reclaim those Hebrews from backsliding, and preserve them from total *apostasy*, that this epistle was written.

**Such as have need of milk]** *Milk* is a metaphor by which many authors, both sacred and profane, express the *first principles* of *religion* and *science*; and they apply *sucking* to learning; and every student in his novitiate, or commencement of his studies, was likened to an *infant* that derives all its nourishment from the breast of its mother, not being able to digest any other kind of food. On the contrary, those who had well learned all the first principles of religion and science, and knew how to apply them, were considered as *adults* who were capable of receiving στερεα τροφη, *solid food*; i.e. the more difficult and sublime doctrines. The rabbins abound with this figure; it occurs frequently in *Philo*, and in the Greek ethic writers also. In the famous Arabic poem called [Arabic] *al Bordah*, written by Abi Abdallah Mohammed ben Said ben Hamad Albusiree, in praise of Mohammed and his religion, every couplet of which ends with the letter [Arabic] mim, the first letter in Mohammed's name, we meet with a couplet that contains a similar sentiment to that of the apostle:—

[Arabic]

[Arabic]

"The soul is like to a young infant, which, if permitted, will grow up to manhood in the love of sucking; but if thou take it from the breast it will feel itself weaned."

Dr. Owen observes that there are two Sorts of hearers of the Gospel, which are here expressed by an elegant metaphor or similitude; this consists, 1. In the *conformity* that is between bodily food and the Gospel as preached. 2. In the *variety* of natural food as suited to the various states of them that feed on it, answered by the truths of the Gospel, which are of *various kinds*; and, in exemplification of this metaphor, natural food is reduced to two kinds: 1. *milk*; 2. *strong* or *solid meat*; and those who feed on these are reduced to two sorts: 1. *children*; 2. *men of ripe age*. Both of which are applied to hearers of the Gospel.

1. Some there are who are *νηπιοι*, *babes* or *infants*, and some are *τελειοι*, *perfect* or *full grown*.
2. These babes are described by a double properly:
  1. They are *dull of hearing*;
  2. They are *unskilful in the word of righteousness*.

In opposition to this, those who are *spiritually adult* are,

1. They who are *capable of instruction*.
2. Such as *have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil*.
3. The different means to be applied to these different sorts for their good, according to their respective conditions, are expressed in the terms of the metaphor: to the first, *γαλα*, *milk*; to the others, *στερεα τροφη*, *strong meat*. All these are compromised in the following scheme:—

The hearers of the Gospel are,

I. *νηπιοι*: BABES or INFANTS.

II. *τελειοι*: PERFECT or ADULT

Who are

1. *Νωθροι ταις ακοαις*: *Dull of hearing*.
2. *Απειροι λογου δικαιοσυνης*: *Inexperienced in the doctrine of righteousness*.

These have need

*Γαλακτος*: Of *milk*.

Who are

1. *Φρονιμοι*: *Wise and prudent*.
2. *Τα αισθητηρια γεγυμνασμενα εχοντες*: *And have their senses properly exercised*.

These have need

*Στερεας τροφης*: Of *solid food*.

But all these are to derive their nourishment or spiritual instruction *εκ των λογιων του θεου*, *from the oracles of God*. The word *oracle*, by which we translate the *λογιον* of the apostle, is used by the best Greek writers to signify a *divine speech*, or *answer of a deity to a question proposed*. It always implied a *speech* or *declaration* purely *celestial*, in which man had no part; and it is thus used wherever it occurs in the New Testament. 1. It signifies the LAW received from God by Moses, #Ac 7:38.

2. The *Old Testament* in general; the holy men of old having spoken by the *inspiration* of the Divine Spirit, #Ro 3:2, and in the text under consideration.

3. It signifies *Divine revelation* in general, because all delivered immediately from God, #1Th 2:13; #1Pe 4:11. When we consider what respect was paid by the heathens to their oracles, which were supposed to be delivered by those gods who were the objects of their adoration, but which were only *impostures*, we may then learn what respect is due to the *true oracles* of God.

Among the heathens the credit of oracles was so great, that in all doubts and disputes their determinations were held sacred and inviolable; whence vast numbers flocked to them for advice in the management of their affairs, and no business of any importance was undertaken, scarcely any war waged or peace concluded, any new form of government instituted or new laws enacted, without the advice and approbation of the oracle. *Cræsus*, before he durst venture to declare war against the Persians, consulted not only the most famous oracles of Greece, but sent ambassadors as far as Libya, to ask advice of Jupiter Ammon. *Minos*, the Athenian lawgiver, professed to receive instructions from Jupiter how to model his intended government; and *Lycurgus*, legislator of Sparta, made frequent visits to the Delphian Apollo, and received from him the platform of the Lacedemonian commonwealth. See *Broughton*.

What a reproach to Christians, who hold the Bible to be a collection of the oracles of God, and who not only do not consult it in the momentous concerns of either this or the future life, but go in direct opposition to it! Were every thing conducted according to these oracles, we should have neither war nor desolation in the earth; families would be well governed, and individuals universally made happy.

Those who consulted the ancient oracles were obliged to go to enormous expenses, both in *sacrifices* and in *presents* to the *priests*. And when they had done so, they received oracles which were so *equivocal*, that, howsoever the event fell out, they were capable of being interpreted *that way*.

Verse 13. **For every one that useth milk]** It is very likely that the apostle, by using this term, refers to the *doctrines of the law*, which were only the *rudiments* of religion, and were intended to lead us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

**The word of righteousness]** *αγιος δικαιοσυνης*: *The doctrine of justification*. I believe this to be the apostle's meaning. He that uses *milk*-rests in the ceremonies and observances of the law, is *unskilful in the doctrine of justification*; for this requires faith in the sacrificial death of the promised Messiah.

Verse 14. **But strong meat]** The high and sublime doctrines of Christianity; the atonement, justification by faith, the gift of the Holy Ghost, the fulness of Christ dwelling in the souls of men, triumph in and over death, the resurrection of the body, the glorification of both body and soul in the realms of blessedness, and an endless union with Christ in the throne of his glory. This is the *strong food* which the genuine Christian understands, receives, digests, and by which he grows.

**By reason of use]** Who, by constant hearing, believing, praying, and obedience, *use* all the graces of God's Spirit; and, in the faithful use of them, find every one improved, so that they daily grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ our Lord.

**Have their senses exercised]** The word *αισθητηρια* signifies the different organs of sense, as the *eyes, ears, tongue, and palate, nose, and finger ends*, and the nervous surface in general, through which we gain the sensations called *seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling*. These organs of sense, being *frequently* exercised or employed on a variety of subjects, acquire the power to discern the various objects of sense: viz. all objects of *light*; difference of *sounds*; of *tastes* or *savours*; of *odours* or *smelling*; and of hard, soft, wet, dry, cold, hot, rough, smooth, and all other *tangible* qualities.

There is something in the soul that answers to all these senses in the body. And as universal *nature* presents to the other senses their different and appropriate *objects*, so *religion* presents to these interior senses the objects which are suited to them. Hence in Scripture we are said, even in spiritual things, to *see, hear, taste, smell, and touch* or *feel*. These are the means by which the soul is rendered comfortable, and through which it derives its happiness and perfection.

In the *adult Christian* these senses are said to be *γεγυμνασμενα*, *exercised*, a metaphor taken from the *athletæ* or *contenders* in the Grecian games, who were wont to employ all their powers, skill, and agility in mock fights, running, wrestling, &c., that they might be the better prepared for the actual contests when they took place. So these employ and improve all their powers, and in using grace get more grace; and thus, being able to discern good from evil, they are in little danger of being imposed on by false doctrine, or by the pretensions of hypocrites; or of being deceived by the subtleties of Satan. They feel that their security depends, under God, on this exercise-on the proper use which they make of the grace already given them by God. Can any reader be so dull as not to understand this?

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER VI.

*We must proceed from the first principles of the doctrine of Christ unto perfection, and not lay the foundation a second time, 1-3. Those who were once enlightened, and have been made partakers of the Holy Ghost and the various blessings of the Gospel, if they apostatize from Christ, and finally reject him as their Saviour, cannot be renewed again to repentance, 4-6. The double similitude of the ground blessed of God, and bearing fruit; and of that ground which is cursed of God, and bears briers and thorns, 7, 8. The apostle's confidence in them, and his exhortation to diligence and perseverance, 9-12. God's promise and oath to Abraham, by which the immutability of his counsel is shown, in order to excite our hope, 13-18. Hope is the anchor of the soul, and enters within the veil, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VI.

Verse 1. **Therefore]** Because ye have been so indolent, *slow of heart*, and have still so many advantages.

**Leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ]** Ceasing to continue in the state of *babes*, who must be fed with *milk*-with the *lowest* doctrines of the Gospel, when ye should be capable of understanding the highest.

**Let us go on unto perfection]** Let us never rest till we are *adult Christians*-till we are saved from all sin, and are filled with the spirit and power of Christ.

The words *τον της αρχης του χριστου λογον* might be translated, *The discourse of the beginning of Christ*, as in the *margin*; that is, the account of his *incarnation*, and the different types and ceremonies in the law by which his advent, nature, office, and miracles were pointed out. The whole law of Moses pointed out *Christ*, as may be seen at large in my comment on the Pentateuch; and therefore the words of the apostle may be understood thus: Leave the *law*, and come to the *Gospel*. Cease from *Moses*, and come to the *Messiah*.

*Let us go on unto perfection.*-The original is very emphatic: *επι την τελειοτητα φερωμεθα*: *Let us be carried on to this perfection*. God is ever ready by the power of his Spirit, to *carry us forward* to every degree of light, life, and love, necessary to prepare us for an eternal weight of glory. There can be little difficulty in attaining the *end* of our faith, the salvation of our souls from all sin, if God *carry us forward* to it; and this he will do if we submit to be saved in his own way, and on his own terms. Many make a violent outcry against the doctrine of *perfection*, i.e. against the heart being cleansed from all sin in this life, and filled with love to God and man, because *they* judge it to be impossible! Is it too much to say of these that *they know neither the Scripture nor the power of God?* Surely the *Scripture* promises the thing; and the *power* of God can *carry us* on to the possession of it.

**Laying again the foundation of repentance]** The phrase νεκρά έργα, *dead works*, occurs but once more in the sacred writings, and that is in #Heb 9:14 of this epistle; and in both places it seems to signify *such works as deserve death*-works of those who were *dead in trespasses, and dead in sins*; and *dead by sentence of the law*, because they had by these works broken the law. Repentance may be properly called the *foundation* of the work of God in the soul of man, because by it we forsake sin, and turn to God to find mercy.

**Faith toward God]** Is also a *foundation*, or fundamental principle, without which it is impossible to please God, and without which we cannot be saved. By *repentance* we *feel* the need of God's mercy, by *faith* we *find* that mercy.

But it is very likely that the apostle refers here to the *Levitical law*, which, in its painful observances, and awful denunciations of Divine wrath against every breach of that law, was well calculated to produce repentance, and make it a grievous and bitter thing to sin against God. And as to *faith in God*, that was essentially necessary, in order to see the *end* of the commandment; for without faith in him who was to come, all that *repentance* was unavailable, and all ritual observances without profit.

Verse 2. **Of the doctrine of baptisms]** "There were two things," says Dr. Owen, "peculiar to the Gospel, the *doctrine* of it and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*. Doctrine is called *baptism*, #De 32:2; hence the people are said to be *baptized to Moses*, when they were initiated into his *doctrines*, #1Co 10:2. The *baptism* of John was his *doctrine*, #Ac 19:3; and the *baptism of Christ* was the *doctrine of Christ*, wherewith he was to *sprinkle many nations*, #Isa 52:15. This is the *first baptism* of the Gospel, even its *doctrine*. The *other* was the communication of the gifts of the Holy Ghost, #Ac 1:5; and this alone is what is intended by the *laying on of hands*; and then the sense will be the foundation of the Gospel baptisms, namely *preaching* and the *gifts of the Holy Ghost*."

I am afraid, with all this great man's learning, he has not hit the meaning of the apostle. As *teaching* is the means by which we are to obtain the gifts of the Holy Ghost, surely the apostle never designed to separate them, but to lead men immediately through the one to the possession of the other. Nor is the word *baptism* mentioned in the passage in Deuteronomy which he quotes; nor, indeed, any word properly synonymous. Neither βαπτισμος, *baptism*, ραντισμος, *sprinkling*, nor any verb formed from them, is found in the *Septuagint*, in that place. But the other proofs are sufficiently in point, viz. that by *baptism* in the other places referred to, *doctrine* or TEACHING is meant; but to call TEACHING *one baptism*, and the *gifts* of THE HOLY GHOST *another baptism*, and to apply this to the explanation of the difficulty here, is very far from being satisfactory.

I am inclined to think that all the terms in *this verse*, as well as those in the *former*, belong to the *Levitical law*, and are to be explained on that ground.

*Baptisms*, or *immersions* of the body in water, *sprinklings*, and *washings*, were frequent as religious rites among the Hebrews, and were all emblematical of that purity which a holy God requires in his worshippers, and without which they cannot be happy here, nor glorified in heaven.

**Laying on of hands]** Was also frequent, especially in *sacrifices*: the person bringing the victim laid his hands on its head, confessed his sins over it, and then gave it to the priest to be offered to God, that it might make atonement for his transgressions. This also had respect to Jesus Christ, that *Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world*.

The doctrine also of the *resurrection* of the *dead* and of *eternal judgment*, were both Jewish, but were only partially revealed, and then referred to the *Gospel*. Of the *resurrection of the dead* there is a fine proof in **#Isa 26:19**, where it is stated to be the consequence of the *death* and *resurrection* of Christ, for so I understand the words, *Thy dead shall live; with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing, ye that dwell in the dust; for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead*. The valley of *dry bones*, **#Eze 37:1**, &c., is both an illustration and proof of it. And Daniel has taught both the *resurrection* and the *eternal judgment*, **#Da 12:2**: *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake; some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt*.

Now the *foundation* of all these doctrines was laid in the Old Testament, and they were variously represented under the law, but they were all referred to the Gospel for their proof and illustration. The apostle, therefore, wishes them to consider the Gospel as holding forth these in their full spirit and power. It preaches, 1. *Repentance*, unto life. 2. *Faith* in God through Christ, by whom we receive the atonement. 3. The *baptism* by *water*, in the name of the holy Trinity; and the *baptism* of the *Holy Ghost*. 4. The *imposition of hands*, the true sacrificial system; and, by and through it, the communication of the various gifts of the *Holy Spirit*, for the instruction of mankind, and the edification of the Church. 5. The *resurrection* of the *dead*, which is both proved and illustrated by the resurrection of Christ. 6. The doctrine of the *eternal* or *future judgment*, which is to take place at the bar of Christ himself, God having committed all judgment to his Son, called here κριμα αλωνιον, *eternal* or *ever during judgment*, because the sentences then pronounced shall be irreversible. Some understand the whole of the *initiation* of persons into the Church, as the candidates for admission were previously *instructed* in those doctrines which contained the *fundamental* principles of Christianity. The Hebrews had already received these; but should they Judaize, or mingle the Gospel with the law, they would thereby exclude themselves from the Christian Church, and should they be ever again admitted, they must come through the same gate, or lay a *second time*, παλιν, this foundation. But should they totally *apostatize* from Christ, and finally reject him, then it would be *impossible to renew them again to repentance*-they could no more be received into the Christian Church, nor have any right to any blessing of the Gospel dispensation; and, finally rejecting the Lord who bought them, would bring on themselves and their land swift destruction. See the 4th and following verses, and particularly the notes on verses 8 and 9. "**Heb 6:8-9**"

Verse 3. **And this will we do]** God being my helper, I will teach you all the sublime truths of the Gospel; and show you how all its excellences were typified by the law, and particularly by its sacrificial system.

Verse 4. **For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened]** Before I proceed to explain the different terms in these verses, it is necessary to give my opinion of their design and meaning: 1. I do not consider them as having any reference to any person *professing Christianity*. 2. They do

not belong, nor are they applicable, to *backsliders* of any kind. 3. They belong to *apostates* from Christianity; to such as reject the whole *Christian system*, and its *author*, the Lord Jesus. 4. And to those of them only who join with the blaspheming Jews, call Christ an impostor, and vindicate his murderers in having crucified him as a malefactor; and thus they render their salvation impossible, by *wilfully* and *maliciously* rejecting the Lord that bought them. No man *believing in the Lord Jesus* as the great sacrifice for sin, and acknowledging *Christianity* as a *Divine revelation*, is here intended, though he may have unfortunately *backslidden* from any degree of the salvation of God.

The design of these solemn words is evidently, *First*, to show the Hebrews that apostasy from the highest degrees of grace was possible; and that those who were highest in the favour of God might sin against him, lose it, and perish everlastingly. *Secondly*, to warn them against such an awful state of perdition, that they might not be led away, by either the persuasions or persecutions of their countrymen, from the truth of the heavenly doctrine which had been delivered to them. And, *Thirdly*, to point out the destruction which was shortly to come upon the Jewish nation.

*Once enlightened-Thoroughly instructed* in the nature and design of the Christian religion, having received the knowledge of the truth, **#Heb 10:32**; and being convinced of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and led to Jesus the Saviour of sinners.

**Tasted of the heavenly gift]** Having received *the knowledge of salvation by the remission of sins*, through the Day Spring which from on high had visited them; such having received *Christ, the heavenly gift* of God's infinite love, **#Joh 3:16**; the *living bread that came down from heaven*, **#Joh 6:51**; and thus *tasting that the Lord is gracious*; **#1Pe 2:3**, and witnessing the full effects of the Christian religion.

**Partakers of the Holy Ghost]** The Spirit himself witnessing with their spirits that they were the children of God, and thus assuring them of God's mercy towards them, and of the efficacy of the atonement through which they had received such blessings.

Verse 5. **And have tasted the good word of God]** Have had this proof of the excellence of the promise of God in sending the Gospel, the Gospel being itself the *good word* of a *good God*, the reading and preaching of which they find sweet to the taste of their souls. Genuine believers have an *appetite* for the word of God; they *taste* it, and then their *relish* for it is the more abundantly increased. The more they get, the more they wish to have.

**The powers of the world to come]** *δυναμεις τε μελλοντος αιωνος*. These words are understood two ways: 1. *The powers of the world to come* may refer to the stupendous *miracles* wrought in confirmation of the Gospel, the Gospel dispensation being *the world to come* in the Jewish phraseology, as we have often seen; and that *δυναμεις* is often taken for a *mighty work* or *miracle*, is plain from various parts of the gospels. The prophets had declared that the Messiah, when he came, should work many miracles, and should be as mighty in word and deed as was *Moses*; see **#De 18:15-19**. And they particularly specify the giving *sight* to the *blind*, *hearing* to the *deaf*, *strength* to the *lame*, and *speech* to the *dumb*; **#Isa 35:5, 6**. All these miracles Jesus Christ did in the sight of this very people; and thus they had the highest evidence they could have that Jesus was this promised Messiah, and could have no pretence to *doubt* his mission, or apostatize from the Christian

faith which they had received; and hence it is no wonder that the apostle denounces the most awful judgments of God against those who had apostatized from the faith, which they had seen thus confirmed.

2. The words have been supposed to apply to those *communications* and *foretastes* of *eternal blessedness*, or of the *joys of the world to come*, which they who are justified through the blood of the covenant, and walk faithfully with their God, experience; and to this sense the word *γευσσαμενους* *have tasted*, is thought more properly to apply. But *γευομαι*, *to taste*, signifies *to experience* or *have full proof* of a thing. Thus, *to taste death*, #Mt 16:28, is *to die*, to come under the *power of death*, fully to *experience* its destructive nature as far as the body is concerned. See also #Lu 9:27; #Joh 8:52. And it is used in the same sense in #Heb 2:9 of this epistle, where Christ is said to *taste death for every man*; for notwithstanding the *metaphor*, which the reader will see explained in the note on the above place, the word necessarily means that he did *actually die*, that he *fully experienced* death; and had the fullest proof of it and of its malignity he could have, independently of the corruption of his flesh; for over this death could have no power. And to *taste* that *the Lord is gracious*, #1Pe 2:3, is to experience God's graciousness thoroughly, in being made *living stones, built up into a spiritual house*, constituted *holy priests to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God*; see #1Pe 2:5. And in this sense it is used by the purest Greek writers. See several examples in *Schleusner*.

It seems, therefore, that the first opinion is the best founded.

Verse 6. **If they shall fall away]** *και παραπεσοντας* *And having fallen away*. I can express my own mind on this translation nearly in the words of Dr. Macknight: "The participles *φωτισθεντας*, *who were enlightened*, *γευσσαμενους*, *have tasted*, and *γενηθεντας*, *were made partakers*, being *aorists*, are properly rendered by our translators in the *past time*; wherefore, *παραπεσοντας*, being an *aorist*, ought likewise to have been translated in the *past time*, *HAVE fallen away*. Nevertheless, our translators, following *Beza*, who without any authority from ancient MSS. has inserted in his version the word *si, if*, have rendered this clause, *IF they fall away*, that this text might not appear to contradict the doctrine of the *perseverance of the saints*. But as no translator should take upon him to add to or alter the Scriptures, for the sake of any favourite doctrine, I have translated *παραπεσοντας* in the *past time*, *have fallen away*, according to the true import of the word, as standing in connection with the other *aorists* in the preceding verses."

Dr. Macknight was a Calvinist, and he was a thorough scholar and an honest man; but, professing to give a *translation of the epistle*, he consulted not his creed but his candour. Had our translators, who were excellent and learned men, leaned less to their own peculiar creed in the present authorized version, the Church of Christ in this country would not have been agitated and torn as it has been with polemical divinity.

It appears from this, whatever sentiment may gain or lose by it, that there is a fearful possibility of *falling away from the grace of God*; and if this scripture did not say so, there are many that do say so. And were there no scripture express on this subject, the nature of the present state of man, which is a state of *probation* or *trial*, must necessarily imply it. Let him who most assuredly standeth, take heed lest he fall.

**To renew them again unto repentance]** *As repentance* is the *first* step that a sinner must take in order to return to God, and as sorrow for sin must be useless in itself unless there be a proper sacrificial offering, these having rejected the only available sacrifice, their repentance for sin, had they any, would be nugatory, and their salvation impossible on this simple account; and this is the very reason which the apostle immediately subjoins:—

**Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God]** They reject him on the ground that he was an impostor, and *justly* put to death. And thus they are said to *crucify him to themselves*-to do that in their present apostasy which the Jews did; and they show thereby that, had they been present when he was crucified, they would have joined with his murderers.

**And put him to an open shame.]** παραδειγματιζοντας· *And have made him a public example; or, crucifying unto themselves and making the Son of God a public example.* That is, they show openly that they judge Jesus Christ to have been worthy of the death which he suffered, and was justly made a public example by being crucified. This shows that it is *final apostasy*, by the total rejection of the Gospel, and blasphemy of the Saviour of men, that the apostle has in view. **See the note on "Heb 6:4".**

Verse 7. **For the earth which drinketh in the rain]** As much as if he had said: In giving up such apostates as utterly incurable, we act as men do in cultivating their fields; for as the ground, which drinketh in the rain by which the providence of God waters it, brings forth fruit to compensate the toil of the tiller, and continues to be cultivated, God granting his blessing to the labours of the husbandman; so,

Verse 8. **That which beareth thorns and briers is rejected]** That is: The land which, notwithstanding the most careful cultivation, receiving also in due times the early and latter rain, produces nothing but thorns and briers, or noxious weeds of different kinds, is rejected, *αδοκιμος*, is given up as unimprovable; *its briers, thorns, and brushwood burnt down*; and then *left to be pastured on by the beasts of the field*. This seems to be the custom in *husbandry* to which the apostle alludes. The nature of the case prevents us from supposing that he alludes to the custom of *pushing and burning*, in order to farther *fertilization*. This practice has been common from very early times:-

*Sæpe etiam steriles incendere profuit agros;  
Atque levem stipulam crepitantibus urere flammis.*  
VIRG. Geor. i., v. 84.

Long practice has a sure *improvement* found,  
With *kindled fires* to burn the barren ground;  
When the light stubble to the flames resign'd,  
Is driven along, and crackles in the wind.

DRYDEN.

But this, I say the circumstances of the case prevent us from supposing to be intended.

Is **nigh unto cursing**] It is acknowledged, almost on all hands, that this epistle was written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans. This verse is in my opinion a proof of it, and here I suppose the apostle refers to that *approaching destruction*; and perhaps he has this all along in view, but speaks of it *covertly*, that he might not give offence.

There is a *good sense* in which all these things may be applied to the Jews at large, who were favoured by our Lord's ministry and miracles. They were *enlightened* by his preaching; *tasted* of the benefits of the *heavenly gift*-the Christian religion established among them; saw many of their children and relatives *made partakers of the Holy Ghost*; *tasted the good word of God*, by the fulfilment of the promise made to Abraham; and saw the almighty *power* of God exerted, in working a great variety of *miracles*. Yet, after being convinced that never man spake as this man, and that none could do those miracles which he did, except God were with him; after having followed him in thousands, for three years, while he preached to them the Gospel of the kingdom of God; they *fell away* from all this, crucified him who, even in his sufferings as well as his resurrection, was demonstrated by miracles to be the Son of God; and then to vindicate their unparalleled wickedness, endeavoured to make him a *public example*, by reproaches and blasphemies. Therefore their state, which had received much moral cultivation from Moses, the prophets, Christ, and his apostles; and now bore nothing but the most vicious fruits, pride, unbelief, hardness of heart, contempt of God's word and ordinances, blasphemy, and rebellion; was *rejected-reprobated*, of God; was *nigh unto cursing*-about to be cast off from the Divine protection; and their city and temple were shortly to be *burnt up* by the Roman armies. Thus the apostle, under the case of *individuals*, points out the destruction that was to come upon this people *in general*, and which actually took place about *seven* years after the writing of this epistle! And this appears to be the very subject which the apostle has in view in the parallel solemn passages, **#Heb 10:26-31**; and, viewed in this light, much of their obscurity and difficulty vanishes away.

Verse 9. **But, beloved**] Here he softens what he had before said; having given them the most solemn warning against apostasy, he now encourages them to persevere, commends the good that is in them, and excites them to watchfulness and activity.

**Better things of you**] Than that you shall resemble that *unfruitful ground* that can be improved by no tillage, and is thrown into *waste*, and is fit only for the beasts of the forests to roam in.

**Things that accompany salvation**] τα εχομενα σωτηριας: *Things that are suitable to a state of salvation*; you give proofs still that you have not, whatever others have done, *departed from the living God*. Several of your brethren have already apostatized, and the whole nation is in a state of rebellion against God; and, in consequence of their final rejection of Christ and his Gospel, are about to be finally rejected by God. *They* must meet with *destruction*; *they* have *the things that are suitable to, and indicative of, a state of reprobation*; the wrath of God will come upon them to the *utmost*; but, while *they* meet with *destruction*, *you* shall meet with *salvation*. It is worthy of remark, that no *genuine Christian* perished in the destruction of Jerusalem; they all, previously to the siege by Titus, escaped to *Pella*, in Cœlosyria; and it is as remarkable that not one *Jew* escaped! all either fell by the *sword*, perished by *famine*, or were led into *captivity*! According to their own imprecation, *His blood be upon us and our children*, God visited and avenged the innocent blood

of Christ upon them and upon their posterity; and they continue to be monuments of his displeasure to the present day.

Verse 10. **God is not unrighteous]** God is only *bound* to men by his own *promise*: this promise he is not obliged to make; but, when once made, his *righteousness* or *justice* requires him to keep it; therefore, whatever he has promised he will certainly perform. But he has promised to reward every good work and *labour of love*, and he will surely reward yours; God's *promise* is God's *debt*.

Every good work must spring from *faith* in the *name*, being, and goodness of God; and every work that is truly good must have *love* for its *motive*, as it has God for its *end*.

The word **του κοπου**, *labour*, prefixed to *love*, is wanting in almost every MS. and version of importance. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

**Ministered to the saints]** Have contributed to the support and comfort of the poor *Christians* who were suffering persecution in Judea. As they *had* thus ministered, and were *still* ministering, they gave full proof that they had a common cause with the others; and this was one of the *things* that proved them to be in a *state of salvation*.

Verse 11. **We desire]** **επιθυμουμεν**, We *earnestly wish*, that each person among you may continue **ενδεικνυσθαι**, to *manifest, exhibit to full view*, the same diligence. There might be reason to suspect that some, through *fear of man*, might not wish the good they did to be *seen*, lest they also should suffer persecution. This would not comport with the generous, noble spirit of the Gospel; the man who is afraid to let his decided attachment to God be known, is not far from backsliding. He who is more afraid of *man* than he is of *God Almighty*, can have very little religion. As the Church of Christ required all those who in these times embraced the Gospel to be publicly baptized, those who submitted to this rite gave full proof that they were thoroughly convinced of the truths of Christianity; and they gave this as a *public pledge* that they would be faithful.

**The same diligence]** They had an *active faith* and a *labouring love*, and the apostle wishes them to persevere in both. They were diligent, very diligent, and he desires them to continue so.

To the full assurance of hope, **προς την πληροφοριαν της ελπιδος**: "The *full assurance of faith*," says Mr. Wesley, "relates to present pardon; the *full assurance of hope*, to future glory: the former is the highest degree of *Divine evidence* that God is reconciled to me in the Son of his love; the latter is the same degree of *Divine evidence*, wrought in the soul by the same immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost, of persevering grace, and of eternal glory. So much as *faith* every moment *beholds* with *open face*, so much, and no more, does *hope see* to all eternity. But this assurance of faith and hope is not an opinion, not a bare construction of Scripture, but is given immediately by the power of the Holy Ghost, and what none can have for another, but for himself only."

We must not misapprehend these excellent sayings of this eminent man. 1. The person who has this *full assurance of hope* is he who not only *knows* and *feels* that *his sins are forgiven* through Christ Jesus, but also that his *heart is purified from all unrighteousness*, that the whole body of sin and death is destroyed, and that he is fully made a partaker of the Divine nature. As without

holiness, complete, entire holiness, no man can see God: so, without this, none can scripturally or rationally *hope* for eternal glory; it being a contradiction to profess to have the full assurance of hope to enjoy a state and place for which the soul is conscious it is *not* prepared. 2. All that is said here must be understood as still implying the absolute necessity of *continuing in the same degree* of grace from which this full assurance of hope is derived. This full assurance, therefore, does not imply that the man *will absolutely persevere* to the end; but that, if he do persevere in this same grace, he shall infallibly have an eternal glory. There is no unconditional perseverance in the Scripture, nor can there be such in a state of *probation*.

Verse 12. **That ye be not slothful]** This shows how the full assurance of hope is to be regulated and maintained. They must be *diligent*; slothfulness will deprive them both of hope and faith. That faith which worketh by love will maintain hope in its full and due exercise.

**Followers of them]** μιμηται δε----κληρονομουτων τας επαγγελιας: *That ye be mimics or imitators of them who are inheriting the promises.* And they inherited these promises by faith in him who is invisible, and who, they knew, could not lie; and they patiently endured, through difficulties and adversities of every kind, and persevered unto death. "The promises made to Abraham and to his seed were, 1. That Abraham should have a numerous seed by faith as well as by natural descent. 2. That God would be a God to him and to his seed in their generations, by being the object of their worship and their protector. 3. That he would give them the possession of Canaan. 4. That he would bless all the nations of the earth in him. 5. That he would thus bless the nations through Christ, Abraham's seed. 6. That through Christ, likewise, he would bless the nations with the Gospel revelation. Four of these promises the believing Gentiles were inheriting at the time the apostle wrote this letter. 1. They were become Abraham's seed by faith. 2. God was become the object of their worship and their protector. 3. They were enjoying the knowledge of God in the Gospel Church, and the gifts of the Spirit. Gal. 3: 4. All these blessings were bestowed upon them through Christ. By observing that the believing Gentiles were actually inheriting the promises; i.e. the four promised blessings above mentioned, the apostle appealed to an undeniable fact, in proof that the believing Gentiles, equally with the believing Jews, were heirs of the promises made to Abraham and his seed." See Dr. Macknight. The *promises* may be considered as referring to the *rest of faith* here, and the *rest of glory* hereafter.

Verse 13. **When God made promise to Abraham]** The promise referred to is that made to Abraham when he had offered his son Isaac on the altar, #Ge 22:16-18: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord; for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thy only son; that in blessing I will bless thee, and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of the heaven, and as the sand which is upon the seashore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies; and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." Of this promise the apostle only quotes a part, as is generally the case, because he knew that his readers were well acquainted with the Scriptures of the Old Testament, and particularly with the law.

**He sware by himself]** He pledged his eternal power and Godhead for the fulfilment of the promise; there was no being superior to himself to whom he could make appeal, or by whom he could be bound, therefore he appeals to and pledges his immutable truth and Godhead.

Verse 14. **Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee]** I will continue to bless thee.

**Multiplying I will multiply thee.]** I will continue to increase thy posterity. In the most literal manner God continues to fulfil this promise; genuine Christians are Abraham's seed, and God is increasing their number daily. See the notes on **#Ge 22:12-18**; and **#Ge 23:1**.

Verse 15. **He obtained the promise.]** Isaac was supernaturally born; and in his birth God began to fulfil the promise: while he lived, he saw a provision made for the multiplication of his seed; and, having continued steadfast in the faith, he received the *end* of all the promises in the enjoyment of an eternal glory. And the inference from this is: If we believe and prove faithful unto death, we shall also inherit the promises; and this is what is implied in the apostle's exhortation, **#Heb 6:12: *Be not slothful, but followers of them, &c.***

Verse 16. **Men verily swear by the greater]** One who has greater authority; who can take cognizance of the obligation, and punish the breach of it.

**An oath for confirmation]** "This observation teaches us," says Dr. Macknight, "that both promissory oaths concerning things lawful and in our power, and oaths for the confirmation of things doubtful, when required by proper authority, and taken religiously, are allowable under the Gospel."

Verse 17. **The heirs of promise]** All the believing posterity of Abraham, and the nations of the earth or Gentiles in general.

**The immutability of his counsel]** His unchangeable purpose, to call the Gentiles to salvation by Jesus Christ; to justify every penitent by faith; to accept faith in Christ for justification in place of personal righteousness; and finally to bring every persevering believer, whether Jew or Gentile, to eternal glory.

Verse 18. **That by two immutable things]** The *promise* and *oath* of God: the *promise* pledged his faithfulness and justice; the *oath*, all the infinite perfections of his Godhead, for he swore by himself. There is a good saying in *Beracoth* on **#Ex 32:13**, fol. 32: *Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self.* "What is the meaning of *by thine own self*? Rab. Eleazar answered, Thus said Moses to the holy blessed God, Lord of all the world. If thou hadst sworn to them by the heavens and the earth, then I should have said, As the heavens and the earth shall pass away, so may thy oath pass away. But now thou hast sworn unto them by thy great name, which liveth, and which endureth for ever, and for ever and ever; therefore thy oath shall endure for ever, and for ever and ever."

This is a good thought; if God had sworn by any thing finite, that thing might fail, and then the obligation would be at an end, but he has sworn by what is infinite, and cannot fail; therefore his oath is of eternal obligation.

**We might have a strong consolation]** There appears to be an allusion here to the cities of refuge, and to the persons who fled to them for safety. As the person who killed his neighbour unawares was sure if he gained the city of refuge he should be safe, and had strong consolation in

the hope that he should reach it, this hope animated him in his race to the city; he ran, he fled, knowing that, though in danger the most imminent of losing his life, yet, as he was now acting according to an ordinance of God, he was certain of safety provided he got to the place.

It is easy to apply this to the case of a truly penitent sinner. Thou hast sinned against God and against thy own life! The avenger of blood is at thy heels! Jesus hath shed his blood for thee, he is thy intercessor before the throne; flee to him! Lay hold on the hope of eternal life which is offered unto thee in the Gospel! Delay not one moment! Thou art never safe till thou hast redemption in his blood! God invites thee! Jesus spreads his hands to receive thee! God hath sworn that he willet not the death of a sinner; then he cannot will *thy* death: take God's *oath*, take his *promise*; credit what he hath spoken and sworn! Take encouragement! Believe on the Son of God, and thou shalt not perish, but have everlasting life!

Verse 19. **Which hope we have as an anchor]** The apostle here changes the allusion; he represents the state of the followers of God in this lower world as resembling that of a vessel striving to perform her voyage through a troublesome, tempestuous, dangerous sea. At last she gets near the port; but the tempest continues, the water is shallow, broken, and dangerous, and she cannot get in: in order to prevent her being driven to sea again she heaves out her sheet anchor, which she has been able to get within the pier head by means of her boat, though she could not herself get in; then, swinging at the length of her cable, she rides out the storm in confidence, knowing that her anchor is sound, the ground good in which it is fastened, and the cable strong. Though agitated, she is safe; though buffeted by wind and tide, she does not drive; by and by the storm ceases, the tide flows in, her sailors take to the capstan, wear the ship against the anchor, which still keeps its bite or hold, and she gets safely into port. **See on "Heb 6:20"**.

The comparison of *hope* to an *anchor* is frequent among the ancient heathen writers, who supposed it to be as necessary to the support of a man in adversity, as the anchor is to the safety of the ship when about to be driven on a lee shore by a storm. "To ground *hope* on a false supposition," says *Socrates*, "is like trusting to a weak *anchor*." He said farther, ουτε ναυν εξ ενος ακυριου, ουτε βιον εκ μιας ελπιδος ορμιστεον· a ship ought not to trust to one *anchor*, nor life to one *hope*. *Stob.*, Serm. 109.

The *hope of eternal life* is here represented as the soul's anchor; the *world* is the *boisterous, dangerous sea*; the *Christian course*, the *voyage*; the *port*, everlasting *felicity*; and the *veil* or *inner road*, the *royal dock* in which that anchor was cast. The storms of life continue but a short time; the anchor, hope, if fixed by faith in the eternal world, will infallibly prevent all shipwreck; the soul may be strongly tossed by various temptations, but will not drive, because the anchor is in *sure* ground, and itself is *steadfast*; it does not *drag*, and it does not *break*; *faith*, like the *cable*, is the *connecting medium* between the *ship* and the *anchor*, or the *soul* and its *hope of heaven*; faith sees the haven, hope desires and anticipates the rest; faith works, and hope holds fast; and, shortly, the soul enters into the haven of eternal repose.

Verse 20. **Whither the forerunner]** The word προδρομος, *prodromos*, does not merely signify one that *goes* or *runs before* another, but also one who *shows the way*, *he who first does a particular*

thing; also the *first fruits*. So in the *Septuagint*, #**Isa 28:4**, προδρομος συκου signifies the *first fruits of the fig tree*, or the *first ripe figs*.

To this meaning of the word *Pliny* refers, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. xvi., c. 26: *Ficus et præcoces habet, quas Athenis PRODROMOS (προδρομος,) vocant*. "The fig tree produces some figs which are ripe before the rest, and these are called by the Athenians *prodromos*, forerunner." The word is interpreted in the same way by *Hesychius*; it occurs in no other part of the *New Testament*, but may be found in **Ecclus. 12:8**, and in #**Isa 28:4**, quoted above from the *Septuagint*. From this we may at once perceive the meaning of the phrase: Jesus is the *first fruits* of human nature that has entered into the heavenly kingdom; the first human body that was ripe for glory, and ripe long before the rest of the children who are partakers of flesh and blood. And he is entered *for us*, as the first fruits of all who have found redemption in his blood. Compare #**Joh 14:2**; #**1Co 15:20, 23**; and the notes there.

The metaphorical allusion is to the person who carries the anchor within the pier head, because there is not yet water sufficient to carry the ship in; and to this I have already referred.

**After the order of Melchisedec.]** After a long digression the apostle resumes his explanation of #**Psa 110:4**, which he had produced, #**Heb 5:6, 10**, in order to prove the permanency of the high priesthood of Christ.

1. WE have in this chapter a very solemn warning against *backsliding* and *apostasy*, and that *negligence* and *sloth* which are their forerunners. A man cannot be careless about God and heaven, till he has lost his relish for sacred things; and this relish he cannot lose while he is diligent and faithful. The slightest departure from *truth* and *purity* may ultimately lead to a denying, and even reviling, of the Lord who bought him.

2. Every obedient believer in Christ Jesus has both the oath and promise of God that he will make all grace abound towards him, for in blessing God will bless him; he may be greatly agitated and distressed, but, while he continues in the obedience of faith, he will ride out the storm. His anchor is within the veil while his heart is right with God. Jesus is gone before to prepare a place for him; and where the first fruits are, there will soon be the whole lump. He who perseveres unto death shall as surely see God as Jesus Christ now does. God's oath and promise cannot fail.

## HEBREWS

### CHAPTER VII.

*Concerning the greatness of Melchisedec, after whose order Christ is a high priest, 1-4. The Levites had authority to take tithes of the people; yet Abraham, their representative, paid tithes to Melchisedec, 5-10. Perfection cannot come by the Mosaic law, else there could be no need for another priest after the order of Melchisedec, according to the prediction of David in Psalm cx., which priest is sprung from a tribe to which the priesthood, according to the law, did not appertain; but Christ is a priest for ever, not according to the law, but after the order of an endless life, 11-17. The law, therefore, is disannulled, because of its unprofitableness and imperfection; and Christ has an unchangeable priesthood, 18-24. He is therefore able always to save them that come unto him, being in every respect a suitable Saviour; and he has offered up himself for the sins of the people, 25-27. The law makes those priests who have infirmity; but he who is consecrated by the oath is perfect, and endures for ever, 28.*

#### NOTES ON CHAP. VII.

Verse 1. **For this Melchisedec, king of Salem]** See the whole of this history largely explained in the notes, See "**Ge 14:18**", &c., and the concluding observations at the end of that chapter.

The name Melchisedec, מלכיצדק is thus expounded in *Bereshith Rabba*, sec. 43, fol. 42, מצדיק את יושביו matsdie eth Yoshebaiv, "The Justifier of those who dwell in him;" and this is sufficiently true of Christ, but false of *Jerusalem*, to which the rabbins apply it, who state that it was originally called *Tsedek*, and that it *justified its inhabitants*.

*Salem* is generally understood to be *Jerusalem*; but some think that it was that city of Shechem mentioned #**Jos 20:7**. St. Jerome was of this opinion.

Verse 2. **Gave a tenth part of all]** It was an ancient custom, among all the nations of the earth, to consecrate a part or *tenth* of the spoils taken in war to the objects of their worship. Many examples of this kind occur. This however was not according to any provision in law, but merely *ad libitum*, and as a eucharistic offering to those to whom they imagined they owed the victory. But neither Abraham's decimation, nor theirs, had any thing to do, either with tithes as *prescribed* under the Mosaic dispensation, or as *claimed* under the Christian.

Verse 3. **Without father, without mother]** The object of the apostle, in thus producing the example of Melchisedec, was to show, 1. That Jesus was the person prophesied of in the 110th Psalm; which psalm the Jews uniformly understood as predicting the Messiah. 2. To answer the objections of the Jews against the legitimacy of the priesthood of Christ, taken from the stock from which he proceeded. The objection is this: If the Messiah is to be a true priest, he must come from a legitimate stock, as all the priests under the law have regularly done; otherwise we cannot acknowledge him to be a priest: but Jesus of Nazareth has not proceeded from such a stock; therefore we cannot acknowledge him for a priest, the antitype of Aaron. To this objection the apostle answers, that it was not necessary for the priest to come from a particular stock, for Melchisedec was

a priest of the most high God, and yet was not of the stock, either of Abraham or Aaron, but a Canaanite. It is well known that the ancient Hebrews were exceedingly scrupulous in choosing their high priest; partly by Divine command, and partly from the tradition of their ancestors, who always considered this office to be of the highest dignity. 1. God had commanded. #Le 21:10, that the high priest should be chosen from among their brethren, *i.e.* from the family of Aaron; 2. that he should marry a virgin; 3. he must not marry a widow; 4. nor a divorced person; 5. nor a harlot; 6. nor one of another nation. He who was found to have acted contrary to these requisitions was, *jure divino*, excluded from the pontificate. On the contrary, it was necessary that he who desired this honour should be able to prove his descent from the family of Aaron; and if he could not, though even in the priesthood, he was cast out, as we find from #Ezr 2:62, and #Ne 7:63.

To these Divine ordinances the Jews have added, 1. That no *proselyte* could be a priest; 2. nor a *slave*; 3. nor a *bastard*; 4. nor the *son of a Nethinim*; 5. nor one whose father exercised any *base trade*. And that they might be well assured of all this, they took the utmost care to preserve their genealogies, which were regularly kept in the archives of the temple. When any person aspired to the sacerdotal function, his genealogical table was carefully inspected; and, if any of the above blemishes were found in him, he was rejected.

He who could not support his pretensions by just genealogical evidences, was said by the Jews to be *without father*. Thus in *Bereshith Rabba*, sect. 18, fol. 18, on these words, *For this cause shall a man leave father and mother*, it is said: If a proselyte to the Jewish religion have married his own sister, whether by the same father or by the same mother, they cast her out according to *Rabbi Meir*. But the wise men say if she be of the *same mother*, they cast her out; but if of the *same father*, they retain her, שׂאִין אֵב לְגוֹי shein ab legoi, "for a Gentile has no father;" *i.e.* his father is not reckoned in the Jewish genealogies. In this way both Christ and Melchisedec were *without father* and *without mother*; *i.e.* were not descended from the original Jewish sacerdotal stock. Yet Melchisedec, who was a Canaanite, was a priest of the most high God. This sense Suidas confirms under the word Melchisedec, where, after having stated that, having reigned in Salem 113 years, he died a righteous man and a bachelor, ἀγενεαλογητος εἰριυαι, παρα το μη υπαρχειν εκ του σπερματος αβρααμ ολως, ειναι δε χαναναιον το γενος, και εκ της επαρατου σπορας ορμωμενον, οθεν ουδε γενεαλογιας ηξιωτο, he adds, "He is, therefore, said to be *without descent* or *genealogy*, because he was not of the seed of Abraham, but of Canaanitish origin, and sprung from an accursed seed; therefore he is without the honour of a genealogy." And he farther adds, "That, because it would have been highly improper for him, who was the most righteous of men, to be joined in affinity to the most unrighteous of nations, he is said to be *απατορα και αμητορα*, *without father and without mother*." This sort of phraseology was not uncommon when the genealogy of a person was unknown or obscure; so Seneca, in his 108th epistle, speaking of some of the Roman kings, says: *De Servii matre dubitatur; Anci pater nullus dicitur*. "Of the mother of Servius Tullus there are doubts; and Ancus Marcus is said to have *no father*." This only signifies that the parents were either unknown or obscure. Titus Livius, speaking of Servius, says he was born of a slave, named *Cornicularia*, *da patre nullo, of no father*, *i.e.* his father was *unknown*. Horace is to be understood in the same way:—

*Ante potestatem Tulli, atque ignobile regnum,  
Multos sæpe viros, NULLIS MAJORIBUS ortos,  
Et vixisse probos, amplis et honoribus auctos.*  
Serm. l. 1. Sat. vi., ver. 9.

Convinced that, long before the ignoble reign  
And power of Tullius, from a *servile* strain  
Full many rose, for virtue high renown'd,  
By worth ennobled, and with honours crown'd.  
FRANCIS.

The *viri nullis majoribus orti*, men sprung from *no ancestors*, means simply men who were born of *obscure* or undistinguished parents; i.e. persons, who had never been famous, nor of any public account.

The old *Syriac* has given the true meaning by translating thus:—

[Syriac]

*Dela abuhi vela, emeh ethcathebu besharbotho.*

Whose father and mother are not inscribed among the genealogies.

The *Arabic* is nearly the same:—

[Arabic]

He had neither father nor mother; the genealogy not being reckoned.

The *Æthiopic*: He had neither father nor mother upon earth, nor is his genealogy known.

As this passage has been obscure and troublesome to many, and I have thought it necessary to show the meaning of such phraseology by different examples, I shall, in order to give the reader full information on the subject, add a few observations from Dr. Owen.

"It is said of Melchisedec in the first place that he was *απατωρ, αμητωρ*, *without father and without mother*, whereon part of the latter clause, namely, *without beginning of days*, doth depend. But how could a mortal man come into the world without father or mother? '*Man that is born of a woman*' is the description of every man; what, therefore, can be intended! The next word declares he was *αγενεαλογητος*: '*without descent*,' say we. But *γενεαλογια* is a generation, a descent, a *pedigree*, not absolutely, but *rehearsed, described, recorded*. *γενεαλογητος* is he whose stock and descent is entered on record. And so, on the contrary, *αγενεαλογητος* is not he who has no descent, no genealogy; but he whose descent and pedigree is nowhere entered, recorded, reckoned up. Thus the apostle himself plainly expresses this word, **#Heb 7:6**: *ο μη γενεαλογουμενος εξ αυτων*, '*whose descent is not counted*;' that is, reckoned up in record. Thus was Melchisedec without father or

mother, in that the Spirit of God, who so strictly and exactly recorded the genealogies of other patriarchs and types of Christ, and that for no less an end than to manifest the truth and faithfulness of God in his promises, speaks nothing to this purpose concerning him. He is introduced as it were one falling from heaven, appearing on a sudden, reigning in Salem, and officiating in the office of priesthood to the high God.

"2. On the same account is he said to be *μητε αρχην ημερων, μητε ζωης τελος εχων*, 'without beginning of days or end of life.' For as he was a mortal man he had both. He was assuredly born, and did no less certainly die than other men. But neither of these is recorded concerning him. We have no more to do with him, to learn from him, nor are concerned in him, but only as he is described in the Scripture; and there is no mention therein of the beginning of his days, or the end of his life. Whatever therefore he might have in himself, he had none to us. Consider all the other patriarchs mentioned in the writings of Moses, and you shall find their descent recorded, who was their father, and so up to the first man; and not only so, but the time of their birth, the beginning of their days, and the end of their life, are exactly recorded. For it is constantly said of them, such a one lived so long, and begat such a son, which fixed the time of birth. Then of him so begotten it is said, he lived so many years, which determines the end of his days. These things are expressly recorded. But concerning Melchisedec none of these things are spoken. No mention is made of father or mother; no genealogy is recorded of what stock or progeny he was; nor is there any account of his birth or death. So that all these things are wanting to him in his historical narration, wherein our faith and knowledge are alone concerned."

**Made like unto the Son of God]** Melchisedec was without father and mother, having neither beginning of days nor end of life. His genealogy is not recorded; when he was born and when he died, is unknown. His priesthood, therefore, may be considered as perpetual. In these respects he was like to Jesus Christ, who, as to his *Godhead*, had neither father nor mother, beginning of time nor end of days; and has an everlasting priesthood. The priesthood of Melchisedec is to abide continually on the same ground that he is said to be without father and mother; i.e. there is no record of the end of his priesthood or life, no more than there is any account of his ancestry.

Verse 4. **Consider how great this man was]** There is something exceedingly mysterious in the person and character of this king of Salem; and to find out the whole is impossible. He seems to have been a sort of *universal* priest, having none superior to him in all that region; and confessedly superior even to Abraham himself, the father of the faithful, and the source of the Jewish race. See **#Heb 7:7**.

**The patriarch Abraham]** *‘ο πατριαρχεις*. Either from *πατηρ*, a *father*, and *αρχη*, a *chief* or *head*; or from *πατριας αρχη*, *the head of a family*.' But the title is here applied, by way of eminence, to him who was the *head* or *chief* of all the *fathers*-or patriarch of the patriarchs, and father of the faithful. The Syriac translates it [Syriac] *Rish Abahatha*, "head of the fathers." The character and conduct of Abraham place him, as a man, deservedly at the *head* of the human race.

Verse 5. **They that are of the sons of Levi]** The priests who are of the posterity of the Levites, and receive the priesthood in virtue of their descent from Aaron, have authority from the law of God to receive tithes from the people.

**According to the law]** That is, the Levites received a *tenth* from the people. The priests received a *tenth* of this *tenth* from the Levites, who are here called their brethren, because they were of the same tribe, and employed in the same sacred work. The apostle is proceeding to show that Melchisedec was greater even than Abraham, the head of the fathers, for to him Abraham gave tithes; and as the Levites were the posterity of Abraham, they are represented here as paying tithes to Melchisedec through *him*. Yet Melchisedec was not of this family, and therefore must be considered as having a more honourable priesthood than even Aaron himself; for he took the *tenth* from Abraham, not for his *maintenance*, for he was a *king*, but in virtue of his *office* as universal high priest of all that region.

Verse 6. **Blessed him that had the promises.]** This is a continuation of the same argument, namely, to show the superiority of Melchisedec; and, in consequence, to prove the superiority of the priesthood of Christ beyond that of Aaron. As in the seed of Abraham all the nations of the earth were to be blessed, Abraham received a sacerdotal blessing from Melchisedec, who was the representative of the Messiah, the promised seed, to show that it was through him, as the high priest of the human race, that this blessing was to be derived on all mankind.

Verse 7. **The less is blessed of the better.]** That the *superior* blesses the *inferior* is a general proposition; but Abraham was blessed of Melchisedec, therefore Melchisedec was greater than Abraham. "The blessing here spoken of," says Dr. Macknight, "is not the simple *wishing of good* to others, which may be done by inferiors to superiors; but it is the action of a person *authorized* to declare *God's intention* to bestow good things on another. In this manner Isaac and Jacob blessed their children under a prophetic impulse; in this manner the priests under the law blessed the people; in this manner, likewise, Melchisedec, the priest of the most high God, blessed Abraham."

Verse 8. **Here men that die receive tithes]** The apostle is speaking of the ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews, which was standing at the time this epistle was written. Under the Jewish dispensation, though the priests were successively removed by *death*, yet they were as duly replaced by others appointed from the same family, and the payment of tithes was never interrupted. But as there is no account of Melchisedec *ceasing to be a priest*, or of *his dying*, he is represented as still living, the better to point him out as a type of Christ, and to show his priesthood to be more excellent than that which was according to the law, as an *unchanging* priesthood must be more excellent than that which was continually *changing*.

**But there he receiveth them]** The  $\omega\delta\epsilon$ , *here*, in the first clause of this verse refers to *Mosaical institutions*, as then existing: the  $\epsilon\kappa\epsilon\lambda$ , *there*, in this clause refers to the place in Genesis (#Ge 14:20) where it is related that Abraham gave *tithes* to Melchisedec, who is still considered as being alive or without a successor, because there is no account of his death, nor of any termination of his priesthood.

Verse 9. **And as I may so say]**  $\kappa\alpha\iota\ \omega\varsigma\ \epsilon\pi\omicron\varsigma\ \epsilon\lambda\pi\epsilon\upsilon\lambda\upsilon$  *And so to speak a word*. This form of speech, which is very frequent among the purest Greek writers, is generally used to *soften* some *harsh* expression, or to *limit* the meaning when the proposition might otherwise appear to be too *general*. It answers fully to our *so to speak-as one would say-I had almost said-in a certain sense*.

Many examples of its use by Aristotle, Philo, Lucian, Josephus, Demosthenes, Æschines, and Plutarch, may be seen in *Raphelius* and *Kypke*.

**Payed tithes in Abraham.]** The Levites, who were descendants of Abraham, paid tithes to Melchisedec *διὰ through*, Abraham, their progenitor and representative.

Verse 10. **For he was yet in the loins of his father]** That is, Levi was seminally included in Abraham, his forefather.

Verse 11. **If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood]** The word *τελειωσις*, as we have before seen, signifies the *completing* or *finishing* of any thing, so as to leave *nothing imperfect*, and *nothing wanting*. Applied here to the Levitical priesthood, it signifies the accomplishment of that for which a priesthood is established, viz.: giving the Deity an acceptable service, enlightening and instructing the people, pardoning all offences, purging the conscience from guilt, purifying the soul and preparing it for heaven, and regulating the conduct of the people according to the precepts of the moral law. This *perfection* never came, and never could come, by the Levitical law; it was the shadow of good things to come, but was not the substance. *It* represented a perfect system, but was imperfect in itself. *It* showed that there was guilt, and that there was an absolute need for a sacrificial offering to atone for sin, and it typified that sacrifice; but every sacrificial act under that law most forcibly proved that it was *impossible for the blood of BULLS and GOATS to take away sin*.

**For under it the people received the law]** That is, as most interpret this place, under the priesthood, *λερωσυνη* being understood; because, on the priesthood the whole Mosaical law and the Jewish economy depended: but it is much better to understand *ἐν αὐτη* *on account of it*, instead of *under it*; for it is a positive fact that the law was given before any priesthood was established, for Aaron and his sons were not called nor separated to this office till Moses came down the second time from the mount with the tables renewed, after that he had broken them, **#Ex 40:12-14**. But it was in *reference* to the great sacrificial system that the law was given, and on that law the priesthood was established; for, why was a priesthood necessary, but because that law was *broken* and must be fulfilled?

**That another priest should rise]** The law was given that the offence might abound, and sin appear exceeding sinful; and to show the absolute necessity of the sacrifice and mediation of the great Messiah, but it was neither perfect in itself, nor could it confer perfection, nor did it contain the *original priesthood*. Melchisedec had a priesthood more than *four* hundred years (422) before the law was given; and David prophesied, **#Ps 110:4**, that another priest should arise after the order of Melchisedec, nearly *five* hundred years (476) after the law was given. The law, therefore, did not contain the original priesthood; this existed *typically* in Melchisedec, and *really* in Jesus Christ.

Verse 12. **The priesthood being changed]** That is, The order of Aaron being now abrogated, to make way for that which had preceded it, the order of Melchisedec.

**There is made of necessity a change also of the law.]** The very essence of the Levitical law consisting in its *sacrificial offerings*; and as these could not confer *perfection*, could not *reconcile*

*God to man, purify the unholy heart, nor open the kingdom of heaven to the souls of men, consequently it must be abolished, according to the order of God himself; for he said, Sacrifice and offering, and burnt-offering, and sacrifice for sin, he would not; see #Ps 40:6, 7, compared with #Heb 10:5-10, and with #Ps 110:4, where it is evident God designed to change both the law and the priesthood, and to introduce Jesus as the only Priest and Sacrifice, and to substitute the Gospel system for that of the Levitical institutions. The priesthood, therefore, being changed, Jesus coming in the place of Aaron, the law of ordinances and ceremonies, which served only to point out the Messiah, must of necessity be changed also.*

Verse 13. **For he of whom these things are spoken]** That is, Jesus the Messiah, spoken of in #Ps 110:4, who came, not from the tribe of Levi, but from the tribe of Judah, of which tribe no priest ever ministered at a Jewish altar, nor could minister according to the law.

Verse 14. **For it is evident]** As the apostle speaks here with so much confidence, it follows that our Lord's descent from the tribe of Judah was incontrovertible. The genealogical tables, both in Matthew and Luke, establish this point; and whatever difficulties *we* may find in them now, there were none apprehended in those days, else the enemies of the Gospel would have urged these as a chief and unanswerable argument against Christ and his Gospel.

Verse 15. **And it is yet far more evident]** *και περισσοτερον επι καταδηλον εστιν.* *And besides, it is more abundantly strikingly manifest.* It is very difficult to translate these words, but the apostle's meaning is plain, viz., that God designed the Levitical priesthood to be changed, because of the oath in Psa. cx., where, addressing the Messiah, he says: *Thou art a Priest for ever after the order, or ομοιοτητα, similitude, of Melchisedec, who was not only a priest, but also a king.* None of the Levitical priests sustained this *double* office; but they both, with that of *prophet*, appear and were exercised in the person of our Lord, who is the Priest to which the apostle alludes.

Verse 16. **Who is made]** Appointed to this high office by God himself, not succeeding one that was *disabled or dead, according to that law or ordinance directed to weak and perishing men, who could not continue by reason of death.*

This is probably all that the apostle intends by the words *carnal commandment, εντολης σαρκικης,* for *carnal* does not always mean *sinful or corrupt, but feeble, frail, or what may be said of or concerning man in his present dying condition.*

**But after the power of an endless life.]** Not dying, or ceasing through weakness to be a priest; but properly immortal himself, and having the power to confer life and immortality on others. He ever lives, as Priest, to make intercession for men; and they who believe on him shall never perish, but have everlasting life.

Verse 17. **For he testifieth]** That is, either the *Scripture*, in the place so often quoted, or God by that *Scripture.*

**Thou art a priest for ever]** This is the proof that he was not appointed according to the carnal commandment, but according to the power of an endless life, because he is a priest *for ever*; i.e. one

that never dies, and is never disabled from performing the important functions of his office; for if he be a priest for ever, he *ever lives*.

Verse 18. **For there is verily a disannulling]** There is a total abrogation, προαγουσης εντολης, *of the former law*, relative to the Levitical priesthood. See **#Heb 7:19**.

**For the weakness]** It had no *energy*; it communicated none; it had no *Spirit* to minister; it required perfect obedience, but furnished no *assistance* to those who were under it.

**And unprofitableness]** No man was *benefited* by the mere observance of its precepts: it pardoned no sin, changed no heart, reformed no life; it found men dead in trespasses and sins, and it consigned them to eternal death. It was therefore weak in itself, and unprofitable to men.

The Jews, who still cleave to it, are a proof that it is both *weak* and *unprofitable*; for there is not a more miserable, distressed, and profligate class of men on the face of the earth.

Verse 19. **For the law made nothing perfect]** It completed nothing; it was only the *outline* of a great plan, the *shadow* of a glorious substance; see on **#Heb 7:11**. It neither pardoned sin, nor purified the heart, nor gave strength to obey the moral precepts. ουδεν, *nothing*, is put here for ουδενα, *no person*.

**But the bringing in of a better hope]** The original is very emphatic, εισαγωγη, the *superintroduction*, or the *after introduction*; and this seems to be put in opposition to the προαγουσα εντολη, the *preceding commandment*, or *former Levitical law*, of **#Heb 7:18**. This *went before* to prepare the way of the Lord; to show the exceeding sinfulness of sin, and the strict justice of God. The *better hope*, which referred not to earthly but to spiritual good, not to temporal but eternal felicity, founded on the priesthood and atonement of Christ, was afterwards introduced for the purpose of doing what the law could not do, and giving privileges and advantages which the law would not afford. One of these privileges immediately follows:—

**By the which we draw nigh unto God.]** This is a sacerdotal phrase: the high priest alone could *approach* to the Divine presence in the holy of holies; but not without the blood of the sacrifice, and that only once in the year. But through Christ, as our high priest, all believers in him have an entrance to the holiest by his blood; and through him perform acceptable service to God. The *better hope* means, in this place, Jesus Christ, who is the author and object of the hope of eternal life, which all his genuine followers possess. He is called *our hope*, **#1Ti 1:1**; **#Col 1:27**.

Verse 20. **Not without an oath]** "The apostle's reasoning here is founded on this, that God never interposed his *oath*, except to show the *certainty* and *immutability* of the thing sworn. Thus he swore to *Abraham*, **#Ge 22:16-18**, that *in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed*; and to the rebellious *Israelites*, **#De 1:34, 35**, that *they should not enter into his rest*; and to *Moses*, **#De 4:21**, that *he should not go into Canaan*; and to *David*, **#Ps 89:4**, that *his seed should endure for ever, and his throne unto all generations*. Wherefore, since Christ was made a priest, *not without an oath* that he should be *a priest for ever, after the similitude of Melchisedec*, that circumstance showed God's immutable resolution never to change or abolish his priesthood, nor to change or abolish the

covenant which was established on his priesthood; whereas the Levitical priesthood and the law of Moses, being established *without an oath*, were thereby declared to be changeable at God's pleasure." This judicious note is from Dr. *Macknight*.

Verse 21. **Those priests]** The Levitical, *were made without an oath*, to show that the whole system was changeable, and might be abolished.

**But this]** The everlasting priesthood of Christ, *with an oath*, to show that the Gospel dispensation should never change, and never be abolished.

**By him]** God the Father, *that said unto him*-the promised Messiah, **#Ps 110:4**, *The Lord sware*, to show the immutability of his counsel, *and will not repent*-can never change his mind nor purpose, *Thou art a priest for ever*-as long as time shall run, and the generations of men be continued on earth. Till the necessity of the mediatorial kingdom be superseded by the fixed state of eternity, till this kingdom be delivered up unto the Father, and God shall be all in all, shall this priesthood of Christ endure.

Verse 22. **By so much]** This solemn, unchangeable *oath* of God, *was Jesus made a surety*, **εγγυος**, a mediator, one who brings the two parties together, witnesses the contract, and offers the covenant sacrifice on the occasion. See at the end of the chapter.

**A better testament.]** **κρειττονος διατηκης**: *A better covenant*; called, in the title to the sacred books which contain the whole Christian code, **η καινη διαθηκη**, THE NEW COVENANT, thus contradistinguished from the *Mosaic*, which was the *old covenant*; and this is called the *new* and *better* covenant, because God has in it promised other blessings, to other people, on other conditions, than the old covenant did. The *new* covenant is *better* than the *old* in the following particulars: 1. God promised to the Jewish nation certain secular blessings, peculiar to that nation, on condition of their keeping the law of Moses; but under the new covenant he promises pardon of sin, and final salvation to all mankind, on condition of believing on Jesus Christ, and walking in his testimonies. 2. The Jewish priests, fallible, dying men, were mediators of the old covenant, by means of their sacrifices, which could not take away sin, nor render the comers thereunto perfect. But Jesus Christ, who liveth for ever, who is infinite in wisdom and power, by the sacrifice of himself has established this new covenant, and by the shedding of his blood has opened the kingdom of heaven to all believers.

Verse 23. **And they truly were many priests]** Under the Mosaic law it was necessary there should be a succession of priests, because, being mortal, they were not suffered to continue always by reason of death.

Verse 24. **But this]** **ο δε**, *But he*, that is, Christ, *because he continueth ever*-is eternal, *hath an unchangeable priesthood*, **απαρβατον ιερωσυην**, *a priesthood that passeth not away* from him; he lives for ever, and he lives a *priest* for ever.

Verse 25. **Wherefore]** Because he is an everlasting priest, and has offered the only available sacrifice, *he is able to save*, from the power, guilt, nature, and punishment of sin, *to the uttermost*,

εις το παντελες, to all intents, degrees, and purposes; and always, and in and through all times, places, and circumstances; for all this is implied in the original word: but *in and through all times* seems to be the particular meaning here, because of what follows, *he ever liveth to make intercession for them*; this depends on the *perpetuity* of his *priesthood*, and the *continuance* of his *mediatorial* office. As Jesus was the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world, has an everlasting priesthood, and is a continual intercessor; it is in virtue of this that all who were saved from the foundation of the world were saved through him, and all that shall be saved to the end of the world will be saved through him. He ever was and ever will be the High Priest, Sacrifice, Intercessor, and Mediator of the human race. All successive generations of men are equally interested in him, and may claim the same privileges. But none can be saved by his grace that do not *come unto God through him*; i.e. imploring mercy through him as their sacrifice and atonement; confidently trusting that God can be just, and yet the justifier of them who thus come to him, believing on Christ Jesus.

The phrase *ευτυγχανειν τιμι*, to make intercession for a person, has a considerable latitude of meaning. It signifies, 1. To come to or meet a person on any cause whatever. 2. To intercede, pray for, or entreat in the behalf of, another. 3. To defend or vindicate a person. 4. To commend. 5. To furnish any kind of assistance or help. 6. And, with the preposition *κατα*, against, to accuse, or act against another in a judicial way.

"The nature of the apostle's arguments," says Dr. Macknight, "requires that, by Christ's *always living*, we understand his *always living in the body*; for it is thus that he is an affectionate and sympathizing High Priest, who, in his intercession, pleads the merit of his death to procure the salvation of all who come unto God through him. Agreeably to this account of Christ's intercession, the apostle, in **#Heb 7:27**, mentions the sacrifice of himself, which Christ offered for the sins of the people as the foundation of his intercession. Now, as he offered that sacrifice in heaven, **#Heb 8:2, 3**, by presenting his crucified body there, (See "**Heb 8:5**",) and as he continually resides there in the body, some of the ancients were of opinion that his continual intercession consists in the *continual presentation of his humanity before his Father*, because it is a continual declaration of his earnest desire of the salvation of men, and of his having, in obedience to his Father's will, made himself flesh, and suffered death to accomplish it. See "**Ro 8:34**", note 3. This opinion is confirmed by the manner in which the Jewish high priest made intercession for the people on the day of atonement, and which was a type of Christ's intercession in heaven. He made it, not by offering of prayers for them in the most holy place, but by *sprinkling the blood of the sacrifices on the mercy-seat*, in token of their death. And as, by that action, he opened the earthly holy places to the prayers and worship of the Israelites during the ensuing year; so Jesus, by presenting his humanity continually before the presence of his Father, opens heaven to the prayers of his people in the present life, and to their persons after the resurrection."

Verse 26. **Such a high priest became us]** Such a high priest was in every respect *suitable* to us, every way qualified to accomplish the end for which he came into the world. There is probably here an allusion to the qualifications of the Jewish high priest:—

1. He was required to be *holy*, *σοιος*, answering to the Hebrew *חַסִּיד* *chasid*, *merciful*. Holiness was his calling; and, as he was the representative of his brethren, he was required to be *merciful* and *compassionate*.

2. He was to be *harmless*, *ακακος*, *without evil*-holy without, and holy within; injuring none, but rather living for the benefit of others.

3. He was *undefiled*, *αμικτος* answering to the Hebrew *באל מום* *baal mum*, *without blemish*-having no *bodily imperfection*. Nothing low, mean, base, or unbecoming in his conduct.

4. He was *separate from sinners*, *κεχωρισμενος απο των αμαρτωλων*. By his office he was *separated* from all men and worldly occupations, and entirely devoted to the service of God. And as to *sinners*, or *heathens*, he was never to be found in their society.

5. *Higher than the heavens*. There may be some reference here to the exceeding *dignity* of the high priesthood; it was the highest office that could be sustained by man, the high priest himself being the immediate representative of God.

But these things suit our Lord in a sense in which they cannot be applied to the high priest of the Jews.

1. He was *holy*, infinitely so; and *merciful*, witness his shedding his blood for the sins of mankind.

2. *Harmless*-perfectly without sin in his humanity, as well as his divinity.

3. *Undefiled*-contracted no sinful infirmity in consequence of his dwelling among men.

4. *Separate from sinners*-absolutely unblamable in the whole of his conduct, so that he could challenge the most inveterate of his enemies with, *Which of you convicteth me of sin?* Who of you can show in my conduct the slightest deviation from truth and righteousness!

5. *Higher than the heavens*-more exalted than all the angels of God, than all created beings, whether thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers, because all these were created by him and for him, and derive their continued subsistence from his infinite energy.

But how was a person of such infinite dignity *suitable* to us! His *greatness* is put in opposition to our meanness. HE was *holy*; WE, *unholy*. HE was *harmless*; WE, *harmful*, *injuring* both ourselves and others. HE was *undefiled*; WE, *defiled*, most *sinfully spotted* and impure. HE was *separate from sinners*; WE were *joined to sinners*, companions of the vile, the worthless, the profane, and the wicked. HE was *higher than the heavens*; WE, *baser* and *lower* than the earth, totally unworthy to be called the creatures of God. And had we not had such a Saviour, and had we not been redeemed at an infinite price, we should, to use the nervous language of *Milton* on another occasion, "after a shameful life and end in this world, have been thrown down eternally into the *darkest* and *deepest* gulf of *hell*, where, under the *despiteful control*, the trample and spurn, of all the other *damned*, and in the anguish of their *torture* should have no other ease than to exercise a raving and bestial *tyranny* over *us* as their *slaves*, we must have remained in that plight for ever, the *basest*, the *lower-most*, the most dejected, most *under-foot* and *down-trodden vassals* of *perdition*." MILTON on *Reformation*, in *fine*.

Verse 27. **Who needeth not daily]** Though the high priest offered the great atonement only once in the year, yet in the Jewish services there was a daily acknowledgment of sin, and a daily sacrifice offered by the priests, at whose head was the high priest, for their own sins and the sins of the people. The Jews held that a priest who neglected his own expiatory sacrifice would be smitten with death. (*Sanhedr.*, fol. 83.) When they offered this victim, they prayed the following prayer: "O Lord, I have sinned, and done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the, people of thy holiness. I beseech thee, for thy name's sake, blot out the sins, iniquities, and transgressions by which I have sinned, done wickedly, and gone astray before thy face, I, and my house, and the sons of Aaron, the people of thy holiness; as it is written in the law of Moses thy servant, (#Le 16:30:) *On that day shall he make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord!*" To which the Levites answered: "Blessed be the name of the glory of thy kingdom, for ever and ever!"

This prayer states that the priest *offered a sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people*, as the apostle asserts.

**For this he did once]** For *himself* he offered no sacrifice; and the apostle gives the reason—he needed none, because he was holy, harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners: and for the *people* he offered himself once for all, when he expired upon the cross.

It has been very properly remarked, that the sacrifice offered by Christ differed in four essential respects from those, offered by the Jewish priests: 1. He offered no sacrifice for himself, but only for the people. 2. He did not offer that sacrifice *annually*, but once for all. 3. The sacrifice which he offered was not of calves and goats, but of himself. 4. This sacrifice he offered, not for *one people*, but for the *whole human race*; for he tasted death for *every man*.

Verse 28. **For the law maketh men high priests]** The Jewish priests have need of these repeated offerings and sacrifices, because they are fallible, sinful men: *but the word of the oath* (still referring to #Ps 110:4) *which was since the law*; for David, who mentions this, lived nearly 500 years after the giving of the law, and consequently that oath, constituting another priesthood, abrogates the law; and by this the SON is *consecrated*, τετελειωμενον, *is perfected, for evermore*. Being a high priest without blemish, immaculately holy, every way perfect, immortal, and eternal, HE is a priest εις τον αιωνα, to ETERNITY.

I. THERE are several respects in which the apostle shows the priesthood of Christ to be more excellent than that of the Jews, which priesthood was typified by that of Melchisedec.

1. Being after the order of Melchisedec, there was no need of a rigorous examination of his *genealogy* to show his right.

2. He has an *eternal* priesthood; whereas theirs was but *temporal*.

3. The other priests, as a token of the dignity of their office, and their state of dependence on God, received tithes from the people. Melchisedec, a priest and king, after whose order Christ comes, *tithed Abraham*, δεδεκατωκε τον αβρααμ, the father of the patriarchs; Jesus, infinitely greater than

all, having an absolute and independent life, needs none. He is no man's debtor, but all receive out of his fulness.

4. He alone can bless the people, not by *praying for their good* merely, but by communicating the good which is necessary.

5. As another priesthood, different from that of Aaron, was promised, it necessarily implies that the Levitical priesthood was insufficient; the priesthood of Christ, being that promised, must be greater than that of Aaron.

6. That which God has appointed and consecrated with an *oath*, as to endure for ever, must be greater than that which he has appointed simply for a time: but the priesthood of Christ is thus appointed; therefore, &c.

7. All the Levitical priests were fallible and sinful men; but Christ was holy and undefiled.

8. The Levitical priests were only by their office distinguished from the rest of their brethren, being equally frail, mortal, and corruptible; but Jesus, *our* high priest, is *higher than the heavens*. The statements from which these differences are drawn are all laid down in this chapter.

II. As the word *surety*, *εγγυος*, in #**Heb 7:22**, has been often abused, or used in an unscriptural and dangerous sense, it may not be amiss to inquire a little farther into its meaning. The Greek word *εγγυος*, from *εγγυη*, a *pledge*, is supposed to be so called from being lodged *εν χειροις*, *in the hands* of the creditor. It is nearly of the same meaning with *bail*, and signifies an engagement made by C. with A. that B. shall fulfil certain conditions then and there specified, for which C. makes himself answerable; if, therefore, B. fails, C. becomes wholly responsible to A. In such *suretiship* it is never *designed* that C. shall pay any debt or fulfil any engagement that belongs to B.; but, if B. fail, then C. becomes responsible, because he had *pledged* himself for B. In this scheme A. is the person legally empowered to take the bail or pledge, B. the debtor, and C. the surety. The idea therefore of B. paying his own debt, is necessarily implied in taking the surety. Were it once to be supposed that the surety undertakes *absolutely* to pay the debt, his suretiship is at an end, and he becomes the debtor; and the real debtor is no longer bound. Thus the nature of the transaction becomes entirely changed, and we find nothing but *debtor* and *creditor* in the case. In this sense, therefore, the word *εγγυος*, which we translate *surety*, cannot be applied in the above case, for Christ never became *surety* that, if men did not fulfil the conditions of this *better covenant*, i.e. repent of sin, turn from it, believe on the Son of God, and having received grace walk as children of the light, and be faithful unto death, he would do all these things for them himself! This would be both absurd and impossible: and hence the gloss of some here is both absurd and dangerous, viz., "That Christ was the surety of the first covenant to pay the debt; of the second, to perform the duty." That it cannot have this meaning in the passage in question is sufficiently proved by Dr. Macknight; and instead of extending my own reasoning on the subject, I shall transcribe his note.

"The Greek commentators explain this word *εγγυος* very properly by *μεσιτης*, a *mediator*, which is its etymological meaning; for it comes from *εγγυος*, *near*, and signifies one who draws near, or who causes another to draw near. Now, as in this passage a comparison is stated between Jesus as a high

priest, and the Levitical high priests; and as these were justly considered by the apostle as the mediators of the Sinaitic covenant, because through their mediation the Israelites worshipped God with sacrifices, and received from him, as their king, a political pardon, in consequence of the sacrifices offered by the high priest on the day of atonement; it is evident that the apostle in this passage calls Jesus *the High Priest*, or *Mediator of the better covenant*, because through his mediation, that is, through the sacrifice of himself which he offered to God, believers receive all the blessings of the better covenant. And as the apostle has said, **#Heb 7:19**, that *by the introduction of a better hope*, *εγγιζομεν*, *we draw near to God*; he in this verse very properly calls Jesus *εγγυος*, rather than *μεσιτης*, to denote the effect of his mediation. See **#Heb 7:25**. Our translators indeed, following the *Vulgate* and *Beza*, have rendered *εγγυος* by the word *surety*, a sense which it has, **Ecclus. 29:16**, and which naturally enough follows from its etymological meaning; for the person who becomes *surety* for the good behaviour of another, or for his performing something stipulated, brings that other *near to the party* to whom he gives the security; he reconciles the two. But in this sense the word *εγγυος* is not applicable to the Jewish high priests; for to be a *proper surety*, one must either have power to compel the party to perform that for which he has become his surety; or, in case of his not performing it, he must be able to perform it himself. This being the case, will any one say that the Jewish high priests were sureties to God for the Israelites performing their part of the covenant of the law! Or to the people for God's performing his part of the covenant! As little is the appellation, *surety of the new covenant*, applicable to Jesus. For since the new covenant does not require perfect obedience, but only the obedience of faith; if the obedience of faith be not given by men themselves, it cannot be given by another in their room; unless we suppose that men can be saved without personal faith. I must therefore infer, that those who speak of Jesus as the surety of the new covenant, must hold that it requires perfect obedience; which, not being in the power of believers to give, Jesus has performed for them. But is not this to make the covenant of grace a covenant of works, contrary to the whole tenor of Scripture! For these reasons I think the Greek commentators have given the true meaning of the word *εγγυος*, in this passage, when they explain it by *μεσιτης*, *mediator*."

The chief difference lies here. The old covenant required perfect obedience from the very commencement of life; this is impossible, because man comes into the world depraved. The new covenant declares God's righteousness for the remission of sins that are *past*; and furnishes grace to enable all true believers to live up to all the requisitions of the moral law, as found in the gospels. But in this sense Christ cannot be called the *surety*, for the reasons given above; for he does not perform the obedience or faith in behalf of any man. It is the highest privilege of believers to love God with all their hearts, and to serve him with all their strength; and to remove their obligation to keep this moral law would be to deprive them of the highest happiness they can possibly have on this side heaven.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The sum, or chief articles, of what the apostle has spoken, concerning the eternal priesthood of Christ, 1-5: The excellency of the new covenant beyond that of the old, 6-9. The nature and perfection of the new covenant stated from the predictions of the prophets, 10-12. By this new covenant the old is abolished, 13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VIII.

Verse 1. **Of the things which we have spoken this is the sum]** The word κεφαλαιον, which we translate *sum*, signifies the *chief*, the *principal*, or *head*; or, as St. Chrysostom explains it, κεφαλαιον αει το μεγαλυτον λεγεται, "that which is greatest is always called *kephalaion*," i.e. the *head*, or *chief*.

**Who is set on the right hand of the throne]** This is what the apostle states to be the *chief* or *most important point* of all that he had yet discussed. His sitting down at the right hand of the throne of God, proves, 1. That he is higher than all the high priests that ever existed. 2. That the sacrifice which he offered for the sins of the world was sufficient and effectual, and as such accepted by God. 3. That he has all power in the heavens and in the earth, and is able to save and defend to the uttermost all that come to God through him. 4. That he did not, like the Jewish high priest, depart out of the holy of holies, after having offered the atonement; but abides there at the throne of God, as a continual priest, in the permanent act of offering his crucified body unto God, in behalf of all the succeeding generations of mankind. It is no wonder the apostle should call this sitting down at the right hand of the throne of the Divine Majesty, the *chief* or *head* of all that he had before spoken.

Verse 2. **A minister of the sanctuary]** των αγιων λειτουργος: *A public minister of the holy things or places.* The word λειτουργος, from λειτος, *public*, and εργον, a *work* or *office*, means a person who officiated for the public, a public officer; in whom, and his work, all the people had a common right: hence our word *liturgy*, the *public work* of prayer and praise, designed for the *people at large*; all having a right to attend it, and each having an equal interest in it. Properly speaking, the Jewish priest was the servant of the public; he transacted the business of the people with God. Jesus Christ is also the same kind of public officer; both as *Priest* and *Mediator* he transacts the business of the whole human race with God. He performs the *holy things* or *acts* in the *true tabernacle*, HEAVEN, of which the Jewish tabernacle was the *type*. The tabernacle was the place among the Jews where God, by the *symbol of his presence*, dwelt. This could only typify *heaven*, where God, in his *essential glory*, dwells, and is manifest to angels and glorified saints; and hence heaven is called here the *true tabernacle*, to distinguish it from the *type*.

**Which the Lord pitched]** The Jewish tabernacle was *man's work*, though made by God's direction; the *heavens*, this *true tabernacle*, the work of God alone, and infinitely more glorious than that of the Jews. The tabernacle was also a type of the *human nature* of Christ, #Joh 1:14: *And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, και εσκηνωσεν εν ημιν* and *tabernacled among us*; for, as the Divine presence dwelt in the tabernacle, so the fulness of the Godhead, bodily, dwelt in the

man Christ Jesus. And this human body was the *peculiar work of God*, as it came not in the way of *natural generation*.

Verse 3. **Every high priest is ordained]** καθίσταται, *Is set apart*, for this especial work.

**Gifts and sacrifices]** δώρα τε και θυσιας· *Eucharistic offerings*, and *sacrifices for sin*. By the *former*, God's government of the universe, and his benevolence to his creatures in providing for their support, were acknowledged. By the *latter*, the destructive and ruinous nature of sin, and the necessity of an atonement, were confessed.

**Wherefore-of necessity]** If Christ be a high priest, and it be essential to the office of a high priest to offer atoning sacrifices to God, Jesus must offer such. Now it is manifest that, as he is the *public minister*, officiating in the *true tabernacle* as high priest, he must make an atonement; and his being at the right hand of the throne shows that he has offered, and continues to offer, such an atonement.

Verse 4. **For if he were on earth]** As the Jewish temple was standing when this epistle was written, the whole temple service continued to be performed by the legal priests, descendants of Aaron, of the tribe of Levi; therefore if Christ had been then on earth, he could not have performed the office of a priest, being of the tribe of Judah, to which tribe the office of the priesthood did not appertain.

**There are priests that offer gifts]** This is an additional proof that this epistle was written before the destruction of Jerusalem. As the word θυσιαι, *sacrifices*, is not added here as it is in #**Heb 8:3**, is it any evidence that bloody sacrifices had then ceased to be offered? Or, are both kinds included in the word δώρα, *gifts*? But is δωρον, a *gift*, ever used to express a *bloody sacrifice*? I believe the Septuagint never used it for זֶבַח *zabach*, which signifies an animal offered to God in sacrifice.

Verse 5. **Who serve]** οἰτινες λατρευουσι· Who perform Divine worship.

**Unto the example and shadow]** υποδειγματι και σκια, WITH *the representation and shadow*; this is Dr. Macknight's translation, and probably the true one.

The whole Levitical service was a representation and shadow of heavenly things; it appears, therefore, absurd to say that the priests served UNTO *an example* or *representation* of heavenly things; they served rather unto the *substance* of those things, WITH appropriate *representations* and *shadows*.

**As Moses was admonished]** καθως κεχηρηματισται μωσης· *As Moses was Divinely warned or admonished of God*.

**According to the pattern]** κατα τον τυπον· According to the *type*, *plan*, or *form*. It is very likely that God gave a regular plan and *specification* of the tabernacle and all its parts to Moses; and that from this Divine plan the whole was constructed. **See on "Ex 25:40"**.

Verse 6. **Now hath he obtained a more excellent ministry]** His office of priesthood is more excellent than the Levitical, because the covenant is better, and established on better promises: the old covenant referred to *earthly* things; the new covenant, to *heavenly*. The old covenant had promises of *secular* good; the new covenant, of spiritual and eternal blessings. As far as Christianity is preferable to Judaism, as far as Christ is preferable to Moses, as far as spiritual blessings are preferable to earthly blessings, and as far as the enjoyment of God throughout eternity is preferable to the communication of earthly good during time; so far does the new covenant exceed the old.

Verse 7. **If that first had been faultless]** This is nearly the same argument with that in **#Heb 7:11**. The simple meaning is: If the first covenant had made a provision for and actually conferred pardon and *purity*, and given a *title* to eternal life, then there could have been no need for a second; but the first covenant did not give these things, therefore a second was necessary; and the covenant that gives these things is the Christian covenant.

Verse 8. **For finding fault with them]** The meaning is evidently this: God, in order to show that the first covenant was inefficient, saith to *them*, the Israelites, *Behold, the days come when I will make a new covenant, &c.* He *found fault* with the *covenant*, and addressed the *people* concerning his purpose of giving another covenant, that should be such as the necessities of mankind required. As this place refers to **#Jer 31:31-34**, the words *finding fault with them* may refer to the *Jewish people*, of whom the Lord complains that they had broken his covenant *though he was a husband to them*. See below.

**With the house of Israel and with the house of Judah]** That is, with all the descendants of the twelve sons of Jacob. This is thought to be a promise of the conversion of all the Jews to Christianity; both of the *lost tribes*, and of those who are known to exist in Asiatic and European countries.

Verse 9. **Not according to the covenant]** The new covenant is of a widely different nature to that of the old; it was only temporal and earthly in itself, though it pointed out spiritual and eternal things. The new covenant is totally different from this, as we have already seen; and such a covenant, or *system of religion*, the Jews should have been prepared to expect, as the Prophet Jeremiah had, in the above place, so clearly foretold it.

**They continued not in my covenant]** It should be observed that the word *διαθικην*, which we translate *covenant*, often means *religion* itself; and its various precepts. The old covenant in general stated, on God's side, *I will be your God*; on the Israelites' side, *We will be thy people*. This covenant they brake; they served other gods, and neglected the precepts of that holy religion which God had delivered to them.

**And I regarded them not]** *καγω ημελησα αυτων*. *And I neglected them or despised them*; but the words in the Hebrew text of the prophet are *וּאֲנֹכִי בַעַלְהֵי בָם* *veanochi baalti bam*, which we translate, *although I was a husband to them*. If our translation be correct, is it possible to account for this most strange difference between the apostle and the prophet? Could the Spirit of God be the author of such a strange, not to say *contradictory*, translation of the same words? Let it be observed: 1. That the apostle quotes from the Septuagint; and in quoting a version accredited by and commonly

used among the Jews, he ought to give the text as he found it, unless the Spirit of God dictated an extension of meaning, as is sometimes the case; but in the present case there seems to be no necessity to alter the meaning. 2. The Hebrew words will bear a translation much nearer to the Septuagint and the apostle than our translation intimates. The words might be literally rendered, *And I was Lord over them*, or *I lorded or ruled over them*; i.e., I chastised them for their transgressions, and punished them for their iniquities;  $\eta\mu\epsilon\lambda\eta\sigma\alpha$ , *I took no farther care of them*, and gave them up into the hands of their enemies, and so they were carried away into captivity. This pretty nearly reconciles the Hebrew and the Greek, as it shows the act of God in reference to them is nearly the same when the proper meaning of the Hebrew and Greek words is considered.

Some suppose that the letter  $\text{ע}$  *ain* in  $\text{בַּעַלְהֵי}$  is changed for  $\text{כ}$  *cheth*, and that the word should be read  $\text{בַּחַלְהֵי}$  *bachalti*, *I have hated or despised them*. An ancient and learned Jew, Rab. *Parchon*, has these remarkable words on this passage,  $\text{וְאֵנֹכִי בַּעַלְהֵי בָם בְּשֵׁנֵאֵתִים וְזוֹ הָעִיִּז}$   $\text{מִתְחַלְבֵּה כַחֵית שֶׁגַּם וְגַם נִבְשָׁם כַּהֵלֶה בִּי בְּשֵׁנֵאֵה אֹתֵי}$ , and *I baatti baam*, translate, *I hated them*; for  $\text{ע}$  *ain* is here changed and stands for  $\text{כ}$  *cheth*, as it is said, *their soul bachalah bi*, translate, *hath hated me.*" None of the Hebrew MSS. collated by *Kennicott* and *De Rossi* give any various reading on this word. Some of the versions have used as much latitude in their translations of the Hebrew as the Septuagint. But it is unnecessary to discuss this subject any farther; the word  $\text{בַּעַל}$  *baal* itself, by the consent of the most learned men, signifies to *disdain* or *despise*, and this is pretty nearly the sense of the apostle's expression.

Verse 10. **This is the covenant]** This is the nature of that glorious system of religion which I shall publish among them *after those days*, i.e., in the times of the Gospel.

**I will put my laws into their mind]** I will influence them with the principles of law, truth, holiness, &c.; and their understandings shall be fully enlightened to comprehend them.

**And write them in their hearts]** All their affections, passions, and appetites, shall be purified and filled with holiness and love to God and man; so that they shall willingly obey, and feel that *love is the fulfilling of the law*: instead of being written on *tables of stone*, they shall be written on the *fleshy tables of their hearts*.

**I will be to them a God]** These are the two grand conditions by which the parties in this covenant or agreement are bound: 1. *I will be your God*. 2. *Ye shall be my people*. As the object of religious adoration to any man is that Being from whom he expects light, direction, defence, support, and happiness: so God, promising to be their God, promises in effect to give them all these great and good things. To be God's people implies that they should give God their whole hearts, serve him with all their light and strength, and have no other object of worship or dependence but himself. Any of these conditions broken, the covenant is rendered null and void, and the other party absolved from his engagement.

Verse 11. **They shall not teach every man his neighbour]** Under the old covenant, properly speaking, there was no public instruction; before the erection of synagogues all worship was confined at first to the tabernacle, afterwards to the temple. When synagogues were established they

were used principally for the bare reading of the law and the prophets; and scarcely any such thing as a *public ministry* for the continual instruction of the *common people* was found in the land till the time of John the Baptist, our Lord, and his apostles. It is true there were *prophets* who were a sort of general teachers, but neither was *their* ministry extended through all the people; and there were *schools of the prophets* and *schools of the rabbins*, but these were for the instruction of *select persons*. Hence it was necessary that every man should do what he could, under that dispensation, to *instruct his neighbour* and *brother*. But the prophecy here indicates that there should be, under the Gospel dispensation, a profusion of Divine light; and this we find to be the case by the plentiful diffusion of the sacred writings, and by an abundant Gospel ministry: and these blessings are not confined to *temples* or *palaces*, but are found in every corner of the land; so that, literally, all the people, from the least to the greatest, know and acknowledge the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he has sent. Almost every man, at least in this land, has a Bible, and can read it; and there is not a family that has not the opportunity of hearing the Gospel preached, explained, and enforced.

Some have thought that *from the least to the greatest* is intended to signify the order in which God proceeds with a work of grace; he generally begins with the poor, and through these the *great* and the *high* often hear the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 12. **I will be merciful to their unrighteousness]** In order to be their God, as mentioned under the preceding verse, it is requisite that their iniquity should be pardoned; this is provided for by the immolation of Jesus Christ as the *covenant sacrifice*. By his blood, redemption has been purchased, and all who with penitent hearts believe on the Lord Jesus receive remission of sins, and God remembers their iniquities no more against them so as to punish them on that account. All spiritual evil against the nature and law of God is represented here under the following terms:-

1. *Unrighteousness*, *αδικια*, *injustice* or *wrong*. This is against God, his neighbour, and himself.
2. *Sin*, *αμαρτια*, deviation from the Divine law; MISSING THE MARK; aiming at happiness but never attaining it, because sought *out* of God, and *in* the breach of his laws.
3. *Iniquity*, *ανομια*, *lawlessness*, not having, knowing, or acknowledging, a law; having no law written in their hearts, and restrained by none in the conduct of their lives. All these are to be removed by God's *mercy*; and this is to be understood of his mercy in Christ Jesus.

Verse 13. **He hath made the first old.]** That is: He has considered it as *antiquated*, and as being no longer of any force.

**That which decayeth and waxeth old]** Here is an allusion to the ancient laws, which either had perished from the *tables* on which they were written through *old age*, or were fallen into *disuse*, or were *abrogated*.

Is **ready to vanish away.]** *εγγυς αφανισμου*. *Is about to be abolished*. Dionysius of Halicarnassus, speaking of the laws of Numa, which had been written on *oak boards*, says: *αφανισθησαι συνηθη τω χρονω*. "which had perished through old age." And the word *αφανιζειν* is used to express the *abolition of the law*. The apostle, therefore, intimates that the old covenant was

just about to be abolished; but he expresses himself cautiously and tenderly, that he might not give unnecessary offence.

WHEN the apostle said, *All shall know the Lord, from the least to the greatest*, under the new covenant, he had copious authority for saying so from the rabbins themselves. In *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 42, it is said: "In the days of the Messiah knowledge shall be renewed in the world, and the law shall be made plain among all; as it is written, #**Jer 31:33**, *All shall know me, from the least to the greatest.*" We find the following legend in *Midrash Yalcut Simeoni*, part 2, fol. 46: "The holy blessed God shall sit in paradise and explain the law; all the righteous shall sit before him, and the whole heavenly family shall stand on their feet; and the holy blessed God shall sit, and the *new law*, which he is to give by *the Messiah*, shall be interpreted."

In *Sohar Genes.*, fol. 74, col. 291, we find these remarkable words: "When the days of the Messiah shall approach, even the little children in this world shall find out the hidden things of wisdom; and in that time all things shall be revealed to all men."

And in *Sohar Levit.*, fol. 24, col. 95: "There shall be no time like this till the Messiah comes, and then the knowledge of God shall be found in every part of the world."

This day are all these sayings fulfilled in our ears: the word of God is multiplied; many run to and fro, and knowledge is increased; all the nations of the earth are receiving the book of God; and men of every clime, and of every degree-Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites; the dwellers in Mesopotamia, in Judea, in Cappadocia, in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, in Egypt, in Libya; strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes; Cretes and Arabians; Americans, Indians, and Chinese-hear, in their own tongues, the wonderful works of God.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER IX.

*Of the first covenant, and its ordinances, 1. The tabernacle, candlestick, table, show-bread, veil, holy of holies, censer, ark, pot of manna, Aaron's rod, tables of the covenant, cherubim of glory, and mercy seat, 2-5. How the priests served, 6, 7. What was signified by the service, 8-10. The superior excellency of Christ's ministry and sacrifice, and the efficacy of his blood, 11-26. As men must once die and be judged, so Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many, and shall come without a sin-offering, a second time, to them that expect him, 27, 28.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IX.

Verse 1. **The first covenant had also ordinances]** Our translators have introduced the word *covenant*, as if *διαθηκη* had been, if not originally in the text, yet in the apostle's mind. Several MSS., but not of good note, as well as printed *editions*, with the *Coptic* version, have *σκηνη* *tabernacle*; but this is omitted by ABDE, several others, both the *Syriac*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, and several of the Greek fathers; it is in all probability a spurious reading, the whole context showing that *covenant* is that to which the apostle refers, as that was the subject in the preceding chapter, and this is a continuation of the same discourse.

**Ordinances]** *δικαιωματα* Rites and ceremonies.

**A worldly sanctuary.]** *ἄγιον κοσμικον*. It is supposed that the term *worldly*, here, is opposed to the term *heavenly*, #**Heb 8:5**; and that the whole should be referred to the carnality or secular nature of the tabernacle service. But I think there is nothing plainer than that the apostle is speaking here in *praise* of this sublimely emblematic service, and hence he proceeds to enumerate the various things contained in the first tabernacle, which added vastly to its *splendour* and importance; such as the table of the show-bread, the golden candlestick, the golden censer, the ark of the covenant overlaid round about with gold, in which was the golden pot that had the manna, Aaron's rod that budded, and the two tables which God had written with his own finger: hence I am led to believe that *κοσμικος* is here taken in its proper, natural meaning, and signifies *adorned, embellished, splendid*; and hence *κοσμος*, *the world: Tota hujus universi machina, cœlum et terram complectens et quicquid utroque contineter, κοσμος dicitur, quod nihil ea est mundus, pulchrius, et ornatius*. "The whole machine of this universe, comprehending the heavens and the earth, and whatsoever is contained in both, is called *κοσμος*, because nothing is more *beautiful*, more *fair*, and more *elegant*." So Pliny, Hist. Nat., l. ii. c. 5: *Nam quem κοσμον Græci nomine ornamenti appellaverunt, eum nos a perfecta absolutaque elegantia, MUNDUM*. "That which the Greeks call *κοσμος*, *ornament*, we, (the Latins,) from its perfect and absolute elegance call *mundum*, world." **See on "Ge 2:1"**.

The Jews believe that the tabernacle was an epitome of the world; and it is remarkable, when speaking of their city, that they express this sentiment by the same Greek word, in Hebrew letters, which the apostle uses here: so in *Bereshith Rabba*, s. 19, fol. 19: *כל קוזמיקון שלו שם הוא* *col kozmikon (κοσμικον) shelo sham hu*. "All his world is placed there." Philo says much to the same purpose.

If my exposition be not admitted, the next most likely is, that God has a *worldly tabernacle* as well as a *heavenly one*; that he as truly *dwelt* in the Jewish tabernacle as he did in the heaven of heavens; the one being his *worldly house*, the other his *heavenly house*.

Verse 2. **For there was a tabernacle made; the first, wherein]** The sense is here very obscure, and the construction involved: leaving out all punctuation, which is the case with all the very ancient MSS., the verse stands thus: *σκηνη γαρ κατεσκευασθη η πρωτη εν η η τε λυχνια, κ. τ. λ.* which I suppose an indifferent person, who understood the language, would without hesitation render, *For, there was the first tabernacle constructed, in which were the candlestick, &c.* And this tabernacle or dwelling may be called the *first* dwelling place which God had among men, to distinguish it from the *second* dwelling place, the temple built by Solomon; for tabernacle here is to be considered in its general sense, as implying a *dwelling*.

To have a proper understanding of what the apostle relates here, we should endeavour to take a concise view of the tabernacle erected by Moses in the wilderness. This tabernacle was the epitome of the Jewish temple; or rather, according to this as a model was the Jewish temple built. It comprised, 1. The court where the people might enter. 2. In this was contained the altar of burnt-offerings, on which were offered the sacrifices in general, besides offerings of bread, wine, and other things. 3. At the bottom or lower end of this court was the *tent* of the covenant; the two principal parts of the tabernacle were, the holy place and the holy of holies. In the temple built by Solomon there was a court for the Levites, different from that of the people; and, at the entrance of the holy place, a vestibule. But in the tabernacle built by Moses these parts were not found, nor does the apostle mention them here.

In the holy place, as the apostle observes, there were,

1. The golden candlestick of seven branches, on the *south*.
2. The golden altar, or altar of incense, on the *north*.

3. The altar, or table of the show-bread; or where the twelve loaves, representing the twelve tribes, were laid before the Lord. 1. In each branch of the golden candlestick was a lamp; these were lighted every evening, and extinguished every morning. They were intended to give light by night. 2. The altar of incense was of gold; and a priest, chosen by lot each week, offered incense every morning and evening in a golden censer, which he probably left on the altar after the completion of the offering. 3. The table of the show-bread was covered with plates of gold; and on this, every Sabbath, they placed *twelve* loaves in two piles, six in each, which continued there all the week till the next Sabbath, when they were removed, and fresh loaves put in their place. The whole of this may be seen in all its details in the book of Exodus, from chap. xxxv. to xl. See *Calmet* also.

**Which is called the sanctuary.]** *ἡτις λεγεται αγια· This is called holy.* This clause may apply to any of the nouns in this verse, in the nominative case, which are all of the feminine gender; and the adjective *αγια*, *holy*, may be considered here as the nominative singular feminine, agreeing with *ητις*. Several *editions* accent the words in reference to this construction. The word *σκηνη*,

*tabernacle*, may be the proper antecedent; and then we may read *αγία*, instead of *αγία*: but these niceties belong chiefly to grammarians.

Verse 3. **And after the second veil]** The first veil, of which the apostle has not yet spoken, was at the entrance of the holy place, and separated the temple from the court, and prevented the people, and even the Levites, from seeing what was in the holy place.

The *second* veil, of which the apostle speaks here, separated the holy place from the holy of holies.

**The tabernacle, which is called the Holiest of all]** That is, that part of the tabernacle which is called the holy of holies.

Verse 4. **Which had the golden censer]** It is evident that the apostle speaks here of the tabernacle built by Moses, and of the state and contents of that tabernacle as they were during the lifetime of Moses. For, as Calmet remarks, in the temple which was afterwards built there were many things *added* which were not in the tabernacle, and *several* things *left out*. The ark of the covenant and the two tables of the law were never found after the return from the Babylonish captivity. We have no proof that, even in the time of Solomon, the golden pot of manna, or the rod of Aaron, was either in or near the ark. In Solomon's temple the holy place was separated from the holy of holies by a solid *wall*, instead of a veil, and by strong wooden doors, #1Ki 6:31-33. In the same temple there was a large vestibule before the holy place; and round about this and the holy of holies there were many chambers in three stories, #1Ki 6:5, 6. But there was nothing of all this in the Mosaic tabernacle; therefore, says Calmet, we need not trouble ourselves to reconcile the various scriptures which mention this subject; some of which refer to the tabernacle, others to Solomon's temple, and others to the temple built by Zorobabel; which places were very different from each other.

The apostle says that the *golden censer* was in the holy of holies; but this is nowhere mentioned by Moses. But he tells us that the high priest went in, once every year, with the golden censer to burn incense; and Calmet thinks this censer was *left there* all the year, and that its place was supplied by a new one, brought in by the priest the year following. Others think it was left just within the veil, so that the priest, by putting his hand under the curtain, could take it out, and prepare it for his next entrance into the holiest.

**The ark of the covenant]** This was a sort of chest overlaid with plates of gold, in which the two tables of the law, Aaron's rod, the pot of manna, &c., were deposited. Its top, or lid, was the propitiatory or mercy-seat.

Verse 5. **And over it the cherubims of glory]** Cherubim is the plural of *cherub*, and it is absurd to add our plural termination (s) to the plural termination of the Hebrew. The *glory* here signifies the *shechinah* or symbol of the Divine presence.

**Shadowing the mercy-seat]** One at each end of the ark, with their faces turned toward each other, but looking down on the cover or propitiatory, *λασθηριον*, here called the *mercy-seat*.

**Of which we cannot now speak particularly.]** The apostle did not judge any farther account of these to be necessary; and I may be excused from considering them particularly here, having said so much on each in the places where they occur in the Pentateuch. What these point out or signify is thus explained by St. Cyril: *Christus licet unus sit, multifariam tamen a nobis intelligitur: Ipse est Tabernaculum propter carnis tegumentum: Ipse est Mensa, quia noster cibus est et vita: Ipse est Arca habens legem Dei reconditam, quia est Verbum Patris: Ipse est Candelabrum, quia est lux spiritualis: Ipse est Altare incensi, quia est odor suavitatis in sanctificationem: Ipse est Altare holocausti, quia est hostia pro totius mundi vita in cruce oblata.* "Although Christ be but one, yet he is understood by us under a variety of forms. He is the *Tabernacle*, on account of the human body in which he dwelt. He is the *Table*, because he is our Bread of life. He is the *Ark* which has the law of God enclosed within, because he is the Word of the Father. He is the *Candlestick*, because he is our spiritual light. He is the *Altar of incense*, because he is the sweet-smelling odour of sanctification. He is the *Altar of burnt-offering*, because he is the victim, by death on the cross, for the sins of the whole world." This father has said, in a few words, what others have employed whole volumes on, by refining, spiritualizing, and allegorizing.

Verse 6. **When these thing were thus ordained]** When the tabernacle was made, and its furniture placed in it, according to the Divine direction.

**The priests went always into the first Tabernacle]** That is, into the *first part* of the tabernacle, or holy place, into which he went *every day twice, accomplishing the services, τας λατρειας επιτελουντες*, which included his burning the incense at the morning and evening sacrifice, dressing the lamps, removing the old show-bread and laying on the new, and sprinkling the blood of the sin-offerings before the veil #Le 4:6: and for these works he must have *constant access to the place*.

Verse 7. **But into the second]** That is, the holy of holies, or *second part* of the tabernacle, *the high priest alone*, once every year, that is, on one day in the year only, which was the day on which the general atonement was made. The high priest could enter into this place only on one day in the year; but on that day he might enter several times. See Lev. 16.

**Not without blood]** The day prescribed by the law for this great solemnity was the *tenth of the month Tisri*, in which the high priest brought in the incense or perfumes, which he placed on the golden censer; he brought also the blood of the bullock; and sprinkled some portion of it seven times before the ark, and the veil which separated the holy place from the holy of holies. See #Le 16:14. He then came out, and, taking some of the blood of the goat which had been sacrificed, he sprinkled it between the veil and the ark of the covenant, #Le 16:15.

**Which he offered for himself, and for the errors of the people]** ὑπερ των του λαου αγνοηματων. For transgressions of which they were not conscious: there were so many niceties in the ritual worship of the Jews, and so many ways in which they might offend against the law and incur guilt, that it was found necessary to institute sacrifices to atone for these sins of *ignorance*. And as the high priest was also clothed with infirmity, he required to have an interest in the same sacrifice, on the same account. This was a national sacrifice; and by it the people understood that they were absolved from all the errors of the past year, and that they now had a renewed right of access to the mercy-seat.

Verse 8. **The Holy Ghost this signifying]** These services were divinely appointed, and by each of them the Holy Spirit of God is supposed to speak.

**The way into the holiest]** That full access to God was not the *common privilege* of the people, while the Mosaic economy subsisted. That the apostle means that it is only by Christ that any man and every man can approach God, is evident from #**Heb 10:19-22**, and it is about this, and not about the tabernacle of this world, that he is here discoursing.

I have already observed that the apostle appears to use the word *σκηνη*, or *tabernacle*, in the general sense of a *dwelling place*; and therefore applies it to the *temple*, which was reputed the *house* or *dwelling place* of God, as well as the ancient *tabernacle*. Therefore, what he speaks here concerning the *first tabernacle*, may be understood as applying with propriety to the then Jewish *temple*, as well as to the ancient tabernacle, which, even with all their sacrifices and ceremonies, could not make the way of holiness plain, nor the way to God's favour possible.

Verse 9. **Which]** Tabernacle and its services, was a *figure*, *παραβολη*, a dark enigmatical representation, *for the time then present*-for that age and dispensation, and for all those who lived under it.

*In which, καθ' ου, during which, time or dispensation were offered both gifts and sacrifices-eucharistic offerings and victims for sin, that could not make him that did the service, whether the priest who made the offering, or the person who brought it in the behalf of his soul, perfect as pertaining to the conscience-could not take away guilt from the mind, nor purify the conscience from dead works. The whole was a figure, or dark representation, of a spiritual and more glorious system: and although a sinner, who made these offerings and sacrifices according to the law, might be considered as having done his duty, and thus he would be exempted from many ecclesiastical and legal disabilities and punishments; yet his conscience would ever tell him that the guilt of sin was still remaining, and that it was impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take it away. Thus even he that did the service best continued to be imperfect-had a guilty conscience, and an unholy heart.*

The words *καθ' ου*, *in which*, referred in the above paraphrase to *τον καιρον*, *the time*, are read *καθ' ην* by ABD, and several others, one copy of the *Slavonic*, the *Vulgate*, and some of the *fathers*, and thus refer to *την σκηνην*, *the tabernacle*; and this is the reading which our translators appear to have followed. Griesbach places it in his *margin*, as a very probable reading; but I prefer the other.

Verse 10. **In meats and drinks, and divers washings]** He had already mentioned eucharistic and sacrificial offerings, and nothing properly remained but the different kinds of clean and unclean animals which were used, or forbidden to be used, as articles of food; together with the different kinds or drinks, washings, *βαπτισμοις*, *baptisms*, immersions, sprinklings and washings of the body and the clothes, and *carnal ordinances*, or things which had respect merely to the body, and could have no *moral influence* upon the soul, unless considered in reference to that of which they were the similitudes, or figures.

**Carnal ordinances]** δικαιώματα σαρκος· Rites and ceremonies pertaining merely to the *body*. The word *carnal* is not used here, nor scarcely in any part of the New Testament, in that catachrestical or *degrading* sense in which many preachers and professors of Christianity take the liberty to use it.

**Imposed on them until the time of reformation.]** These rites and ceremonies were enacted, by Divine authority, as proper representations of the Gospel system, which should reform and rectify all things.

*The time of reformation, καιρος διορθωσεως, the time of rectifying,* signifies the Gospel dispensation, under which every thing is set *straight*; every thing referred to its proper purpose and end; the ceremonial law fulfilled and abrogated; the moral law exhibited and more strictly enjoined; (see our Lord's sermon upon the mount;) and the spiritual nature of God's worship taught, and grace promised to purify the heart: so that, through the power of the eternal Spirit, all that was *wrong* in the soul is *rectified*; the affections, passions, and appetites purified; the understanding enlightened; the judgment corrected; the will refined; in a word, all things made *new*.

Verse 11. **But Christ being come a high priest of good things]** I think this and the succeeding verses not happily translated: indeed, the *division* of them has led to a wrong translation; therefore they must be taken together, thus: *But the Christ, the high priest of those good things (or services) which were to come, through a greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is, not of the same workmanship, entered once for all into the sanctuary; having obtained eternal redemption for us, not by the blood of goats and calves, but by his own blood, #Heb 9:13. For if the blood of GOATS, and bulls, and calves, and a heifer's ashes, sprinkled on the unclean, sanctifieth to the cleansing of the flesh, (#Heb 9:14,) how much more shall the blood of Christ, who, through the eternal Spirit, offered himself without spot to God, cleanse your consciences from dead works, in order to worship (or that ye may worship) the living God?*

In the above translation I have added, in **#Heb 9:13**, τραγων, *of goats*, on the authority of ABDE, three others, the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, Coptic, Vulgate, two copies of the Itala, and Theodoret. And I have rendered εις το λατρευειν, (**#Heb 9:14**), IN ORDER *to worship*, or THAT YE MAY *worship*; for this is the meaning of these particles εις το in many parts of the New Testament. I shall now make a few observations on some of the principal expressions.

**High priest of good things]** Or *services, to come*, των μελλοντων αγαθων. He is the High Priest of Christianity; he officiates in the behalf of all mankind; for by him are all the prayers, praises, and services of mankind offered to God; and he ever appears in the presence of God for us.

**A greater and more perfect tabernacle]** This appears to mean our Lord's *human nature*. That, in which dwelt all the fulness of the Godhead bodily, was fitly typified by the tabernacle and temple, in both of which the majesty of God dwelt.

**Not made with hands]** Though our Lord's body was a perfect human body, yet it did not come in the way of natural generation; his *miraculous conception* will sufficiently justify the expressions used here by the apostle.

Verse 12. **But by his own blood]** Here the redemption of man is attributed to the *blood of Christ*; and this blood is stated to be shed in a *sacrificial way*, precisely as the blood of bulls, goats and calves was shed under the law.

**Once]** *Once for all*, *εφαπαξ*, in opposition to the *annual* entering of the high priest into the holiest, with the blood of the *annual* victim.

**The holy place]** Or *sanctuary*, *τα αγια*, signifies *heaven*, into which Jesus entered with his own blood, as the high priest entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the *victims* which he had sacrificed.

**Eternal redemption]** *αιωνιαν λυτρωσιν*. A redemption price which should stand good *for ever*, when once offered; and an *endless redemption* from sin, in reference to the pardon of which, and reconciliation to God, there needs no other sacrifice: it is *eternal* in its *merit* and *efficacy*.

Verse 13. **Sanctifieth to the purifying of the flesh]** Answers the end proposed by the law; namely, to remove legal disabilities and punishments, having the *body* and its interests particularly in view, though adumbrating or typifying the soul and its concerns.

Verse 14. **Who through the eternal Spirit]** This expression is understood two ways: 1. Of the Holy Ghost himself. As Christ's *miraculous conception* was by the *Holy Spirit*, and he wrought all his *miracles* by the *Spirit* of God, so his *death* or final offering was made through or by the *eternal Spirit*; and by that *Spirit* he was *raised from the dead*, #1Pe 3:18. Indeed, through the whole of his life he was *justified by the Spirit*; and we find that in this great work of human redemption, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were continually employed: therefore the words may be understood of the Holy Spirit properly. 2. Of the *eternal Logos* or Deity which dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, through the energy of which the offering of his humanity became an infinitely meritorious victim; therefore the Deity of Christ is here intended. But we cannot well consider one of these distinct from the other; and hence probably arose the various readings in the MSS. and versions on this article. Instead of *δια πνευματος αιωνιου*, *by the ETERNAL Spirit*, *δια πνευματος αγιου*, *by the HOLY Spirit*, is the reading of D\*, and more than twenty others of good note, besides the *Coptic*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, two copies of the *Itala*, *Cyril*, *Athanasius* sometimes, *Damascenus*, *Chrysostom*, and some others. But the common reading is supported by ABD\*\*, and others, besides the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Armenian*, *Æthiopic*, *Athanasius* generally, *Theodoret*, *Theophylact*, and *Ambrosius*. This, therefore, is the reading that should be preferred, as it is probable that the *Holy Ghost*, not the *Logos*, is what the apostle had more immediately in view. But still we must say, that the *Holy Spirit*, with the *eternal Logos*, and the *almighty Father*, equally concurred in offering up the sacrifice of the human nature of Christ, in order to make atonement for the sin of the world.

**Purge your conscience]** *καθαριει την συνειδησιν*. *Purify your conscience*. The term *purify* should be everywhere, both in the translation of the Scriptures, and in preaching the Gospel, preferred to the word *purge*, which, at present, is scarcely ever used in the sense in which our translators have employed it.

**Dead works]** Sin in general, or acts to which the *penalty of death* is annexed by the law. **See the phrase explained, "Heb 6:1".**

Verse 15. **And for this cause]** Some translate *δια τουτο*, *on account of this* (blood.) Perhaps it means no more than a mere inference, such as *therefore*, or *wherefore*.

**He is the Mediator of the new testament]** There was no proper reason why our translators should render *διαθηκη* by *testament* here, when in almost every other case they render it *covenant*, which is its proper ecclesiastical meaning, as answering to the Hebrew *ברית*, which see largely explained, #Ge 15:10, and in other places of the Pentateuch.

Very few persons are satisfied with the translation of the following verses to the 20th, particularly the 16th and 17th; at all events the word *covenant* must be retained. *He*-Jesus Christ, is *Mediator*; the *μεσιτης*, or *mediator*, was the person who witnessed the contract made between the two contracting parties, slew the victim, and sprinkled each with its blood.

**Of the new testament]** The *new contract* betwixt God and the whole human race, by *Christ Jesus* the Mediator, distinguished here from the *old covenant* between God and the *Israelites*, in which *Moses* was the mediator.

**That by means of death]** His own death upon the cross.

**For the redemption of the transgressions]** To make atonement for the transgressions which were committed under the old covenant, which the blood of bulls and calves could not do; so the death of Jesus had respect to all the time antecedent to it, as well as to all the time afterward till the conclusion of the world.

**They which are called]** The GENTILES, *might receive the promise*-might, by being brought into a covenant with God, have an equal right with the *Jews*, not merely to an inheritance such as the promised land, but to an *eternal inheritance*, and consequently infinitely superior to that of the *Jews*, inasmuch as the new covenant is superior in every point of view to the old.

How frequently the *Gentiles* are termed *οι κλητοι* and *οι κεκλημενοι*, *the called*, all St. Paul's writings show. And they were thus termed because they were *called* and *elected* in the place of the *Jews*, the ancient *called* and *elect*, who were now *divorced* and *reprobated* because of their disobedience.

Verse 16. **For where a testament is]** A learned and judicious friend furnishes me with the following translation of this and the 17th verse:—

"For where there is a covenant, it is necessary that the death of the appointed *victim* should be exhibited, because a covenant is confirmed over dead *victims*, since it is not at all valid while the appointed *victim* is alive."

He observes, "There is no word signifying *testator*, or *men*, in the original. διαθεμενος is not a substantive, but a participle, or a participial adjective, derived from the same root as διατηκη, and must have a substantive understood. I therefore render it *the disposed* or *appointed* victim, alluding to the manner of *disposing* or *setting apart* the pieces of the victim, when they were going to ratify a covenant; and you know well the old custom of ratifying a covenant, to which the apostle alludes. I refer to your own notes on #Ge 6:18, and #Ge 15:10.-J. C."

Mr. Wakefield has translated the passage nearly in the same way.

"For where a covenant *is*, there must be necessarily introduced *the* death of that which establisheth the covenant; because a covenant *is* confirmed over dead things, and is of no force at all whilst that which establisheth the covenant is alive." This is undoubtedly the meaning of this passage; and we should endeavour to forget that *testament* and *testator* were ever introduced, as they totally change the apostle's meaning. See the observations at the end of this chapter.

Verse 18. **Whereupon]** ὅθεν. *Wherefore*, as a *victim* was required for the ratification of every covenant, the first covenant made between God and the Hebrews, by the mediation of Moses, was *not dedicated*, εγκεκλινοται, renewed or solemnized, *without blood*-without the death of a victim, and the aspersion of its blood.

Verse 19. **When Moses had spoken every precept]** The place to which the apostle alludes is #Ex 24:4-8, where the reader is requested to consult the notes.

**And sprinkled both the book]** The sprinkling of the *book* is not mentioned in the place to which the apostle refers, (see above,) nor did it in fact take place. The words αυτο τε το βιβλιον, *and the book itself*, should be referred to λαβων, *having taken*, and not to ερραντισε, *he sprinkled*; the verse should therefore be read thus: *For after every commandment of the law had been recited by Moses to all the people, he took the blood of the calves, and of the goats, with water and scarlet wool, and the book itself, and sprinkled all the people.* The rite was performed thus: Having received the blood of the calves and goats into basins, and mingled it with water to prevent it from coagulating, he then took a bunch of *hyssop*, and having bound it together with *thread* made of *scarlet wool*, he dipped this in the basin, and sprinkled the blood and water upon the people who were nearest to him, and who might be considered on this occasion the representatives of all the rest; for it is impossible that he should have had blood enough to have sprinkled the whole of the congregation.

Some think that the blood was actually sprinkled *upon the book itself*, which contained the written covenant, to signify that the covenant itself was ratified by the blood.

Verse 20. **This is the blood of the testament]** (*covenant*.) Our Lord refers to the conduct of Moses here, and partly quotes his words in the institution of the eucharist: *This is my blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins*, #Mt 26:28. And by thus using the words and applying them, he shows that *his* sacrificial blood was intended by the blood shed and sprinkled on this occasion, and that by it alone the remission of sins is obtained.

Verse 21. **He sprinkled-with blood-all the vessels of the ministry.]** To intimate that every thing used by sinful man is polluted, and that nothing can be acceptable in the sight of a holy God that has not in effect the sprinkling of the atoning blood.

Verse 22. **And almost all things are-purged with blood]** The apostle says *almost*, because in some cases certain vessels were purified by *water*, some by *fire*, #Nu 31:23, and some with the *ashes* of the *red heifer*, #Nu 19:2-10, but it was always understood that every thing was at *first* consecrated by the blood of the victim.

**And without shedding of blood is no remission.]** The apostle shows fully here what is one of his great objects in the whole of this epistle, viz. that there is no salvation but through the sacrificial death of Christ, and to prefigure this the law itself would not grant any remission of sin without the blood of a victim. This is a maxim even among the Jews themselves, **אין כפרה אלא בדם** *ein capparah ella bedam*, "There is no expiation but by blood." *Yoma*, fol. 5, 1; *Menachoth*, fol. 93, 2. Every sinner has forfeited his *life* by his transgressions, and the law of God requires his *death*; the blood of the victim, which is its *life*, is shed as a *substitute* for the *life* of the sinner. By these victims the sacrifice of Christ was typified. He gave his *life* for the *life* of the world; human life for human life, but a life infinitely dignified by its union with God.

Verse 23. **The patterns of things in the heavens]** That is: The tabernacle and all its utensils, services, &c., must be purified *by these*, viz.: *The blood of calves and goats, and the sprinkling of the blood and water with the bunch of hyssop bound about with scarlet wool*. These are called *patterns*, **υποδειγματα**, *exemplars*, earthly things, which were the representatives of heavenly things. And there is no doubt that every thing in the tabernacle, its parts, divisions, utensils, ministry, &c., as appointed by God, were representations of *celestial matters*; but how *far* and in *what way* we cannot now see.

*Purification* implies, not only cleansing from defilement, but also *dedication* or *consecration*. All the utensils employed in the tabernacle service were thus *purified* though incapable of any moral pollution.

**But the heavenly things themselves]** Some think this means *heaven* itself, which, by receiving the sacrificed body of Christ, which appears in the presence of God for us, may be said to be *purified*, i.e., *set apart* for the reception of the souls of those who have found redemption in his blood. 2. Others think the *body of Christ* is intended, which is the *tabernacle* in which his Divinity dwelt; and that this might be said to be *purified* by its own sacrifice, as he is said, #Joh 17:19, to *sanctify himself*; that is, to *consecrate* himself unto God as a sin-offering for the redemption of man. 3. Others suppose the Church is intended, which he is to *present to the Father without spot or wrinkle or any such thing*. 4. As the *entrance* to the holy of holies must be made by the sprinkling of the blood of the sacrifice, and as that holy of holies represented *heaven*, the apostle's meaning seems to be that there was and could be no entrance to the holiest but through his blood; and therefore, when by a more perfect tabernacle, #Heb 9:11, 12, he passed into the heavens, not with the blood of bulls and goats, but by his own blood, he thus purified or laid open the entrance to the holiest, by a more valuable sacrifice than those required to open the entrance of the holy of holies. *It was necessary*, therefore, for God had appointed it so, that the *tabernacle* and its *parts*, &c., which

were *patterns of things in the heavens*, should be *consecrated* and *entered* with such sacrifices as have already been mentioned; but the heaven of heavens into which Jesus entered, and whither he will bring all his faithful followers, must be propitiated, consecrated, and entered, by the infinitely *better sacrifice* of his own body and blood. That this is the meaning appears from the following verse.

Verse 24. **Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands]** He is not gone into the *holy of holies* of the *tabernacle* or *temple*, as the Jewish high priest does once in the year with the blood of the victim, to sprinkle it before the mercy-seat there; but *into heaven itself*, which he has thus opened to all believers, having made the propitiatory offering by which both he and those whom he represents are entitled to enter and enjoy eternal blessedness. And hence we may consider that Christ, appearing in his crucified body before the throne, is a real offering of himself to the Divine justice in behalf of man; and that there he continues in the constant act of being offered, so that every penitent and believer, coming unto God through him, find him their ever ready and available sacrifice, officiating as the High Priest of mankind in the presence of God.

Verse 25. **Nor yet that he should offer himself often]** The sacrifice of Christ is not like that of the Jewish high priest; his must be offered every year, Christ has offered himself *once for all*: and this sacrificial act has ever the same efficacy, his crucified body being still a powerful and infinitely meritorious sacrifice before the throne.

Verse 26. **For then must he often have suffered]** In the counsel of God, Christ was considered the *Lamb slain from the foundation of the world*, #Re 13:8, so that all believers *before* his advent were equally interested in his sacrificial death with those who have lived *since* his coming. Humanly speaking, the virtue of the annual atonement could not last long, and must be repeated; Christ's sacrifice is ever the same; his life's blood is still considered as in the act of being *continually poured out*. See #Re 5:6.

**The end of the world]** The conclusion of the Jewish dispensation, the Christian dispensation being that which shall continue till the end of time.

**To put away sin]** εἰς ἀθέτησιν ἁμαρτίας: *To abolish the sin-offerings*; i.e. to put an end to the *Mosaic economy* by his one offering of himself. It is certain that, after Christ had offered himself, the typical sin-offerings of the law ceased; and this was expressly foretold by the Prophet Daniel, #Da 9:24. Some think that the expression should be applied to the *putting away the guilt, power, and being* of sin from the souls of believers.

Verse 27. **As it is appointed]** ἀποκεῖται: It is *laid before them* by the Divine decree: *Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return*. *Unto men* generally, during the course of the present world, not *all men* as some falsely quote; for Enoch and Elijah have not died, and those that shall be alive at the day of judgment shall not *die*, but be *changed*.

**But after this the judgment]** They *shall die* but *once*, and be *judged* but *once*, therefore there is no *metempsychosis*, no *transmigration from body to body*; judgment succeeds to dying; and as they shall be *judged* but *once*, they can *die* but *once*.

Verse 28. **So Christ was once offered]** He shall die no more; he has borne away the sins of many, and what he has done once shall stand good for ever. Yet *he will appear a second time without sin, χωρίς αμαρτίας, without a sin-offering;* THAT he has already made.

**Unto salvation.]** To deliver the *bodies* of believers from the *empire of death*, to reunite them to their purified souls, and bring both into his eternal glory. This is *salvation*, and the very highest of which the human being is capable. Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus! Hallelujah!

1. IN the preceding notes I have given my reasons for dissenting from our translation of the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses. Many learned men are of the same opinion; but I have not met with one who appears to have treated the whole in a more satisfactory manner than Dr. *Macknight*, and for the edification of my readers I shall here subjoin the substance of what he has written on this point.

"Verse 15. *Mediator of the new covenant.* See #**Heb 8:7**. The word *διαθηκη*, here translated *covenant*, answers to the Hebrew word *berith*, which all the translators of the Jewish Scriptures have understood to signify *a covenant*. The same signification our translators have affixed to the word *διαθηκη*, as often as it occurs in the writings of the evangelists and apostles, except in the history of the institution of the supper, and in #**2Co 3:6**: and #**Heb 7:22**, and in the passage under consideration; in which places, copying the Vulgate version, they have rendered *διαθηκη* by the word *testament*. Beza, following the Syriac Version, translates *διαθηκη* everywhere by the words *fædas, pactum*, except in the 16th, 17th, and 20th verses of this chapter, where likewise following the Syriac version, he has *testamentum*. Now if *καινη διαθηκη, the new testament*, in the passages above mentioned, means the Gospel covenant, as all interpreters acknowledge, *παλαια διαθηκη, the old testament*, #**2Co 3:14**, and *πρωτη διαθηκη, the first testament*, #**Heb 9:15**, must certainly be the *Sinaitic covenant* or *law of Moses*, as is evident also from #**Heb 9:20**. On this supposition it may be asked, 1. In what sense the *Sinaitic covenant* or *law of Moses*, which required perfect obedience to all its precepts under penalty of death, and allowed no mercy to any sinner, however penitent, can be called a *testament*, which is a deed conferring something valuable on a person who may accept or refuse it, as he thinks fit? Besides, the transaction at Sinai, in which God promised to continue the Israelites in Canaan, on condition they refrained from the wicked practices of the Canaanites, and observed his statutes, Lev. xviii., can in no sense be called a testament. 2. If the law of Moses be a testament, and if, to render that testament valid, the death of the testator be necessary, as the English translators have taught us, #**Heb 9:16**, I ask who it was that made the testament of the law? Was it God or Moses? And did either of them die to render it valid? 3. I observe that even the Gospel covenant is improperly called *a testament*, because, notwithstanding all its blessings were procured by the death of Christ, and are most freely bestowed, it lost any validity which, as a testament, it is thought to have received by the death of Christ, when he revived again on the third day. 4. The things affirmed in the common translation of #**Heb 9:15**, concerning *the new testament*, namely, that it has a Mediator; that that Mediator is the Testator himself; that there were transgressions of a former testament, for the redemption of which the Mediator of the new testament died; and, #**Heb 9:19**, that the first testament was made by sprinkling the people in whose favour it was made with blood; are all things quite foreign to a testament. For was it ever known in any nation that a testament needed a mediator? Or that the testator was the mediator of his own testament? Or that it was necessary the testator of a new testament should die to redeem the transgressions of a former testament? Or that any testament was ever made by sprinkling the legatees with blood? These

things however were usual in covenants. They had mediators who assisted at the making of them, and were sureties for the performance of them. They were commonly ratified by sacrifices, the blood of which was sprinkled on the parties; withal, if any former covenant was infringed by the parties, satisfaction was given at the making of a second covenant. 5. By calling Christ *the Mediator of the new testament* our thoughts are turned away entirely from the view which the Scriptures give us of his death as a sacrifice for sin; whereas, if he is called *the Mediator of the new covenant*, which is the true translation of *διαθηκης καινης μεσιτης*, that appellation directly suggests to us that the new covenant was procured and ratified by his death as a sacrifice for sin. Accordingly Jesus, on account of his being made a priest by the oath of God, is said to be *the Priest or Mediator of a better covenant* than that of which the Levitical priests were the mediators. I acknowledge that in classical Greek *διαθηκη*, commonly signifies *a testament*. Yet, since the Seventy have uniformly translated the Hebrew word *berith*, which properly signifies a *covenant*, by the word *διαθηκη*, in writing Greek the Jews naturally used *διαθηκη* for *σουθηκη* as our translators have acknowledged by their version of **#Heb 10:16**. To conclude: Seeing in the verses under consideration *διαθηκη* may be translated *a covenant*; and seeing, when so translated, these verses make a better sense, and agree better with the scope of the apostle's reasoning than if it were translated *a testament*; we can be at no loss to know which translation of *διαθηκη* in these verses ought to be preferred. Nevertheless, the absurdity of a phraseology to which readers have been long accustomed, without attending distinctly to its meaning, does not soon appear.

"*He is the Mediator*. Here it is remarkable that Jesus is not called *διαθεμενος*, *the Testator*, but *μεσιτης*, the *Mediator*, of the new covenant; first, because he procured the new covenant for mankind, in which the pardon of sin is promised; for, as the apostle tells us, his death, as a sacrifice for sin, is the consideration on account of which the pardon of the transgressions of the first covenant is granted. Secondly, because the new covenant having been ratified as well as procured by the death of Christ, he is fitly called *the Mediator* of that covenant in the same sense that God's oath is called, **#Heb 6:17**, the *mediator*, or *confirmor*, of his promise. Thirdly, Jesus, who died to procure the new covenant, being appointed by God the high priest thereof, to dispense his blessings, he is on that account also called, **#Heb 8:6**, *the mediator of that better covenant*.

"Verse 16. *For where a covenant [is made by sacrifice,] there is a necessity that the death of the appointed sacrifice be produced*. This elliptical expression must be completed, if, as is probable, the apostle had now in his eye the covenant which God made with Noah and Abraham. His covenant is recorded, **#Ge 8:20**, where we are told, that on coming out of the ark *Noah offered a burnt-offering of every clean beast and fowl. And the Lord smelled a sweet savour. And the Lord said in his heart, I will not again curse the ground, neither will I again smite any more every living thing as I have done*. This promise or declaration God called *his covenant with men, and with every living creature*. **#Ge 9:9, 10**. In like manner God made a covenant with Abraham by sacrifice, **#Ge 15:9, 18**, and with the Israelites at Sinai, **#Ex 24:8**. See also **#Ps 50:5**. By making his covenants with men in this manner, God taught them that his intercourses with them were all founded on an expiation afterwards to be made for their sins by the sacrifice of the seed of the woman, *the bruising of whose heel*, or death, was foretold at the fall. On the authority of these examples, the practice of making covenants by sacrifice prevailed among the Jews; **#Jer 34:18**; **#Zec 9:11**; and even among the heathens; for they had the knowledge of these examples by tradition. *Stabant et caesa jungebant*

*fædera porca*; Virgil, *Æneid*, viii. 611. Hence the phrases, *fædus ferire* and *percutere*, *to strike or kill the covenant*.

"*There is a necessity that the death του διαθεμενου, of the appointed.* Here we may supply either the word θυματος, *sacrifice*, or ζωου, *animal*, which might be either a calf, a goat, a bull, or any other animal which the parties making the covenant chose. διαθεμενου is the participle of the second aorist of the middle voice of the verb διατιθημι, *constituo, I appoint*. Wherefore its primary and literal signification is, *of the appointed*. Our translators have given the word this sense, #Lu 22:29; καγω διατιθεμαι υμιν, καθως διετιθετο μοι ο πατηρ μου, βασιλειαν. *And I appoint to you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed to me a kingdom.*

"*Be brought in; θανατον αναγκη φερεσθαι του διαθεμενου*, Elsner, vol. ii., p. 381, has shown that the word φερεσθαι is sometimes used in a forensic sense for what is *produced*, or *proved*, or made apparent in a court of judicature. Wherefore the apostle's meaning is, that it is necessary the death of the appointed sacrifice be brought in, or produced, at the making of the covenant. In the margin of our Bibles this clause is rightly translated, *be brought in*. See #Ac 25:7, where φεροντες is used in the forensic sense.

"Verse 17. *A covenant is firm over dead sacrifices; επι νεκροις. νεκροις* being an adjective, it must have a substantive agreeing with it, either expressed or understood. The substantive understood in this place, I think, is θυμασι, *sacrifices*; for which reason I have supplied it in the translation. Perhaps the word ζωοις, *animals*, may be equally proper; especially as, in the following clause, διαθεμενος is in the gender of the animals appointed for the sacrifice. Our translators have supplied the word ανθρωποις, *men*, and have translated επι νεκροις, *after men are dead*, contrary to the propriety of the phrase.

"*It never hath force whilst the appointed liveth; οτε ζη ο διαθεμενος.* Supply μοσχος, or τραγος, or ταυρος *whilst the calf, or goat, or bull, appointed for the sacrifice of ratification, liveth.* The apostle having, in #Heb 9:15, showed that Christ's death was necessary as ο μεσιτης, *the Mediator*, that is, *the procurer*, and *ratifier* of the new covenant, he in the 16th and 17th verses observes that, since God's covenants with men were all ratified by sacrifice to show that his intercourses with men are founded on the sacrifice of his Son, it was necessary that the new covenant itself should be ratified by his Son's actually dying as a sacrifice.

"The faultiness of the common translation of the 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, and 20th verses of this chapter having been already shown in the notes, nothing needs be added here, except to call the reader's attention to the propriety and strength of the apostle's reasoning, as it appears in the translation of these verses which I have given, compared with his reasoning as represented in the common version."

2. It is supposed that in #Heb 9:28, the apostle, in speaking about Christ's bearing the sins of many, alludes to the ceremony of the *scape goat*. This mysterious sacrifice was to be presented to God, #Le 16:7, and the sins of the people were to be confessed over the head of it, #Le 16:21, and after this the goat was dismissed into a land uninhabited, laden, as the institution implied, with the sins of the people; and this the word ανενεγκεν, *to bear or carry away*, seems to imply. So truly

as the goat did metaphorically bear away the sins of the many, so truly did Christ literally bear the punishment due to our sins; and in reference to every believer, has so *borne them away* that they shall never more rise in judgment against him.

3. In Christ's coming, or *appearing the second time*, it is very probable, as Dr. Doddridge and others have conjectured, that there is an allusion to the return of the high priest from the inner tabernacle; for, after appearing there in the presence of God, and making atonement for the people in the plain dress of an ordinary priest, **#Le 16:23, 24**, he came out arrayed in his magnificent robes, to bless the people, who waited for him in the court of the tabernacle of the congregation. "But there will be this difference," says Dr. Macknight, "between the return of Christ to bless his people, and the return of the high priest to bless the congregation. The latter, after coming out of the most holy place, made a new atonement in his pontifical robes for himself and for the people, **#Le 16:24**, which showed that the former atonement was not *real* but *typical*. Whereas Jesus, after having made atonement, [and presented himself in heaven, before God,] will not return to the earth for the purpose of making himself a sacrifice the second time; but having procured an eternal redemption for us, by the sacrifice of himself once offered, he will return for the purpose of declaring to them who wait for him that they are accepted, and of bestowing on them the great blessing of eternal life. This reward he, being surrounded with the glory of the Father, **#Mt 16:27**, will give them in the presence of an assembled universe, both as their *King* and their *Priest*. This is the great salvation which Christ came to preach, and which was confirmed to the world by them who heard him: **#Heb 2:3**." Reader, lay this sincerely to heart!

4. The *form* in which the high priest and the ordinary priests were to bless the people, after burning the incense in the tabernacle, is prescribed, **#Nu 6:23-26**. Literally translated from the Hebrew it is as follows, and consists of three parts or benedictions:—

1. May Jehovah bless thee, and preserve thee!

2. May Jehovah cause his face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee!

3. May Jehovah lift up his faces upon thee, and may he put prosperity unto thee! (See my notes on the place.)

We may therefore say that Christ, our High Priest, came to *bless* each of us, by turning us away from our iniquity. And let no one ever expect to see him at his second coming with joy, unless he have, in this life, been turned away from *his* iniquity, and obtained remission of all his sins, and that holiness without which none can see God. Reader, the time of his reappearing is, to thee, at hand! Prepare to meet thy God!

On the word *conscience*, which occurs so often in this chapter, and in other parts of this epistle, see the observations at the end of "**Heb 13:25**".

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER X.

*The insufficiency of the legal sacrifices to take away sin, 1-4. The purpose and will of God, as declared by the Psalmist, relative to the salvation of the world by the incarnation of Christ; and our sanctification through that will, 5-10. Comparison between the priesthood of Christ and that of the Jews, 11-14. The new covenant which God promised to make, and the blessings of it, 15-17. The access which genuine believers have to the holiest by the blood of Jesus, 18-20. Having a High Priest over the Church of God, we should have faith, walk uprightly, hold fast our profession, exhort and help each other, and maintain Christian communion, 21-25. The danger and awful consequences of final apostasy, 26-31. In order to our perseverance, we should often reflect on past mercies, and the support afforded us in temptations and afflictions; and not cast away our confidence, for we shall receive the promise if we patiently fulfil the will of God, 32-37. The just by faith shall live; but the soul that draws back shall die, 38. The apostle's confidence in the believing Hebrews, 39.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. X.

Verse 1. **The law, having a shadow of good things to come]** A shadow, σκιά, signifies, 1. Literally, the shade cast from a body of any kind, interposed between the place on which the shadow is projected, and the sun or light; the rays of the light not shining on that place, because intercepted by the opacity of the body, through which they cannot pass. 2. It signifies, technically, a sketch, rude plan, or imperfect draught of a building, landscape, man, beast, &c. 3. It signifies, metaphorically, any faint adumbration, symbolical expression, imperfect or obscure image of a thing; and is opposed to σωμα, body, or the thing intended to be thereby defined. 4. It is used catachrestically among the Greek writers, as umbra is among the Latins, to signify any thing vain, empty, light, not solid; thus Philostratus, Vit. Soph., lib. i. cap. 20: ὅτι σκιά και ονειρατα αι ηδοναι πασαι. All pleasures are but SHADOWS and dreams. And Cicero, in Pison., cap. 24: Omnes umbras falsæ gloriæ consecrari. "All pursue the SHADOWS of FALSE GLORY." And again, De Offic., lib. iii. cap. 17: Nos veri juris germanæque justitiæ solidam et expressam effigiem nullam tenemus; umbra et itnaginibus utimur. "We have no solid and express effigy of true law and genuine justice, but we employ shadows and images to represent them."

And **not the very image]** εικων, image, signifies, 1. A simple representation, from εικω, I am like. 2. The form or particular fashion of a thing. 3. The model according to which any thing is formed. 4. The perfect image of a thing as opposed to a faint representation. 5. Metaphorically, a similitude, agreement, or conformity.

The law, with all its ceremonies and sacrifices, was only a shadow of spiritual and eternal good. The Gospel is the image or thing itself, as including every spiritual and eternal good.

We may note three things here: 1. The shadow or general outline, limiting the size and proportions of the thing to be represented. 2. The image or likeness completed from this shadow or general outline, whether represented on paper, canvass, or in statuary, 3. The person or thing thus

represented in its actual, natural state of existence; or what is called here *the very image of the things*, *αυτην την εικονα των πραγματος*. Such is the *Gospel*, when compared with the *law*; such is *Christ*, when compared with *Aaron*; such is his *sacrifice*, when compared with the *Levitical offerings*; such is the *Gospel remission of sins and purification*, when compared with those afforded by the law; such is the *Holy Ghost*, ministered by the Gospel, when compared with its types and shadows in the Levitical service; such the *heavenly rest*, when compared with the *earthly Canaan*. Well, therefore, might the apostle say, *The law was only the shadow of good things to come*.

**Can never-make the comers thereunto perfect.]** Cannot remove guilt from the conscience, or impurity from the heart. I leave *preachers* to improve these points.

Verse 2. **Would they not have ceased to be offered?]** Had they made an effectual reconciliation for the sins of the world, and contained in their once offering a plenitude of permanent merit, they would have ceased to be offered, at least in reference to any individual who had once offered them; because, in such a case, his conscience would be satisfied that its guilt had been taken away. But no Jew pretended to believe that even the annual atonement cancelled his sin before God; yet he continued to make his offerings, the law of God having so enjoined, because these sacrifices pointed out that which was to come. They were offered, therefore, not in *consideration* of their own efficacy, but as referring to Christ; **See on "Heb 9:9"**.

Verse 4. **For it is not possible]** Common sense must have taught them that shedding the blood of bulls and goats could never satisfy Divine justice, nor take away guilt from the conscience; and God intended that they should understand the matter so: and this the following quotation from the Psalmist sufficiently proves.

Verse 5. **When he (the Messiah) cometh into the world]** Was about to be incarnated, *He saith* to God the Father, *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not*-it was never thy *will* and design that the sacrifices under thy own law should be considered as making atonement for sin, they were only designed to point out my incarnation and consequent sacrificial death, and therefore *a body hast thou prepared me*, by a miraculous conception in the womb of a virgin, according to thy word, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*.

**A body hast thou prepared me]** The quotation in this and the two following verses is taken from Psalm xl., 6th, 7th, and 8th verses, as they stand now in the Septuagint, with scarcely any variety of reading; but, although the general meaning is the same, they are widely different in verbal expression in the Hebrew. David's words are, *אזניים כרייה לי* *oznayim caritha li*, which we translate, *My ears hast thou opened*; but they might be more properly rendered, *My ears hast thou bored*, that is, thou hast made me *thy servant for ever*, to dwell in thine own house; for the allusion is evidently to the custom mentioned, **#Ex 21:2**, &c.: "If thou buy a Hebrew servant, six years he shall serve, and in the seventh he shall go out free; but if the servant shall positively say, I love my master, &c., I will not go out free, then his master shall bring him to the door post, and shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall serve him for ever."

But how is it possible that the Septuagint and the apostle should take a meaning so totally different from the sense of the Hebrew? Dr. Kennicott has a very ingenious conjecture here: he

supposes that the Septuagint and apostle express the meaning of the words as they stood in the copy from which the Greek translation was made; and that the present Hebrew text is corrupted in the word **אזני** **oznayim**, ears, which has been written through carelessness for **אז גוה** **az gevah**, THEN A BODY. The first syllable **אז**, THEN, is the same in both; and the latter **ני**, which joined to **אז**, makes **אזני** **oznayim**, might have been easily mistaken for **גוה** **gevah**, BODY; **נ** **nun**, being very like **ג** **gimel**; **י** **yod**, like **ו** **vau**; and **ה** **he**, like final **מ** **mem**; especially if the line on which the letters were written in the MS. happened to be blacker than ordinary, which has often been a cause of mistake, it might have been easily taken for the under stroke of the **mem**, and thus give rise to a corrupt reading: add to this the root **כרה** **carah**, signifies as well to **prepare as to open, bore, &c.** On this supposition the ancient copy, translated by the Septuagint, and followed by the apostle, must have read the text thus: **אז גוה כרית לי** **az gevah caritha li**, **σωμα δε κατηρτισω μοι**, **then a body thou hast prepared me**: thus the Hebrew text, the version of the Septuagint, and the apostle, will agree in what is known to be an indisputable fact in Christianity, namely, that Christ was **incarnated** for the sin of the world.

The **Æthiopic** has nearly the same reading; the **Arabic** has both, **A body hast thou prepared me, and mine ears thou hast opened**. But the **Syriac**, the **Chaldee**, and the **Vulgate**, agree with the present Hebrew text; and none of the MSS. collated by **Kennicott** and **De Rossi** have any various reading on the disputed words.

It is remarkable that all the offerings and sacrifices which were considered to be of an atoning or cleansing nature, offered under the law, are here enumerated by the psalmist and the apostle, to show that **none** of them nor **all** of them could take away sin, and that the grand sacrifice of Christ was that alone which could do it.

Four kinds are here specified, both by the psalmist and the apostle, viz.: SACRIFICE, **זבח** **zebach**, **θυσια** OFFERING, **מנחה** **minchah**, **προσφορα** BURNT-OFFERING, **עולה** **olah**, **ολοκαυτωμα** SIN-OFFERING, **חטאה** **chataah**, **περι αμαρτιας**. Of all these we may say, with the apostle, it was impossible that the blood of bulls and goats, &c., should take away sin.

Verse 6. **Thou hast had no pleasure.]** Thou couldst never be pleased with the victims under the law; thou couldst never consider them as atonements for sin; as they could never satisfy thy justice, nor make thy law honourable.

Verse 7. **In the volume of the book]** **במגלת ספר** *bimgillath sepher*, "in the roll of the book." Anciently, books were written on skins and rolled up. Among the Romans these were called *volumina*, from *volvo*, *I roll*; and the Pentateuch, in the Jewish synagogues, is still written in this way. There are two wooden rollers; on one they roll *on*, on the other they roll *off*, as they proceed in reading. The *book* mentioned here must be the *Pentateuch*, or five books of Moses; for in David's time no other part of Divine revelation had been committed to writing. This whole book speaks about Christ, and his accomplishing the *will* of God; not only in, *The seed of the woman shall bruise the head of the serpent*, and, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed*, but in all the *sacrifices* and sacrificial rites mentioned in the law.

**To do thy will]** God *willed* not the sacrifices under the law, but he *willed* that a human victim of infinite merit should be offered for the redemption of mankind. That there might be *such a victim*, a *body* was prepared for the eternal Logos; and in that body *he came* to do the *will of God*, that is, to suffer and die for the sins of the world.

Verse 9. **He taketh away the first]** The offerings, sacrifices, burnt-offerings, and sacrifices for sin, which were prescribed by the *law*.

**That he may establish the second.]** The offering of the *body of Jesus* once for all. It will make little odds in the meaning if we say, he taketh away the first *covenant*, that he may establish the second *covenant*; he takes away the first *dispensation*, that he may establish the second; he takes away the *law*, that he may establish the *Gospel*. In all these cases the sense is nearly the same: I prefer the *first*.

Verse 10. **By the which will we are sanctified]** Closing in with this so solemnly declared *WILL of God*, that there is no name given under heaven among men, by which we can be saved, but Jesus the Christ, we believe in him, find redemption in his blood, and are sanctified unto God through the sacrificial *offering of his body*.

1. Hence we see that the sovereign *WILL of God* is, that Jesus should be incarnated; that he should suffer and die, or, in the apostle's words, *taste death for every man*; that all should believe on him, and be saved from their sins: for this is the *WILL of God*, our *sanctification*.

2. And as the apostle grounds this on the words of the psalm, we see that it is the *WILL of God* that that system shall end; for as the essence of it is contained in its *sacrifices*, and God says he *will not* have these, and has prepared the *Messiah* to do his will, i.e. to *die for men*, hence it necessarily follows, from the psalmist himself, that the introduction of the *Messiah* into the world is the abolition of the law, and that his sacrifice is that which shall last for ever.

Verse 11. **Every priest standeth]** The office of the Jewish priest is here compared with the office of our High Priest. The Jewish priest *stands* daily at the altar, like a servant ministering, *repeating* the same sacrifices; our High Priest offered himself once for all, and *sat down* at the right hand of God, as the only-begotten Son and Heir of all things, **#Heb 10:12**. This *continual* offering argued the *imperfection* of the sacrifices. Our Lord's *once* offering, proves his was *complete*.

Verse 13. **Till his enemies be made his footstool.]** Till all that oppose his high priesthood and sacrificial offering shall be defeated, routed, and confounded; and acknowledge, in their punishment, the supremacy of his power as universal and eternal King, who refused to receive him as their *atonement* and *sanctifying Priest*. There is also an oblique reference here to the destruction of the Jews, which was then at hand; for Christ was about to *take away the second* with an overwhelming flood of desolations.

Verse 14. **For by one offering]** His death upon the cross.

**He hath perfected for ever.]** He has procured remission of sins and holiness; for it is well observed here, and in several parts of this epistle, that *τελειωω*, *to make perfect*, is the same as *αφεσιν αμαρτιων ποιωω*, *to procure remission of sins*.

**Them that are sanctified.]** *τους αγιαζομενους*· Them that have received the sprinkling of the blood of this offering. These, therefore, receiving redemption through that blood, have no need of any other offering; as this was a complete atonement, purification, and title to eternal glory.

Verse 15. **The Holy Ghost-is a witness to us]** The words are quoted from **#Jer 31:33, 34**, and here we are assured that Jeremiah spoke by the inspiration of the Spirit of God.

**Had said before]** See **#Heb 8:10, 12**, and the notes there.

Verse 18. **Now where remission of these is]** In any case, where sin is once pardoned, there is no farther need of a sin-offering; but every believer on Christ has his sin blotted out, and therefore needs no other offering for that sin.

"If," says Dr. Macknight, "after remission is granted to the sinner, there is no need of any more sacrifice for sin; and if Christ, by offering himself once, has *perfected for ever the sanctified*, **#Heb 10:14**, the *sacrifice of the mass*, as it is called, about which the Romish clergy employ themselves so incessantly, and to which the *papists* trust for the pardon of their sins, has no foundation in Scripture. Nay, it is an evident impiety, as it proceeds upon the supposition that the offering of the body of Christ once is not sufficient to procure the pardon of sin, but must be *frequently* repeated. If they reply that their mass is only the representation and commemoration of the sacrifice of Christ, they give up the cause, and renounce an article of their faith, established by the council of Trent, which, in session xxii. can. 1, 3, declared *the sacrifice of the mass to be a true and propitiatory sacrifice for sin*. I say, give up the cause; for the *representation* and *commemoration* of a sacrifice is not a sacrifice. Farther, it cannot be affirmed that the body of Christ is offered in the mass, unless it can be said that, as often as it is offered, *Christ has suffered death*; for the apostle says expressly, **#Heb 9:25, 26**, that if Christ offered himself often, *he must often have suffered since the foundation of the world*." Let him disprove this who can.

Verse 19. **Having therefore, brethren, boldness]** The apostle, having now finished the doctrinal part of his epistle, and fully shown the superiority of Christ to all men and angels, and the superiority of his priesthood to that of Aaron and his successors, the absolute inefficacy of the Jewish sacrifices to make atonement for sin, and the absolute efficacy of that of Christ to make reconciliation of man to God, proceeds now to show what influence these doctrines should have on the hearts and lives of those who believe in his merits and death.

**Boldness to enter]** *παρησιαν εις την εισοδον*· *Liberty, full access to the entrance of the holy place, των αγιων*· This is an allusion to the case of the high priest going into the holy of holies. He went with fear and trembling, because, if he had neglected the smallest item prescribed by the law, he could expect nothing but death. Genuine believers can come even to the throne of God with confidence, as they carry into the Divine presence the infinitely meritorious blood of the great

atonement; and, being justified through that blood, they have a right to all the blessings of the eternal kingdom.

Verse 20. **By a new and living way]** It is a *new* way; no *human* being had ever before entered into the heaven of heavens; Jesus in human nature was the first, and thus he has opened the way to heaven to mankind, his own resurrection and ascension to glory being the proof and pledge of ours.

The way is called *οδον προσφατον και ζωσαν*, *new or fresh, and living*. This is evidently an allusion to the blood of the victim *newly shed, uncoagulated*, and consequently proper to be used for *sprinkling*. The blood of the Jewish victims was fit for sacrificial purposes only so long as it was *warm and fluid*, and might be considered as yet possessing its *vitality*; but when it grew *cold*, it *coagulated*, lost its *vitality*, and was no longer proper to be used sacrificially. Christ is here, in the allusion, represented as *newly slain*, and yet *living*; the blood ever considered as *flowing* and giving life to the world. The way by the old covenant neither gave life, nor removed the liability to death. The way to peace and reconciliation, under the old covenant, was through the dead bodies of the animals slain; but Christ is living, and ever liveth, to make intercession for us; therefore he is a new and *living* way.

In the Chœphoræ of *Æschylus*, ver. 801, there is an expression like this of the apostle:—

αγετε, των παλαι πεπραγμενων  
λυσασθ' αιμα προσφατοις δικαις.

*Agite, olim venditorum  
Solvite sanguinem recenti vindicta.*

This way, says Dr. Owen, is *new*, 1. Because it was but newly made and prepared. 2. Because it belongs unto the new covenant. 3. Because it admits of no decays, but is always new, as to its efficacy and use, as in the day of its first preparation. 4. The way of the tabernacle waxed old, and so was prepared for a removal; but the Gospel way of salvation shall never be altered, nor changed, nor decay; it is always *new*, and remains for ever.

It is also called *ζωσαν*, *living*, 1. In opposition to the way into the holiest under the tabernacle, which was by *death*; nothing could be done in it without the blood of a victim. 2. It was the cause of death to any who might use it, except the high priest himself; and he could have access to it only one day in the year. 3. It is called *living*, because it has a spiritual *vital* efficacy in our access to God. 4. It is *living* as to its effects; it leads to life, and infallibly brings those who walk in it unto *life eternal*.

**Through the veil]** As the high priest lifted up or drew aside the veil that separated the holy from the most holy place, in order that he might have access to the Divine Majesty; and as the veil of the temple was rent from the top to the bottom at the crucifixion of Christ, to show that the way to the holiest was then laid open; so we must approach the throne through the mediation of Christ, and through his sacrificial death. His pierced side is the way to the holiest. Here the veil-his humanity, is rent, and the kingdom of heaven opened to all believers.

Verse 21. **A high priest over the house of God]** The *house* or family of God is the Christian Church, or all true believers in the Lord Jesus. Over this Church, house, or family, Christ is the High Priest—in their behalf he offers his own blood, and their prayers and praises; and as the high priest had the ordering of all things that appertained to the house and worship of God, so has Christ in the government of his Church. This government he never gave into other hands. As none can govern and preserve the world but God, so none can govern and save the Church but the Lord Jesus: He is *over* the house; He is its *President*; he instructs, protects, guides, feeds, defends, and saves the flock. Those who have such a President may well have *confidence*; for with him is the fountain of life, and he has all power in the heavens and in the earth.

Verse 22. **Let us draw near]** Let us come with the blood of our sacrifice to the throne of God: the expression is sacrificial.

**With a true heart]** Deeply convinced of our need of help, and truly in earnest to obtain it.

**In full assurance of faith]** Being fully persuaded that God will accept us for the sake of his Son, and that the sacrificial death of Christ gives us full authority to expect every blessing we need.

**Having our hearts sprinkled]** Not our *bodies*, as was the case among the Hebrews, when they had contracted any pollution, for they were to be *sprinkled with the water of separation*, see **#Nu 19:2-10**; but our *hearts*, sprinkled by the cleansing efficacy of the blood of Christ, without which we cannot draw nigh to God.

**From an evil conscience]** Having that deep sense of guilt which our conscience felt taken all away, and the peace and love of God shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given unto us.

**Our bodies washed with pure water.]** The high priest, before he entered into the inner tabernacle, or put on his holy garments, was to wash his flesh in water, **#Le 16:4**, and the Levites were to be cleansed the same way, **#Nu 8:7**. The apostle probably alludes to this in what he says here, though it appears that he refers principally to *baptisms*, the washing by which was an emblem of the purification of the soul by the grace and Spirit of Christ; but it is most likely that it is to the Jewish baptisms, and not the Christian, that the apostle alludes.

Verse 23. **Let us hold fast the profession of our faith]** The word *ομολογια*, from *ομου*, *together*, and *λογος*, *a word*, implies that general consent that was among Christians on all the important articles of their faith and practice; particularly their acknowledgment of the truth of the Gospel, and of Jesus Christ, as the only victim for sin, and the only Saviour from it. If the word *washed* above refer to Christian baptism in the case of adults, then the profession is that which the baptized then made of their faith in the Gospel; and of their determination to live and die in that faith.

The various readings on this clause are many in the MSS., &c. *της ελπιδος την ομολογιαν*, *the confession of our HOPE*; D\*, two of the *Itala*, *Vulgate*, Erpen's *Arabic*, and the *Æthiopic*. *ὁμολογιαν της πιστεως*, *the confession of FAITH*; one of the Barberini MSS. and two others. This is the reading which our translators have followed; but it is of very little authority. *την επαγγελιαν της ελπιδος*,

*the promise of HOPE*; St. Chrysostom. *την ἐλπίδα της ομολογιας*, *the HOPE of our PROFESSION*; one of Petavius's MSS. But among all these, the *confession* or *profession of HOPE* is undoubtedly the genuine reading. Now, among the primitive Christians, the *hope* which they professed was the *resurrection of the body, and everlasting life*; every thing among these Christians was done and believed in reference to a future state; and for the joy that this set before them, they, like their Master, endured every cross, and despised all shame: they *expected* to be with God, through Christ; this *hope* they *professed to have*; and they *confessed* boldly and publicly the *faith* on which this hope was built. The apostle exhorts them to *hold fast this confession without wavering*-never to doubt the declarations made to them by their Redeemer, but having the *full assurance of faith* that their hearts were sprinkled from an evil conscience, that they had found redemption in the blood of the lamb, they might expect to be glorified with their living Head in the kingdom of their Father.

**He is faithful that promised]** The eternal life, which is the *object* of your *hope*, is promised to you by him who cannot lie; as he then is *faithful* who has given you this *promise*, *hold fast the profession of your hope*.

Verse 24. **And let us consider one another]** *κατανοωμεν*. Let us *diligently* and *attentively* consider each other's trials, difficulties, and weaknesses; feel for each other, and *excite* each other to an increase of *love* to God and man; and, as the proof of it, to be fruitful in *good works*. The words *εις παροξυσμον*, *to the provocation*, are often taken in a *good sense*, and signify *excitement, stirring up*, to do any thing laudable, useful, honourable, or necessary. Xenophon, *Cyrop.*, lib. vi., page 108, speaking of the conduct of Cyrus towards his officers, says: *και τουτους επαινων τε, παρωξυνε, και χαριζομενος αυτοις ο τι δυναιτο*. "He by praises and gifts *excited* them as much as possible." **See the note on "Ac 15:39"**, where the subject is farther considered.

Verse 25. **Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves]** *επισυναγωγην εαυτων*. Whether this means *public* or *private* worship is hard to say; but as the word is but once more used in the New Testament, (**#2Th 2:1**), and there means the *gathering together* of the redeemed of the Lord at the day of judgment, it is as likely that it means here *private* religious meetings, for the purpose of mutual exhortation: and this sense appears the more natural here, because it is evident that the Church was now in a state of persecution, and therefore their meetings were most probably held in *private*. For fear of persecution, it seems as if some had deserted these meetings, *καθως εθος τισιν*, *as the custom of certain persons is*. They had given up these strengthening and instructive means, and the others were in danger of following their example.

**The day approaching.]** *την ημεραν*. *That day*-the time in which God would come and pour out his judgments on the Jewish nation. We may also apply it to the day of death and the day of judgment. Both of these are approaching to every human being. He who wishes to be found ready will carefully use every means of grace, and particularly the communion of saints, if there be even but *two* or *three* in the place where he lives, who stately meet together in the name of Christ. Those who relinquish Christian communion are in a backsliding state; those who backslide are in danger of *apostasy*. To prevent this latter, the apostle speaks the awful words following. See at the end of this chapter. {**See "Heb 10:39"**}

Verse 26. **For if we sin wilfully]** If we deliberately, for fear of persecution or from any other motive, *renounce the profession of the Gospel* and the *Author* of that Gospel, after having received the knowledge of the truth so as to be convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah, and that he had sprinkled our hearts from an evil conscience; for such *there remaineth no sacrifice for sins*; for as the Jewish sacrifices are abolished, as appears by the declaration of God himself in the fortieth Psalm, and Jesus being now the only sacrifice which God will accept, those who reject him have *none other*; therefore their case must be utterly without remedy. This is the meaning of the apostle, and the case is that of a *deliberate apostate*-one who has utterly rejected Jesus Christ and his atonement, and renounced the whole Gospel system. It has nothing to do with *backsliders* in our common use of that term. A man may be overtaken in a fault, or he may deliberately go into sin, and yet neither renounce the Gospel, nor deny the Lord that bought him. His case is dreary and dangerous, but it is not *hopeless*; no case is *hopeless* but that of the deliberate *apostate*, who rejects the whole Gospel system, after having been saved by grace, or convinced of the truth of the Gospel. To him there remaineth no *more sacrifice for sin*; for there was but the ONE, Jesus, and this he has utterly rejected.

Verse 27. **A certain fearful looking for of judgment]** From this it is evident that God will pardon no man without a sacrifice for sin; for otherwise, as Dr. Macknight argues, it would not follow, from there remaining to apostates no more sacrifice for sin, that there must remain to them a dreadful expectation of judgment.

**And fiery indignation]** και πυρος ζηλος: A *zeal*, or *fervour of fire*; something similar to the fire that came down from heaven and destroyed Korah and his company; #Nu 16:35.

Probably the apostle here refers to the case of the unbelieving Jews in general, as in chap. vi. to the dreadful judgment that was coming upon them, and the burning up their temple and city with fire. These people had, by the preaching of Christ and his apostles, received the knowledge of the truth. It was impossible that they could have witnessed his miracles and heard his doctrine without being convinced that he was the Messiah, and that their own system was at an end; but they rejected this only sacrifice at a time when God abolished their own: to that nation, therefore, *there remained no other sacrifice for sin*; therefore the dreadful judgment came, the fiery indignation was poured out, and they, as *adversaries*, were *devoured* by it.

Verse 28. **He that despised Moses' law]** αθετησας: He that rejected it, *threw it aside*, and denied its Divine authority by presumptuous sinning, *died without mercy*-without any extenuation or mitigation of punishment; #Nu 15:30.

**Under two or three witnesses]** That is, when convicted by the testimony of two or three respectable witnesses. See #De 17:6.

Verse 29. **Of how much sorer punishment]** Such offences were trifling in comparison of this, and in justice the punishment should be proportioned to the offence.

**Trodden under foot the Son of God]** Treated him with the utmost contempt and blasphemy.

**The blood of the covenant-an unholy thing]** The blood of the covenant means here the sacrificial death of Christ, by which the new covenant between God and man was ratified, sealed, and confirmed. And counting this *unholy*, or common, *κοινων*, intimates that they expected nothing from it in a sacrificial or atoning way. How near to those persons, and how near to their destruction, do they come in the present day who reject the atoning blood, and say, "that they expect no more benefit from the blood of Christ than they do from that of a cow or a sheep!" Is not this precisely the crime of which the apostle speaks here, and to which he tells us God would show no mercy?

**Despite unto the Spirit of grace?]** Hath *insulted* the Spirit of grace. The apostle means the Holy Spirit, whose gifts were bestowed in the first age on believers for the confirmation of the Gospel. See **#Heb 6:4-6**. Wherefore, if one apostatized in the first age, after having been witness to these miraculous gifts, much more after having possessed them himself, he must, like the scribes and Pharisees, have ascribed them to *evil spirits*; than which a greater indignity could not be done to the Spirit of God. *Macknight*. This is properly the sin against the Holy Ghost, which has no forgiveness.

Verse 30. **Vengeance** belongeth **unto me]** This is the saying of God, **#De 32:35**, in reference to the idolatrous Gentiles, who were the enemies of his people; and is here with propriety applied to the above apostates, who, being enemies to God's ordinances, and Christ's ministry and merits, must also be enemies to Christ's people; and labour for the destruction of them, and the cause in which they are engaged.

**The Lord shall judge his people.]** That is, he shall execute judgment *for* them; for this is evidently the sense in which the word is used in the place from which the apostle quotes, **#De 32:36**: *For the Lord shall judge his people, and repent himself for his servants, when he seeth that their power is gone*. So God will avenge and vindicate the cause of Christianity by destroying its enemies, as he did in the case of the Jewish people, whom he destroyed from being a nation, and made them a proverb of reproach and monuments of his wrathful indignation to the present day.

Verse 31. **It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.]** To fall into the hands of God is to fall under his *displeasure*; and he who *lives for ever* can *punish for ever*. How dreadful to have the displeasure of an *eternal, almighty* Being to rest on the soul for ever! Apostates, and all the persecutors and enemies of God's cause and people, may expect the heaviest judgments of an incensed Deity: and these, not for a *time*, but through *eternity*.

Verse 32. **But call to remembrance]** It appears from this, and indeed from some parts of the Gospel history, that the first believers in Judea were greatly persecuted; our Lord's crucifixion, Stephen's martyrdom, the persecution that arose after the death of Stephen, **#Ac 8:1**, Herod's persecution, **#Ac 12:1**, in which James was killed, and the various persecutions of St. Paul, sufficiently show that this disposition was predominant among that bad people.

**A great fight of afflictions]** *πολλην αθλησιν παθηματων*. A *great combat* or *contention of sufferings*. Here we have an allusion to the combats at the Grecian games, or to exhibitions of gladiators at the public spectacles; and an intimation how *honourable* it was to contend for the faith once delivered to the saints, and to overcome through the blood of the Lamb, and their own testimony.

Verse 33. **Ye were made a gazing-stock]** θεατριζόμενοι· Ye were exhibited as wild beasts and other shows at the theatres. See the note on #1Co 4:9, where all this is illustrated.

**Companions of them that were so used.]** It appears, from #1Th 2:14,15, that the Churches of God in Judea were greatly persecuted, and that they believed with courage and constancy in their persecutions. When any victim of persecuting rage was marked out, the rest were prompt to take his part, and acknowledge themselves believers in the same doctrine for which he suffered. This was a noble spirit; many would have slunk into a corner, and put off the marks of Christ, that they might not be exposed to affliction on this account.

Verse 34. **Ye had compassion of me in my bonds]** συνεπαθήσατε· *Ye suffered with me, ye sympathized with me*, when bound for the testimony of Jesus. This probably refers to the sympathy they showed towards him, and the help they afforded him, during his long imprisonment in Cæsarea and Jerusalem. But instead of τοις δεσμοῖς μου, *my bonds*, τοις δεσμοῖς, *the prisoners*, is the reading of AD, and several others, both the Syriac, the Arabic of Erpen, the Coptic, Armenian, Vulgate, some of the Itala, and several of the Greek fathers. This reading appears to be so well supported, that Griesbach has admitted it into the text. If it be genuine, it shows that there had been, and perhaps were *then*, several bound for the testimony of Jesus, and that the Church in Judea had shown its attachment to Christ by openly acknowledging these prisoners, and ministering to them.

**Took joyfully the spoiling of your goods]** They were deprived of their inheritances, turned out of their houses, and plundered of their goods; they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented. To suffer such persecution patiently was great; to endure it without a murmur was greater; to rejoice in it was greatest of all. But how could they do all this? The next clause informs us.

**Knowing in yourselves]** They had the fullest evidence that they were the children of God, the Spirit itself bearing this witness to their spirits; and if *children* than *heirs*, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. They knew that heaven was their *portion*, and that to it they had a sure right and indefeasible title by Christ Jesus. This accounts, and this alone can account, for their *taking joyfully the spoiling of their goods*: they had Christ in their hearts; they knew that they were his children, and that they had a kingdom, but that kingdom was not of this world. They had the support they needed, and they had it in the time in which they needed it most.

Verse 35. **Cast not away therefore your confidence]** την παρρησιαν υμων· *Your liberty of access to God; your title and right to approach his throne; your birthright as his sons and daughters; and the clear evidence you have of his favour, which, if you be not steady and faithful, you must lose. Do not throw it away, μη αποβαλητε*· neither men nor devils can take it from you, and God will never deprive you of it if you continue faithful. There is a reference here to cowardly soldiers, who throw away their shields, and run away from the battle. This is your shield, your faith in Christ, which gives you the *knowledge of salvation*; keep it, and it will keep you.

The Lacedemonian women, when they presented the shields to their sons going to battle, were accustomed to say: ηταν, η επι τας· "Either bring this back, or be brought back upon it;" alluding to the custom of bringing back a slain soldier on his own shield, a proof that he had preserved it to

the last, and had been faithful to his country. They were accustomed also to excite their courage by delivering to them their fathers' shields with the following short address. ταυρην ο πατηρ σοι αι εσωζε· και συ ουν ταυταν σωζε η μη εσο· "This shield thy father always preserved; do thou preserve it also, or perish;" *Lacænarum Apophthegmata*, PLUT. OPERA, *a Wittenbach*, vol. i. p. 682. Thus spake the Lacedæmonian mothers to their sons; and what say the oracles of God to us? μη αποβαλητε την παρηρησιαν υμων· *Cast not away your confession of faith.* This is your *shield*; keep it, and it will ever be your sure defence; for by it you will quench every fiery dart of the wicked one. The Church of Christ speaks this to all her sons, and especially to those employed in the work of the ministry. Of *this shield*, of this glorious system of *salvation by Jesus Christ*, illustrated and defended in this work, I say to each of my children: ταυτην ο πατηρ σοι αι εσωζε· και συ ουν ταυταν σωζε, η μη εσο· This faith, thy father, by the grace of God, hath always kept; keep thou it also, or thou must expect to perish! May this be received both as a warning and encouragement!

**Great recompense of reward.]** No less than God's continual approbation; the peace that passeth all understanding ruling the heart here; and the glories of heaven as an eternal portion. Conscientiously keep the *shield*, and all these shall be thine. This will be thy *reward*; but remember that it is the *mercy* of God that gives it.

Verse 36. **Ye have need of patience]** Having so *great a fight of sufferings* to pass through, and they of so long continuance. God furnishes the *grace*; you must exercise it. The grace or principle of patience comes from God; the use and exercise of that grace is of yourselves. Here ye must be workers together with God. *Patience* and *perseverance* are nearly the same.

**Have done the will of God]** By keeping the faith, and patiently suffering for it.

Verse 37. **For yet a little while]** επι γαρ μικρον οσον· *For yet a very little time.* In a very short space of time the Messiah will come, and execute judgment upon your rebellious country. This is determined, because they have filled up the measure of their iniquity, and their destruction slumbereth not. The apostle seems to refer to **#Hab 2:3, 4**, and accommodates the words to his own purpose.

Verse 38. **Now the just shall live by faith]** ο δε δικαιος εκ πιστεως ζησεται· *But the just by faith*, i.e. he who is justified by faith, *shall live*-shall be preserved when this overflowing scourge shall come. See this meaning of the phrase vindicated, **#Ro 1:17**. And it is evident, both from this text, and **#Ga 3:11**, that it is in this sense that the apostle uses it.

**But if any man draw back]** και εαν υποστειληται· *But if he draw back; he, the man who is justified by faith*; for it is of *him*, and none other, that the text speaks. The insertion of the words *any man*, if done to serve the purpose of a *particular creed*, is a wicked perversion of the words of God. They were evidently intended to turn away the *relative* from the *antecedent*, in order to save the doctrine of final and *unconditional* perseverance; which doctrine this text destroys.

**My soul shall have no pleasure in him.]** My very heart shall be opposed to him who makes shipwreck of faith and a good conscience. The word υποστειλλειν signifies, not only to *draw back*, but to *slink away and hide through fear*. In this sense it is used by the very best Greek writers, as

well as by *Josephus* and *Philo*. As dastards and cowards are hated by all men, so those that *slink* away from Christ and his cause, for fear of persecution or secular loss, God must despise; in them he cannot delight; and his Spirit, grieved with their conduct, must desert their hearts, and lead them to *darkness* and *hardness*.

Verse 39. **But we are not of them who draw back]** ουκ εσμεν υποστολης--, αλλα πιστεως. "We are not the cowards, but the courageous." I have no doubt of this being the meaning of the apostle, and the form of speech requires such a translation; it occurs more than once in the New Testament. So, #Ga 3:7: οι εκ πιστεως, *they who are of the faith*, rather *the faithful*, the *believers*; #Ro 3:26: ο εκ πιστεως, *the believer*; #Ro 2:8: οι εξ επιθειας, *the contentious*; in all which places the learned reader will find that the form of speech is the same. We are not cowards who *slink* away, and notwithstanding meet *destruction*; but we are *faithful*, and have our souls saved alive. The words περιποιησις ψυχης signify the *preservation of the life*. See the note, "**Eph 1:14**". He intimates that, notwithstanding the persecution was hot, yet they should escape with their *lives*.

1. IT is very remarkable, and I have more than once called the reader's attention to it, that not one Christian life was lost in the siege and destruction of Jerusalem. Every *Jew* perished, or was taken captive; all those who had *apostatized*, and slunk away from Christianity, perished with them: all the genuine *Christians* escaped with their lives. This very important information, which casts light on many passages in the New Testament, and manifests the grace and providence of God in a very conspicuous way, is given both by *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius*. I shall adduce their words: "When the whole congregation of the Church in Jerusalem, according to an oracle given by revelation to the approved persons among them before the war, κατα τινα χρησμον τοις αυτοθι δοκιμοις δι' αποκαλυψεως δοθεντα προ του πολему, μεταναστηναι της πολεως, και τινα της περαιας πολιν οικειν κεκελευσμενου, πελλαν αυτην ονομαζουσιν, were commanded to depart from the city, and inhabit a certain city which they call Pella, beyond Jordan, to which, when all those who believed in Christ had removed from Jerusalem, and when the saints had totally abandoned the royal city which is the metropolis of the Jews; then the Divine vengeance seized them who had dealt so wickedly with Christ and his apostles, and utterly destroyed that wicked and abominable generation." EUSEB. *Hist. Eccles.*, l. iii. c. v. vol. i. p. 93. Edit. a *Reading*.

St. *Epiphanius*, in *Hæres. Nazaren*, c. 7, says: "The Christians who dwelt in Jerusalem, being forewarned by Christ of the approaching siege, removed to Pella."

The same, in his book *De Ponderibus et Mensuris*, says: "The disciples of Christ being warned by an angel, removed to Pella; and afterwards, when Adrian rebuilt Jerusalem, and called it after his own name, *Ælia Colonia*, they returned thither." As those places in *Epiphanius* are of considerable importance, I shall subjoin the original: εκειθεν γαρ η αρχη γεγουμε μετα την απο των ιεροσολυμων μεταστασιν, παντων των μαθητων των εν πελλη ωκηκοτων, χριστου φησαντος καταλειψαι τα ιεροσολυμα, και αναχωρησαι, επειδη ημελλε πασχειν πολιορκιαν. EPIPH. *adver. Hæres.*, l. i. c. 7, vol. i. p. 123. Edit. Par. 1622. The other place is as follows: ηνικα γαρ εμελλεν η πολις αλισκεσθαι υπο των ρωμαιων, προεχρηματισθησαν υπο αγγελου παντες οι μαθηται μεταστηναι απο της πολεως, μελλουσης αρδην απολλυσθαι. οι τινες και μετανασται γενομενοι ωκησαν εν πελλη-περαν του ιορδανου, η τις εκ δεκαπολεως λεγεται ειναι. Ibid. *De Pon. et Mens.*, vol. ii. p. 171.

These are remarkable testimonies, and should be carefully preserved. Pella, it appears, was a city of Cœlesyria, beyond Jordan, in the district of Decapolis. Thus it is evident that these Christians held fast their faith, preserved their shields, and continued to believe to the *saving of their lives* as well as to the *saving of their souls*. As the apostle gives several hints of the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, it is likely that this is the true sense in which the words above are to be understood.

2. I have already said a little, from **Heb 10:25**, on the importance of *social worship*. PUBLIC *worship* is not of less consequence. Were it not for *public*, private worship would soon be at an end. To this, under God, the Church of Christ owes its being and its continuance. Where there is no public worship there is no *religion*. It is by this that God is acknowledged; and he is the *universal Being*; and by his *bounty* and *providence* all live; consequently, it is the duty of every intelligent creature *publicly* to acknowledge him, and offer him that worship which himself has prescribed in his word. The ancient Jews have some good maxims on this subject which may be seen in Schoettgen. I shall quote a few.

In *Berachoth*, fol. 8, it is written: "Rabbi Levi said, He who has a synagogue in his city, and does not go thither to pray, shall be esteemed a bad citizen," or a bad neighbour. And to this they apply the words of the prophet, **Jer 12:14**: *Thus saith the Lord against all my evil neighbours-behold, I will pluck them out of their land.*

In *Mechilta*, fol. 48: "Rabbi Eliezer, the son of Jacob, said," speaking as from God, "If thou wilt come to my house, I will go to thy house; but if thou wilt not come to my house, I will not enter thy house. The place that my heart loveth, to that shall my feet go." We may safely add, that those who do not frequent the house of God can never expect his presence or blessing in their own.

In *Taanith*, fol. 11, it is said that "to him who separates himself from the congregation shall two angels come, and lay their hands upon his head and say, This man, who separates himself from the congregation, shall not see the comfort which God grants to his afflicted Church." The wisest and best of men have always felt it their duty and their interest to worship God in public. As there is nothing more necessary, so there is nothing more reasonable; he who acknowledges God in all his ways may expect all his steps to be directed. The public worship of God is one grand line of distinction between the atheist and the believer. He who uses not public worship has either no God, or has no right notion of his being; and such a person, according to the rabbins, is a *bad neighbour*; it is dangerous to live near him, for neither he nor his can be under the protection of God. No man should be forced to attend a particular place of worship, but every man should be obliged to attend some place; and he who has any fear of God will not find it difficult to get a place to his mind.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER XI.

*A definition of faith, 1, 2. What are its immediate objects, 3. What are its effects, instanced in Abel, 4 In Enoch, 5, 6. In Noah, 7. In Abraham, 8-10. In Sara, 11. In their righteous posterity, 12-16 In Abraham's offering of his son Isaac, 17-19. In Isaac, 20. In Jacob, 21. In Joseph, 22. In Moses, 23-28. In the Israelites in the wilderness, 29. In the fall of Jericho, 30. In Rahab, 31. In several of the judges, and in David, Samuel, and the prophets, 32-34. The glorious effects produced by it in the primitive martyrs, 35-40.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XI.

Verse 1. **Faith is the substance of things hoped for]** *εστι δε πιστις ελπιζομενων υποστασις· Faith is the SUBSISTENCE of things hoped for; πραγματος ελεγχος ου βλεπομενων· The DEMONSTRATION of things not seen.* The word *υποστασις*, which we translate *substance*, signifies *subsistence*, that which becomes a *foundation* for another thing to stand on. And *ελεγχος* signifies such a *conviction* as is produced in the mind by the *demonstration* of a *problem*, after which demonstration no doubt can remain, because we see from it that the thing *is*; that it *cannot but be*; and that it cannot be *otherwise* than as it is, and is proved to be. Such is the faith by which the soul is justified; or rather, such are the effects of justifying faith: on it subsists the peace of God which passeth all understanding; and the love of God is shed abroad in the heart where it lives, by the Holy Ghost. At the same time the Spirit of God witnesses with their spirits who have this faith that their sins are blotted out; and this is as fully manifest to their judgment and conscience as the axioms, "A whole is greater than any of its parts;" "Equal lines and angles, being placed on one another, do not exceed each other;" or as the deduction from prop. 47, book i., Euclid: "The square of the base of a right-angled triangle is equal to the difference of the squares of the other two sides." *ελεγχος* is defined by logicians, *Demonstratio quæ fit argumentis certis et rationibus indubitatis, qua rei certitudo efficitur.* "A demonstration of the certainly of a thing by sure arguments and indubitable reasons." Aristotle uses it for a mathematical demonstration, and properly defines it thus: *ελεγχος δε εστις ο μη δυνατος αλλως εξεις, αλλ' ουτως ως ημεις λεγομεν,* "Elenehos, or Demonstration, is that which cannot be otherwise, but is so as we assert." Rhetor. ad Alexand., cap. 14, *περι ελεγχου.* On this account I have adduced the above theorem from *Euclid*.

**Things hoped for]** Are the peace and approbation of God, and those blessings by which the soul is prepared for the kingdom of heaven. A *penitent* hopes for the pardon of his sins and the favour of his God; faith in Christ puts him in possession of this pardon, and thus the thing that was hoped for is enjoyed by faith. When this is received, a man has the fullest conviction of the truth and reality of all these blessings though *unseen* by the *eye*, they are *felt* by the *heart*; and the man has no more doubt of God's approbation and his own free pardon, than he has of his being.

In an extended sense the *things hoped for* are the resurrection of the body, the new heavens and the new earth, the introduction of believers into the heavenly country, and the possession of eternal glory.

The *things unseen*, as distinguished from the things hoped for, are, in an extended sense, the creation of the world from nothing, the destruction of the world by the deluge, the miraculous conception of Christ, his resurrection from the dead, his ascension to glory, his mediation at the right hand of God, his government of the universe, &c., &c., all which we as firmly believe on the testimony of God's word as if we had seen them. See *Macknight*. But this faith has particular respect to the being, goodness, providence, grace, and mercy of God, as the subsequent verses sufficiently show.

Verse 2. **For by it the elders obtained a good report.]** By the *elders* are meant *ancestors, forefathers*, such as the patriarchs and prophets, several of whom he afterwards particularly names, and produces some fact from the history of their lives.

It is very remarkable that among the whole there is root one word concerning poor Adam and his wife, though both *Abraham* and *Sarah* are mentioned. There was no *good report* concerning *them*; not a word of their repentance, faith, or holiness. Alas! alas! did ever such bright suns set in so thick a cloud? Had there been any thing praiseworthy in their life after their fall, any act of faith by which they could have been distinguished, it had surely come out here; the mention of their second son Abel would have suggested it. But God has covered the whole of their spiritual and eternal state with a *thick and impenetrable veil*. Conjectures relative to their state would be very precarious; little else than *hope* can be exercised in their favour: but as to them the promise of Jesus was given, so we may believe they found redemption in that blood which was shed from the foundation of the world. Adam's rebellion against his Maker was too great and too glaring to permit his name to be ever after mentioned with honour or respect.

The word *μαρτυρηθησαν*, which we translate *obtained a good report*, literally signifies, *were witnessed of*; and thus leads us naturally to GOD, who by his word, as the succeeding parts of the chapter show, *bore testimony* to the faith and holiness of his servants. The apostle does not mention one of whom an account is not given in the Old Testament. This, therefore, is God's witness or testimony concerning them.

Verse 3. **Through faith we understand]** By *worlds*, *τους αιωνας*, we are to understand the *material fabric of the universe*; for *αιων* can have no reference here to age or any measurement of time, for he speaks of the *things which are SEEN*; *not being made out of the things which do APPEAR*; this therefore must refer to the *material creation*: and as the word is used in the *plural* number, it may comprehend, not only the earth and visible heavens, but the whole planetary system; the different worlds which, in our system at least, revolve round the sun. The apostle states that these things were *not made* out of a *pre-existent matter*; for if they were, that matter, however extended or *modified*, must *appear* in that thing into which it is compounded and modified, consequently it could not be said that the things which are *seen* are not made of the things that *appear*; and he shows us also, by these words, that the present mundane fabric was not formed or *reformed* from one anterior, as some suppose. According to Moses and the apostle we believe that God made all things out of *nothing*. **See the note on "Ge 1:1", &c.**

At present we see trees of different kinds are produced from trees; beasts, birds, and fishes, from others of the same kind; and man, from man: but we are necessarily led to believe that there was a

*first man*, who owed not his being to man; first there were *beasts*, &c., which did not derive their being from others of the same kind; and so of all manner of *trees, plants*, &c. God, therefore, made all these out of *nothing*; his word tells us so, and we credit that word.

Verse 4. **By faith Abel offered-a more excellent sacrifice]** *πλειονα θυσιαν* *More sacrifice*; as if he had said: Abel, by faith, made *more* than *one* offering; and hence it is said, God testified of his GIFTS, *τοις δωροις*. The plain state of the case seems to have been this: Cain and Abel both brought offerings to the altar of God, probably the altar erected for the *family worship*. As Cain was a *husbandman*, he brought a *mincha*, or *eucharistic offering*, of the fruits of the ground, by which he acknowledged the being and providence of God. Abel, being a *shepherd* or a feeder of cattle, brought, not only the *eucharistic offering*, but also of the produce of his flock as a *sin-offering* to God, by which he acknowledged his own *sinfulness*, God's *justice* and *mercy*, as well as his *being* and *providence*. Cain, not at all apprehensive of the demerit of sin, or God's holiness, contented himself with the *mincha*, or *thank-offering*: this God could not, consistently with his holiness and justice, receive with complacency; the other, as referring to him who was the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, God could receive, and did particularly testify his approbation. Though the *mincha*, or *eucharistic offering*, was a very proper offering in its place, yet this was not received, because there was no *sin-offering*. The rest of the history is well known.

Now by this faith, thus exercised, in reference to an atonement, he, Abel, *though dead, yet speaketh*; i.e. preacheth to mankind the necessity of an atonement, and that God will accept no sacrifice unless connected with this. **See this transaction explained at large in my notes on "Ge 4:3", &c.**

Verse 5. **By faith Enoch was translated]** It is said, in **#Ge 5:24**, that Enoch walked with God, and *he was not, for God took him*. Here the apostle explains what God's taking him means, by saying that *he was translated that he should not see death*; from which we learn that he did not die, and that God took him to a state of blessedness without obliging him to pass through death. See his history explained at large in the above place, in **#Ge 5:22-24**.

Verse 6. **He that cometh to God]** The man who professes that it is his duty to worship God, must, if he act rationally, do it on the conviction that there is such a Being infinite, eternal, unoriginated, and self-existent; the cause of all other being; on whom all being depends; and by whose energy, bounty, and providence, all other beings exist, live, and are supplied with the means of continued existence and life. He must believe, also, that he rewards them that diligently seek him; that he is not indifferent about his own worship; that he *requires* adoration and religious service from men; and that he blesses, and especially protects and saves, those who in simplicity and uprightness of heart seek and serve him. This requires *faith*, such a faith as is mentioned above; a faith by which we can *please God*; and now that we have an abundant revelation, a faith *according* to that revelation; a faith in God through Christ the great sin-offering, without which a man can no more please him, or be accepted of him, than Cain was. As the knowledge of the being of God is of infinite importance in religion, I shall introduce at the end of this chapter a series of propositions, tending to prove the being of God, 1st, *a priori*; and 2dly, *a posteriori*; omitting the proofs that are generally produced on those points, for which my readers may refer to works in general circulation on this subject: and 3dly, I shall lay down some *phenomena* relative to the heavenly bodies, which

it will be difficult to account for without acknowledging the infinite skill, power, and *continual energy* of God.

Verse 7. **By faith Noah]** See the whole of this history, #Ge 6:13.

**Warned of God]** *ξηρηματισθεις*. As we know from the history in Genesis that *God* did warn Noah, we see from this the real import of the verb *ξηρηματιζω*, as used in various parts of the New Testament; it signifies to *utter oracles*, to *give Divine warning*.

**Moved with fear]** *ευλαβηθεις*. Influenced by *religious fear* or *reverence towards God*. This is mentioned to show that he acted not from a fear of losing his life, but from the fear of God; and hence that fear is here properly attributed to faith.

**He condemned the world]** HE credited God, *they* did not; *he* walked in the way God had commanded, *they* did not; *he* repeatedly admonished them, #1Pe 3:20, *they* regarded it not; this aggravated their crimes while it exalted his faith and righteousness. "His faith and obedience condemned the world, i.e. the *unbelievers*, in the same sense in which every good man's virtues and exhortations condemn such as will not attend to and imitate them." *Dodd*.

**Became heir of the righteousness]** He became entitled to that justification which is by faith; and his temporal deliverance was a pledge of the salvation of his soul.

Verse 8. **Abraham, when he was called]** See on #Ge 12:1-4.

**Not knowing whither he went.]** Therefore his *obedience* was the fullest proof of his *faith* in God, and his faith was an *implicit* faith; he obeyed, and went out from his own country, having no prospect of any good or success but what his implicit faith led him to expect from God, *as the rewarder of them that diligently seek him*. In all the preceding cases, and in all that follow, the apostle keeps this maxim fully in view.

Verse 9. **By faith he sojourned in the land of promise]** It is remarkable that Abraham did not acquire any right in Canaan, except that of a *burying place*; nor did he build any house in it; his faith showed him that it was only a *type* and *pledge* of a better country, and he kept that better country continually in view: he, with Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs of the same promise, were contented to dwell in tents, without any *fixed* habitation.

Verse 10. **For he looked for a city which hath foundations]** He knew that earth could afford no permanent residence for an immortal mind, and he looked for that heavenly building of which God is the architect and owner; in a word, he lost sight of earth, that he might keep heaven in view. And all who are partakers of his faith possess the same spirit, walk by the same rule, and mind the same thing.

**Whose builder and maker is God.]** The word *τεχνιτης* signifies an *architect*, one who *plans*, *calculates*, and *constructs* a building. The word *δημιουργος* signifies the *governor of a people*; one who *forms them by institutions* and *laws*; the framer of a *political constitution*. God is here

represented the *Maker* or *Father* of all the heavenly inhabitants, and the *planner* of their *citizenship* in that heavenly country. See *Macknight*.

Verse 11. **Through faith also Sara]** Her history, as far as the event here is concerned, may be seen #Ge 17:19, and #Ge 21:2. Sarah at first treated the Divine message with ridicule, judging it to be absolutely impossible, not knowing then that it was from God; and this her age and circumstances justified, for, humanly speaking, such an event was impossible: but, when she knew that it was God who said this, it does not appear that she doubted any more, but implicitly believed that what God had promised he was able to perform.

Verse 12. **Him as good as dead]** According to nature, long past the time of the procreation of children. The birth of Isaac, the circumstances of the father and mother considered, was entirely supernatural; and the people who proceeded from this birth were a supernatural people; and were and are most strikingly singular through every period of their history to the present day.

Verse 13. **These all died in faith]** That is, Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, and Jacob, continued to believe, to the *end of their lives*, that God would fulfil this promise; but they neither saw the numerous seed, nor did they get the promised rest in Canaan.

**Strangers and pilgrims]** Strangers, *ξένοι*, persons who are out of their own country, who are in a foreign land: *pilgrims*, *παρεπιδημοί*, sojourners only for a time; not intending to take up their abode in that place, nor to get naturalized in that country.

How many use these expressions, professing to be strangers and pilgrims here below, and yet the whole of their conduct, spirit, and attachments, show that they are *perfectly at home*! How little consideration and weight are in many of our professions, whether they relate to earth or heaven!

Verse 14. **Declare plainly that they seek a country.]** A man's *country* is that in which he has constitutional rights and privileges; no stranger or sojourner has any such rights in the country where he sojourns. These, by declaring that they felt themselves strangers and sojourners, professed their faith in a heavenly country and state, and looked beyond the grave for a place of happiness. No intelligent Jew could suppose that Canaan was all the *rest* which God had promised to his people.

Verse 15. **If they had been mindful of that country]** They considered their right to the promises of God as dependent on their utter renunciation of Chaldea; and it was this that induced Abraham to cause his steward Eliezer to *swear* that he would not carry his son Isaac to Chaldea; see #Ge 24:5-8. There idolatry reigned; and God had called them to be the patriarchs and progenitors of a people among whom the knowledge of the true God, and the worship required by him, should be established and preserved.

Verse 16. **But now they desire a better]** They all expected *spiritual blessings*, and a *heavenly inheritance*; they sought God as their *portion*, and in such a way and on such principles that he is not *ashamed to be called their God*; and he shows his affection for them by preparing for them a city, to wit, *heaven*, as themselves would seek no city on earth; which is certainly what the apostle has here in view. And from this it is evident that the patriarchs had a proper notion of the immortality

of the soul, and expected a place of residence widely different from Canaan. Though to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promises were made in which Canaan was so particularly included, yet God did not give them any inheritance in that country, *no, not so much as to set a foot on*; #Ac 7:5. Therefore, if they had not understood the promises to belong to *spiritual things*, far from enduring, as seeing him who is invisible, they must have considered themselves deceived and mocked. The apostle therefore, with the highest propriety, attributes their whole conduct and expectation to *faith*.

Verse 17. **Abraham, when he was tried]** See the history of this whole transaction explained at large in the notes on #Ge 22:1-9.

**Offered up his only-begotten]** Abraham did, *in effect*, offer up Isaac; he built an altar, bound his son, laid him upon the altar, had ready the incense, took the knife, and would immediately have slain him had he not been prevented by the same authority by which the sacrifice was enjoined. Isaac is here called *his only-begotten*, as he was the *only son* he had by his legitimate wife, who was heir to his property, and heir of the promises of God. The man who proved faithful in such a trial, deserved to have his faith and obedience recorded throughout the world.

Verse 19. **To raise him up, even from the dead]** Abraham staggered not at the promise through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. The resurrection of the dead must have been a doctrine of the patriarchs; they expected a heavenly inheritance, they saw they died as did other men, and they must have known that they could not enjoy it but in consequence of a resurrection from the dead.

**He received him in a figure.]** εν παραβολη· In my discourse on *parabolical writing* at the end of "Mt 13:58, I have shown (signification\_9) that παραβολη sometimes means a *daring exploit*, a *jeoparding of the life*; and have referred to this place. I think it should be so understood here, as pointing out the very imminent danger he was in of losing his life. The clause may therefore be thus translated: "Accounting that God was able to raise him up from the dead, from whence he had received him, he being in the most imminent danger of losing his life." It is not, therefore, the natural deadness of Abraham and Sarah to which the apostle alludes, but the death to which Isaac on this occasion was exposed, and which he escaped by the immediate interference of God.

Verse 20. **By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau]** He believed that God would fulfil his promise to his posterity; and God gave him to see what would befall them in their future generations. The apostle does not seem to intimate that one should be an object of the *Divine hatred*, and the other of *Divine love*, in reference to their *eternal* states. This is wholly a *discovery* of later ages. For an ample consideration of this subject, see the notes on Gen. xxvii.

Verse 21. **Blessed both the sons of Joseph]** That is, Ephraim and Manasseh. See the account and the notes. #Ge 48:5, &c.

**Worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff]** This subject is particularly considered in the note, See "Ge 47:31".

It appears, that at the time Joseph visited his father he was very weak, and generally confined to his couch, having at hand his *staff*; either that with which he usually supported his feeble body, or that which was the *ensign* of his office, as *patriarch* or *chief* of a very numerous family. The ancient chiefs, in all countries, had this staff or sceptre continually at hand. See Homer throughout. It is said, #Ge 48:2, that when Joseph came to see his father Jacob, who was then in his last sickness, *Israel strengthened himself, and sat upon the bed*. Still I conceive he had his staff or sceptre at hand; and while sitting upon the bed, with his feet on the floor, he supported himself with his staff. When Joseph swore to him that he should be carried up from Egypt, he *bowed himself on his bed's head*, still supporting himself with his staff, which probably with this last act he laid aside, *gathered up his feet*, and reclined wholly on his couch. It was therefore indifferent to say that he worshipped or bowed himself on his staff or on his bed's head. But as שׁוּחַ shachah signifies, not only to *bow*, but also to *worship*, because acts of adoration were performed by *bowing* and *prostration*; and as מִטָּה mittah, a *bed*, by the change of the vowel points becomes *matteh*, a *staff*, hence the *Septuagint* have translated the passage *καὶ προσεκύνησεν ἰσραὴλ ἐπὶ τὸ ἄκρον τῆς ῥάβδου αὐτοῦ*. *And Israel bowed or worshipped on the head of his staff*. This reading the apostle follows here *literatim*.

Wretched must that cause be which is obliged to have recourse to what, at best, is an equivocal expression, to prove and support a favourite opinion. The Romanists allege this in favour of *image worship*. This is too contemptible to require confutation. To make it speak this language the Rheims version renders the verse thus: *By faith Jacob dying, blessed every one of the sons of Joseph, and adored the top of his rod*. A pretty object of adoration, indeed, for a dying patriarch! Here the preposition ἐπὶ *upon*, answering to the Hebrew עַל *al*, is wholly suppressed, to make it favour the corrupt reading of the Vulgate. This preposition is found in the *Hebrew text*, in the *Greek version* of the *Seventy*, the *printed Greek text* of the *New Testament*, and in *every MS.* yet discovered of this epistle. It is also found in the *Syriac*, *Æthiopic*, *Arabic*, and *Coptic*: in which languages the connection necessarily shows that it is not an idle particle: and by no mode of construction can the text be brought to support *image worship*, any more than it can to support *transubstantiation*.

Verse 22. **Joseph, when he died]** τελευτῶν, *When he was dying, gave commandment concerning his bones*. On this subject I refer the reader to the **notes on "Ge 50:25"**. And I have this to add to the account I have given of the *sarcophagus* now in the *British Museum*, vulgarly called *Alexander's coffin*, that it is more probably the *coffin of Joseph* himself; and, should the time ever arrive in which the hieroglyphics on it shall be interpreted, this conjecture may appear to have had its foundation in truth.

Verse 23. **By faith Moses, &c.] See the notes on "Ex 2:2", and See "Ac 7:20"**. We know that Moses was bred up at the Egyptian court, and *there* was considered to be the son of Pharaoh's daughter; and probably might have succeeded to the throne of Egypt: but, finding that God had visited his people, and given them a promise of *spiritual and eternal blessings*, he chose rather to take the lot of this people, i.e. God as his portion for ever, than to *enjoy the pleasures of sin*, which, however gratifying to the animal senses, could only be προσκαιρον, *temporary*.

After the 23d verse, there is a whole clause added by DE, two copies of the *Itala*, and some copies of the *Vulgate*. The clause is the following: πιστεὶ μεγάλῳ γενομένῳ Μωϋσῆϊ ἀνείλεν τὸν Αἰγύπτῳ, κατανῶν τὴν ταπεινώσιν τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτοῦ. *By faith Moses, when he was grown up, slew the*

*Egyptian, considering the oppression of his own brethren.* This is a remarkable addition, and one of the largest in the whole New Testament. It seems to have been collected from the history of Moses as given in Exodus, and to have been put originally into the margin of some MS., from which it afterwards crept into the text.

Verse 26. **The reproach of Christ]** The *Christ* or *Messiah* had been revealed to Moses; of him he prophesied, #De 18:15; and the *reproach* which God's people had, in consequence of their decided opposition to idolatry, may be termed the *reproach of Christ*, for they refused to become one people with the Egyptians, because the *promise of the rest* was made to them, and in this *rest* CHRIST and his *salvation* were included: but, although it does not appear these things were known to the Hebrews *at large*, yet it is evident that there were sufficient intimations given to Moses concerning the Great Deliverer, (of whom himself was a type,) that determined his conduct in the above respect; as he folly understood that he must renounce his interest in the promises, and in the life eternal to which they led, if he did not obey the Divine call in the present instance. Many have been stumbled by the word ο χριστος, *Christ*, here; because they cannot see how Moses should have any knowledge of him. It may be said that it was just as easy for God Almighty to reveal *Christ* to *Moses*, as it was for him to reveal him to *Isaiah*, or to the *shepherds*, or to *John Baptist*; or to manifest him in the *flesh*. After all there is much reason to believe that, by του χριστου, here, of *Christ* or the *anointed*, the apostle means the whole body of the Israelitish or Hebrew people; for, as the word signifies the *anointed*, and anointing was a consecration to God, to serve him in some particular office, as prophet, priest, king, or the like, all the Hebrew people were considered thus *anointed* or *consecrated*; and it is worthy of remark that χριστος is used in this very sense by the Septuagint, #1Sa 2:35; Ps 105:15; and Hab 3:13; where the word is necessarily restrained to this meaning.

**He had respect unto the recompense]** απεβλεπε He *looked attentively* to it; his eyes were *constantly directed* to it. This is the import of the original word; and the whole conduct of Moses was an illustration of it.

Verse 27. **He forsook Egypt]** He believed that God would fulfil the promise he had made; and he cheerfully changed an *earthly* for a *heavenly* portion.

**Not fearing the wrath of the king]** The apostle speaks here of the departure of Moses *with the Israelites*, not of his *flight to Midian*, #Ex 2:14, 15; for he was then in great fear: but when he went to Pharaoh with God's authority, to demand the dismissal of the Hebrews, he was without fear, and acted in the most noble and dignified manner; he then feared nothing but God.

**As seeing him who is invisible.]** He continued to act as one who had the judge of his heart and conduct always before his eyes. By calling the Divine Being *the invisible*, the apostle distinguishes him from the *god's of Egypt*, who were *visible, corporeal, gross, and worthless*. The Israelites were worshippers of the *true God*, and this worship was not tolerated in Egypt. His pure and spiritual worship could never comport with the adoration of *oxen, goats, monkeys, leeks, and onions*.

Verse 28. **He kept the passover]** God told him that he would destroy the first-born of the Egyptians, but would spare all those whose doors were *sprinkled with the blood* of the paschal lamb. Moses believed this, kept the passover, and *sprinkled the blood*. See the notes on Ex 12. One of the

Itala adds here, *Fide prædaverunt Ægyptios exeuntes*. "By faith, when they went out, they spoiled the Egyptians." This is any thing but *genuine*.

Verse 29. **By faith they passed through the Red Sea]** See the notes on "Ex 14:22". The Egyptians thought they could walk through the sea as well as the Israelites; they tried, and were drowned; while the former passed in perfect safety. The one walked by *faith*, the other by *sight*; one perished, the other was saved.

Verse 30. **The walls of Jericho fell down]** This is particularly explained #Jos 6:1, &c. God had promised that the walls of Jericho should fall down, if they compassed them about seven days. They *believed*, did as they were commanded, and the promise was fulfilled.

Verse 31. **The harlot Rahab perished not]** See this account #Jos 2:1, 9, 11, and #Jos 6:23, where it is rendered exceedingly probable that the word זונה *zonah* in Hebrew, and πορνη in Greek, which we translate *harlot*, should be rendered *innkeeper* or *tavernkeeper*, as there is no proper evidence that the person in question was such a woman as our translation represents her. As to her having been a *harlot* before and converted afterwards, it is a figment of an idle fancy. She was afterwards married to *Salmon*, a Jewish prince; see #Mt 1:5. And it is extremely incredible that, had she been what we represent her, he would have sought for such an alliance.

**Received the spies with peace.]** μετ' ειρηνης. The same as בשלום *beshalom*, giving them a *kind welcome*, *good fare*, and *protection*. After these words the *Slavonic* adds: και ετερα οδω εκβαλουσα, and *sent them out another way*.

Verse 32. **Time would fail me]** με διηγουμενον ο χρονος. A very usual mode of expression with the best Greek writers, when they wish to intimate that much important intelligence remains to be communicated on the subject already in hand, which must be omitted because of other points which have not yet been handled.

**Gedeon]** Who by faith in God, with 300 men, destroyed a countless multitude of Midianites and Amalekites, and delivered Israel from oppression and slavery. Jud 6., 7., 8.

**Barak]** Who overthrew Jabin, king of Canaan, and delivered Israel from servitude. Jud. 4.

**Samson]** Who was appointed by God to deliver Israel from the oppressive yoke of the *Philistines*; and, by extraordinary assistance, discomfited them on various occasions. Jud. 13.-16.

**Jephthae]** Who, under the same guidance, defeated the Ammonites, and delivered Israel. Jud. 11., 12.

**David]** King of Israel, whose whole life was a life of faith and dependence on God; but whose character will be best seen in those books which contain an account of his reign, and the book of Psalms, to which, and the notes there, the reader must be referred. It is probable he is referred to here for that act of faith and courage which he showed in his combat with Goliah. See 1Sam 17.

**Samuel]** The last of the Israelitish *judges*, to whom succeeded a race of *kings*, of whom Saul and David were the two first, and were both anointed by this most eminent man. See his history in the *first* book of *Samuel*.

All these are said to have performed their various exploits *through faith*. 1. The faith of *Gideon* consisted in his throwing down the altar of Baal, and cutting down his grove, in obedience to the command of God. 2. The faith of *Barak* consisted in his believing the revelation made to Deborah, and the command to go against Jabin's numerous army. 3. *Samson's* faith consisted in his obeying the various impulses produced by the Spirit of God in his own mind. 4. *Jephthae's* faith consisted particularly in his believing the promise made to Abraham and his posterity, that they should possess the land of Canaan; and in his resolutely fighting against the Ammonites, that they might not deprive the Israelites of the land between Arnon and Jabbok. It may be observed, here, that the apostle does not produce these in *chronological order*; for Barak lived before Gideon, and Jephthae before Samson, and Samuel before David. He was not producing facts in their chronological order, but instances of the power of God exerted in the behalf of men who had strong confidence in him.

Verse 33. **Who through faith subdued kingdoms]** As *Joshua*, who subdued the seven Canaanitish nations; and *David*, who subdued the Moabites, Syrians, Ammonites, and Edomites. 2Sam viii., &c.

**Wrought righteousness]** Did a great variety of works indicative of that faith in God without which it is impossible to do any thing that is good.

**Obtained promises]** This is supposed to refer to *Joshua* and *Caleb*, who, through their faith in God, obtained the promised land, while all the rest of the Israelites were excluded; to Phineas also, who, for his act of *zealous faith* in slaying *Zimri* and *Cosbi*, got the promise of an *everlasting priesthood*; and to *David*, who, for his *faith* and *obedience*, obtained the kingdom of Israel, and had the promise that from his seed the Messiah should spring.

**Stopped the mouths of lions]** Daniel, who, though cast into a den of lions for his fidelity to God, was preserved among them unhurt, and finally came to great honour.

Verse 34. **Quenched the violence of fire]** As in the case of the three faithful Hebrews, *Shadrach*, *Meshach*, and *Abed-nego*, who, for their steady attachment to God's worship, were cast into a fiery furnace, in which they were preserved, and from which they escaped unhurt. Dan. 3.

**Escaped the edge of the sword]** Moses, who escaped the sword of Pharaoh, #Ex 18:4; *Elijah*, that of Jezebel; and *David*, that of Saul: and many others.

**Out of weakness were made strong]** Were miraculously restored from *sickness*, which seemed to threaten their life; as *Hezekiah*, #Isa 38:21.

**Waxed valiant in fight]** Like *Gideon*, who overthrew the camp of the Midianites, and *Jonathan*, that of the Philistines, in such a way as must have proved that God was with them.

Verse 35. **Women received their dead]** As did the widow of *Zarephath*, #1Ki 17:21, and the *Shunammite*, #2Ki 4:34. What other cases under all the above heads the apostle might have in view, we know not.

**Others were tortured]** *ετυπανισθησαν*. This is a word concerning the meaning of which the critics are not agreed. *τυπανον* signifies a stick, or *baton*, which was used in *bastinadoing* criminals. And *τυπανιζω* signifies to *beat violently*, and is thus explained by the best lexicographers. After considering what others have written on this subject, I am inclined to think that the *bastinado* on the *soles of the feet* is what is here designed. That this was a most torturing and dangerous punishment, we learn from the most authentic accounts; and it is practised among the *Turks* and other *Mohammedans* to the present day. Mr. *Antes*, of *Fulnek*, is *Yorkshire*, twenty years a resident in *Egypt*, furnishes the latest account I have met with; he himself was the unhappy subject of his own description. See at the end of this chapter, article 4. See "**Heb 11:40**"

**Not accepting deliverance]** This looks very like a reference to the case of the mother and her seven sons, mentioned 2Mac 7:1, &c.

Verse 36. **Had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings]** We do not know the cases to which the apostle refers. The *mockings* here can never mean such as those of *Ishmael* against *Isaac*, or the youths of *Bethel* against *Elisha*. It is more probable that it refers to public exhibitions of the people of God at idol feasts and the like; and *Samson's* case before *Dagon*, when the *Philistines* had put out his eyes, is quite in point. As to *scourgings*, this was a common way of punishing minor culprits: and even those who were to be punished *capitally* were first scourged. See the case of our Lord.

**Bond's and imprisonment]** *Joseph* was cast into prison; *Jeremiah* was cast into a dungeon full of mire, #Jer 37:16, and #Jer 38:6; and the Prophet *Micaiah* was imprisoned by *Ahab*, #1Ki 22:27.

Verse 37. **They were stoned]** As *Zechariah*, the son of *Barachiah* or *Jehoida*, was, between the altar and the temple; see the account, #2Ch 24:21; and See the notes on "**Mt 23:35**". And as *Naboth the Jezreelite*, who, on refusing to give up his father's inheritance to a covetous king, because it had respect to the promise of God, was falsely accused and stoned to death; #1Ki 21:1-14.

**They were sawn asunder]** There is a tradition that the Prophet *Isaiah* was thus martyred. In *Yevamoth*, fol. 49, 2, it is thus written: "*Manasseh* slew *Isaiah*; for he commanded that he should be slain with a wooden saw. They then brought the saw, and cut him in two; and when the saw reached his mouth, his soul fled forth." *St. Jerome* and others mention the same thing; and among the Jews the tradition is indubitable.

**Were tempted]** *επειρασθησαν*. I believe this word has vexed the critics more than any other in the New Testament. How being *tempted* can be ranked among the *heavy sufferings* of the primitive martyrs and confessors is not easy to discern, because *to be tempted* is the common lot of every godly man. This difficulty has induced learned men to mend the text by conjecture: *Beza* proposes *επυρωθησαν*, *they were branded*. *Junius, Piscator*, and others, propose *επυρασθησαν*, *they were burnt alive*. *Gataker* thinks *επηρσθησαν*, a word of the same import, should be preferred. *Tanaquil Faber* gives the preference to *επηρωθησαν*, *they were mutilated*-had different parts of their bodies *lopped*

off. Sir Norton Knatchbull contends for *επαρτησαν*, *they were transfixed*, or *pierced through*. Alberti thinks the original reading was *εσπειρασθησαν*, *they were strangled*. About as many more differences have been proposed by learned men, all hearing a very clear resemblance to the words now found in the Greek text. By three MSS. the word is entirely *omitted*; as also by the *Syriac*, *Arabic* of Erpen, the *Æthiopic*, and by *Eusebius* and *Theophylact*. Of all the conjectures, that of *Knatchbull* appears to me to be the most probable: *they were transfixed* or *impaled*; and even the present reading might be construed in this sense.

**Were slain with the sword]** As in the case of the eighty-five priests slain by Doeg, see #1Sa 22:18; and the *prophets*, of whose slaughter by the sword Elijah complains, #1Ki 19:10. Probably the word means being *beheaded*, which was formerly done with a *sword*, and not with an axe; and in the east is done by the sword to the present day.

**They wandered about in sheepskins]** *μηλωταις* *Sheepskins dressed with the wool on*. This was probably the sort of mantle that Elijah wore, and which was afterwards used by Elisha; for the Septuagint, in #2Ki 2:8-13, expressly say: *και ελαβεν ηλιας την μηλωτην αυτου* and *Elijah took his SHEEPSKIN* (mantle.) *και υψωσε την μηλωτην ηλιου, η επεσεν επανωθεν αυτου* And *he* (Elisha) *took the SHEEPSKIN of Elijah which had fallen from off him*. It was most probably on this account, as Dr. Macknight conjectures, that Elijah was called a *hairy man*, #2Ki 1:8; and not on account of having a preposterously *long beard*, as those marrers of all the unities of time, place, circumstances, and common sense, the *painters*, represent him. And it is likely that the prophets themselves wore such garments, and that the false prophets imitated them in this, in order that they might gain the greater credit. *And it shall come to pass in that day, that the prophets shall be ashamed every one of his vision-neither shall they wear a rough garment to deceive*, #Zec 13:4; *δερριν τριχληνην*, a *hairy skin*, SEPT., probably the *goatskins* mentioned above. In general, this was an *upper garment*; but, in the cases to which the apostle alludes, the *sheepskin* and *goatskin* seem to have been the *only covering*.

**Being destitute]** *υστερουμενοι*· *In want* of all the *comforts* and *conveniences* of life, and often of its *necessaries*.

**Afflicted]** In consequence of enduring such privations.

**Tormented]** *κακουχουμενοι*· *Maltreated*, *harassed*, variously persecuted by those to whom they brought the message of salvation.

Verse 38. **Of whom the world was not worthy]** Yet they were obliged to wander by day in *deserts* and *mountains*, driven from the society of men, and often obliged to hide by night in dens and caves of the earth, to conceal themselves from the brutal rage of men. Perhaps he refers here principally to the case of Elijah, and the hundred prophets hidden in caves by Obadiah, and fed with bread and water. See #1Ki 18:4. David was often obliged thus to hide himself from Saul; #1Sa 24:3, &c.

Verse 39. **Having obtained a good report** (having been witnessed to; see #**Heb 11:2**) **through faith**] It was *faith in God* which supported all those eminent men who, in different parts of the world, and in different ages, were persecuted for righteousness sake.

**Received not the promise**] They all heard of the promises made to Abraham of a heavenly rest, and of the promise of the *Messiah*, for this was a constant tradition; but they died without having seen this *Anointed of the Lord*. Christ was not in any of their times manifested in the flesh; and of him who was the expectation of all nations, they heard only by the hearing of the ear. This must be the promise, without receiving of which the apostle says *they died*.

Verse 40. **God having provided some better thing for us**] This is the dispensation of the Gospel, with all the privileges and advantages it confers.

**That they without us should not be made perfect.**] Believers before the flood, after the flood, under the law, and since the law, make but one Church. The Gospel dispensation is the last, and the Church cannot be considered as *complete* till the believers under all dispensations are gathered together. As the Gospel is the last dispensation, the preceding believers cannot be consummated even in glory till the Gospel Church arrive in the heaven of heavens.

There are a great variety of meanings put on this place, but the above seems the most simple and consistent. See #**Re 6:11**. "White robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren, that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled." This time, and its blessings, are now upon the wing.

See ancillary data for:—

## **OBSERVATIONS ON THE BEING OF A GOD.**

And

*A short account of the BASTINADO, supposed to be referred to in #**Heb 11:35**.*

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER XII.

*Having so many incitements to holiness, patience, and perseverance, we should lay aside every hinderance, and run with patience the race that is set before us, taking our blessed Lord for our example, 1-4. These sufferings are to be considered as fatherly chastisements from God, and to be patiently submitted to on account of the benefits to be derived from them, 5-11. They should take courage and go forward, 12, 13. Directions to follow peace with all men, and to take heed that they fall not from the grace of God, 14, 15. References to the case of Esau, 16, 17. The privileges of Christians, compared with those of the Jews, by which the superior excellence of Christianity is shown, 18-24. They must take care not to reject Jesus, who now addressed them from heaven, and who was shortly to be their Judge, 25-27. As they were called to receive a kingdom, they should have grace, whereby they might serve God acceptably, 28, 29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XII.

Verse 1. **Wherefore]** This is an inference drawn from the examples produced in the preceding chapter, and on this account both should be read in connection.

**Compassed about]** Here is another allusion to the *Olympic games*: the *agonistæ*, or contenders, were often greatly animated by the consideration that the eyes of the *principal men* of their country were fixed upon them; and by this they were induced to make the most extraordinary exertions.

**Cloud of witnesses]** *νεφος μαρτυρων*. Both the *Greeks* and *Latins* frequently use the term *cloud*, to express a *great number* of persons or things; so in *Euripides*, *Phœniss.* ver. 257: *νεφος ασπιδων πυκνον*, a *dense cloud of shields*; and *Statius*, *Thebiad.*, lib. ix., ver. 120: *jaculantum nubes*, a cloud of spearmen. The same metaphor frequently occurs.

**Let us lay aside every weight]** As those who ran in the *Olympic races* would throw aside every thing that might impede them in their course; so *Christians*, professing to go to heaven, must throw aside every thing that might hinder them in their *Christian race*. Whatever weighs down our hearts or affections to earth and sense is to be carefully avoided; for no man, with the love of the world in his heart, can ever reach the kingdom of heaven.

**The sin which doth so easily beset]** *ευπεριστατον αμαρτιαν*. *The well circumstanced sin*; that which has every thing in its favour, *time*, and *place*, and *opportunity*; the *heart* and the *object*; and a sin in which all these things frequently occur, and consequently the transgression is frequently committed. *ευπεριστατος* is derived from *ευ*, *well*, *περι*, *about*, and *ιστημι*, *I stand*; the sin that stands well, or is favourably situated, ever surrounding the person and soliciting his acquiescence. What we term the *easily besetting sin* is the sin of our constitution, the sin of our trade, that in which our worldly honour, secular profit, and sensual gratification are most frequently felt and consulted. Some understand it of *original sin*, as that by which we are enveloped in body, soul, and spirit. Whatever it may be, the word gives us to understand that it is what meets us at every turn; that it is always presenting itself to us; that as a pair of compasses describe a circle by the revolution of one

leg, while the other is at rest in the centre, so this, springing from that point of corruption within, called the *carnal mind*, surrounds us in every place; we are *bounded* by it, and often hemmed in on every side; it is a circular, well fortified wall, over which we must leap, or through which we must break. The man who is addicted to a particular species of sin (for every sinner has *his way*) is represented as a prisoner in this strong fortress.

In laying aside the weight, there is an allusion to the long garments worn in the eastern countries, which, if not laid aside or tucked up in the girdle, would greatly incommode the traveller, and utterly prevent a man from running a race. The easily besetting sin of the Hebrews was an aptness to be drawn aside from their attachment to the Gospel, for fear of persecution.

**Let us run with patience the race]** *τρεχωμεν τον προκειμενον ημιν αγωνα*. Let us *start, run on, and continue running*, till we get to the goal. This figure is a favourite among the Greek writers; so *Euripides*, *Alcest.*, ver. 489: *ου τον δ' αγωνα πρωτον αν δραμοιμ' εγω*. *This is not the first race that I shall run.* *Id.* *Iphig.* in *Aulid.*, ver. 1456: *δεινους αγωνας δια σε κεινον δει δραμειν*. *He must run a hard race for thee.* This is a race which is of infinite moment to us: the prize is ineffably great; and, if we lose it, it is not a simple loss, for the whole soul perishes.

Verse 2. **Looking unto Jesus]** *αφορωντες*. Looking *off* and *on*, or *from* and *to*; looking *off* or *from* the world and all secular concerns *to* Jesus and all the spiritual and heavenly things connected with him. This is still an allusion to the Grecian games: those who ran were to keep their eyes fixed on the mark of the prize; they must keep the goal in view. The exhortation implies, 1. That they should place all their hope and confidence in Christ, as their sole helper in this race of faith. 2. That they should consider him their leader in this contest and imitate his example.

**The author and finisher of-faith]** *αρχηγος*, translated here *author*, signifies, in general, captain or leader, or the first inventor of a thing; see **#Heb 2:10**. But the reference seems to be here to the *βραβευς*, or judge in the games, whose business it was to admit the contenders, and to give the prize to the conqueror. Jesus is here represented as this officer; every Christian is a contender in this race of life, and for eternal life. The heavenly course is *begun* under Jesus; and under him it is *completed*. He is the finisher, by awarding the prize to them that are faithful unto death. Thus he is the *author* or the judge under whom, and by whose permission and direction, according to the rules of the heavenly race, they are permitted to enter the lists, and commence the race, and he is the finisher, *τελειωτης*, the *perfecter*, by awarding and giving the prize which consummates the combatants at the end of the race.

**Who, for the joy that was set before him]** The joy of fulfilling the will of the Father, **#Ps 40:6-8**, &c., in tasting death for every man; and having endured the cross and despised the shame of this ignominious death, He is set down at the right hand of God, ever appearing in the presence of God for us, and continuing his exhibition of himself as our Sacrifice, and his intercession as our Mediator. **See the notes on "Heb 10:5"**, &c. There are different other explanations given of this clause, but I think *that* here offered is the most natural. It never can, in any sense, be said of Jesus that he endured the cross, &c., in the prospect of gaining an everlasting glory; when he had the fulness of that glory with the Father before the world began; **#Joh 17:5**.



"and," the *comparative* particle כִּי *ke*, "as" or "like;" and אֲבִי *ab*, "a father:" or it may be the third person preterite *kal* of כָּאָב *caab*, "he spoiled, wasted, marred, ulcerated," compounded with the conjunction וְ *vau*, "and." And in this sense the *Septuagint* most evidently understood it; and it is so understood by the *Arabic*; and both readings seem to be combined by the *Syriac* and *Chaldee* versions. And as to רָצָה *ratsah*, one of its prime meanings is to *accept*, to receive *graciously*, to *take into favour*; the translation, therefore, of the *Septuagint* and *apostle* is perfectly consonant to the Hebrew text, and our version of #Pr 3:12 is wrong.

Verse 7. **If ye endure chastening]** If ye submit to his authority, humble yourselves under his hand, and pray for his blessing, you will find that he deals with you as beloved children, correcting you that he may make you partakers of his holiness.

**God dealeth with you as with sons]** He acknowledges by this that you belong to the *family*, and that he, as your *Father*, has you under proper discipline. It is a maxim among the Jewish rabbins that "the love which is not conjoined with reproof is not genuine."

Verse 8. **Then are ye bastards]** This proceeds on the general fact, that *bastards* are neglected in their manners and education; the fathers of such, feeling little affection for, or obligation to regard, their spurious issue. But *all* that are legitimate children *are partakers* of chastisement or discipline; for the original word παιδεία does not imply *stripes* and *punishments*, but the whole discipline of a child, both at home and at school.

Verse 9. **We have had fathers of our flesh]** The fathers of our flesh, i.e. our natural parents, were correctors; and we revered them, notwithstanding their corrections often arose from whim or caprice: but *shall we not rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits*; to him from whom we have received both body and soul; who is our Creator, Preserver, and Supporter; to whom both we and our parents owe our life and our blessings; and who corrects us only for our profit; that we may *live* and be *partakers of his holiness*? The apostle in asking, *Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits, and live?* alludes to the punishment of the *stubborn and rebellious son*, #De 21:18-21: "If a man have a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father, or the voice of his mother, and that, when they have chastened him, will not hearken unto them; then shall his father and mother lay hold on him and bring him to the elders of the city, and they shall say, This our son is stubborn and rebellious; he will not obey our voice: and all the men of the city shall stone him with stones that he DIE." Had he been subject to his earthly parents, he would have *lived*; because not subject, he *dies*. If we be subject to our heavenly Father, we shall LIVE, and be partakers of his holiness; if not, we shall DIE, and be treated as *bastards* and not *sons*. This is the sum of the apostle's meaning; and the *fact* and the *law* to which he alludes.

Verse 10. **For-a few days]** The chastisement of our earthly parents lasted only a *short time*; that of our heavenly Father will also be but a *short time*, if we submit: and as our parents ceased to correct when we learned obedience; so will our heavenly Father when the end for which he sent the chastisement is accomplished. God delights not in the rod; judgment is his strange work.

Verse 11. **No chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous]** Neither correction, wholesome restraint, domestic regulations, nor gymnastic discipline, are pleasant to them that are thus exercised;

but it is by these means that *obedient children, scholars, and great men* are made. And it is by God's discipline that *Christians* are made. He who does not bear the yoke of Christ is good for nothing to others, and never gains rest to his own soul.

**The peaceable fruit of righteousness]** *i.e.* The joyous, prosperous fruits; those fruits by which we gain much, and through which we are made happy.

**Exercised thereby.]** *γεγυμνασμενοις*· *To the trained.* There is still an allusion to the Grecian games; and in the word before us to those *gymnastic exercises* by which the candidates for the prizes were trained to the different kinds of exercises in which they were to contend when the games were publicly opened.

Verse 12. **Wherefore lift up the hands]** The apostle refers to **#Isa 35:3**. The words are an address to persons almost worn out with sickness and fatigue, whose hands hang down, whose knees shake, and who are totally discouraged. These are exhorted to exert themselves, and take courage, with the assurance that they shall infallibly conquer if they persevere.

Verse 13. **Make straight paths for your feet]** That is, Take the straight path that is before you, do not go in crooked or rough ways, where are stones, briars, and thorns, by which you will be inevitably lamed, and so totally prevented from proceeding in the way; whereas, if you go in the even, proper path, though you have been wounded by getting into a wrong way, that which was wounded will *be healed* by moderate, equal exercise, all impediments being removed. The application of all this to a correct, holy deportment in religious life, is both natural and easy.

Verse 14. **Follow peace with all men]** Cultivate, as far as you possibly can, a good understanding, both with Jews and Gentiles. *ειρηνην διωκετε*, pursue peace with the same care, attention, and diligence, as *beasts* do their *game*; follow it through all places; trace it through all winding circumstances; and have it with all men, if you can with a safe conscience.

**And holiness]** *τον αγιασμον*· That state of continual *sanctification*, that life of *purity* and *detachment* from the *world* and all its lusts, without which detachment and sanctity *no man shall see the Lord*-shall never enjoy his presence in the world of blessedness. *To see God*, in the Hebrew phrase, is to *enjoy him*; and without holiness of heart and life this is impossible. No soul can be fit for heaven that has not suitable dispositions for the place.

Verse 15. **Looking diligently]** *επισκοπουντες*· *Looking about, over, and upon*; being constantly on your guard.

**Lest any man fail of the grace of God]** *μη τις υστερων απο της χαριτος του θεου*· *Lest any person should come behind, or fall off from, this grace* or *GIFT of God*; this *state of salvation*, viz. the *Gospel system* or *Christianity*; for this is most evidently the meaning of the apostle. It is not the *falling from a work of grace in their own souls*, but from the *Gospel*, to apostatize from which they had now many temptations; and to guard them against this, the whole epistle was written.

**Lest any root of bitterness springing up]** A root of bitterness signifies a *poisonous plant*. The Hebrews call every species of poison a *bitter*, and with considerable propriety, as most plants are poisonous in proportion to the quantum of the bitter principle they possess. The *root of bitterness* is here used metaphorically for a *bad man*, or a man holding *unsound doctrines*, and endeavouring to spread them in the Church.

**Trouble you]** This alludes to the effects of poison taken into the body: the whole animal system is disturbed, sometimes violent retchings, great disturbances through the whole alimentary canal, together with the most fatal changes in the whole sanguineous system, are the consequences of poison taken into the stomach. The *blood* itself (the principle, under God, of life) becomes putrescent; and probably to this the intelligent apostle alludes when he says, *and thereby many be defiled*, *μιανθωσι*, *corrupted* or *contaminated*.

Bad example and false teaching have corrupted thousands, and are still making desolation in the *world* and in the *Church*.

Verse 16. **Lest there be any fornicator]** Any licentious person who would turn the Gospel of the grace of God into lasciviousness.

**Or profane person, as Esau]** It is not intimated that Esau was a *fornicator*; and the disjunctive *η*, *or*, separates the *profane person* from the *fornicator*. And Esau is here termed *profane*, because he so far disregarded the spiritual advantages connected with his rights of primogeniture, that he alienated the whole for a single mess of pottage. **See the note on "Ge 25:34"**. The word *βεβηλος*, which we translate *profane*, is compounded of *βε*, which in composition has a *negative* signification, and *βηλος*, *the threshold of a temple* or *sacred edifice*; and was applied to those who were not *initiated* into the sacred mysteries, or who were *despisers* of *sacred things*, and consequently were to be denied *admittance* to the *temple*, and were not permitted to *assist at holy rites*. Indeed, among the Greeks *βεβηλος* signified any thing or person which was *not consecrated to the gods*. Hence, in the opening of their worship, they were accustomed to proclaim,

*Procul, O procul, este profani!*  
VIRG.

"Hence! O hence! ye profane."

And,

*Odi profanum vulgus, et arceo.*  
HOR.

"I abominate the profane vulgar, and drive them from the temple."

The Latin *profanus*, from which we have our word, is compounded of *procul a fano*, "far from the temple," properly an *irreligious man*.

**Sold his birthright.]** *The first-born*, in patriarchal times, 1. Had a right to the priesthood, **#Ex 22:29**. 2. And a double portion of all the father's possessions, **#De 21:17**. 3. And was *lord over his*

*brethren*, #Ge 27:29, 37; 49:3. 4. And in the family of Abraham the first-born was the very source whence the Messiah as the Redeemer of the world, and the Church of God, were to spring. Farther, 5. The first-born had the right of conveying especial blessings and privileges when he came to die. See the case of Isaac and his two sons, Jacob and Esau, in the history to which the apostle alludes, Gen 27; and that of Jacob and his twelve sons, Gen 49; In short, the rights of primogeniture were among the most noble, honourable, and spiritual in the ancient world.

Verse 17. **When he would have inherited the blessing]** When he wished to have *the lordship over the whole family conveyed to him*, and sought it earnestly with tears, he found no place for a *change* in his *father's mind* and counsel, who now perceived that it was the will of God that Jacob should be made *lord of all*.

**Repentance]** Here μετανοια is not to be taken in a theological sense, as implying *contrition* for sin, but merely *change of mind* or *purpose*; nor does the word refer here to *Esau* at all, but to his *father*, whom Esau could not, with all his tears and entreaties, persuade to reverse what he had done. *I have blessed him*, said he, *yea, and he must be blessed*; I cannot reverse it now. See the whole of this transaction largely considered and explained, **See the notes on "Ge 25:29"**, &c., and **See "Ge 27:1"**, &c. Nothing spoken here by the apostle, nor in the history in Genesis to which he refers, concerns the *eternal* state of either of the two brothers. The use made of the transaction by the apostle is of great importance: Take heed lest, by apostatizing from the Gospel, ye forfeit all right and title to the heavenly birthright, and never again be able to retrieve it; because they who reject the Gospel reject the only means of salvation.

Verse 18. - 21. **For ye are not come unto the mount that might be touched]** I believe the words ψηλαφωμενω ορει should be translated *to a palpable* or *material mountain*; for that it was not a mountain that on this occasion *might be touched*, the history, #Ex 19:12, 13, shows; and the apostle himself, in #Heb 12:20, confirms. It is called here a *palpable* or *material* mount, to distinguish it from that *spiritual mount* Sion, of which the apostle is speaking. Some contend that it should be translated *tacto de caelo*, thunder-struck; this sense would agree well enough with the scope of the place. The apostle's design is to show that the dispensation of the law engendered terror; that it was most awful and exclusive; that it belonged only to the Jewish people; and that, even to them, it was so terrible that they *could not endure that which was commanded*, and entreated that God would not communicate with them in his own person, but by the ministry of Moses: and even to Moses, who held the highest intimacy with Jehovah, the revealed glories, the burning fire, the blackness, the darkness, the tempest, the loud-sounding trumpet, and the voice of words, were so terrible that he said, *I exceedingly fear and tremble*.

These were the things which were exhibited on that *material* mountain; but the Gospel dispensation is one grand, copious, and interesting display of the infinite love of God. It is all encouragement; breathes nothing but mercy; is not an exclusive system; embraces the whole human race; has Jesus, the sinner's friend, for its mediator; is ratified by his blood; and is suited, most gloriously suited, to all the wants and wishes of every soul of man.

Verse 22. **But ye are come unto mount Sion]** In order to enter fully into the apostle's meaning, we must observe, 1. That the Church, which is called here the *city of the living God*, the heavenly

Jerusalem, and mount Sion, is represented under the notion of a CITY. 2. That the great assembly of believers in Christ is here opposed to the congregation of the Israelites assembled at Mount Sinai. 3. That the *innumerable company of angels* is here opposed to, those angels by whom the law was ushered in, #Ac 7:53; #Ga 3:19. 4. That the Gospel *first-born, whose names are written in heaven*, are here opposed to the *enrolled first-born* among the Israelites, #Ex 24:5; 19:22. 5. That the *mediator* of the new covenant, the Lord *Jesus*, is here opposed to *Moses*, the mediator of the old. 6. And that the *blood of sprinkling*, of Christ, our High Priest, refers to the act of Moses, #Ex 24:8: "And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, Behold the blood of the covenant, which the Lord hath made with you concerning all these words."

1. The description in these verses does not refer to a *heavenly state*; for the *terrible nature* of the *Mosaic dispensation* is never opposed to heaven or life eternal, but to the economy of the New Testament. 2. In heaven there is no need of a *mediator*, or *sprinkling of blood*; but these are mentioned in the state which the apostle describes.

**The heavenly Jerusalem]** This phrase means the Church of the New Testament, as *Schoettgen* has amply proved in his dissertation on this subject.

**To an innumerable company of angels]** μυριασιν αγγελων· *To myriads, tens of thousands, of angels.* These are represented as the attendants upon God, when he manifests himself in any external manner to mankind. When he gave the law at Mount Sinai, it is intimated that myriads of these holy beings attended him. "The chariots of the Lord are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels; the Lord is among them as in Sinai, in the holy place;" #Ps 68:17. And when he shall come to judge the world, he will be attended with a similar company. "Thousand thousands ministered unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before him;" #Da 7:10. In both these cases, as in several others, these seem to be, speaking after the manner of men, the *body guard* of the Almighty. Though angels make a part of the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, yet they belong also to the Church below. Christ has in some sort incorporated them with his followers, for "they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation," and they are all ever considered as making a part of God's subjects.

Verse 23. **To the general assembly]** πανηγυρει. This word is joined to the preceding by some of the best MSS., and is quoted in connection by several of the fathers: *Ye are come-to the general assembly of innumerable angels*; and this is probably the true connection.

The word πανηγυρις is compounded of παν, *all*, and αγυρις, an *assembly*; and means, particularly, an assembly collected on *festive* occasions. It is applied to the assembly of the *Grecian states* at their national games, Olympic, Isthmian, &c.; and hence a speech pronounced in *favour* of any person at such festive assemblies was called πανηγυρικός λογος, a *panegyric discourse*; and hence our word *panegyric*.

**The first-born]** Those who first received the Gospel of Christ, and who are elsewhere termed the *first fruits*: this is spoken in allusion to the first-born among the Israelites, who were all considered as the Lord's property, and were dedicated to him. The Jews gave the title בכור bechor,

first-born, to those who were very eminent or excellent; what we would term the *head* or *top of his kin*. *The Church of the first-born* is the assembly of the *most excellent*.

**Which are written in heaven]** Who are enrolled as citizens of the New Jerusalem, and are entitled to all the rights, privileges, and immunities of the Church here, and of heaven above. This is spoken in allusion to the custom of enrolling or writing on tables, &c., the names of all the citizens of a particular city; and all those thus registered were considered as having a right to live there, and to enjoy all its privileges. All genuine believers are denizens of heaven. That is their country, and there they have their rights, &c. And every member of Christ has a right to, and can demand, every ordinance in the Church of his Redeemer; and wo to him who attempts to prevent them!

**God the Judge of all.]** The supreme God is ever present in this general assembly: *to* him they are all gathered; *by* him they are admitted to all those rights, &c.; under his inspection they continue to act; and it is he alone who erases from the register those who act unworthily of their citizenship. *Judge* here is to be taken in the Jewish use of the term, i.e. one who exercises *sovereign rule* and *authority*.

**The spirits of just men made perfect]** We cannot understand these terms without the assistance of Jewish phraseology. The Jews divide mankind into three classes:—

1. The JUST PERFECT, צדיקים גמורים *tsaddikim gemurim*.
2. The wicked perfect, רשעים גמורים *reshaim gemurim*.
3. Those between both, בינוניים *beinoniyim*.

1. The *just perfect* are those, 1. Who have conquered all brutal appetites and gross passions. 2. Who have stood in the time of strong temptation. 3. Who give alms with a sincere heart. 4. Who worship the true God only. 5. Who are not invidious. 6. Those from whom God has taken יצר הרע *yetsar hara*, evil concupiscence, and given יצר טוב *yetsar tob*, the good principle.

2. The *wicked perfect* are those, 1. Who never repent. 2. They receive their portion in this life, because they can have none in the life to come, and are under the influence of יצר הרע *yetsar hara*, the evil principle.

3. The *intermediate* are those who are influenced partly by the evil principle, and partly by the good.—See *Schoettgen*.

In several parts of this epistle τελειος, *the just man*, signifies one who has a *full knowledge* of the Christian system, who is justified and saved by Christ Jesus; and the τετελειωμενοι are the *adult Christians*, who are opposed to the νηπιου or *babes in knowledge and grace*. See #**Heb 5:12-14**; #**8:11**; and #**Ga 4:1-3**. *The spirits of the just men made perfect*, or the *righteous perfect*, are the full grown Christians; those who are justified by the blood and sanctified by the Spirit of Christ. Being *come* to such, implies that spiritual union which the disciples of Christ have with each other, and which they possess how far soever separate; for they are *all joined in one spirit*, #**Eph 2:18**; they are *in the unity of the spirit*, #**Eph 4:3, 4**; and of *one soul*, #**Ac 4:32**. This is a *unity* which was never

possessed even by the Jews themselves in their best state; it is peculiar to real Christianity: as to *nominal* Christianity, wars and desolations between man and his fellows are quite consistent with *its* spirit. See at the end of the chapter. See "**Heb 12:29**"

Verse 24. **And to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant]** The old covenant and its mediator, Moses, are passed away. See #**Heb 8:13**. The new covenant, i.e. the Gospel, is now in force, and will be to the end of the world; and Jesus, the Son of God, the brightness of the Father's glory, the Maker and Preserver of all things, the Saviour and the Judge of all men, is its mediator. Both the covenant and its mediator are infinitely superior to those of the Jews, and they are very properly set down here among the superior benefits and glories of Christianity.

**To the blood of sprinkling]** This is an allusion, as was before observed, to the sprinkling of the blood of the covenant sacrifice upon the people, when that covenant was made upon Mount Sinai; to the sprinkling of the blood of the sin-offerings before the mercy-seat; and probably to the sprinkling of the blood of the paschal lamb on their houses, to prevent their destruction by the destroying angel. But all these sprinklings were *partial* and inefficacious, and had no meaning but as they referred to this: the blood of sprinkling under the new covenant is ever ready; all may have it applied; it continues through ages; and is the highest glory of Christianity, because by it we draw nigh to God, and through it get our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and, in a word, have an entrance unto the holiest by the blood of Jesus.

**Better things than that of Abel.]** God accepted Abel's sacrifice, and, was well pleased with it; for Abel was a righteous man, and offered his sacrifice by *faith* in the great promise. But the blood of Christ's sacrifice was infinitely more precious than the blood of Abel's sacrifice, as Jesus is infinitely greater than Abel; and the blood of Christ avails for the sins of the *whole world*, whereas the blood of Abel's sacrifice could avail only for *himself*.

Many have supposed that the *blood of Abel* means here the blood that was shed by Cain in the murder of this holy man, and that the blood of Jesus *speaks better things than it does*, because the blood of Abel *called for vengeance*, but the blood of Christ *for pardon*; this interpretation reflects little credit on the understanding of the apostle. To say that the blood of Christ *spoke better things than that of Abel* is saying little indeed; it might speak very little good to any soul of man, and yet speak *better things* than *that* blood of Abel which spoke no kind of good to any human creature, and only called for vengeance against him that shed it. The truth is, the *sacrifice* offered by Abel is that which is intended; that, as we have already seen, was pleasing in the sight of God, and was accepted in behalf of him who offered it: but the blood of Christ is infinitely more acceptable with God; it was shed for the whole human race, and cleanses all who believe from all unrighteousness.

Verse 25. **See]** βλέπετε· *Take heed, that ye refuse not him-* the Lord Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant, who now speaketh *from heaven*, by his Gospel, to the Jews and to the Gentiles, having in his incarnation come down from God.

**Him that spake on earth]** Moses, who spoke on the part of God to the Hebrews, every transgression of whose word received a just recompense of reward, none being permitted to *escape* punishment; consequently, if ye turn away from Christ, who speaks to you from heaven, you may

expect a much sorer punishment, the offence against God being so much the more heinous, as the privileges slighted are more important and glorious.

Verse 26. **Whose voice then shook the earth]** Namely, at the giving of the law on Mount Sinai; and from this it seems that it was the voice of *Jesus* that then shook the earth, and that it was he who came down on the mount. But others refer this simply to God the Father giving the law.

**Not the earth only, but also heaven.]** Probably referring to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, and the total abolition of the political and ecclesiastical constitution of the Jews; the one being signified by the *earth*, the other by *heaven*; for the Jewish state and worship are frequently thus termed in the prophetic writings. And this seems to be the apostle's meaning, as he evidently refers to **#Hag 2:6**, where this event is predicted. It may also remotely refer to the final dissolution of all things.

Verse 27. **The removing of those things that are shaken]** The whole of the *Jewish polity*, which had been in a *shaken state* from the time that Judea had fallen under the power of the Romans.

**As of things that are made]** That is, subjects intended to last only for a time. God never designed that the Jewish religion should become general, nor be permanent.

**Those things which cannot be shaken]** The whole *Gospel system*, which cannot be *moved* by the power of man.

**May remain.]** Be permanent; God designing that this shall be the *last dispensation* of his grace and mercy, and that it shall continue till the earth and the heavens are no more.

Verse 28. **We receiving a kingdom]** The Gospel dispensation, frequently termed the *kingdom of God* and the *kingdom of heaven*, because in it God reigns among men, and he reigns in the hearts of them that believe, and his kingdom is righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.

**Which cannot be moved]** Which never can fail, because it is the last dispensation.

**Let us have grace]** *εξωμεν χαριν*. *Let us have, keep, or hold fast, the benefit or gift*, that is, the heavenly kingdom which God has given us. This is the meaning of the word, **#2Co 8:4**, and is so rendered by our translators; and it is only by this *heavenly gift* of the Gospel that we can serve God acceptably, for he can be pleased with no service that is not performed according to the Gospel of his Son.

If we prefer the common meaning of the word *grace* it comes to the same thing; without the *grace*-the especial *succour* and *influence of Christ*, we cannot serve, *λατρευωμεν*, pay religious worship to God; for he receives no *burnt-offering* that is not kindled by fire from his own altar.

**Acceptably]** *ευαρεστως*: In such a way as to *please* him well. And the offering, with which he is *well pleased*, he will *graciously accept*; and if he accept our service, his Spirit will testify in our

conscience that our ways please him. When *Abel* sacrifices, God is well pleased; where *Cain* offers, there is no approbation.

**Reverence]** αἰδους· With *shamefacedness* or *modesty*.

**Godly fear]** εὐλαβειας· *Religious fear*. We have boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, but let that boldness be ever tempered with *modesty* and *religious fear*; for we should never forget that *we have sinned*, and that *God is a consuming fire*. Instead of αἰδους και εὐλαβειας, *modesty* and *religious fear*, ACD\*, several others, with the Slavonic and Chrysostom, have εὐλαβειας και δεους, and others have ψοβου και τρομου, *fear and trembling*; but the sense is nearly the same.

Verse 29. **For our God is a consuming fire.]** The apostle quotes #De 4:24, and by doing so he teaches us this great truth, that sin under the Gospel is as abominable in God's sight as it was under the law; and that the man who does not labour to serve God with the principle and in the way already prescribed, will find that fire to consume *him* which would otherwise have consumed his *sin*.

#### *Additional remarks on verses #Heb 12:22-24.*

On the whole, I think the description in these verses refers to the state of the Church *here below*, and not to any *heavenly state*. Let us review the particulars: 1. As the law was given on Mount *Sinai*, so the Gospel was given at Mount *Sion*. 2. As *Jerusalem* was the city of the living God while the Jewish dispensation lasted, (for *there* was the temple, its services, sacrifices, &c.,) the Christian Church is now called the *heavenly Jerusalem*, the city of the living God. In it is the great sacrifice, in it that spiritual worship, which God, the infinite Spirit, requires. 3. The ministry of angels was used under the *old covenant*, but that was *partial*, being granted only to particular persons, such as Moses, Joshua, Manoah, &c., and only to a few before the law, as Abraham, Jacob, &c. It is employed under the *new covenant* in its utmost latitude, not to a few peculiarly favoured people, but to all the followers of God in general; so that in this very epistle the apostle asserts that they are all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation. 4. At the giving of the law, when the Church of the old covenant was formed, there was a *general assembly* of the *different tribes* by their representatives; in the Gospel Church all who believe in Christ, of every nation, and kindred, and tongue, form one grand aggregate body. Believers of all nations, of all languages, of all climates, however differing in their colour or local habits, are one in Christ Jesus; one body, of which he is the head, and the Holy Spirit the soul. 5. The *first-born* under the old dispensation had exclusive privileges; they had authority, emolument, and honour, of which the other children in the same family did not partake: but under the new, all who believe in Christ Jesus, with a heart unto righteousness, are equally children of God, are all entitled to the same privileges; for, says the apostle, ye are all children of God by faith in Christ, and to them that received him he gave authority to become the children of God; so that through the whole of this Divine family all have *equal rights* and *equal privileges*, all have GOD for their *portion*, and *heaven* for their *inheritance*. 6. As those who had the rights of citizens were *enrolled*, and their names *entered on tables*, &c., so that it might be known who were *citizens*, and who had the rights of such; so all the faithful under the new covenant are represented as having their names written in heaven, which is another form of speech for, *have a right to that glorious state*, and all the blessings it possesses; *there* are their possessions, and there are their rights. 7. Only the high priest, and he but one day in the year, was

permitted to *approach God* under the Old Testament dispensation; but under the New, every believer in Jesus can *come even to the throne*, each has liberty to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, and, to real Christians alone it can be said, *Ye are come-to God the Judge of all*-to him ye have constant access, and from him ye are continually receiving grace upon grace. We have already seen that the *righteous perfect*, or the *just men made perfect*, is a Jewish phrase, and signified those who had made the farthest advances in moral rectitude. The apostle uses it here to point out those in the Church of Christ who had received the highest degrees of grace, possessed most of the mind of Christ, and were doing and suffering most for the glory of God; those who were most deeply acquainted with the things of God and the mysteries of the Gospel, such as the apostles, evangelists, the primitive teachers, and those who presided in and over different Churches. And these are termed the *spirits διακαίων τετελειωμένων*, of the *just perfected*, because they were a *spiritual* people, forsaking *earth*, and living in reference to that *spiritual rest* that was typified by Canaan. In short, all genuine Christians had communion with each other, through God's Spirit, and even with those whose faces they had not seen in the flesh. 9. Moses, as the servant of God, and *mediator of the old covenant*, was of great consequence in the Levitical economy. By his laws and maxims every thing was directed and tried; and *to him* the whole Hebrew people *came* for both their civil and religious ordinances: but Christians *come* to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant; he not only stands immediately between God and man, but reconciles and connects both. From him we receive the Divine law, by his maxims our conversation is to be ruled, and he gives both the light and life by which we walk; these things Moses could not do, and for such *spirituality* and *excellence* the old covenant made no provision; it was therefore a high privilege to be able to say, *Ye are come-to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant*. 10. The Jews had their blood of sprinkling, but it could not satisfy as touching things which concerned the conscience; it took away no guilt, it made no reconciliation to God: but the blood of sprinkling under the Christian covenant purifies from all unrighteousness; for the blood of the new covenant was shed for the remission of sins, and by its infinite merit it still continues to sprinkle and cleanse the unholy. All these are privileges of infinite consequence to the salvation of man; privileges which should be highly esteemed and most cautiously guarded; and because they are so great, so necessary, and so unattainable in the Levitical economy, therefore we should lay aside every weight, &c., and run with perseverance the race that is set before us. I see nothing therefore in these verses which determines their sense to the heavenly state; all is suited to the state of the Church of Christ militant here on earth; and some of these particulars cannot be applied to the Church triumphant on any rule of construction whatever.

# HEBREWS

## CHAPTER XIII.

*Exhortations to hospitality to Strangers, 1, 2. Kindness to those in bonds, 3. Concerning marriage, 4. Against covetousness, 5, 6. How they should imitate their teachers, 7, 8. To avoid strange doctrines, 9. Of the Jewish sin-offerings, 10, 11. Jesus suffered without the gate, and we should openly confess him and bear his reproach, 12, 13. Here we have no permanent residence; and while we live should devote ourselves to God, and live to do good, 14-16. We should obey them that have the rule over us, 17. The apostle exhorts them to pray for him, that he might be restored to them the sooner, 18, 19. Commends them to God in a very solemn prayer, 20, 21. Entreats them to bear the word of exhortation, mentions Timothy, and concludes with the apostolical benediction, 22-25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XIII.

Verse 1. **Let brotherly love continue.**] Be all of one heart and one soul. Feel for, comfort, and support each other; and remember that he who professes to love God should love his brother also. They had this brotherly love among them; they should take care to retain it. As God is remarkable for his *φιλανθρωπια*, *philanthropy*, or love to man, so should they be for *φιλαδελφια*, or *love to each other*. **See the note on "Tit 3:4"**.

Verse 2. **To entertain strangers**] In those early times, when there were scarcely any public inns or houses of entertainment, it was an office of charity and mercy to receive, lodge, and entertain travellers; and this is what the apostle particularly recommends.

**Entertained angels**] Abraham and Lot are the persons particularly referred to. Their history, the angels whom they entertained, not knowing them to be such, and the good they derived from exercising their hospitality on these occasions, are well known; and have been particularly referred to in the notes on **#Ge 18:3; 19:2**.

Verse 3. **Remember them that are in bonds**] He appears to refer to those Christian's who were suffering imprisonment for the testimony of Jesus.

**As bound with them**] Feel for them as you would wish others to feel for you were you in their circumstances, knowing that, being in the body, you are liable to the same evils, and may be called to suffer in the same way for the same cause.

Verse 4. **Marriage is honourable in all**] Let this state be highly esteemed as one of God's own instituting, and as highly calculated to produce the best interests of mankind. This may have been said against the opinions of the *Essenes*, called *Therapeutæ*, who held marriage in little repute, and totally abstained from it themselves as a state of comparative imperfection. At the same time it shows the absurdity of the popish tenet, that marriage in the clergy is both dishonourable and sinful; which is, in fact, in opposition to the apostle, who says marriage is honourable in ALL; and to the institution of God, which evidently designed that every male and female should be united in this holy

bond; and to nature, which in every part of the habitable world has produced men and women in due proportion to each other.

**The bed undefiled]** Every man cleaving to his own wife, and every wife cleaving to her own husband, because *God will judge*, i.e. punish, all *fornicators* and *adulterers*.

Instead of *δε but*, *γαρ, for*, is the reading of AD\*, one other, with the *Vulgate, Coptic*, and one of the *Itala*; it more forcibly expresses the *reason* of the prohibition: *Let the bed be undefiled, FOR whoremongers and adulterers God will judge.*

Verse 5. **Let your conversation]** That is, the whole tenor of your conduct, *τροπος*, the *manner of your life*, or rather the *disposition* of your hearts in reference to all your secular transactions; for in this sense the original is used by the best Greek writers.

Be **without covetousness]** Desire nothing more than what God has given you; and especially covet nothing which the Divine Providence has given to another man, for this is the very *spirit of robbery*.

**Content with such things as ye have]** *αρκουμενοι τοις παρουσιν*· *Being satisfied with present things*. In one of the sentences of *Phocylides* we have a sentiment in nearly the same words as that of the apostle: *αρκεισθαι παρουσιν, και αλλοτριων απεχεσθαι*· *Be content with present things, and abstain from others*. The covetous man is ever running out into futurity with insatiable desires after secular good; and, if this disposition be not checked, it increases as the subject of it increases in years. Covetousness is the vice of old age.

**I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.]** These words were, in sum, spoken to Joshua, **#Jos 1:5**: "As I was with Moses, so will I be with thee; *I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*." They were spoken also by David to Solomon, **#1Ch 28:20**: "David said to Solomon his son, Be strong and of good courage, and do it: fear not, nor be dismayed; for the Lord God, even my God, will be with thee; *he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee*." The apostle, in referring to the same promises, feels authorized to strengthen the expressions, as the Christian dispensation affords more consolation and confidence in matters of this kind than the old covenant did. The words are peculiarly emphatic: *ου μη σε ανω, ουδ' ου μη σε εγκαταλιπω*. There are no less than *five negatives* in this short sentence, and these connected with two verbs and one pronoun twice repeated. To give a literal translation is scarcely possible; it would run in this way: "No, I will not leave thee; no, neither will I not utterly forsake thee." Those who understand the genius of the Greek language, and look at the manner in which these negatives are placed in the sentence, will perceive at once how much the meaning is strengthened by them, and to what an emphatic and energetic affirmative they amount.

This promise is made to those who are patiently bearing affliction or persecution for Christ's sake; and may be applied to any faithful soul in affliction, temptation, or adversity of any kind. Trust in the Lord with thy whole heart, and never lean to thy own understanding; for he hath said, "No, I will never leave thee; not I: I will never, never cast thee off."

Verse 6. **So that we may boldly say]** We, in such circumstances, while cleaving to the Lord, may confidently apply to ourselves what God spake to Joshua and to Solomon; and what he spake to David, "The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man can do." God is omnipotent, man's power is limited; howsoever strong he may be, he can do nothing against the Almighty.

Verse 7. **Remember them which have the rule over you]** This clause should be translated, *Remember your guides*, τῶν ηγουμένων, *who have spoken unto you the doctrine of God*. Theodoret's note on this verse is very judicious: "He intends the saints who were dead, Stephen the first martyr, James the brother of John, and James called the Just. And there were many others who were taken off by the Jewish rage. 'Consider these, (said he,) and, observing their example, imitate their faith.'" This remembrance of the dead saints, with admiration of their virtues, and a desire to imitate them, is, says Dr. Macknight, the only worship which is due to them from the living.

**Considering the end of their conversation]** ὧν αναθεωροῦντες την εκβασιν της αναστροφης· "The issue of whose course of life most carefully consider." They lived to get good and do good; they were faithful to their God and his cause; they suffered persecution; and for the testimony of Jesus died a violent death. God never left them; no, he never forsook them; so that they were happy in their afflictions, and glorious in their death. Carefully consider this; act as they did; keep the faith, and God will keep you.

Verse 8. **Jesus Christ the same yesterday]** In all past times there was no way to the holiest but through the blood of Jesus, either actually shed, or significantly typified. *To-day*-he is the lamb newly slain, and continues to appear in the presence of God for us. *For ever*-to the conclusion of time, he will be the way, the truth, and the life, none coming to the Father but through him; and throughout eternity, εἰς τους αιωνας, it will appear that all glorified human spirits owe their salvation to his infinite merit. This Jesus was thus witnessed of by your guides, who are already departed to glory. Remember HIM; remember *them*; and take heed to *yourselves*.

Verse 9. **Be not carried about]** μη περιφερεσθε· *Be not whirled about*. But ABCD, and almost every other MS. of importance, with the Syriac, Coptic, Arabic, Vulgate, and several of the Greek fathers, have μη παραφερσθε, *be not carried away*, which is undoubtedly the true reading, and signifies here, *do not apostatize*; permit not yourselves to be carried off from Christ and his doctrine.

**Divers and strange doctrines.]** διδαχαις, ποικιλαις· *Variiegated doctrines*; those that blended the law and the Gospel, and brought in the Levitical sacrifices and institutions in order to perfect the Christian system. Remember the old covenant is abolished; the *new* alone is in force.

**Strange doctrines,** διδαχαις ξεναις, foreign doctrines; such as have no *apostolical* authority to recommend them.

**That the heart be established with grace]** It is well to have the heart, the mind, and conscience, fully satisfied with the truth and efficacy of the *Gospel*; for so the word χαρις should be understood here, which is put in opposition to βρωμασιν, meats, signifying here the Levitical institutions, and especially its *sacrifices*, these being emphatically termed *meats*, because the offerers were permitted to *feast* upon them after the blood had been poured out before the Lord. See #Le 7:15; #De 12:6, 7.

**Which have not profited them]** Because they neither took away guilt, cleansed the heart, nor gave power over sin.

Verse 10. **We have an altar]** The altar is here put for the sacrifice on the altar; the Christian altar is the Christian sacrifice, which is Christ Jesus, with all the benefits of his passion and death. To these privileges they had no right who continued to offer the Levitical sacrifices, and to trust in them for remission of sins.

Verse 11. **For the bodies of those beasts]** Though in making covenants, and in some victims offered according to the law, the flesh of the sacrifice was eaten by the offerers; yet the flesh of the *sin-offering* might no man eat: when the blood was sprinkled before the holy place to make an atonement for their souls, the skins, flesh, entrails, &c., were carried without the camp, and there entirely consumed by fire; and this entire consumption, according to the opinion of some, was intended to show that sin was not pardoned by such offerings. For, as *eating* the other sacrifices intimated they were made *partakers* of the benefits procured by those sacrifices, so, not being permitted to eat of the sin-offering proved that they had no benefit from it, and that they must look to the Christ, whose sacrifice is pointed out, that they might receive that real pardon of sin which the shedding of his blood could alone procure. While, therefore, they continued offering those sacrifices, and refused to acknowledge the Christ, they had no right to any of the blessings procured by him, and it is evident they could have no benefit from their own.

Verse 12. **That he might sanctify the people]** That he might consecrate them to God, and make an atonement for their sins, he *suffered without the gate* at Jerusalem, as the sin-offering was consumed *without the camp* when the tabernacle abode in the wilderness. Perhaps all this was typical of the abolition of the Jewish sacrifices, and the termination of the whole Levitical system of worship. He left the city, denounced its final destruction, and abandoned it to its fate; and suffered without the gate to bring the Gentiles to God.

Verse 13. **Let us go forth therefore unto him]** Let us leave this city and system, devoted to destruction, and take refuge in Jesus alone, bearing his reproach-being willing to be accounted the refuse of all things, and the worst of men, for his sake who bore the contradiction of sinners against himself, and was put to death as a malefactor.

Verse 14. **For here have we no continuing city]** Here is an elegant and forcible allusion to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem. The Jerusalem that was *below* was about to be burnt with fire, and erased to the ground; the Jerusalem that was *from above* was that alone which could be considered to be *μενουσαν*, *permanent*. The words seem to say: "Arise, and depart; for this is not your rest: it is polluted:" About seven or eight years after this, Jerusalem was wholly destroyed.

Verse 15. **By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise]** He has now fulfilled all vision and prophecy, has offered the last bloody sacrifice which God will ever accept; and as he is the gift of God's love to the world, let us through him offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, this being the substitute for all the Levitical sacrifices.

The Jews allowed that, in the time of the Messiah, all sacrifices, except the sacrifice of praise, should cease. To this maxim the apostle appears to allude; and, understood in this way, his words are much more forcible. In *Vayikra Rabba*, sect. 9, fol. 153, and Rabbi *Tanchum*, fol. 55: "Rabbi Phineas, Rabbi Levi, and Rabbi Jochanan, from the authority of Rabbi Menachem of Galilee, said, *In the time of the Messiah all sacrifice shall cease, except the sacrifice of praise.*" This was, in effect, quoting the authority of one of their own maxims, that *now* was the time of the Messiah; that Jesus was that Messiah; that the Jewish sacrificial system was now abolished; and that no sacrifice would now be accepted of God, except the sacrifice of praise for the gift of his Son.

**That is, the fruit of our lips]** This expression is probably borrowed from #**Ho 14:2**, in the version of the Septuagint, καρπον χειλεων which in the Hebrew text is פְּרִים שֶׁפִּהֵינוּ *parim sephatheinu*, "the heifers of our lips." This may refer primarily to the *sacrifices, heifers, calves, &c.*, which they had *vowed* to God; so that the *calves of their lips* were the sacrifices which they had *promised*. But how could the Septuagint translate פְּרִים *parim, calves*, by καρπον, *fruit*? Very easily, if they had in their copy פֶּרִי *peri*, the *mem* being omitted; and thus the word would be literally *fruit*, and not *calves*. This reading, however, is not found in any of the MSS. hitherto collated.

Verse 16. **But to do good and to communicate]** These are continual sacrifices which God requires, and which will spring from a sense of God's love in Christ Jesus. Praise to God for his unspeakable gift, and acts of kindness to men for God's sake. No reliance, even on the infinitely meritorious sacrifice of Christ, can be acceptable in the sight of God if a man have not love and charity towards his neighbour. Praise, prayer, and thanksgiving to God, with works of charity and mercy to man, are the sacrifices which every genuine follower of Christ must offer: and they are the proofs that a man belongs to Christ; and he who does not bear these fruits gives full evidence, whatever his *creed* may be, that he is no Christian.

Verse 17. **Obey them that have the rule over you]** Obey your *leaders*, τοις ηγουμενοις. He is not fit to *rule* who is not capable of *guiding*. See Clarke on "**Heb 13:7**". In the former verse the apostle exhorts them to remember those who had been their leaders, and to imitate their faith; in this he exhorts them to obey the leaders they now had, and to submit to their authority in all matters of doctrine and discipline, on the ground that they *watched for their souls*, and should have to give an account of their conduct to God. If this conduct were improper, they must give in their report before the great tribunal with *grief*; but *in* it must be given: if holy and pure, they would give it in with *joy*. It is an awful consideration that many pastors, who had loved their flocks as their own souls, shall be obliged to accuse them before God for either having *rejected* or *neglected* the great salvation.

Verse 18. **Pray for us]** Even the success of apostles depended, in a certain way, on the prayers of the Church. Few Christian congregations feel, as they ought, that it is their bounden duty to pray for the success of the Gospel, both among themselves and in the world. The Church is weak, dark, poor, and imperfect, because it prays little.

**We trust we have a good conscience]** We are persuaded that we have a conscience that not only acquits us of all fraud and sinister design, but assures us that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have laboured to promote the welfare of you and of all mankind.

**To live honestly.]** εν πασι καλως θελοντες αναστρεφεισθαι· *Willing in all things to conduct ourselves well-to behave with decency and propriety.*

Verse 19. **The rather to do this]** That is, pray for us, that, being enabled to complete the work which God has given us *here* to do, we may be the sooner enabled to visit *you*. It is evident, from this, that the people to whom this epistle was written knew well who was the author of it; nor does there appear, in any place, any design in the writer to conceal his name, and how the epistle came to lack a name it is impossible to say. I have sometimes thought that a part of the beginning might have been lost, as it not only begins without a name, but begins very abruptly.

Verse 20. **Now the God of peace]** We have often seen that *peace* among the Hebrews signifies *prosperity* of every kind. *The God of peace* is the same as the God of all blessedness, who has at his disposal all temporal and eternal good; who loves mankind, and has provided them a complete salvation.

**Brought again from the dead our Lord]** As our Lord's sacrificial death is considered as an atonement offered to the Divine justice, God's acceptance of it as an atonement is signified by his raising the human nature of Christ from the dead; and hence this raising of Christ is, with the utmost propriety, attributed to *God the Father*, as this proves his acceptance of the sacrificial offering.

**That great Shepherd of the sheep]** This is a title of our blessed Lord, given to him by the prophets; so **#Isa 40:11**; *He shall feed his flock like a shepherd; He shall gather the lambs with his arms, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those which are with young:* and **#Eze 34:23**; *I will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed them; even my servant David,* (i.e. the beloved, viz. Jesus,) and *he shall feed them, and be their shepherd:* and **#Zec 13:7**; *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd-smite the shepherd, and the flock shall be scattered.* In all these places the term *shepherd* is allowed to belong to our blessed Lord; and he appropriates it to himself, **#Joh 10:11**, by calling himself *the good Shepherd, who, lays down his life for the sheep.*

**Through the blood of the everlasting covenant]** Some understand this in the following way, that "God brought back our Lord from the dead on account of his having shed his blood to procure the everlasting covenant." Others, that the Lord Jesus became the great Shepherd and Saviour of the sheep by shedding his blood to procure and ratify the everlasting covenant." The sense, however, will appear much plainer if we connect this with the following verse: "Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead, our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, make you, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, perfect in every good work to do his will." The Christian system is termed the *everlasting covenant*, to distinguish it from the *temporary covenant* made with the Israelites at Mount Sinai; and to show that it is the *last* dispensation of grace to the world, and shall endure to the end of time.

Verse 21. **Make you perfect]** καταρτισια υμας: Put you completely *in joint*. See **Clarke's note on "2Co 13:9"**, where the meaning of the original word is largely considered. From the following terms we see what the apostle meant by the *perfection* for which he prays. They were to do the will of God in every good work, from God working in them that which is well pleasing in his sight. 1. This necessarily implies a complete change in the whole soul, that God may be well pleased with

whatsoever he sees in it; and this supposes its being cleansed from all sin, for God's *sight* cannot be *pleased* with any thing that is unholy. 2. This complete *inward purity* is to produce an outward conformity to God's will, so they were to be *made perfect in every good work*. 3. The *perfection within* and the *perfection without* were to be produced *by the blood of the everlasting covenant*; for although God is love, yet it is not consistent with his justice or holiness to communicate any good to mankind but through his Son, and through him as having died for the offences of the human race.

**To whom be glory for ever.]** As God does all *in, by, and through* Christ Jesus, to him be the honour of his own work ascribed through time and eternity. Amen.

Verse 22. **Suffer the word of exhortation]** Bear the word or doctrine of this exhortation. This seems to be an epithet of this whole epistle: and as the apostle had in it shown the insufficiency of the Levitical system to atone for sin and save the soul; and had proved that it was the design of God that it should be abolished; and had proved also that it was now abolished by the coming of Christ, whom he had shown to be a greater priest than Aaron, higher than all the angels, the only Son of God as to his human nature, and the Creator, Governor, and Judge of all; and that their city was shortly to be destroyed; he might suppose that they would feel prejudiced against him, and thus lose the benefit of his kind intentions toward them; therefore he entreats them to bear the exhortation which, notwithstanding the great extent of the subject, he had included in a short compass.

**I have written a letter unto you in few words.]** Perhaps it would be better to translate *δια βραχων επιστελα υμιν*, *I have written to you briefly*, as *επιστελλειν* often signifies simply to *write*, and this appears to be its meaning here.

Verse 23. **Know ye that our brother Timothy]** The word *ημων*, *our*, which is *supplied* by our translators, is very probably genuine, as it is found in ACD\*, ten others, the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, and *Vulgate*.

**Is set at liberty]** *απολελυμενον*. *Is sent away*; for there is no evidence that Timothy had been imprisoned. It is probable that the apostle refers here to his being sent into Macedonia, **#Php 2:19-24**, in order that he might bring the apostle an account of the affairs of the Church in that country. In none of St. Paul's epistles, written during his confinement in Rome, does he give any intimation of Timothy's *imprisonment*, although it appears from **#Php 1:1**; **#Col 1:1**; **#Phm 1:1**; that he was with Paul during the greatest part of the time.

**With whom, if he come shortly, I will see you.]** Therefore Paul himself, or the writer of this epistle, was now at liberty, as he had the disposal of his person and time in his own power. Some suppose that Timothy did actually visit Paul about this time, and that both together visited the Churches in Judea.

Verse 24. **Salute all them that have the rule over you]** *Salute all your leaders or guides*, *τους ηγουμενους υμων*. See Clarke on "**Heb 13:7**" and "**Heb 13:17**".

**And all the saints.]** All the *Christians*; for this is the general meaning of the term in most parts of St. Paul's writings. But a *Christian* was then a *saint*, i.e. by profession a holy person; and most of

the primitive Christians were actually such. But in process of time the term was applied to all that bore the Christian name; as *elect, holy people, sanctified, &c.*, were to the nation of the Jews, when both their piety and morality were at a very low ebb.

**They of Italy salute you.]** Therefore it is most likely that the writer of this epistle was then in some part of Italy, from which he had not as yet removed after his being released from prison. By *they of Italy* probably the apostle means the Jew's there who had embraced the Christian faith. These salutations show what a brotherly feeling existed in every part of the Christian Church; even those who had not seen each other yet loved one another, and felt deeply interested for each other's welfare.

Verse 25. **Grace be with you all.]** May the Divine favour ever rest upon you and among you; and may you receive, from that source of all good, whatsoever is calculated to make you wise, holy, useful, and happy! And may you be enabled to *persevere* in the truth to the end of your lives! *Amen.* May it be so! May God seal the prayer by giving the blessings!

THE subscriptions to this epistle are, as in other cases, various and contradictory.

The VERSIONS are as follow:—

The Epistle to the Hebrews was written from Roman Italy, and sent by the hand of Timothy.-SYRIAC.

VULGATE nothing, in the present printed copies.

It was written from Italy by Timothy: with the assistance of God, disposing every thing right, the fourteen epistles of the blessed Paul are completed, according to the copy from which they have been transcribed. May the Lord extend his benedictions to us. *Amen.*-ARABIC.

The Epistle to the Hebrews is completed. The end.-ÆTHIOPIC.

Written in Italy, and sent by Timothy.-COPTIC.

The MANUSCRIPTS, and ancient editions taken from MSS., are not more to be relied on.

To the Hebrews, written from Rome.-CODEX ALEXANDRINUS.

The epistles of Saint Paul the apostle are finished.-COLOPHON, at the end of this epistle; in one of the first printed Bibles; and in an ancient MS. of the Vulgate in my own collection.

The end of the Epistle to the Hebrews.-GREEK TEXT of the COMPLUTENSIAN EDITION.

The Epistle of the blessed Paul to the Hebrews is finished.-LATIN TEXT of ditto.

To the Hebrews.-The Epistle of Paul the apostle to the Hebrews.-The Epistle to the Hebrews, written from Italy.-From Athens.-From Italy by Timothy.-Written in the Hebrew tongue, &c.-Various MSS.

Written to the Hebrews from Italy by Timothy.-COMMON GREEK TEXT.

That it was neither written from *Athens*, nor in the Hebrew tongue, is more than probable; and that it was not sent by *Timothy*, is evident from **#Heb 13:23**. For the author, time, place, and people to whom sent, see the INTRODUCTION.

I. On the term "conscience," as frequently occurring in this epistle, I beg leave to make a few observations.

*Conscience* is defined by some to be "that judgment which the rational soul passes on all her actions;" and is said to be a faculty of the soul itself, and consequently natural to it. Others state that it is a ray of Divine light. Milton calls it "God's umpire;" and Dr. Young calls it a "god in man." To me it seems to be no other than a *faculty capable of receiving light and conviction from the Spirit of God*; and answers the end in spiritual matters to the soul, that the eye does to the body in the process of vision. The *eye* is not *light* in itself, nor is it capable of discerning any object, but by the instrumentality of solar or artificial light; but it has organs properly adapted to the reception of the rays of light, and the various images of the objects which they exhibit. When *these* are present to an eye the organs of which are perfect, then there is a *discernment* of those objects which are within the sphere of vision; but when the light is absent, there is no *perception* of the shape, dimensions, size, or colour of any object, howsoever entire or perfect the optic nerve and the different humours may be.

In the same manner (comparing spiritual things with natural) the Spirit of God enlightens that eye of the soul which we call *conscience*; it penetrates it with its effulgence; and (speaking as human language will permit on the subject) it has powers properly adapted to the reception of the Spirit's emanations, which, when received, exhibit a real view of the situation, state, &c., of the soul, as it stands in reference to God and eternity. Thus the Scripture says, "The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit," &c., i.e. it shines into the conscience, and reflects throughout the soul a conviction, proportioned to the degree of light communicated, of *condemnation* or *acquittance*, according to the end of its coming.

The late Mr. J. Wesley's definition of conscience, taken in a *Christian* sense, is nearly the same with the above: "It is," says he, "that *faculty* of the soul which, by the *assistance of the grace of God*, sees at one and the same time, 1. Our own tempers and lives; the real nature and quality of our thoughts, words and actions. 2. The *rule* whereby we are to be directed. And 3. The *agreement* or *disagreement* therewith. To express this a little more largely: Conscience implies, *first*, the *faculty* a man has of knowing himself; of discerning, both in general and in particular, his temper, words, thoughts, and actions: but this is not possible for him to do, *without the assistance of the Spirit of God*; otherwise self-love, and indeed every other irregular passion, would disguise and wholly conceal him from himself. It implies, *secondly*, a *knowledge* of the rule whereby he is to be directed in every particular, which is no other than the written word of God. Conscience implies, *thirdly*, a

knowledge that all his thoughts, and words, and actions are *conformable* to that rule. In all these offices of conscience, the *unction of the holy One* is indispensably needful. Without this, neither could we clearly discern our lives and tempers, nor could we judge of the rule whereby we are to walk, nor of our conformity or disconformity to it. A *good* conscience is a Divine consciousness of walking in all things according to the written word of God. It seems, indeed, that there can be no conscience that has *not a regard to God*. I doubt whether the words *right* and *wrong*, according to the Christian system, do not imply, *in the very idea of them*, agreement and disagreement to the will and word of God. And if so, there is no such thing as conscience in a Christian, *if we leave God out of the question.*" Sermon on *Conscience*, page 332.

Some of the Greek fathers seem to consider it as an especial gift of God; a principle implanted immediately by himself. So *Chrysostom*, on Psa 7., speaking of conscience, says: *φυσικον γαρ εστι, και παρα του θεου ημιν παρα την αρχην εντεθεν.* *It is a natural thing, but is planted in us by our God from our birth*, In his homily on **#Isa 6:2**, he explains himself more particularly: *θειον γαρ εστι, και παρα, θεου ταις ημετεραις ενιδρυμενον φυχαις.* *It is a Divine principle, and is by God himself implanted in our souls.* It is allowed on all hands that it is a recorder and judge of human actions, which cannot be corrupted, or be induced to bear a false testimony. Every sense of the body, and every faculty of the mind, may be weakened, obstructed, or impaired, but conscience; all other powers may be deceived or imposed on, but conscience. "No man," says *Chrysostom*, "can flee from the judgment of his own conscience, which cannot be shunned. It cannot be corrupted; it cannot be terrified; it cannot be flattered or bribed; nor can its testimony be obscured by any lapse of time." *Epist. ad Olymp.* This strongly argues its Divine nature; and, *while* the Spirit of God strives with man, conscience has its full influence, and is ever alert in the performance of its office. *Cicero*, in his oration for Milo, describes the power of conscience well in a few words: *Magna est vis conscientiae in utramque partem, ut neque timeant qui nihil commiserint, et pœnam semper ante oculos versari putent qui peccarint.* "Great is the power of conscience in both cases; they fear nothing who know they have committed no evil; on the contrary, they who have sinned live in continual dread of punishment." One of our poets has said, "'Tis conscience that makes cowards of us all." And had we been sure that Shakespeare was a scholar, we might have supposed that he had borrowed the thought from Menander.

ὁ συνιστορων αυτω τι, και η θρασυτατος,  
 ἡ συνεσις αυτον δειλοτατον ειναι ποιει.

If a man be conscious of any crime, although he  
 were the most undaunted of mankind,  
 His conscience makes him the most timid of mortals.  
*Apud Stobæum, Serm. xxiv., p. 192.*

Conscience is sometimes said to be *good, bad, tender, seared, &c.*: *good*, if it acquit or approve; *bad*, if it condemn or disapprove; *tender*, if it be alarmed at the least approach of evil, and severe in scrutinizing the actions of the mind or body; and *seared*, if it feel little alarm, &c., on the commission of sin. But these epithets can scarcely belong to it if the common definition of it be admitted; for how can it be said there is a "tender light," a "dark or hardened light," a "bad god," &c., &c.? But on the other definition these terms are easily understood, and are exceedingly proper; e. g.

"a *good* conscience" is one *to* which the Spirit of God has brought intelligence of the pardon of all the sins of the soul, and its reconciliation to God through the blood of Christ; and this good conscience *retained*, implies God's *continued* approbation of such a person's conduct; see #Ac 23:1; #1Ti 1:5,19; and here, #Heb 13:18. "A *bad* or evil conscience" supposes a charge of guilt brought against the soul by the Holy Spirit, for the breach of the Divine laws; and which he makes known to it by conscience, as a *medium* of conveying his own light to the mind; see #Heb 10:22; #1Ti 4:2; #Tit 1:3. "A *tender* conscience" implies one fully irradiated by the light of the Holy Ghost, which enables the soul to view the good as *good*, and the evil as *evil*, in every important respect; which leads it to abominate the latter, and cleave to the former; and, if at any time it act in the smallest measure opposite to these views, it is severe in its reprehensions, and bitter in its regret. "A *darkened* or *hardened* conscience" means one that has little or none of this Divine light; consequently, the soul feels little or no self-reprehension for acts of transgression, but runs on in sin, and is not aware of the destruction that awaits it, heedless of counsel, and regardless of reproof. This state of the soul St. Paul calls by the name of a "seared conscience," or one cauterized by repeated applications of sin, and resistings of the Holy Ghost; so that, being grieved and quenched, he has withdrawn his light and influence from it.

The word conscience itself ascertains the above explication with its deductions, being compounded of *con*, *together*, or *with*, and *scio*, to *know*, because it *knows* or convinces *by* or *together* with the Spirit of God. The Greek word συνειδησις, which is the only word used for *conscience* through the whole New Testament, has the very same meaning, being compounded of συν, *together* or *with*, and εἶδω, to *know*. This is the same as συνειδος, which is the word generally used among ecclesiastical writers.

From the above view of the subject I think we are warranted in drawing the following inferences:-

1. All men have what is called conscience; and conscience plainly supposes the light or Spirit of God.
2. The Spirit of God is given to enlighten, convince, strengthen, and bring men back to God.
3. Therefore all men may be saved who attend to and coincide with the light and convictions communicated; for the God of the Christians does not give men his Spirit to enlighten, &c., merely to leave them without excuse; but that it may direct, strengthen, and lead them to himself, that they may be finally saved.
4. That this spirit comes from the *grace* of God is demonstrable from hence: it is a "good and perfect gift," and St. James says all such come from the Father of lights. Again, it cannot be merited, for as it implies the influence of the Holy Spirit, it must be of an infinite value; yet it is GIVEN; *that* then which is *not merited* and yet is *given* must be of *grace*; not *ineffectual grace*, there is no such principle in the Godhead.

Thus it appears all men are partakers of the grace of God, for all acknowledge that conscience is common to *all*; and this is but a recipient faculty, and necessarily implies the spirit of grace given by Jesus Christ, not that the world might be thereby condemned, but that it might be saved. Nevertheless, multitudes, who are partakers of this heavenly gift, sin against it, lose it, and perish everlastingly, not through the deficiency of the gift, but through the abuse of it. I conclude that conscience is not a power of the soul, acting *by* or *of itself*; but a *recipient faculty*, in which that *true light that lighteth every man that cometh into the world* has its especial operation.

II. In this chapter the apostle inculcates the duty of hospitality, particularly in respect to entertaining *strangers*; i.e. persons of whom we know nothing, but that they are now in a state of distress, and require the necessaries of life. Some, says the apostle, have entertained angels without knowing them; and some, we may say, have entertained great men, kings, and emperors, without knowing them. By exercising this virtue many have *gained*; few have ever *lost*.

God, in many parts of his own word, is represented as the stranger's friend; and there is scarcely a duty in life which he inculcates in stronger terms than that of hospitality to strangers. The heathen highly applauded this virtue; and among them the person of a stranger was sacred, and supposed to be under the particular protection of Jove, Homer gives the sentiment in all its beauty when he puts the following words into the mouth of Eumæus, when he addressed Ulysses, who appeared a forlorn stranger, and, being kindly received by him, implored in his behalf a Divine blessing:—

Ζεὺς τοι δοῖη, ξεῖνε, καὶ ἀθάνατοι θεοὶ ἄλλοι  
᾿ὅττι μάλιστ' ἐθέλεις, ὅτι με προφρῶν ὑπεδέξο.  
τὸν δ' ἀπαμειβομένος προσεφης, εὐμαίε σὺ βῶτα·  
ξεῖν', οὐ μοι θεμὶς ἐστ', οὐδ' εἰ κακίων σέθεν ἐλθοί,  
ξεῖνον ἀτιμῆσαι· πρὸς θάπ' Δίος εἰσὶν ἀπαντες  
ξεῖνοι τε, πτωχοὶ τε· δόσις δ' ἀλιγῆ τε φίλη τε  
γίγνεται ἡμετέρη.

ODYSS., lib. xiv., v. 53.

My gentle host, Jove grant thee, and the gods  
All grant thee, for this deed thy best desire!  
To whom the herd Eumæus thus replied;  
My *guest*, it were unjust to treat with scorn  
The *stranger*, though a poorer should arrive  
Than even thou; for all the poor that are,  
And all the *strangers*, are the care of Jove.  
Little, and with good will, is all that lies  
Within my scope.

COWPER.

The Scriptures which more particularly recommend this duty are the following: *He doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye, therefore, the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt; #De 10:18, 19. I was a stranger, and ye took me in. Come, ye blessed of my Father, #Mt 25:35. Given to hospitality; #Ro 12:13. Neglect not to entertain strangers; #Heb 13:2.*

"The entertaining of unknown strangers," says Dr. Owen, "which was so great a virtue in ancient times, is almost driven out of the world by the wickedness of it. The false practices of some, with wicked designs, under the habit and pretence of strangers, on the one hand, and pretences for sordid covetousness on the other, have banished it from the earth. And there are enough who are called Christians who never once thought it to be their duty." But it is vain to inculcate the duty where the spirit of it is not found; and we shall never find the spirit of it in any heart where the love of God and man does not rule.

Benevolent wishes of *Be ye warmed* and *Be ye clothed* are frequent enough; these cost nothing, and therefore can be readily used by the most parsimonious.

But to draw out a man's soul to the hungry, to draw out his warmest affections, while he is drawing out, in order to divide with the destitute, the contents of his purse, belongs to the man of genuine feeling; and this can scarcely be expected where the compassionate mind that was in Christ does not rule. One bountiful meal to the poor may often be a preventive of death; for there are times in which a man may be brought so low for want of proper nourishment that, if he get not a timely supply, after-help comes in vain, nature being too far exhausted ever to recover itself, though the vital spark may linger long. One wholesome meal in time may be the means of enabling nature to contend successfully with after privations; and he who has afforded this meal to the destitute has saved a life. "But most who go about seeking relief are idle persons and impostors, and it would be sinful to relieve them." When you *know* the applicant to be such, then refuse his suit; but if you have nothing but suspicion, which suspicion generally arises from an uncharitable and unfeeling heart, then beware how you indulge it. If, through such suspicion, a man should lose his life, God will require his blood at your hand.

Reader, permit me to relate an anecdote which I have heard from that most eminent man of God, the reverend *John Wesley*; it may put thee in mind to entertain *strangers*. "At Epworth, in Lincolnshire, where (says he) I was born, a poor woman came to a house in the market-place and begged a morsel of bread, saying, *I am very hungry*. The master of the house called her a *lazy jade*, and bade her *be gone*. She went forward, called at another house, and asked for a little small-beer, saying, *I am very thirsty*. Here she was refused, and told to *go to the workhouse*. She struggled on to a third door and begged a little water, saying, *I am faint*. The owner drove her away, saying, *He would encourage no common beggars*. It was winter, and the snow lay upon the ground. The boys, seeing a poor ragged creature driven away from door to door, began to throw snow-balls at her. She went to a little distance, sat down on the ground, lifted up her eyes to heaven, reclined on the earth, and expired!" Here was a stranger; had the first to whom she applied relieved her with a morsel of bread, he would have saved her life, and not been guilty of blood. As the case stood, the woman was murdered; and those three householders will stand arraigned at the bar of God for her death. Reader, fear to send any person empty away. If you know him to be an *impostor*, why then give him nothing. But if you only *suspect* it, let not your suspicion be the rule of your conduct; give something, however little; because that little may be sufficient to preserve him, if in real want, from present death. If you know him not to be a knave, to you he may be an *angel*. God may have *sent* him to exercise your charity, and try your faith. It can never be a matter of regret to you that you gave an alms for God's sake, though you should afterwards find that the person to whom you gave it was both a hypocrite and impostor. Better to be imposed on by ninety-nine hypocrites out of a hundred applicants, than send *one*, like the poor *Epworth woman*, empty away.

*Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 30, 1831-A. C.*

**PREFACE**  
**TO**  
**THE GENERAL EPISTLE**  
**OF**  
**JAMES.**

THERE have been more doubts, and more diversity of opinion, concerning the author of this epistle, and the *time* in which it was written, than about most other parts of the New Testament. To enter at large into a discussion of the opinions of ancient and modern writers on this subject would tend but little to the establishment of truth, or to the edification of the reader. Lardner, Michaelis, and Macknight, have entered considerably into the controversy relative to the author, the time, and the canonical authority of this book; and to them the reader who wishes to see the difficulties with which the subject is pressed may have recourse.

This epistle, with those of Peter, John, and Jude, is termed *catholic*, καθολικη, from κατα, *through*, and ολος, *the whole*; for the application of which term Œcumenius, in cap. i. Jacobi, gives the following reason: καθολικαι λεγονται αυται, οιονει εγκυκλιοι· ου γαρ αφωρισμενως εθνει ενι η πολει, αλλα καθολου τοις πιστοις "These epistles are called catholic, universal, or *circular*, because they were not written to one nation or city, but to believers *everywhere*."

Yet, as these epistles had some difficulty at first to get into general circulation, but at last were everywhere received, it is more likely that they obtained the term *catholic* from the circumstance of their being at last *universally* acknowledged as *canonical*; so that the word *catholic* is to be understood here in the same sense as *canonical*.

*Who* the writer of the epistle in question was, is difficult to say; all that we know *certainly* is, from his own words, that his name was *James*, and that he was a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus. *Two* persons of this name are mentioned in the New Testament; James the son of Zebedee, called also James the elder; and James του μικρου, *the less* or the *little one*, called the *son of Alpheus*, and *brother of our Lord*: but whether one of these, or if one of them, *which*, or whether one of the same name different from both, are points that cannot be satisfactorily determined. Michaelis, who has examined the subject with his usual ability, leaves the matter in doubt; but leans to the opinion that *James the son of Zebedee* was the author, and that this epistle was written *before* any of those in the New Testament. Other great authorities ascribe it to *James*, called the *brother of our Lord*, who was president, or bishop, of the Church in Jerusalem. Even allowing this opinion to be correct, it is not agreed in what sense James is called our *Lord's brother*, there being *four* or *five* different opinions concerning the meaning of this term. From #Mt 13:55, 56, we learn that there were four persons called brethren of our Lord: "Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren *James*, and *Joses*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" Now, it is generally allowed that the *James* here is the author of this epistle, and the *Jude* or *Judas*, mentioned with him, the author of that which stands last in this collection. But with respect to the meaning of the term *brother*, as here used, it will be necessary to state the opinions of learned men:—

1. It is supposed that these were children of Joseph, by a former marriage; this is a very ancient opinion; as there is nothing improbable in the supposition that Joseph was a *widower* when he married the blessed virgin.

2. They are supposed to have been children of Joseph and his wife Mary; all born after the birth of our Lord. This is an opinion extremely probable: see some reasons for it in the note on **#Mt 13:56**; see also on **#Mt 1:25**.

3. That they were called our *Lord's brethren*, because children of Joseph by the wife of one of his brothers, who had died childless, and whose widow Joseph took, according to the Mosaic law, to raise up seed to his deceased brother. This is very unlikely, because, in this case, it would have been only requisite for Joseph to have had one male by his brother's wife; but here we find *four*, besides several *sisters*.

4. That Cleophas, called also Alpheus, married a sister of the blessed virgin, called also *Mary*, by whom he had the above issue; and that these were called brethren of our Lord, from the common custom among the Hebrews, to term all the more immediately cognate branches of the same family, *brothers'* and *sisters'* children, i.e. cousins-german, *brethren*. These, therefore, being aunt's children of our Lord, are, according to this usage, called his *brethren*. The first and second of these opinions appear to me the most probable; though most modern writers are of the latter opinion.

That of the two James's, *James the less* was the author of this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks, following Lardner and others, is incontestable: I shall quote his abridgment of Lardner's arguments; but the point in question is not, in my opinion, made out by any of these writers.

"In the catalogue of the apostles, **#Mt 10:2**; **#Mr 3:17**; **#Lu 6:14**; **#Ac 1:13**; we find two persons of the name of James; the first was the son of *Zebedee*, **#Mt 10:2**; the second in all the catalogues is called the son of *Alpheus*: one of these apostles is called, **#Ga 1:19**, *the Lord's brother*. Wherefore, as there were only *twelve* apostles, and as *James* the son of *Zebedee*, so far as we know, was in no respect related to our Lord, the apostle called *James, the Lord's brother*, must have been *James the son of Alpheus*, called also *James the less or younger*, whose relation to Christ will appear by comparing **#Mr 15:40**, with **#Joh 19:25**. In the former passage, *Mark*, speaking of the women who were present at the crucifixion, says: 'There were also women looking on afar off, among whom were *Mary Magdalen*, and *Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses*, and *Salome*.' In the latter passage, *John*, speaking of the same women, says: 'There stood by the cross of *Jesus*, his mother, and his mother's sister, *Mary*, the wife of *Cleophas*, and *Mary Magdalen*:' wherefore, *our Lord's mother's sister, Mary the wife of Cleophas*, mentioned by *John*, is in all probability the person whom *Mark* calls *Mary the mother of James the less, and of Joses*; consequently, her sons, *James* and *Joses*, were our Lord's cousins-german by his mother. And as the Hebrews called all near relations *brethren*, it is more than probable that *James the son of Alpheus*, who was our Lord's cousin-german, is *James the Lord's brother*, mentioned **#Ga 1:19**. Three circumstances confirm this opinion: 1. *James* and *Joses*, the sons of *Mary*, our Lord's mother's sister, are expressly called *the brethren* of *Jesus*, **#Mt 13:55**; **#Mr 6:3**. 2. *James*, the son of our Lord's mother's sister, being distinguished from another *James* by the appellation of *the less*, **#Mr 15:40**, there is good reason to suppose that he is the *James* whom *Mark*, in his catalogue, distinguishes from *James the son of Zebedee*, by the appellation of the

*son of Alpheus*. It is true, Mary the mother of James and of Joses, is called the *wife of Cleophas*, #Joh 19:25; but *Cleophas* and *Alpheus* are the same name differently pronounced; the one according to the Hebrew, and the other according to the Greek, orthography. 3. Of the persons called the *brethren of Jesus*, #Mt 13:55, there are three mentioned in the catalogue as APOSTLES: *James*, and *Simon*, and *Judas*. They, I suppose, are the brethren of the Lord, who are said, as apostles, to have had a right to lead about a sister or a wife, &c.; #1Co 9:5. Jerome likewise thought *James the Lord's brother* was so called because he was the son of Mary, our Lord's mother's sister; Art. *Jacobus*. Lardner, Canon., vol. iii. p. 63, says: 'Jerome seems to have been the *first* who said our Lord's brethren were the sons of his mother's sister; and this opinion was at length embraced by *Augustine*, and has prevailed very much of late, being the opinion of the *Romanists* in general, and of *Lightfoot*, *Witsius*, *Lampe*, and many of the *Protestants*. On the other hand, *Origen*, *Epiphanius*, and other ancient writers, both Greeks and Latins, were of opinion that *James*, the Lord's brother, was not the son of the virgin's sister, but of *Joseph*, our Lord's reputed father, by a *former wife*, who died before he espoused the virgin. Of the same opinion were *Vossius*, *Basnage*, and *Cave*, among the *Protestants*; and *Valesius* among the *Romanists*. *Epiphanius* and *Theophylact* supposed that *Joseph's* first wife was the widow of *Alpheus*, who, being *Joseph's* brother, *Joseph* married her to raise up seed to him; and therefore *James*, the issue of that marriage, was fitly called the *won of Alpheus*, and *brother of our Lord*.' But these suppositions might have been spared, if the ancients and moderns had recollected that near *relations* were called *brethren* by the Hebrews, and that *Alpheus* and *Cleophas* are the same names differently written; *James* the less, the son of *Alpheus*, being not only the Lord's near relation, but an *apostle*, whom, as is generally supposed, he honoured in a particular manner, by appearing to him *alone*, after his resurrection; #1Co 15:7. These circumstances, together with his own personal merit, rendered him of such note among the apostles that they appointed him to reside at Jerusalem, and to superintend the Church there. This appointment, Lardner says, was made soon after the martyrdom of *Stephen*; and, in support of this opinion, observes, 'that *Peter* always speaks first, as president among the apostles, until after the choice of the seven deacons. Every thing said of *St. James*, after that, implies his presiding in the Church at Jerusalem.' Canon., vol. iii. p. 28. For example, when the apostles and elders at Jerusalem came together to consider whether it was needful to circumcise the Gentiles, after there had been much disputing, *Peter* spake, #Ac 15:7, then *Barnabas* and *Paul*, #Ac 15:12. And when they had ended, *James* summed up the whole, and proposed the terms on which the Gentiles were to be received into the Church, #Ac 15:19-21; to which the whole assembly agreed, and wrote letters to the Gentiles, conformably to the opinion of *James*, #Ac 15:22-29. From this it is inferred, that *James* presided in the council of Jerusalem, because he was president of the Church in that city.

"*Chrysostom*, in his Homily on Acts 15, says: '*James* was bishop of Jerusalem, and therefore spoke last.' In the time of this council, *Paul* communicated the Gospel which he preached among the Gentiles to three of the apostles, whom he calls *pillars*; and tells us that, when they perceived the inspiration and miraculous powers which he possessed, they gave him the right hand of fellowship, mentioning *James* first, #Ga 2:9: 'And knowing the grace that was bestowed on me, *James*, *Cephas*, and *John*, who were pillars, gave to me and *Barnabas* the right hand of fellowship.' This implies that *James*, whom, in the first chapter, he had called *the Lord's brother*, was not only an *apostle*, but the presiding apostle in the Church at Jerusalem. In the same chapter, *Paul*, giving an account of what happened after the council, says, #Ga 2:11: 'When *Peter* was come to Antioch, before that certain came from *James*, he did eat with the Gentiles; but when they were come he withdrew, and separated

himself, fearing them who were of the circumcision.' This shows that James resided at Jerusalem, and presided in the Church there, and was greatly respected by the Jewish believers. The same circumstance appears from **#Ac 21:17**, where, giving an account of Paul's journey to Jerusalem, with the collections from the saints in Judea, Luke says, **#Ac 21:18**: 'Paul went in with us to James, and all the elders were present.' Farther, the respect in which James was held by the apostles appears from two facts recorded by Luke: the first is, when Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, Barnabas took him, and brought him Peter and James, as the chief apostles. Compare **#Ac 9:27** with **#Ga 1:19**. The second fact is, after Peter was miraculously delivered out of prison, about the time of the passover, in the year 44, 'he came to the house of Mary-where many were gathered together praying; (**#Ac 12:12**;) and when he had declared to them how the Lord had brought him out of the prison, he said, Go, show these things to James, and to the brethren;' **#Ac 12:17**. These particulars are mentioned by Lardner, and before him by Whitby and Cave, to show that James, the Lord's brother, was really an *apostle*, in the strict acceptation of the word; consequently, that Eusebius was mistaken when he placed him among the seventy disciples; E. H., lib. vii. c. 12.

"That the Epistle of James was early esteemed an inspired writing, is evident from the following fact: that while the Second Epistle of Peter, the second and third of John, the Epistle of Jude, and the Revelation, are omitted in the first Syriac translation of the New Testament, (the *Peshito*.) which was made in the beginning of the second century for the use of the converted Jews; the Epistle of James has found a place in it, equally with the books which were never called in question. This is an argument of great weight; for certainly the Jewish believers, to whom that epistle was addressed and delivered, were much better judges of its authenticity than the converted Gentiles, to whom it was not sent, and who perhaps had no opportunity of being acquainted with it till long after it was written. Wherefore its being received by the Jewish believers is an undeniable proof that they knew it to be written by James the apostle; whereas the ignorance of the Gentile believers, concerning this epistle, is not even a presumption against its authenticity.

"That the converted Gentiles had little knowledge of the Epistle of James in the first ages, may have been owing to various causes; such as, that it was addressed to the *Jews*, and that the matters contained in it were personal to the Jews. For on these accounts the Jewish believers may have thought it not necessary to communicate it to the Gentiles. And when it was made known to them, they may have scrupled to receive it as an inspired writing for the following reasons: 1. The writer does not, in the inscription, take the title of an apostle, but calls himself simply *James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ*. 2. Many of the ancients, by calling the writer of this epistle *James the Just*, have rendered his apostleship doubtful. 3. As they have done, likewise, by speaking of him commonly as *bishop of Jerusalem*, and not as an apostle of Christ. It is little wonder, therefore, that this epistle was not received generally by the converted Gentiles; consequently that it was not often quoted by them in their writings. But afterwards, when it was considered that this epistle was from the beginning received by the Jewish believers, and that it was translated into the Syriac language for their use; and that Paul, though an apostle, sometimes contented himself with the appellation of *a servant of Christ*, **#Php 1:1**; **#Phm 1:1**; and sometimes took no appellation but his own name; **#1Th 1:1**; **#2Th 1:1**; and that the apostle John did not, in any of his epistles, call himself an *apostle*; the title which the author of the Epistle of James had to be an apostle was no longer doubted, but he was generally acknowledged to be *James, the son of Alphaeus, and the Lord's brother*; and his epistle, after an accurate examination, was received as an inspired writing. So

*Estius* tells us, who affirms that after the *fourth century* no Church nor ecclesiastical writer is found who ever doubted of the authority of this epistle; but, on the contrary; all the catalogues of the books of Scripture published, whether by general or provincial councils, or by Roman bishops, or other orthodox writers, since the fourth century, constantly number it among the *canonical* Scriptures.

"With respect to what is remarked by Eusebius, that there are not many ancient writers who have quoted the Epistle of James, learned men have observed that *Clement* of Rome has quoted it four several times; and so does *Ignatius* in his genuine Epistle to the Ephesians, sec. 10, 12, 17, 30; and *Origen* in his thirteenth Homily on Genesis, sec. 5. That it was not more generally quoted by the ancients, besides the things already mentioned, may have been owing to the following reasons: 1. Being written to the whole Jewish nation to correct the errors and vices which prevailed among them, the Gentiles may have thought themselves little concerned with it, and may have been at no pains to procure copies of it; by which means it was not so generally known among them as some other books of Scripture. 2. The seeming opposition of the doctrine of this epistle to the doctrine of Paul, concerning *justification by faith without the works of the law*, may have occasioned it to be less regarded by the most ancient writers; just as it was in later times, on the same account, rejected by Luther, who, to show his contempt of it, called it (*epistola straminea*) a *strawy* or chaffy epistle.

"To conclude, the authority of the Epistle of James, as an inspired writing, is abundantly established, in Mill's opinion, by the Apostles Paul and Peter, who have in their writings many sentiments and expressions similar to those contained in this epistle; for example:—

**#1Pe 1:3:** Who hath begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

**#Jas 1:18:** Having willed it, he hath begotten us by the word.

**#Ro 5:3, 4:** Knowing that affliction worketh out patience; and patience experience.

**#Jas 1:3:** Knowing that the proving of your faith worketh out patience.

**#Ro 2:13:** That the hearers of the law are not just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.

**#Jas 1:22:** And be ye doers of the law, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves by false reasoning.

**#Ro 7:23:** I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind.

**#Jas 4:1:** Come they not hence, even from your lusts, which war in your members?

**#1Pe 2:11:** Lusts which war against the soul.

**#1Pe 5:8, 9:** Your adversary the devil; whom resist, steadfast in the faith.

**#Jas 4:7:** Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

**#1Pe 5:6:** Be humbled under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you.

**#Jas 4:10:** Be humbled in the presence of God, and he will lift you up.

**#Ro 14:4:** Who art thou that condemnest another man's household servant?

**#Jas 4:12:** Thou, who art thou that condemnest another?

#1Pe 4:8: Love covereth a multitude of sins.

#Jas 5:20: Will cover a multitude of sins."

See *Macknight's* preface.

That James the less may have been our Lord's cousin-german, or even our Lord's brother by a former wife of Joseph, or even by the virgin, is perfectly possible; and that he was an *apostle*, and an eminent man among both Jews and Christians, may be readily credited; and that he was author of this epistle, is also possible: but I must still assert that we have neither decisive nor satisfactory evidence on this subject; and that it is arguing in a circle to deduce the evidence of its authenticity from the apostleship of James the less, because this person is not proved to be its author. The chief and proper evidence of its being *canonical* must be taken from the fact that it was universally received by the Church of Christ, and without scruple incorporated with those writings, which were, on all hands, allowed to have been given by the inspiration of God.

Before I conclude, I shall mention the opinion of *Michaelis* relative to the author of this epistle. "All things considered," says he, "I see no ground for the assertion that James, the son of Zebedee, was not the author of this epistle. One circumstance affords, at least, a presumptive argument in favour of the opinion that it was really written by the elder James, and at a time when the Gospel had not been propagated among the Gentiles; namely, that it contains no exhortations to harmony between the Jewish and Gentile converts, which, after the time that the Gentiles were admitted into the Church, became absolutely necessary. Had it been written after the apostolic council of Jerusalem, mentioned Acts 15, and by the younger James, we might have expected that, at least, some allusion would be made in it to the decree of that council, which was propounded by the younger James in favour of the Gentile converts; and that the epistle would contain an admonition to the Jewish converts, to consider the Gentile converts as their brethren."-*Introduction to the New Testament*.

The epistle itself is entirely different in its complexion from all those in the sacred canon; the style and manner are more that of a Jewish prophet than a Christian apostle. It scarcely touches on any subject purely Christian. Our blessed Lord is only mentioned twice in it, #Jas 1:1; 2:1; but it has nothing of his miracles or teaching, of his death or resurrection, nor of any redemption by him. It begins without any apostolical salutation, and ends without any apostolical benediction. In short, had it not been for the two slight notices of our blessed Lord, we had not known it was the work of any Christian writer. It may be considered a sort of connecting link between Judaism and Christianity, as the ministry of John Baptist was between the old covenant and the new. There is neither plan nor arrangement in it; but it contains many invaluable lessons which no serious person can read without profit.

James the less was martyred at Jerusalem about A. D. 62: and the epistle is supposed to have been written a short time before his death. Though I believe it to be the work of an unknown author, not long after the ascension of our Lord, I shall follow the usual chronology, and date it in the year 61; not because I think that to be the true date, but because it is what is generally adopted.

## THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5569.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5563.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5553.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4065.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4289.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3821.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4420.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2409.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3163.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1001.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 810.
- Year of the CCXth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 808.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 813.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 814.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 373.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 109.
- Year of the Julian era, 106.
- Year of the Spanish era, 99.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ according to Archbishop Usher, 65.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 61.
- Year of Porcius Festus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 12.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 2.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 62.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 5; or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 2, or the year before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 14.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, D.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, according to the Roman computation of time, the XIth of the calends of April, or, in our common mode of reckoning, the twenty-second of March, which happened in this year on the day after the Jewish Sabbath.

- Easter Sunday, the IVth of the Calends of April, named by the Jews the 22d of Nisan or Abib; and by Europeans in general, the 29th of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 14.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 22.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 22, 24, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 28, 0, 0.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 1.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 8.
- Roman Consuls, C. Cæsonius Pætus and C. Petronius Turpilianus.

## CHAPTER I.

*He addresses the dispersed of the twelve tribes, 1. Shows that they should rejoice under the cross, because of the spiritual good which they may derive from it, especially in the increase and perfecting of their patience, 2-4. They are exhorted to ask wisdom of God, who gives liberally to all, 5. But they must ask in faith, and not with a doubting mind, 6-8. Directions to the rich and the poor, 9-11. The blessedness of the man that endures trials, 12. How men are tempted and drawn away from God, 13-15. God is the Father of lights, and all good proceeds from him, 16-18. Cautions against hasty words and wrong tempers, 19-21. We should be doers of the word, and not hearers merely, lest we resemble those who, beholding their natural face in a glass, when it is removed forget what manner of persons they were, 22-24. We should look into the perfect law of liberty, and continue therein, 25. The nature and properties of pure religion, 26, 27.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **James, a servant of God]** For an account of this person, or rather for the conjectures concerning him, see the *preface*. He neither calls himself an *apostle*, nor does he say that he was the *brother of Christ*, or *bishop of Jerusalem*; whether he was *James the elder*, son of Zebedee, or *James the less*, called our Lord's brother, or some other person of the same name, we know not. The assertions of writers concerning these points are worthy of no regard. The Church has always received him as an *apostle* of Christ.

**To the twelve tribes-scattered abroad]** To the Jews, whether converted to Christianity or not, who lived out of Judea, and sojourned among the Gentiles for the purpose of trade or commerce. At this time there were Jews partly *travelling*, partly *sojourning*, and partly *resident* in most parts of the civilized world; particularly in Asia, Greece, Egypt, and Italy. I see no reason for restricting it to Jewish believers only; it was sent to all whom it might concern, but particularly to those who had received the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ; much less must we confine it to those who were scattered abroad at the persecution raised concerning Stephen, **#Ac 8:1, &c.; #Ac 11:19, &c.** That the twelve tribes were in actual existence when James wrote this epistle, Dr. Macknight thinks evident from the following facts: "1. Notwithstanding Cyrus allowed all the Jews in his dominions to return to their

own land, many of them did not return. This happened agreeably to God's purpose, in permitting them to be carried captive into Assyria and Babylonia; for he intended to make himself known among the heathens, by means of the knowledge of his being and perfections, which the Jews, in their dispersion, would communicate to them. This also was the reason that God determined that the ten tribes should never return to their own land, #Ho 1:6; 8:8; 9:3, 15-17. 2. That, comparatively speaking, few of the twelve tribes returned in consequence of Cyrus's decree, but continued to live among the Gentiles, appears from this: that in the days of Ahasuerus, one of the successors of Cyrus, who reigned from India to Æthiopia, over one hundred and twenty-seven provinces, #Es 3:8, *The Jews were dispersed among the people in all the provinces of his kingdom, and their laws were diverse from the laws of all other people, and they did not keep the king's laws*; so that, by adhering to their own usages, they kept themselves distinct from all the nations among whom they lived. 3. On the day of pentecost, which happened next after our Lord's ascension, #Ac 2:5, 9, *There were dwelling at Jerusalem Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven; Parthians, Medes, and Elamites, &c.*; so numerous were the Jews, and so widely dispersed through all the countries of the world. 4. When Paul travelled through Asia and Europe, he found the Jews so numerous, that in all the noted cities of the Gentiles they had synagogues in which they assembled for the worship of God, and were joined by multitudes of proselytes from among the heathens, to whom likewise he preached the Gospel. 6. The same apostle, in his speech to King Agrippa, affirmed that the twelve tribes were then existing, and that they served God day and night, in expectation of the promise made to the fathers, #Ac 26:6. 6. Josephus, Ant. i. 14, cap. 12, tells us that one region could not contain the Jews, but they dwelt in most of the flourishing cities of Asia and Europe, in the islands and continent, not much less in number than the heathen inhabitants. From all this it is evident that the Jews of the dispersion were more numerous than even the Jews in Judea, and that James very properly inscribed this letter to the *twelve tribes which were in the dispersion*, seeing the twelve tribes really existed then, and do still exist, although not distinguished by separate habitations, as they were anciently in their own land.

**Greeting.]** χαίρειν· *Health*; a mere expression of benevolence, a wish for their prosperity; a common form of salutation; see #Ac 15:23; 23:26; #2Jo 1:11.

Verse 2. **Count it all joy]** The word πειρασμος, which we translate *temptation*, signifies affliction, persecution, or *trial* of any kind; and in this sense it is used here, not intending diabolic suggestion, or what is generally understood by the word *temptation*.

Verse 3. **The trying of your faith]** Trials put religion, and all the graces of which it is composed to *proof*; the man that *stands* in such trials gives proof that his religion is sound, and the evidence afforded to his own mind induces him to take courage, bear *patiently*, and *persevere*.

Verse 4. **Let patience have her perfect work]** That is, Continue faithful, and your patience will be *crowned* with its full reward; for in this sense is εργον, which we translate *work*, to be understood. It is any *effect* produced by a cause, as *interest* from *money*, *fruit* from *tillage*, *gain* from *labour*, a *reward* for *services performed*; the *perfect work* is the *full reward*. See many examples in *Kypke*.

**That ye may be perfect and entire]** τελειοι, *Fully instructed*, in every part of the doctrine of God, and in his whole will concerning you. ὀλοκληροι, having all your *parts*, *members*, and

portions; that ye may have *every grace* which constitutes the mind that was in Christ, so that your knowledge and holiness may be complete, and bear a proper proportion to each other. These expressions in their present application are by some thought to be borrowed from the Grecian games: the man was *τελειος*, *perfect*, who in any of the athletic exercises had got the victory; he was *ολοκληρος*, *entire*, having *every thing complete*, who had the victory in the *pentathlon*, in each of the *five* exercises. Of this use in the last term I do not recollect an example, and therefore think the expressions are borrowed from the *sacrifices* under the law. A victim was *τελειος*, *perfect*, that was perfectly sound, having no *disease*; it was *ολοκληρος*, *entire*, if it had *all its members*, having nothing *redundant*, nothing *deficient*. Be then to the Lord what he required his sacrifices to be; let your whole heart, your body, soul, and spirit, be sanctified to the Lord of hosts, that he may fill you with all his fulness.

Verse 5. **If any of you lack wisdom]** Wisdom signifies in general *knowledge of the best end*, and *the best means of attaining it*; but in Scripture it signifies the same as *true religion*, the thorough practical knowledge of God, of one's self, and of a Saviour.

**Let him ask of God]** Because God is the only teacher of this wisdom.

**That giveth to all men liberally]** Who has all good, and gives all necessary good to every one that asks fervently. He who does not ask thus does not feel his need of Divine teaching. The ancient Greek maxim appears at first view strange, but it is literally true:—

αρχη γνωσεως της αγνοιας η γνωσις.

"The knowledge of ignorance is the beginning of knowledge."

In knowledge we may distinguish these four things:—

1. INTELLIGENCE, the object of which is *intuitive truths*.
2. WISDOM, which is employed in finding out the *best end*.
3. PRUDENCE, which *regulates* the whole *conduct* through life.
4. ART, which provides infallible rules to reason by.

Verse 6. **Let him ask in faith]** Believing that God IS; that he has all good; and that he is ever ready to impart to his creatures whatever they need.

**Nothing wavering.]** *μηδεν διακρινομενος*· *Not judging otherwise*; having no doubt concerning the truth of these grand and fundamental principles, never supposing that God will permit him to ask in vain, when he asks sincerely and fervently. Let him not hesitate, let him not be *irresolute*; no man can believe too much good of God.

**Is like a wave of the sea]** The man who is not thoroughly persuaded that if he ask of God he shall receive, resembles a wave of the sea; he is in a state of continual agitation; driven by the wind, and tossed: now *rising* by *hope*, then *sinking* by *despair*.

Verse 7. **Let not that man think]** The man whose mind is divided, who is not properly persuaded either of his own wants or God's sufficiency. Such persons may pray, but having no faith, they can get no answer.

Verse 8. **A double-minded man]** ἀνὴρ διψυχός· The man of two souls, who has one for earth, and another for heaven; who wishes to secure both worlds; he will not give up earth, and he is loth to let heaven go. This was a usual term among the Jews, to express the man who attempted to worship God, and yet retained the love of the creature. Rabbi *Tanchum*, fol. 84, on #De 26:17, said: "Behold, the Scripture exhorts the Israelites, and tells them when they pray, לֹא יִהְיֶה לָהֶם שֵׁתֵי לִבְבוֹתָהּ *lo yiyeh lahem shetey lebaboth*, that they should not have two hearts, one for the holy blessed God, and one for something else." A man of this character is continually distracted; he will neither let earth nor heaven go, and yet he can have but *one*. Perhaps St. James refers to those Jews who were endeavoring to incorporate the law with the Gospel, who were divided in their minds and affections, not willing to give up the Levitical rites, and yet unwilling to renounce the Gospel. Such persons could make no progress in Divine things.

Verse 9. **Let the brother of low degree]** The poor, destitute Christian may *glory* in the cross of Christ, and the blessed hope laid up for him in heaven; for, being a child of God, he is an heir of God, and a joint heir with Christ.

Verse 10. **But the rich, in that he is made low]** ἐν τῇ ταπεινώσει· *In his humiliation*-in his being brought to the foot of the cross to receive, as a poor and miserable sinner, redemption through the blood of the cross: and especially let him rejoice in this, because all outward glory is only as the flower of the field, and, like that, will wither and perish.

Verse 11. **For the sun is no sooner risen]** We need not pursue this metaphor, as St. James' meaning is sufficiently clear: All human things are transitory; *rise* and *fall*, or *increase* and *decay*, belong to all the productions of the earth, and to all its inhabitants. This is unavoidable, for in many cases the very cause of their growth becomes the cause of their decay and destruction. The sun by its genial heat nourishes and supports all plants and animals; but when it arises with a *burning heat*, the atmosphere not being tempered with a sufficiency of moist vapours, the juices are exhaled from the plants; the earth, for lack of moisture, cannot afford a sufficient supply; vegetation becomes checked; and the plants soon wither and die. Earthly possessions are subject to similar mutations. God gives and resumes them at his pleasure, and for reasons which he seldom explains to man. He shows them to be uncertain, that they may never become an object of confidence to his followers, and that they may put their whole trust in God. If for righteousness' sake any of those who were in affluence suffer loss, or spoiling of their goods, they should consider that, while they have gained that of infinite worth, they have lost what is but of little value, and which in the nature of things they must soon part with, though they should suffer nothing on account of religion.

Verse 12. **Blessed is the man that endureth temptation]** This is a mere Jewish sentiment, and on it the Jews speak some excellent things. In *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 31, fol. 129, and in Rab. *Tanchum*, fol. 29, 4, we have these words: "Blessed is the man **שְׁהַיָּה עוֹמֵד בְּנִסְיוֹנוֹ** *shehayah omed benisyono* who stands in his temptation; for there is no man whom God does not try. He tries the *rich*, to see if they will open their hands to the poor. He tries the *poor*, to see if they will receive affliction and not murmur. If, therefore, the rich *stand in his temptation*, and give alms to the poor, he shall enjoy his riches in this world, and his horn shall be exalted in the world to come, and the holy blessed God shall deliver him from the punishment of hell. If the poor *stand in his temptation*, and do not repine, (kick back,) he shall have double in the world to come." This is exactly the sentiment of James. Every man is in this life in a state of temptation or trial, and in this state he is a candidate for another and a better world; he that *stands* in his trial shall receive the crown of life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him. It is only *love to God* that can enable a man to endure the trials of life. Love feels no loads; all practicable things are possible to him who loveth.

There may be an allusion here to the contests in the Grecian games. He is crowned who conquers; and none else.

Verse 13. **Let no man say]** Lest the former sentiment should be misapplied, as the word *temptation* has two grand meanings, *solicitation to sin*, and trial from *providential situation or circumstances*, James, taking up the word in the former sense, after having used it in the latter, says: *Let no man say, when he is tempted, (solicited to sin,) I am tempted of God; for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he (thus) any man.* Thus the author has explained and guarded his meaning.

Verse 14. **But every man is tempted]** Successfully solicited to sin, when *he is drawn away of his own lust*-when, giving way to the evil propensity of his own heart, he does that to which he is solicited by the enemy of his soul.

Among the rabbins we find some fine sayings on this subject. In *Midrash hanaalam*, fol. 20, and *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 17, it is said: "This is the custom of evil concupiscence, **יֵצֵר הָרַע**, *yetser hara*: To-day it saith, Do this; to-morrow, Worship an idol. The man goes and worships. Again it saith, Be angry."

"Evil concupiscence is, at the beginning, like the thread of a spider's web; afterwards it is like a cart rope." *Sanhedrim*, fol. 99.

In the words, *drawn away by his own lust and enticed*, **υπο της ιδιας επιθυμιας εξελκομενος και δελεαζομενος**, there is a double metaphor; the first referring to the *dragging a fish* out of the water by a *hook* which it had swallowed, because *concealed by a bait*; the second, to the *enticements* of impure women, who draw away the unwary into their snares, and involve them in their ruin. Illicit connections of this kind the writer has clearly in view; and every word that he uses refers to something of this nature, as the following verse shows.

Verse 15. **When lust hath conceived]** When the evil propensity works unchecked, *it bringeth forth sin*-the evil act between the parties is perpetrated.

**And sin, when it is finished]** When this breach of the law of God and of innocence has been a sufficient time completed, it *bringeth forth death*-the spurious offspring is the fruit of the criminal connection, and the evidence of that *death* or *punishment* due to the transgressors.

Any person acquainted with the import of the verbs συλλαμβανειν, τικτειν, and αποκυειν, will see that this is the metaphor, and that I have not exhausted it. συλλαμβανω signifies concipio sobolem, *quæ comprehenditur utero*; concipio foetum;- τικτω, pario, genero, efficio;- αποκυεω ex απο et κυω, *prægnans sum*, in utero gero. *Verbum proprium prægnantium, quæ foetum maturum emittunt. Interdum etiam gignendi notionem habet.*-MAIUS, *Obser. Sacr.*, vol. ii., page 184. Kypke and Schleusner.

Sin is a small matter in its commencement; but by indulgence it grows great, and multiplies itself beyond all calculation. To use the rabbinical metaphor lately adduced, *it is, in the commencement, like the thread of a spider's web*-almost *imperceptible* through its extreme *tenuity* or *fineness*, and as *easily broken*, for it is as yet but a *simple irregular imagination*; afterwards it becomes like a *cart rope*-it has, by being indulged produced *strong desire and delight*; next *consent*; then, time, place, and opportunity serving, that which was *conceived* in the *mind*, and *finished* in that *purpose*, is consummated by *act*.

"The *soul*, which the Greek philosophers considered as the seat of the appetites and passions, is called by *Philo το θηλυ*, the *female* part of our nature; and the *spirit το αρρευ*, the *male* part. In allusion to this notion, James represents men's *lust* as a *harlot*; which entices their understanding and will into its impure embraces, and from that conjunction *conceives* sin. Sin, being *brought forth*, immediately acts, and is nourished by frequent repetition, till at length it gains such strength that in its turn it *begets* death. This is the true *genealogy* of sin and death. *Lust* is the *mother* of sin, and *sin* the *mother* of *death*, and the *sinner* the *parent* of both." See *Macknight*.

Verse 16. **Do not err]** By supposing that God is the author of sin, or that he impels any man to commit it.

Verse 17. **Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above]** Whatever is good is from God; whatever is evil is from man himself. As from the *sun*, which is the *father* or fountain of *light*, all light comes; so from GOD, who is the infinite Fountain, Father, and *Source* of *good*, all good comes. And whatever can be called *good*, or *pure*, or *light*, or *excellence* of any kind, must necessarily spring from him, as he is the only source of all goodness and perfection.

**With whom is no variableness]** The *sun*, the fountain of light to the whole of our system, may be obscured by clouds; or the different bodies which revolve round him, and particularly the earth, may from time to time suffer a diminution of his light by the intervention of other bodies *eclipsing* his splendour; and his apparent *tropical variation*, *shadow of turning*; when, for instance, in our winter, he has declined to the *southern tropic*, the tropic of Capricorn, so that our days are greatly shortened, and we suffer in consequence a great diminution both of *light* and *heat*. But there is nothing of this kind with God; he is never affected by the changes and chances to which mortal things are exposed. He occupies no *one* place in the universe; he fills the *heavens* and the *earth*, is *everywhere present*, sees all, pervades all, and shines upon all; dispenses his blessings equally to the

universe; hates nothing that he has made; is loving to every man; and his tender mercies are over all his works: therefore he is not *affected with evil*, nor does he *tempt*, or influence to sin, *any man*. The sun, the source of light, rises and sets with a continual *variety* as to the *times* of both, and the *length* of the time in which, in the course of three hundred and sixty-five days, five hours, forty-eight minutes, and forty-eight seconds, it has its revolution through the ecliptic, or rather the earth has its revolution round the sun; and by which its light and heat are, to the inhabitants of the earth, either constantly *increasing* or *decreasing*: but God, the Creator and Preserver of all things, is eternally the same, dispensing his *good* and *perfect gifts*-his *earthly* and *heavenly* blessings, to all his creatures, ever unclouded in himself, and ever *nilling* EVIL and *willing* GOOD. Men may hide themselves from his light by the works of darkness, as owls and bats hide themselves in dens and caves of the earth during the prevalency of the solar light: but his good will to his creatures is permanent; he wills not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may come unto him and live; and no man walks in wretchedness or misery but he who *will not come unto God that he may have life*. See diagram and notes at the end of this chapter. **See Clarke "Jas 1:27"**.

Verse 18. **Of his own will begat he us]** *God's will* here is opposed to the *lust of man*, #**Jas 1:15**; his *truth*, the means of human salvation, to the *sinful means* referred to in the above verse; and the *new creatures*, to the *sin conceived* and *brought forth*, as above. As the *will* of God is essentially *good*, all its productions must be *good* also; as it is infinitely *pure*, all its productions must be *holy*. The *word* or *doctrine* of *truth*, what St. Paul calls *the word of the truth of the Gospel*, #**Col 1:5**, is the means which God uses to convert souls.

**A kind of first fruits]** By *creatures* we are here to understand the *Gentiles*, and by *first fruits* the *Jews*, to whom the Gospel was first sent; and those of them that believed were the *first fruits* of that astonishing *harvest* which God has since reaped over the whole Gentile world. **See Clarke's notes on "Ro 8:19"**, &c. There is a remarkable saying in *Philo* on this subject, *De Allegoris*, lib. ii. p. 101: *God begat Isaac, for he is the father of the perfect nature*, σπειρων εν ταις ψυχαις, *sowing seed in souls, and begetting happiness*.

Verse 19. **Swift to hear]** *Talk little and work much*, is a rabbinical adage.-*Pirkey Aboth*, cap. i. 15.

*The righteous speak little, and do much; the wicked speak much, and do nothing*.-*Bava Metzia*, fol. 87.

The son of Sirach says, cap. v. 11: γινου ταχυς εν τη ακροσει σου, και εν μακροθυμια φθεγγου αποκρισιν. "Be swift to hear, and with deep consideration give answer."

**Slow to wrath]** "There are *four* kinds of dispositions," says the *Midrash hanaalam*, cap. v. 11: "*First*, Those who are easily incensed, and easily pacified; these *gain* on one hand, and *lose* on the other. *Secondly*, Those who are not easily incensed, but are difficult to be appeased; these *lose* on the one *hand*, and *gain* on the *other*. *Thirdly*, Those who are difficult to be incensed, and are easily appeased; these are the *good*. *Fourthly*, Those who are easily angered, and difficult to be appeased; these are the *wicked*."

Those who are hasty in speech are generally of a peevish or angry disposition. A person who is careful to consider what he says, is not likely to be soon angry.

Verse 20. **The wrath of man]** A furious zeal in matters of religion is detestable in the sight of God; he will have no sacrifice that is not consumed by fire from his own altar. The zeal that made the Papists persecute and burn the Protestants, was kindled in hell. This was *the wrath of man*, and did not work any *righteous act for God*; nor was it the means of working righteousness in others; the bad fruit of a bad tree. And do they still vindicate these cruelties? Yes: for still they maintain that no faith is to be kept with heretics, and they acknowledge the *inquisition*.

Verse 21. **All filthiness]** *πασαν ροπαριαν*. This word signifies any impurity that cleaves to the body; but applied to the mind, it implies all impure and unholy affections, such as those spoken of **#Jas 1:15**, which pollute the soul; in this sense it is used by the best Greek writers.

**Superfluity of naughtiness]** *περισσειαν κακιας*. The *overflowing of wickedness*. Perhaps there is an allusion here to the part cut off in circumcision, which was the emblem of impure desire; and to lessen that propensity, God, in his mercy, enacted this rite. Put all these evil dispositions aside, for they blind the soul, and render it incapable of receiving any good, even from that ingrafted word of God which otherwise would have saved their souls.

**The ingrafted word]** That doctrine which has already been *planted among you*, which has brought forth fruit in all them that have *meekly* and humbly received it, and is as *powerful to save your souls* as the souls of those who have already believed. I think this to be the meaning of *εμφυτον λογον*, the *ingrafted word* or *doctrine*. The seed of life had been sown in the land; many of them had received it to their salvation; others had partially credited it, but not so as to produce in them any saving effects. Besides, they appear to have taken up with other doctrines, from which they had got no salvation; he therefore exhorts them to receive the doctrine of Christ, which would be the means of saving them unto eternal life. And when those who were Jews, and who had been originally planted by God as altogether a right vine, received the faith of the Gospel, it is represented as being ingrafted on that right stock, the pure knowledge of the true God and his holy moral law. This indeed was a good stock on which to implant *Christianity*. This appears to be what the apostle means by the ingrafted word, which is able to save the soul.

Verse 22. **But be ye doers of the word]** They had heard this doctrine; they had believed it; but they had put it to no practical use. They were downright *Antinomians*, who put a sort of stupid, inactive faith in the place of all moral righteousness. This is sufficiently evident from the second chapter.

**Deceiving your own selves.]** *παραλογιζομενοι εαυτους*. Imposing on your own selves by sophistical arguments; this is the meaning of the words. They had reasoned themselves into a state of carnal security, and the object of St. James is, to awake them out of their sleep.

Verse 23. **Beholding his natural face in a glass]** This metaphor is very simple, but very expressive. A man wishes to see his own face, and how, in its natural state, it appears; for this purpose he looks into a mirror, by which his real face, with all its blemishes and imperfections, is

exhibited. He is affected with his own appearance; he sees deformities that might be remedied; spots, superfluities, and impurities, that might be removed. While he *continues to look* into the mirror he is affected, and wishes himself different to what he appears, and forms purposes of doing what he can to render his countenance agreeable. On going away he soon forgets what manner of person he was, because the mirror is now removed, and his face is no longer reflected to himself; and he no longer recollects how disagreeable he appeared, and his own resolutions of improving his countenance. The *doctrines of God*, faithfully preached, are such a *mirror*; he who hears cannot help discovering his own character, and being affected with his own deformity; he sorrows, and purposes amendment; but when the preaching is over, the mirror is removed, and not being careful to examine the records of his salvation, the *perfect law of liberty*, #Jas 1:25, or *not continuing to look therein*, he soon forgets what manner of man he was; or, reposing some unscriptural trust in God's mercy, he reasons himself out of the necessity of repentance and amendment of life, and thus deceives his soul.

Verse 25. **But whoso looketh into the perfect law]** The word *παρακυψας*, which we translate *looketh into*, is very emphatic, and signifies that deep and attentive consideration given to a thing or subject which a man cannot bring up to his eyes, and therefore must *bend his back and neck, stooping down*, that he may see it to the greater advantage. The *law of liberty* must mean the *Gospel*; it is a *law*, for it *imposes obligations* from God, and prescribes a *rule of life*; and it *punishes* transgressors, and *rewards* the obedient. It is, nevertheless, a law that gives *liberty* from the guilt, power, dominion, and influence of sin; and it is *perfect*, providing a *fulness of salvation* for the soul: and it may be called *perfect* here, in opposition to the *law*, which was a system of types and representations of which the Gospel is the sum and substance. Some think that the word *τελειον*, *perfect*, is added here to signify that the *whole* of the Gospel must be considered and received, not a *part*; all its threatenings with its promises, all its precepts with its privileges.

**And continueth]** *παραμεινας* Takes time to see and examine the state of his soul, the grace of his God, the extent of his duty, and the height of the promised glory. The metaphor here is taken from those females who spend much time at their glass, in order that they may decorate themselves to the greatest advantage, and not leave one hair, or the smallest ornament, out of its place.

**He being not a forgetful hearer]** This seems to be a reference to #De 4:9: "Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life." *He who studies and forgets is like to a woman who brings forth children, and immediately buries them. Aboth R. Nathan, cap. 23.*

**Shall be blessed in his deed.]** In *Pirkey Aboth*, cap. v. 14, it is said: "There are four kinds of men who visit the synagogues, 1. He who enters but does not work; 2. He who works but does not enter. 3. He who enters and works. 4. He who neither enters nor works. The first two are indifferent characters; the *third* is the righteous man; the *fourth* is wholly evil."

As the path of duty is the way of *safety*, so it is the way of *happiness*; he who obeys God from a loving heart and pure conscience, will infallibly find continual blessedness.

Verse 26. **Seem to be religious]** The words *θησκοσ* and *θησκεια*, which we translate *religious* and *religion*, (see the next verse,) are of very uncertain etymology. *Suidas*, under the word *θησκειει*, which he translates *θεοσσειει, υπηρετει τοις θεοις*, *he worships or serves the gods*, accounts for the derivation thus: "It is said that Orpheus, a *Thracian*, instituted the mysteries (or religious rites) of the Greeks, and called the worshipping of God *θησκειειν* *threskeuein*, as being a *Thracian* invention." Whatever its derivation may be, the word is used both to signify *true religion*, and *superstition* or *heterodoxy*. See *Hesychius*, and see **Clarke on "Jas 1:27"**.

**Bridleth not his tongue]** He who speaks not according to the oracles of God, whatever pretences he makes to religion, only shows, by his want of scriptural knowledge, that his religion is *false*, *ματαιοσ*, or *empty* of solid truth, profit to others, and good to himself. Such a person should *bridle his tongue*, put the *bit in his mouth*; and particularly if he be a professed *teacher* of religion; ho matter where he has studied, or what else he has learned, if he have not learned *religion*, he can never teach it. And religion is of such a nature that no man can learn it but by *experience*; he who does not feel the doctrine of God to be the power of God to the salvation of his soul, can neither teach religion, nor act according to its dictates, because he is an unconverted, unrenewed man. If he be *old*, let him retire to the desert, and pray to God for light; if he be in the *prime of life*, let him turn his attention to some honest calling; if he be *young*, let him tarry at Jericho till his beard grows.

Verse 27. **Pure religion, and undefiled]** Having seen something of the etymology of the word *θησκεια*, which we translate *religion*, it will be well to consider the etymology of the word *religion* itself.

In the 28th chapter of the 4th book of his *Divine Instructions*, LACTANTIUS, who flourished about A. D. 300, treats of *hope, true religion, and superstition*; of the two latter he gives Cicero's definition from his book *De Natura Deorum*, lib. ii. c. 28, which with his own definition will lead us to a correct view, not only of the *etymology*, but of the *thing* itself.

"*Superstition*," according to that philosopher, "had its name from the custom of those who offered daily prayers and sacrifices, that their children might SURVIVE THEM; *ut sui sibi liberi* *superstites* essent. Hence they were called *superstitiosi*, superstitious. On the other hand, religion, *religio*, had its name from those who, not satisfied with what was commonly spoken concerning the nature and worship of the gods, searched into the whole matter, and *perused the writings* of past times; hence they were called *religiosi*, from *re*, again, and *lego*, I read."

This definition Lactantius ridicules, and shows that religion has its name from *re*, intensive, and *ligo*, I bind, because of that *bond of piety* by which it *binds* us to God, and this he shows was the notion conceived of it by *Lucretius*, who laboured to *dissolve* this bond, and make men atheists.

*Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus, et ARCTIS  
RELIGIONUM animos NODIS EXSOLVERE pergo.*

For first I teach great things in lofty strains,  
And loose men from *religion's* grievous chains.  
Lucret., lib. i., ver. 930, 931

As to *superstition*, he says it derived its name from those who paid religious veneration to the memory of the dead, (*qui superstitem memoriam defunctorem colunt*), or from those who, *surviving* their parents, worshipped their images at home, as household gods; *aut qui, parentibus suis superstites, colebant imagines eorum domi, tanquam deos penates*. *Superstition*, according to others, refers to novel rites and ceremonies in religion, or to the worship of new gods. But by *religion* are meant the *ancient forms* of worship belonging to those gods, which had long been received. Hence that saying of Virgil:—

*Vana superstitione veterumque ignara deorum.*

"Vain superstition not knowing the ancient gods."

Here Lactantius observes, that as the ancient gods were consecrated precisely in the same way with *these new ones*, that therefore it was nothing but *superstition* from the beginning. Hence he asserts, the *superstitious* are those who worship many and false gods, and the *Christians* alone are *religious*, who worship and supplicate the one true God only. St. James' definition rather refers to the *effects* of *pure religion* than to its *nature*. The *life of God in the soul of man*, producing *love to God and man*, will show itself in the acts which St. James mentions here. It is *pure* in the *principle*, for it is Divine truth and Divine love. It is *undefiled* in all its operations: it can produce nothing *unholy*, because it ever acts in the *sight of God*; and it can produce no *ungentle* word nor *unkind* act, because it comes from the *Father*.

The words καθαρα και αμικντος, *pure and undefiled*, are supposed to have reference to a *diamond* or *precious stone*, whose perfection consists in its being *free from flaws*; not *cloudy*, but of a *pure water*. True religion is the *ornament* of the soul, and its *effects*, the ornament of the *life*.

**To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction]** Works of *charity* and *mercy* are the proper fruits of religion; and none are more especially the objects of charity and mercy than the *orphans* and *widows*. False religion may perform acts of mercy and charity; but its *motives* not being *pure*, and its principle being *defiled*, the *flesh*, self, and hypocrisy, *spot* the man, and *spot* his acts. True religion does not merely *give* something for the *relief* of the distressed, but it *visits them*, it takes *the oversight of them*, it takes them under its care; so επισκεπτεσθαι means. It goes to their houses, and speaks to their hearts; it relieves their wants, sympathizes with them in their distresses, instructs them in Divine things and recommends them to God. And all this it does for the Lord's sake. This is the religion of Christ. The religion that does not prove itself by works of charity and mercy is not of God. Reader, what religion hast thou? Has thine ever led thee to cellars, garrets, cottages, and houses, to find out the distressed? Hast thou ever fed, clothed, and visited a destitute representative of Christ?

The subject in #Jas 1:11 suggests several reflections on the mutability of human affairs, and the end of all things.

1. Nature herself is subject to mutability, though by her secret and inscrutable exertions she effects her renovation from her decay, and thus *change* is prevented from terminating in *destruction*. Yet nature herself is tending, by continual mutations, to a final destruction; or rather to a fixed state,

when *time*, the place and sphere of mutability, shall be absorbed in eternity. Time and nature are coeval; they began and must terminate together. All *changes* are efforts to arrive at destruction or renovation; and destruction must be the *term* or bound of all created things, had not the Creator purposed that his works should endure for ever. According to his promise, we look for a new heaven and a new earth; a fixed, permanent, and endless state of things; an everlasting sabbath to all the works of God.

I shall confirm these observations with the last verses of that incomparable poem, the *Faery Queene*, of our much neglected but unrivalled poet, *Edmund Spenser*:—

"When I bethink me on that speech whylear,  
Of *mutability*, and well it weigh;  
Me seems, that though she all unworthy were  
Of the *heaven's rule*; yet very sooth to say,  
In *all things else she bears the greatest sway*;  
Which makes me loath this state of life so tickle,  
And love of things so vain to cast away;  
Whose *flow'ring pride*, so *fading* and so *fickle*,  
*Short Time shall soon cut down with his consuming sickle.*

Then gin I think on that which *Nature* sayd,  
Of that same time when *no more change* shall be,  
But *stedfast rest* of all things, firmly stayd  
Upon the *pillours of eternity*,  
That is contrayr to *mutability*:  
For all that *moveth*, doth in *change* delight:  
But thenceforth all shall rest eternally  
With him that is the God of *Sabaoth* hight:  
O that great *Sabaoth* God, grant me that *Sabaoth's* sight!"

When this is to be the glorious *issue*, who can regret the speedy lapse of time? Mutability shall end in permanent perfection, when time, the destroyer of all things, shall be absorbed in eternity. And what has a righteous man to fear from that "wreck of matter and that crush of worlds," which to him shall usher in the glories of an eternal day? A moralist has said, "Though heaven shall vanish like a vapour, and this firm globe of earth shall crumble into dust, the righteous man shall stand unmoved amidst the shocked depredations of a crushed world; for he who hath appointed the heavens and the earth to fail, hath said unto the virtuous soul, Fear not! for *thou* shalt neither perish nor be wretched."

Dr. *Young* has written most nervously, in the spirit of the highest order of poetry, and with the knowledge and feeling of a sound divine, on this subject, in his *Night Thoughts*. Night vi. *in fine*.

Of man *immortal* hear the lofty style:—  
"If so decreed, th' Almighty will be done.  
Let earth dissolve, yon ponderous orbs descend  
And grind us into dust: the *soul* is safe;  
The *man* emerges; mounts above the wreck,  
As towering flame from nature's funeral pyre;  
O'er desolation, as a gainer, smiles;  
His charter, his inviolable rights,  
Well pleased to learn from thunder's impotence,  
Death's pointless darts, and hell's defeated storms."

After him, and borrowing his *imagery* and *ideas*, another of our poets, *in canticis sacris facile princeps*, has expounded and improved the whole in the following hymn on the *Judgment*.

"Stand the Omnipotent decree,  
Jehovah's will be done!  
Nature's end we wait to see,  
And hear her final groan.  
Let this earth dissolve, and blend  
In death the wicked and the just;  
Let those ponderous orbs descend  
And grind us into dust.

Rests secure the righteous man;  
At his Redeemer's beck,  
Sure to emerge, and rise again,  
And mount above the wreck.  
Lo! the heavenly spirit towers  
Like flames o'er nature's funeral pyre;  
Triumphs in immortal powers,  
And claps her wings of fire.

Nothing hath the just to lose  
By worlds on worlds destroy'd;  
Far beneath his feet he views,  
With smiles, the flaming void;  
Sees the universe renew'd;  
The grand millennial reign begun;  
Shouts with all the sons of God  
Around th' eternal throne."

WESLEY

One word more, and I shall trouble my reader no farther on a subject on which I could wear out my pen and drain the last drop of my ink. The learned reader will join in the wish.

"Talia saecula suis dixerunt, currite, fuis  
 Concordes stabili fatorum numine Parcae.  
 Aggredere O magnos (aderit jam tempus!) honores,  
 Cara Deum soboles, magnum Jovis incrementum.  
 Aspice convexo nutantem pondere mundum,  
 Terrasque, tractusque maris, cœlumque profundum:  
 Aspice, venturo lætentur ut omnia saeclo.  
 O mihi tam longæ maneat pars *ultima* vitæ,  
 Spiritus, et quantum sat erit tua dicere facta!"  
 VIRG. *Eclog.* iv.

There has never been a translation of this, worthy of the poet; and to such a piece I cannot persuade myself to append the hobbling verses of Mr. Dryden.

2. Taken in every point of view, #Jas 1:17 is one of the most curious and singular in the New Testament. It has been well observed, that the first words make a regular *Greek hexameter verse*, supposed to be quoted from some Greek poet not now extant; and the last clause of the verse, with a very little change, makes another hexameter:—

πασα δοσις αγαθη, και παν δωρημα τελειον,  
 εστ' απο των φωτων πατρος καταβαινον ανωθεν.

"Every goodly gift, and every perfect donation,  
 Is from the Father of lights, and from above it descendeth."

The first line, which is incontestably a *perfect hexameter*, may have been designed by St. James, or in the course of composition may have originated from accident, a thing which often occurs to all good writers; but the sentiment itself is immediately from heaven. I know not that we can be justified by sound criticism in making any particular distinction between *δοσις* and *δωρημα*: our translators have used the same word in rendering both. They are often synonymous; but sometimes we may observe a shade of difference, *δοσις* signifying a *gift* of any kind, here probably meaning *earthly blessings* of all sorts, *δωρημα* signifying a *free gift*—one that comes without constraint, from the mere *benevolence* of the giver; and here it may signify all *spiritual and eternal blessings*. Now all these *come from above*; God is as much the *AUTHOR* of our *earthly good*, as he is of our *eternal salvation*. Earthly blessings are simply *good*; but they are *imperfect*, they perish in the using. The blessings of *grace* and *glory* are supreme goods, they are permanent and perfect; and to the *gift* that includes these the term *τελειον*, *perfect*, is here properly added by St. James. There is a sentiment very similar to this in the ninth Olympic Ode of Pindar, l. 41:—

-----αγαθοι δε  
 και σοφοι κατα δαιμον' ανδρες.

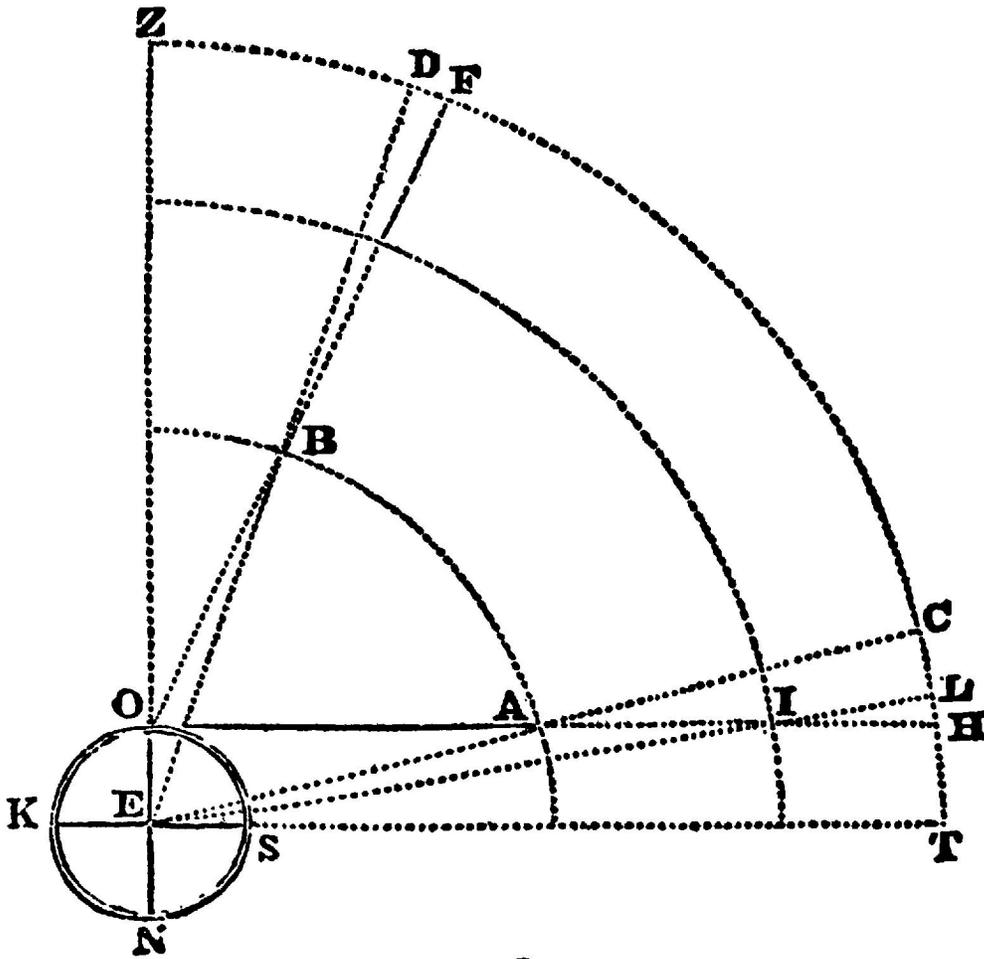
Man, boast of naught: whate'er thou hast is given;  
 Wisdom and virtue are the gifts of Heaven.

But how tame is even Pindar's verse when compared with the energy of James!

3. In the latter part of the verse, *παρ ὧ οὐκ ἐνὶ παραλλαγῇ, ἡ τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα*, which we translate, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*, there is an allusion to some of the most abstruse principles in astronomy. This is not accidental, for every word in the whole verse is astronomical. In his *πατήρ τῶν φωτῶν*, *Father of lights*, there is the most evident allusion to the SUN, who is the *father, author, or source* of all the *lights* or luminaries proper to our system. It is not only his light which *we* enjoy by day, but it is his light also which is reflected to us, from the moon's surface, by *night*. And it is demonstrable that all the *planets-Mercury, Venus, the Earth, the Moon, Mars, Ceres, Pallas, Juno, Vesta, Jupiter, Saturn, Saturn's Rings, and Herschel, or the Georgium Sidus*, with the *four* satellites of Jupiter, the *seven* satellites of Saturn, and the *six* satellites of the Georgium Sidus, thirty-one bodies in all, besides the *comets*, all derive their light from the sun, being perfectly *opaque* or *dark* in themselves; the sun being the only luminous body in our system; all the rest being *illuminated* by him.

The word *παραλλαγή*, which we translate *variableness*, from *παραλλαττω*, *to change alternately, to pass from one change to another*, evidently refers to *parallax* in astronomy. To give a proper idea of what astronomers mean by this term, it must be premised that all the diurnal motions of the heavenly bodies from east to west are only *apparent*, being occasioned by the rotation of the earth upon its axis in an opposite direction in about twenty-four hours. These diurnal motions are therefore performed *uniformly* round the axis or polar diameter of the earth, and not round the place of the spectator, who is upon the earth's surface. Hence every one who observes the apparent motion of the heavens from this surface will find that this motion is not even, equal arches being described in unequal times; for if a globular body, such as the earth, describe equally the circumference of a circle by its rotatory motion, it is evident the equality of this motion can be seen in no other points than those in the axis of the circle, and therefore any object viewed from the centre of the earth will appear in a different place from what it does when observed from the surface. This difference of place of the same object, seen at the same time from the earth's centre and surface, is called its *parallax*.

As I shall make some farther use of this point, in order to make it plain to those who are not much acquainted with the subject, to which I am satisfied St. James alludes, I shall introduce the following diagram:—



Let the circle OKNS. in the annexed figure, represent the earth, E its centre, O the place of an observer on its surface, whose visible or sensible horizon is OH, and the line EST, parallel to OH, the rational, true, or mathematical horizon. Let ZDFT be considered a portion of a great circle in the heavens, and A the place of an object in the visible horizon. Join EA by a line produced to C:

then C is the *true* place of the object, and H is its *apparent* place; and the angle CAH is its *parallax*; and, because the object is in the horizon, it is called its *horizontal parallax*. As OAE, the angle which the earth's radius or semidiameter subtends to the object, is necessarily equal to its opposite angle CAH, hence the *horizontal parallax* of an object is defined to be the angle which the earth's semidiameter subtends at that object.

The whole effect of parallax is in a *vertical* direction; for the parallaxic angle is in the *plane* passing through the *observer* and the *earth's centre*, which plane is necessarily *perpendicular* to the *horizon*, the earth being considered as a *sphere*. The more *elevated* an object is above the visible horizon, the *less* the *parallax*, the distance from the earth's centre continuing the same. To make this sufficiently clear, let B represent an object at any given altitude above the visible horizon OAH; then the angle DBF, formed by the straight lines OB and EB produced to F and D, will be the parallax of the object at the given altitude, and is less than the parallax of the same object when in the visible horizon OAH, for the angle DBF is less than the angle CAH. Hence the horizontal parallax is the greatest of all diurnal parallaxes; and when the object is in the *zenith*, it has no *parallax*, the visual ray passing perpendicularly *from* the *object* through the *observer* to the earth's centre, as in the line ZOE.

The quantity of the horizontal parallax of any object is in proportion to its distance from the place of observation, being greater or less as the object is nearer to or farther removed from the spectator. In illustration of this point, let I be the place of an object in the sensible horizon; then will LIH be its horizontal parallax, which is a smaller angle than CAH, the horizontal parallax of the nearer object A.

The horizontal parallax being given, the distance of the object from the earth's centre, EA or EI, may be readily found in semidiameters of the earth by the resolution of the right-angled triangle OEA, in which we have given the angle OAE, the horizontal parallax, the side OE, the semidiameter of the earth, considered as unity, and the right angle AOE, to find the side EA, the distance of the object from the earth's centre. The proportion to be used in this case is: The sine of the horizontal parallax is to unity, the semidiameter of the earth, as radius, *i.e.* the right angle AOE, the sine of ninety degrees being the radius of a circle, is to the side EA. This proportion is very compendiously wrought by logarithms as follows: Subtract the logarithmic sine of the horizontal parallax from 10, the radius, and the remainder will be the logarithm of the answer.

*Example.* When the moon's horizontal parallax is a degree, what is her distance from the earth's centre in semidiameters of the earth?

From the radius, . . . . .	10.000000
Subtract the sine of 1 degree . . . . .	8.2418553
. . . . .	1.7581447
Remainder the logarithm of 57.2987 .	

Which is the distance of the moon in semidiameters of the earth, when her horizontal parallax amounts to a degree. If 57.2987 be multiplied by 3977, the English miles contained in the earth's semidiameter, the product, 227876.9, will be the moon's distance from the earth's centre in English miles.

The sun's horizontal parallax is about *eight seconds* and *three-fifths*, as is evident from the phenomena attending the transits of Venus, of 1761 and 1769, as observed in different parts of the world: a method of obtaining the solar parallax abundantly less liable to be materially affected by error of observation than that of Hipparchus, who lived between the 154th and 163d Olympiad, from lunar eclipses; or than that of Aristarchus the Samian, from the moon's dichotomy; or even than that of modern astronomers from the parallax of Mars when in opposition, and, at the same time, in or near his perihelion. The sun's horizontal parallax being scarcely the four hundred and eighteenth part of that of the moon given in the preceding example, if 227876.9, the distance of the moon as found above, be multiplied by 418.6, (for the horizontal parallax decreases nearly in proportion as the distance increases,) the product will be the distance of the sun from the earth's centre, which will be found to be upwards of *ninety-five millions* of English miles.

When we know the horizontal parallax of any object, its magnitude is easily determined. The apparent diameter of the sun, for example, at his mean distance from the earth, is somewhat more than *thirty-two minutes of a degree*, which is at least a hundred and eleven times greater than the double of the sun's horizontal parallax, or the apparent diameter of the earth as seen from the sun;

therefore, the real solar diameter must be at least a *hundred and eleven* times greater than that of the earth; *i.e.* upwards of 880,000 English miles. And as spherical bodies are to each other as the cubes of their diameters, if 111 be cubed, we shall find that the magnitude of the sun is more than *thirteen hundred thousand* times greater than that of the earth.

The whole effect of parallax being in a *vertical circle*, and the circles of the sphere not being in this direction, the parallax of a star will evidently change its true place with respect to these different circles; whence there are *five* kinds of diurnal parallaxes, *viz.* the parallax of *longitude*, parallax of *latitude*, parallax of *ascension* or *descension*, parallax of *declination*, and parallax of *altitude*, the last of which has been already largely explained; and the meaning of the first four, simply, is the *difference* between the *true* and *visible* longitude, latitude, right ascension, and declination of an object. Besides these, there is another kind of parallax, called by modern astronomers the *parallax* of the *earth's ANNUAL ORBIT*, by which is meant the difference between the places of a planet as seen from the sun and the earth at the same time, the former being its *true* or *heliocentric* place, and the latter its *apparent* or *geocentric* place. The ancient astronomers gave the term *parallax* only to the diurnal apparent inequalities of motion in the moon and planets; Ptolemy, who lived in the second century, calling *prosphaeresis orbis* what is now named the *parallax* of the *great* or *annual orbit*. This parallax is more considerable than the diurnal parallax, as the earth's annual orbit is more considerable than the earth's semidiameter. This parallax, when greatest, amounts in Mars, the nearest superior planet, to upwards of *forty-seven* degrees; in Jupiter to near *twelve* degrees; in Saturn to more than *six* degrees, &c. In the region of the nearest fixed stars, *i.e.* those new ones of 1572 and 1604, *double* the *radius* of the earth's orbit does not subtend an angle of a single *minute* of a degree; whence it is evident the nearest fixed stars are at least *hundreds of times* more distant from us than the Georgium Sidus is, whose greatest annual parallax amounts to upwards of *three* degrees. The annual parallaxes of the fixed stars are, in general, *too minute* to be measured; hence their distances from the earth must be inconceivably great.

Any farther description of parallax would be useless in reference to the subject to be illustrated.

The words τροπῆς ἀποσκίασμα, *shadow of turning*, either refer to the darkness in which the earth is involved in consequence of its *turning round its axis* once in every twenty-four hours, by means of which one hemisphere, or half of its surface, is involved in darkness, being hidden from the sun by the opposite hemisphere; or to the different portions of the earth which come gradually into the solar light by its revolution round its *orbit*, which, in consequence of the pole of the earth being inclined nearly twenty-three degrees and a half to the plane of its orbit, and keeping its *parallelism* through every part of its revolution, causes all the *vicissitudes of season*, with all the increasing and decreasing proportions of light and darkness, and of cold and heat.

Every person who understands the images will see with what propriety St. James has introduced them; and through this his great object is at once discernible. It is evident from this chapter that there were persons, among those to whom he wrote, that held very erroneous opinions concerning the Divine nature; *viz.* that God tempted or influenced men to sin, and, consequently, that he was the author of all the evil that is in the world; and that he withholds his light and influence when necessary to convey truth and to correct vice. To destroy this error he shows that though the sun, for its *splendour*, *genial heat*, and *general utility* to the globe and its inhabitants, may be a fit emblem

of God, yet in several respects the metaphor is very *imperfect*; for the sun himself is liable to repeated obscurations; and although, as to his mass, he is the *focus of the system*, giving light and heat to all, yet he is not everywhere present, and both his light and heat may be intercepted by a great variety of opposing bodies, and other causes. St. James refers particularly to the Divine *ubiquity* or omnipresence. Wherever his light and energy are, there is he *himself*; neither his *word* nor his *Spirit* gives false or inconsistent views of his nature and gracious purposes. He has no *parallax*, because he is equally present everywhere, and intimately *near* to all his creatures; HE is never *seen where he is not*, or *not seen where he is*. *He is the God and Father of all; who is ABOVE all, and THROUGH all, and IN all*; "in the wide waste, as in the city full;" nor can any thing be hidden from his light and heat. There can be no opposing bodies to prevent him from sending forth his light and truth, because he is everywhere *essentially* present. He suffers no *eclipses*; he *changes* not in his nature; he varies not in his designs; he is ever a full, free, and eternal fountain of mercy, goodness, truth, and good will, to all his intelligent offspring. Hallelujah, the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth! Amen.

IN concluding these observations, I think it necessary to refer to Mr. Wakefield's translation of this text, and his vindication of that translation: *Every good gift, and every perfect kindness, cometh down from above, from the Father of lights, with whom is no parallax, nor tropical shadow*. "Some have affected," says he, "to ridicule my translation of this verse, if it be obscure, the author must answer for that, and not the translator. Why should we impoverish the sacred writers, by *robbing* them of the learning and science they display? Why should we *conceal* in *them* what we should *ostentatiously point out* in *profane authors*? And if any of these wise, learned, and judicious critics think they understand the phrase *shadow of turning*, I wish they would condescend to explain it." Yes, if such a sentiment were found in *Aratus*, or in any other *ancient* astronomical writer, whole pages of commentary would be written on it, and the subtle doctrine of the parallax proved to be well known in itself, and its use in determining the distances and magnitudes of the heavenly bodies, to the ancients some hundreds of years before the Christian era.

The sentiment is as elegant as it is just, and forcibly points out the *unchangeableness* and *beneficence* of God. He is the Sun, not of a system, but of all worlds; the great Fountain and Dispenser of light and heat, of power and life, of order, harmony, and perfection. In him all live and move, and from him they have their being. There are no *spots* on his disk; all is unclouded splendour. Can he who dwells in this unsufferable and unapproachable light, in his own eternal self-sufficiency, concern himself with the affairs of mortals? Yes, *for we are his offspring*; and it is one part of his perfection to delight in the welfare of his intelligent creatures. He is loving to every man: he hates nothing that he has made; and his praise endureth for ever!

# JAMES

## CHAPTER II.

*We should not prefer the rich to the poor, nor show any partiality inconsistent with the Gospel of Christ, 1-4. God has chosen the poor, rich in faith, to be heirs of his kingdom, even those whom some among their brethren despised and oppressed, 5, 6. They should love their neighbour as themselves, and have no respect of persons, 7-9. He who breaks one command of God is guilty of the whole, 10, 11. They should act as those who shall be judged by the law of liberty; and he shall have judgment without mercy, who shows no mercy, 12, 13. Faith without works of charity and mercy is dead; nor can it exist where there are no good works, 14-20. Abraham proved his faith by his works, 21-24. And so did Rahab, 25. As the body without the soul is dead, so is faith without good works, 26.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

Verse 1. **My brethren, have not]** This verse should be read interrogatively: *My brethren, do ye not make profession of the faith or religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ with acceptance of persons?* That is, preferring the rich to the poor merely because of their riches, and not on account of any moral excellence, personal piety, or public usefulness. πιστις, *faith*, is put here for religion; and της δοξης, *of glory*, should, according to some critics, be construed with it as the Syriac and Coptic have done. Some connect it with *our Lord Jesus Christ-the religion of our glorious Lord Jesus Christ*. Others translate thus, *the faith of the glory of our Lord Jesus*. There are many various readings in the MSS. and versions on this verse: the meaning is clear enough, though the connection be rather obscure.

Verse 2. **If there come unto your assembly]** εις την συναγωγην· *Into the synagogue*. It appears from this that the apostle is addressing *Jews* who frequented their synagogues, and carried on their worship there and judicial proceedings, as the Jews were accustomed to do. Our word *assembly* does not express the original; and we cannot suppose that these synagogues were at this time occupied with Christian worship, but that the Christian Jews continued to frequent them for the purpose of hearing the law and the prophets read, as they had formerly done, previously to their conversion to the Christian faith. But St. James may refer here to proceedings in a court of justice.

**With a gold ring, in goodly apparel]** The ring on the finger and the splendid garb were proofs of the man's opulence; and his *ring* and his *coat*, not his *worth*, moral good qualities, or the righteousness of his cause, procured him the respect of which St. James speaks.

**There come in also a poor man]** In ancient times petty courts of judicature were held in the synagogues, as *Vitringa* has sufficiently proved, *De Vet. Syn.* l. 3, p. 1, c. 11; and it is probable that the case here adduced was one of a judicial kind, where, of the two *parties*, one was *rich* and the other *poor*; and the master or ruler of the synagogue, or he who presided in this court, paid particular deference to the rich man, and neglected the poor man; though, as *plaintiff* and *defendant*, they were equal in the eye of justice, and should have been considered so by an impartial judge.

Verse 3. **Sit here under my footstool]** Thus evidently prejudging the cause, and giving the poor man to see that he was to expect no impartial administration of justice in his cause.

Verse 4. **Are ye not then partial]** ου διεκριθητε· *Do ye not make a distinction*, though the case has not been heard, and the law has not decided?

**Judges of evil thoughts?]** κριται διαλογισμων πονηρων· *Judges of evil reasonings*; that is, *judges who reason wickedly*; who, in effect, say in your hearts, we will espouse the cause of the *rich*, because they can befriend us; we will neglect that of the poor, because they cannot help us, nor have they power to hurt us.

Verse 5. **Hath not God chosen the poor of this world]** This seems to refer to #Mt 11:5: *And the poor have the Gospel preached to them*. These believed on the Lord Jesus, and found his salvation; while the *rich* despised, neglected, and persecuted him. These had that faith in Christ which put them in possession of the *choicest spiritual blessings*, and gave them a *right* to the *kingdom of heaven*. While, therefore, they were despised of men, they were highly prized of God.

Verse 6. **Do not rich men oppress you]** The administration of justice was at this time in a miserable state of corruption among the Jews; but a *Christian* was one who was to expect no justice any where but from his God. The words καταδυναστευουσιν, *exceedingly oppress*, and ελκουσιν εις κριτηρια, *drag you to courts of justice*, show how grievously oppressed and maltreated the Christians were by their countrymen the Jews, who made *law* a pretext to afflict their bodies, and spoil them of their property.

Verse 7. **Blaspheme that worthy name]** They took every occasion to asperse the *Christian* name and the Christian faith, and have been, from the beginning to the present day, famous for their blasphemies against Christ and his religion. It is evident that these were *Jews* of whom St. James speaks; no *Christians* in these early times could have acted the part here mentioned.

Verse 8. **The royal law]** νομον βασιλικον. This epithet, of all the New Testament writers, is peculiar to James; but it is frequent among the Greek writers in the sense in which it appears St. James uses it. βασιλικος, *royal*, is used to signify any thing that is of general concern, is suitable to all, and necessary for all, as brotherly love is. This commandment; *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, is a *royal law*, not only because it is ordained of God, and proceeds from his *kingly* authority over men, but because it is so *useful*, *suitable*, and *necessary* to the present state of man; and as it was given us particularly by Christ himself, #Joh 13:34; 15:12, who is our *King*, as well as Prophet and Priest, it should ever put us in mind of his *authority* over us, and our *subjection* to him. As the *regal state* is the most excellent for secular dignity and civil utility that exists among men, hence we give the epithet *royal* to whatever is excellent, noble, grand, or useful.

Verse 9. **But if ye have respect to persons]** In judgment, or in any other way; *ye commit sin* against God, and against your brethren, and are *convinced*, ελεγχομενοι, and are *convicted*, by the law; by this royal law, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself; *as transgressors*, having shown this sinful acceptance of persons, which has led you to refuse *justice* to the *poor man*, and uphold the *rich* in his oppressive conduct.

Verse 10. **For whosoever shall keep the whole law, &c.]** This is a rabbinical form of speech. In the tract *Shabbath*, fol. 70, where they dispute concerning the thirty-nine works commanded by Moses, Rabbi Yochanan says: *But if a man do the whole, with the omission of one, he is guilty of the whole, and of every one.* In *Bammidar rabba*, sec. 9, fol. 200, and in *Tanchum*, fol. 60, there is a copious example given, how an *adulteress*, by that one crime, *breaks all the ten commandments*, and by the same mode of proof any one sin may be shown to be a breach of the whole decalogue. The truth is, any sin is against the Divine authority; and he who has committed one transgression is guilty of death; and by his one deliberate act dissolves, as far as he can, the sacred connection that subsists between all the Divine precepts and the obligation which he is under to obey, and thus casts off in effect his allegiance to God. For, if God should be obeyed in any one instance, he should be obeyed in all, as the authority and reason of obedience are the same in every case; he therefore who breaks one of these laws is, in effect, if not in fact, guilty of the whole. But there is scarcely a more *common form of speech* among the rabbins than this, for they consider that any one sin has the seeds of all others in it. See a multitude of examples in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 11. **For he that said]** That is, the authority that gave one commandment gave also the rest; and he who breaks one resists this authority; so that the breach of any one commandment may be justly considered a breach of the whole law. It was a maxim also among the Jewish doctors that, if a man kept any one commandment carefully, though he broke all the rest, he might assure himself of the favour of God; for while they taught that "He who transgresses all the precepts of the law has broken the yoke, dissolved the covenant, and exposed the law to contempt, and so has he done who has broken even one precept," (*Mechilta*, fol. 5, *Yalcut Simeoni*, part 1, fol. 59,) they also taught, "that he who observed any *principal* command was equal to him who kept the whole law;" (*Kiddushin*, fol. 39;) and they give for example, "If a man abandon idolatry, it is the same as if he had fulfilled the whole law," (*Ibid.*, fol. 40.) To correct this false doctrine James lays down that in the 11th verse. {#Jas 2:11} Thus they *did* and *undid*.

Verse 12. **So speak ye, and so do]** Have respect to every commandment of God, for this the *law of liberty*-the Gospel of Jesus Christ, particularly requires; and this is the law by which all mankind, who have had the opportunity of knowing it, shall be judged. But all along St. James particularly refers to the precept, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*.

Verse 13. **For he shall have judgment]** He who shows no mercy to man, or, in other words, he who does not exercise himself in works of charity and mercy to his needy fellow creatures, shall receive no mercy at the hand of God; for he hath said, *Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy*. The unmerciful therefore are *cursed*, and they shall obtain no mercy.

**Mercy rejoiceth against judgment.]** These words are variously understood. 1. *Mercy*, the merciful man, the abstract for the concrete, exults over judgment, that is, he is not afraid of it, having acted according to the law of liberty, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*. 2. Ye shall be exalted by mercy above judgment. 3. For he (God) exalts mercy above judgment. 4. A merciful man rejoices rather in opportunities of showing mercy, than in acting according to strict justice. 5. In the great day, though justice might condemn every man according to the rigour of the law, yet God will cause mercy to triumph over justice in bringing those into his glory who, for his sake, had fed the

hungry, clothed the naked, ministered to the sick, and visited the prisoners. See what our Lord says, **#Mt 25:31-46**.

In the MSS. and versions there is a considerable variety of readings on this verse, and some of the senses given above are derived from those readings. The spirit of the saying may be found in another scripture, *I will have mercy and not sacrifice*-I prefer works of charity and mercy to every thing else, and especially to all acts of worship. The ROYAL LAW, *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, should particularly prevail among *men*, because of the miserable state to which all are reduced by sin, so that each particularly needs the help of his brother.

Verse 14. **What doth it profit-though a man say he hath faith]** We now come to a part of this epistle which has appeared to some eminent men to contradict other portions of the Divine records. In short, it has been thought that James teaches the doctrine of *justification by the merit of good works*, while Paul asserts this to be insufficient, and that man is *justified by faith*. Luther, supposing that James did actually teach the doctrine of justification by works, which his good sense showed him to be absolutely insufficient for salvation, was led to condemn the epistle *in toto*, as a production unauthenticated by the Holy Spirit, and consequently worthy of no regard; he therefore termed it *epistola straminea, a chaffy epistle, an epistle of straw*, fit only to be burnt. Learned men have spent much time in striving to reconcile these two writers, and to show that St. Paul and St. James perfectly accord; one teaching the pure doctrine, the other guarding men against the abuse of it. Mr. *Wesley* sums the whole up in the following words, with his usual accuracy and precision: "From **#Jas 1:22** the apostle has been enforcing Christian practice. He now applies to those who neglect this under the pretence of faith. St. Paul had taught that *a man is justified by faith without the works of the law*. This some already began to wrest to their own destruction. Wherefore St. James, purposely repeating, **#Jas 1:21, 23, 25**, the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul had used, **#Ro 4:3; #Heb 11:17, 31**, refutes not the doctrine of St. Paul, but the error of those who abused it. There is therefore no contradiction between the apostles; they both delivered the truth of God, but in a different manner, as having to do with different kinds of men. This verse is a summary of what follows: *What profiteth it*, is enlarged on, **#Jas 2:15-17**; *though a man say*, **#Jas 2:18, 19**; *can that faith save him?* **#Jas 2:20**. It is not *though he have faith*, but *though he say, I have faith*. Here therefore true living faith is meant. But in other parts of the argument the apostle speaks of a dead imaginary faith. He does not therefore teach that true faith *can*, but that it *cannot*, subsist without works. Nor does he oppose *faith* to *works*, but that empty name of faith to real faith working by love. *Can that faith which is without works save him?* No more than it can profit his neighbour."-*Explanatory notes*.

That St James quotes the same scriptures, and uses the same phrases, testimonies, and examples which St. Paul has done, is fully evident; but it does not follow that he wrote *after* St. Paul. It is *possible* that one had seen the epistle of the other; but if so, it is strange that neither of them should quote the other. That St. Paul might write to correct the abuses of St. James' doctrine is as possible as that James wrote to prevent St. Paul's doctrine from being abused; for there were *Antinomians* in the Church in the time of St. James, as there were *Pharisaic persons* in it at the time of St. Paul. I am inclined to think that James is the elder writer, and rather suppose that neither of them had ever seen the other's epistle. Allowing them both to be inspired, God could teach each what was

necessary for the benefit of the Church, without their having any knowledge of each other. See the preface to this epistle.

As the Jews in general were very strenuous in maintaining the *necessity of good works or righteousness* in order to justification, wholly neglecting the doctrine of *faith*, it is not to be wondered at that those who were converted, and saw the absolute necessity of *faith* in order to their justification, should have gone into the contrary extreme.

**Can faith save him?]** That is, his profession of faith; for it is not said that he *has faith*, but that *he says*, I have faith. St. James probably refers to that faith which simply took in the being and unity of God. See on #**Jas 2:19, 24, 25**.

Verse 15. **If a brother or sister be naked]** That is, ill-clothed; for *γυμνος*, *naked*, has this meaning in several parts of the New Testament, signifying bad clothing, or the want of some particular article of dress. See #**Mt 25:36, 38, 43, 44**, and #**Joh 21:7**. It has the same *comparative* signification in most languages.

Verse 16. **Be ye warmed and filled]** Your saying so to them, while you give them nothing, will just profit them as much as your professed faith, without those works which are the genuine fruits of true faith, will profit you in the day when God comes to sit in judgment upon your soul.

Verse 17. **If it hath not works, is dead]** The faith that does not produce works of charity and mercy is without the living principle which animates all true faith, that is, *love to God* and *love to man*. They had faith, such as a man has who credits a well-circumstanced relation because it has all the appearance of truth; but they had nothing of that faith that a sinner, convinced of his sinfulness, God's purity, and the strictness of the Divine laws, is obliged to exert in the Lord Jesus, in order to be saved from his sins.

Verse 18. **Show me thy faith without thy works]** Your pretending to have faith, while you have no works of charity or mercy, is utterly vain: for as *faith*, which is a principle in the mind, cannot be discerned but by the *effects*, that is, *good works*; he who has no good works has, presumptively, no faith.

**I will show thee my faith by my works.]** My works of charity and mercy will show that I have faith; and that it is the living tree, whose root is love to God and man, and whose fruit is the good works here contended for.

Verse 19. **Thou believest that there is one God]** This is the faith in which these persons put their hope of pleasing God, and of obtaining eternal life. Believing in the *being and unity of God* distinguished them from all the nations of the world; and having been circumcised, and thus brought into the covenant, they thought themselves secure of salvation. The insufficiency of this St. James immediately shows.

**The devils also believe, and tremble.]** It is well to believe there is one only true God; this truth universal nature proclaims. Even the *devils* believe it; but far from *justifying* or *saving them*, it leaves

them in their damned state, and every act of it only increases their torment; φρισσοῦσι, *they shudder with horror*, they believe and tremble, are increasingly tormented; but they can neither *love* nor *obey*.

Verse 20. **But wilt thou know]** Art thou willing to be instructed in the nature of true saving faith? Then attend to the following examples.

Verse 21. **Was not Abraham our father]** Did not the conduct of Abraham, in offering up his son Isaac on the altar, sufficiently prove that *he believed in God*, and that it was his *faith* in him that led him to this extraordinary act of obedience?

Verse 22. **Seest thou how faith wrought]** Here is a proof that faith cannot exist without being active in works of righteousness. His faith in God would have been of no avail to him, had it not been manifested by works; for *by works*-by his obedience to the commands of God, *his faith was made perfect*-it dictated obedience, he obeyed; and thus faith ἐτελείωθη, *had its consummation*. Even *true faith* will soon die, if its possessor do not live in the spirit of *obedience*.

Verse 23. **The scripture was fulfilled]** He believed God; this faith was never inactive, it was accounted to him for righteousness: and being justified by thus believing, his life of obedience showed that he had not received the grace of God in vain. **See Clarke's notes on "Ge 15:6"; "Ro 4:3"; "Ga 3:6";** where this subject is largely explained.

**The friend of God.]** The highest character ever given to man. As among friends every thing is in common; so God took Abraham into intimate communion with himself, and poured out upon him the choicest of his blessings: for as God can never be in want, because he possesses all things; so Abraham his friend could never be destitute, because God was his friend.

Verse 24. **Ye see then how]** It is evident from this example that Abraham's faith was not merely *believing that there is a God*; but a principle that led him to credit God's promises relative to the future Redeemer, and to implore God's mercy: this he received, and was justified by faith. His faith now began to work by love, and therefore he was found ever obedient to the will of his Maker. He brought forth the fruits of righteousness; and his works *justified*-proved the genuineness of his faith; and he continued to enjoy the *Divine approbation*, which he could not have done had he not been thus obedient; for the Spirit of God would have been grieved, and his principle of faith would have perished. Obedience to God is essentially requisite to maintain faith. Faith lives, under God, by works; and works have their being and excellence from faith. Neither can subsist without the other, and this is the point which St. James labours to prove, in order to convince the Antinomians of his time that their faith was a delusion, and that the hopes built on it must needs perish.

Verse 25. **Rahab the harlot]** **See Clarke's notes on "Jos 2:1", &c., and "Heb 11:31", &c.** Rahab had the *approbation* due to genuine faith, which she actually possessed, and gave the fullest proof that she did so by her conduct. As justification signifies, not only the pardon of sin, but receiving the *Divine approbation*, James seems to use the word in this latter sense. God *approved* of them, because of their obedience to his will; and he *approves* of no man who is not *obedient*.

Verse 26. **For as the body without the spirit is dead]** There can be no more a *genuine faith* without *good works*, than there can be a living human body without a soul.

WE shall never find a series of disinterested godly living without true faith. And we shall never find true faith without such a life. We may see works of apparent benevolence without faith; their principle is *ostentation*; and, as long as they can have the reward (human applause) which they seek, they may be continued. And yet the experience of all mankind shows how *short-lived* such works are; they want both *principle* and *spring*; they endure for a time, but soon wither away. Where true faith is, there is God; his *Spirit* gives *life*, and his *love* affords *motives* to righteous actions. The *use* of any Divine principle leads to its *increase*. The more a man exercises faith in Christ, the more he is enabled to believe; the more he believes, the more he receives; and the more he receives, the more able he is to work for God. Obedience is his delight, because love to God and man is the element in which his soul lives. Reader, thou professest to believe; show thy faith, both to God and man, by a life conformed to the *royal law*, which ever gives *liberty* and confers *dignity*.

"Some persons, known to St. James, must have taught that men are justified by merely believing in the one true God; or he would not have taken such pains to confute it. Crediting the unity of the Godhead, and the doctrine of a future state, was that faith through which both the Jews in St. James' time and the Mohammedans of the present day expect justification. St. James, in denying this faith to be of avail, if unaccompanied with good works, has said nothing more than what St. Paul has said, in other words, Rom. 2, where he combats the same Jewish error, and asserts that not the hearers but the doers of the law will be justified, and that a knowledge of God's will, without the performance of it, serves only to increase our condemnation."-*Michaelis*.

# JAMES

## CHAPTER III.

*They are exhorted not to be many masters, 1. And to bridle the tongue, which is often an instrument of much evil, 2-12. The character and fruits of true and false wisdom, 13-18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Verse 1. **Be not many masters]** Do not affect the *teacher's* office, for many wish to be teachers who have more need to learn. There were many teachers or *rabbins* among the Jews, each affecting to have THE truth, and to draw disciples after him. We find a caution against such persons, and of the same nature with that of St. James, in *Pirkey Aboth*, c. i. 10: *Love labour, and hate the rabbin's office.*

This caution is still necessary; there are multitudes, whom God has never called, and never can call, because he has never qualified them for the work, who earnestly wish to get into the priest's office. And of this kind, in opposition to St. James, *we* have *many masters*-persons who undertake to show us the way of salvation, who know nothing of that ways and are unsaved themselves. These are found among *all descriptions* of Christians, and have been the means of bringing the ministerial office into contempt. Their case is awful; *they shall receive greater condemnation* than common sinners; they have not only sinned in thrusting themselves into that office to which God has never called them, but through their *insufficiency* the flocks over whom they have assumed the mastery perish for lack of knowledge, and their blood will God require at the watchman's hand. A man may have this *mastery* according to the *law* of the land, and yet not have it according to the *Gospel*; another may affect to have it according to the *Gospel*, because he dissents from the religion of the *state*, and not have it according to Christ. Blockheads are common, and knaves and hypocrites may be found everywhere.

Verse 2. **In many things we offend all.]** *πταλομεν απαντες*. *We all stumble or trip.* Dr. Barrow very properly observes: "As the general course of life is called a *way*, and particular actions *steps*, so going on in a regular course of right action is *walking uprightly*; and acting amiss, *tripping or stumbling.*" There are very few who walk so closely with God, and inoffensively with men, as never to stumble; and although it is the privilege of every follower of God *to be sincere and without offence to the day of Christ*, yet few of them are so. Were this *unavoidable*, it would be useless to make it a subject of regret; but as every man may receive grace from his God to enable him to walk in every respect *uprightly*, it is to be deplored that so few live up to their privileges. Some have produced these words as a *proof* that "no man can live without sinning against God; for James himself, a holy apostle speaking of himself, all the apostles, and the whole Church of Christ, says, *In many things we offend all.*" This is a very bad and dangerous doctrine; and, pushed to its consequences, would greatly affect the credibility of the whole Gospel system. Besides, were the doctrine as true as it is dangerous and false, it is foolish to ground it upon such a text; because St. James, after the common mode of all teachers, includes himself in his addresses to his hearers. And were we to suppose that where he appears by the use of the plural pronoun to include himself, he means to be thus understood, we must then grant that himself was one of those many *teachers* who

were to *receive a great condemnation*, #Jas 3:1; that he was a *horse-breaker*, because he says, "we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us," #Jas 3:3; that *his tongue was a world of iniquity*, and set on fire of hell, for he says, "so is the tongue among *our members*," #Jas 3:6; that he cursed men, "wherewith curse *we men*," #Jas 3:9. No man possessing common sense could imagine that James, or any man of even tolerable morals, could be guilty of those things. But some of those were thus guilty to whom he wrote; and to soften his reproofs, and to cause them to enter the more deeply into their hearts, he appears to include himself in his own censure; and yet not one of his readers would understand him as being a brother delinquent.

**Offend not in word, the same is a perfect man]** To understand this properly we must refer to the caution St. James gives in the preceding verse: *Be not many masters or teachers*-do not affect that for which you are not qualified, because in your *teaching*, not knowing the heavenly doctrine, ye may *sin* against the *anology of faith*. But, says he, *if any man offend not*, ου πταιει, *trip not*, εν λογω, *in doctrine*, teaching the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, *the same is τελειος ανηρ*, *a man fully instructed* in Divine things: How often the term λογος, which we render *word*, is used to express *doctrine*, and the *doctrine of the Gospel*, we have seen in many parts of the preceding comment. And how often the word τελειος, which we translate *perfect*, is used to signify *an adult Christian*, one *thoroughly instructed* in the doctrines of the Gospel, may be seen in various parts of St. Paul's writings. See among others, #1Co 2:6; 14:20; #Eph 4:13; #Php 3:15; #Col 4:12; #Heb 5:14. The man, therefore, who advanced no false doctrine, and gave no imperfect view of any of the great truths of Christianity; that man proved himself thereby to be *thoroughly instructed* in Divine things; to be no novice, and consequently, among the *many teachers*, to be a *perfect master*, and worthy of the sacred vocation.

**Able also to bridle the whole body.]** Grotius, by *body*, believed that the Church of Christ was intended; and this the view we have taken of the preceding clauses renders very probable. But some think the *passions* and *appetites* are intended; yet these persons understand *not offending in word* as referring simply to well guarded speech. Now how a man's cautiousness in *what he says* can be a proof that he has *every passion* and *appetite under control*, I cannot see. Indeed, I have seen so many examples of a contrary kind, that I can have no doubt of the impropriety of this exposition. But it is objected "that χαλιναγωγεω signifies to *check, turn, or rule with a bridle*; and is never applied to the government of the Church of Christ." Probably not: but St. James is a very peculiar writer; his phraseology, metaphors, and diction in general, are different from all the rest of the New Testament writers, so as to have scarcely any thing in common with them, but only that he writes in Greek. The sixth verse {#Jas 3:6} is supposed to be a proof against the opinion of Grotius; but I conceive that verse to belong to a different subject, which commences #Jas 3:3.

Verse 3. **Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths]** In order to show the necessity of regulating the tongue, to which St. James was led by his exhortation to them who wished to thrust themselves into the teacher's office, supposing, because they had the *gift of a ready flow of speech*, that therefore they might commence teachers of Divine things; he proceeds to show that the tongue must be bridled as the horse, and governed as the ships; because, though it is small, it is capable of ruling the whole man; and of irritating and offending others.

Verse 5. **Boasteth great things.**] That is, *can do great things*, whether of a *good* or *evil* kind. He seems to refer here to the powerful and all commanding eloquence of the Greek orators: they could carry the great mob whithersoever they wished; calm them to peaceableness and submission, or excite them to furious sedition.

**Behold, how great a matter**] See what a flame of discord and insubordination one man, merely by his persuasive tongue, may kindle among the common people.

Verse 6. **The tongue is a fire**] It is often the instrument of producing the most desperate contentions and insurrections.

**A world of iniquity**] This is an unusual form of speech, but the meaning is plain enough; *WORLD* signifies here a *mass*, a *great collection*, an *abundance*. We use the term in the same sense—a *world of troubles*, a *world of toil*, a *world of anxiety*; for *great troubles*, *oppressive toil*, *most distressing anxiety*. And one of our lexicographers calls his work *a world of words*; i.e. a vast collection of words: so we also say, a *deluge of wickedness*, a *sea of troubles*; and the Latins, *oceanus malorum*, an ocean of evils. I do not recollect an example of this use of the word among the Greek writers; but in this sense it appears to be used by the Septuagint, **#Pr 17:6**: του πιστου ολος ο κοσμος των χρηματων, του δε απιστου ουδε οβολος, which may be translated, "The faithful has a *world of riches*, but the unfaithful not a penny." This clause has nothing answering to it in the *Hebrew* text. Some think that the word is thus used, **#2Pe 2:5**: And brought the flood, κοσμοω ασεβων, on the multitude of the ungodly. Mr. Wakefield translates the clause thus: The tongue is the *varnisher of injustice*. We have seen that *κοσμος* signifies adorned, elegant, beautiful, &c., but I can scarcely think that this is its sense in this place. The *Syriac* gives a curious turn to the expression: *And the tongue is a fire; and the world of iniquity is like a wood*. Above, the same version has: *A little fire burns great woods*. So the world of iniquity is represented as inflamed by the wicked tongues of men; the world being *fuel*, and the tongue a *fire*.

**So is the tongue among our members**] I think St. James refers here to those well known speeches of the rabbins, *Vayikra Rabba*, sec. 16, fol. 159. "Rabbi Eleazar said, Man has one hundred and forty-eight members, some confined, others free. The tongue is placed between the jaws; and from under it proceeds a fountain of water, (the great sublingual salivary gland,) and it is folded with various foldings. Come and see *what a flame the tongue kindles!* Were it one of the unconfined members, what would it not do?" The same sentiment, with a little variation, may be found in *Midrash, Yalcut Simeoni*, par. 2, fol. 107; and in *Erachin*, fol. xv. 2, on **#Ps 120:3**: *What shall be given unto thee, or what shall be done unto thee, thou false tongue?* "The holy blessed God said to the tongue: All the rest of the members of the body are *erect*, but thou *liest down*; all the rest are *external*, but thou art *internal*. Nor is this enough: I have built *two walls* about thee; the one *bone*, the other *flesh*: *What shall be given unto thee, and what shall be done unto thee, O thou false tongue?*"

**Setteth on fire the course of nature**] φλογιζουσα τον τροχον της γενεσεως. *And setteth on fire the wheel of life*. I question much whether this verse be in general well understood. There are three different interpretations of it: 1. St. James does not intend to express the whole circle of human affairs, so much affected by the tongue of man; but rather the *penal wheel* of the Greeks, and not

unknown to the Jews, on which they were accustomed to extend criminals, to induce them to confess, or to punish them for crimes; under which *wheels, fire* was often placed to add to their torments. In the book, *De Maccabæis*, attributed to Josephus, and found in *Haverkamp's* edition, vol. ii., p. 497-520, where we have the account of the martyrdom of seven Hebrew brothers, in chap. ix, speaking of the death of the eldest, it is said: ἀνεβαλον αυτον επι τον τροχοτ-περι ον κατατεινομενος· "They cast him on the *wheel*, over which they extended him; πυρ υπεστρωσαν και διηρεθισαν τον τροχον προσεπικατατεινοντες· they put *coals* under it, and strongly agitated the wheel." And of the martyrdom of the sixth brother it is said, cap. 11: παρηγον επι τον τροχον, εφ' ου κατατεινομενος εκμελωσ και εκσφονδυλιζομενος υπεκαιετο. και οβελισκουσ δε οξεισ πυρωσαντες, τοις νοτοις προσεφερον, και τα πλευρα διαπειραντες αυτου, και τα σπλαγχνα διεκαιον· They brought him to the *wheel*, on which, having distended his limbs, and broken his joints, they *scorched* him with the *fire* placed underneath; and with sharp spits *heated in the fire*, they pierced his sides, and burned his bowels.

The *fire* and the *wheel* are mentioned by *Achilles Tatius*, lib. 7, p. 449. "Having stripped me of my garments, I was carried aloft, των μεν μαστιγασ κομιζοντων, των δε πυρ και τροχον, some bringing scourges, others the *fire* and the *wheel*." Now as *γενεσις* often signifies *life*, then the *wheel of life* will signify the miseries and torments of life. To *set on fire the wheel of life* is to increase a man's torments; and to be *set on fire from hell* implies having these miseries rendered more active by diabolic agency; or, in other words, bad men, instigated by the devil, through their *lies* and *calumnies*, make life burdensome to the objects of their malicious tongues. The *wheel* and the *fire*, so pointedly mentioned by St. James, make it probable that this sort of punishment might have suggested the idea to him. See more in *Kypke*.

2. But is it not possible that by the *wheel of life* St. James may have the *circulation of the blood* in view? Angry or irritating language has an astonishing influence on the circulation of the blood: the heart beats high and frequent; the blood is hurried through the arteries to the veins, through the veins to the heart, and through the heart to the arteries again, and so on; an extraordinary degree of *heat* is at the same time engendered; the eyes become more prominent in their sockets; the capillary vessels suffused with blood; the face flushed; and, in short, the whole *wheel of nature is set on fire of hell*. No description can be more natural than this: but it may be objected that this intimates that the *circulation of the blood* was known to St. James. Now supposing it does, is the thing impossible? It is allowed by some of the most judicious medical writers, that Solomon refers to this in his celebrated *portraiture of old age*, particularly in #**Ec 12:6**: "Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the *pitcher be broken at the fountain*, or the *wheel broken at the cistern*." Here is the very *wheel of life* from which St. James might have borrowed the idea; and the different times evidently refer to the *circulation of the blood*, which might be as well known to St. James as the doctrine of the *parallax of the sun*. See **Clarke on "Jas 1:17"**.

3. It is true, however, that the rabbins use the term גלגל תולדות *gilgal toledoth*, "the wheel of generations," to mark the successive generations of men: and it is possible that St. James might refer to this; as if he had said: "The tongue has been the instrument of confusion and misery through all the ages of the world." But the other interpretations are more likely.

Verse 7. **Every kind of beasts]** That is, every *species* of wild beasts, *πασα φυσικς θηριων*, is *tamed*, i.e. brought under man's power and dominion. Beasts, birds, serpents, and some kinds of fishes have been *tamed* so as to be domesticated; but every kind, particularly *των εναλιων*, of *sea monsters*, has not been *thus* tamed; but all have been subjected to the power of man; both the *shark* and *whale* become an easy prey to the skill and influence of the human being. I have had the most credible information, when in the Zetland Isles, of the *seals* being domesticated, and of one that would pass part of his time on shore, receive his allowance of milk, &c., from the servants, go again to sea, and return, and so on.

Verse 8. **But the tongue wan no man tame]** No cunning, persuasion, or influence has ever been able to silence it. Nothing but the grace of God, *excision*, or *death*, can bring *it* under subjection.

It is **an unruly evil]** *ακατασχετον κακον*. An *evil* that *cannot* be *restrained*; it cannot be *brought* under any kind of government; it breaks all bounds.

**Full of deadly poison.]** He refers here to the tongues of serpents, supposed to be the means of conveying their poison into wounds made by their teeth. Throughout the whole of this poetic and highly declamatory description, St. James must have the tongue of the *slanderer*, *calumniator*, *backbiter*, *whisperer*, and *tale-bearer*, particularly in view. Vipers, basilisks; and rattlesnakes are not more dangerous to *life*, than these are to the peace and reputation of men.

Verse 9. **Therewith bless we God]** The tongue is capable of rehearsing the praises, and setting forth the glories, of the eternal King: what a pity that it should ever be employed in a contrary work! It can proclaim and vindicate the truth of God, and publish the Gospel of peace and good will among men: what a pity that it should ever be employed in falsehoods, calumny, or in the cause of infidelity!

**And therewith curse we men]** In the true Satanic spirit, many pray to God, the *Father*, to destroy those who are objects of their displeasure! These are the *common swearers*, whose mouths are generally full of direful imprecations against those with whom they are offended.

The consideration that *man is made after the image of God* should restrain the tongue of the swearer; but there are many who, while they pretend to *sing the high praises of God*, are ready to wish the direst imprecations either on those who offend them, or with whom they choose to be offended.

Verse 10. **Out of the same mouth]** This saying is something like that, **#Pr 18:21: *Death and life are in the power of the tongue***; and on this, for an illustration of St. James' words, hear *Vayikra Rabba*, sec. 33: "Rabbi Simeon, the son of Gamaliel, said to his servant Tobias, Go and bring me some *good food* from the market: the servant went, and he bought *tongues*. At another time he said to the same servant, Go and buy me some *bad food*: the servant went, and bought *tongues*. The master said, What is the reason that when I ordered thee to buy me *good* and *bad* food, thou didst bring *tongues*? The servant answered, From the *tongue* both *good* and *evil* come to man: if it be *good*, there is nothing *better*; if *bad*, there is nothing *worse*."

A saying very like that of St. James as found in *Rabbi Tanchum*, fol. 10, 4: "The mouth desires to study in the law, and to speak good words; to praise God, to glorify him, and to celebrate him with hymns: but it can also slander, blaspheme, reproach, and swear falsely." See *Schoettgen*.

To find a man who officiates in sacred things to be a common swearer, a slanderer, &c., is truly monstrous; but there have been many cases of this kind, and I have known several. Let me say to all such, *My brethren, these things ought not so to be*.

Verse 11. **Doth a fountain send forth-sweet water and bitter?]** In many things *nature* is a sure guide to man; but no such inconsistency is found in the natural world as this blessing and cursing in man. No fountain, at the same opening, sends forth sweet water and bitter; no fig tree can bear olive berries; no vine can bear figs; nor can the sea produce salt water and fresh from the same place. These are all contradictions, and indeed impossibilities, in nature. And it is depraved man alone that can act the monstrous part already referred to.

Verse 12. **So can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh.]** For the reading of the common text, which is *οὕτως οὐδεμία πηγή αλυκὸν καὶ γλυκὺ ποιῆσαι ὕδωρ*, *so no fountain can produce salt water and sweet*, there are various other readings in the MSS. and versions. The word *οὕτως*, *so*, which makes this a continuation of the comparison in **#Jas 3:11**, is wanting in ABC, one other, with the *Armenian* and ancient *Syriac*; the later *Syriac* has it in the margin with an asterisk. ABC, five others, with the *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, one copy of the *Itala*, and *Cyril*, have *οὐτε αλυκὸν γλυκὺ ποιῆσαι ὕδωρ*, *neither can salt water produce sweet*. In the *Syriac* and the *Arabic* of Erpen, it is, *So, likewise, sweet water cannot become bitter; and bitter water cannot become sweet*. The true reading appears to be, *Neither can salt water produce sweet, or, Neither can the sea produce fresh water*; and this is a new comparison, and not an inference from that in **#Jas 3:11**. This reading *Griesbach* has admitted into the text; and of it Professor *White*, in his *Crisews*, says, *Lectio indubie genuina*, "a reading undoubtedly genuine." There are therefore, *four* distinct comparisons here: 1. A fountain cannot produce sweet water and bitter. 2. A fig tree cannot produce olive berries. 3. A vine cannot produce figs. 4. Salt water cannot be made sweet. That is, according to the ordinary operations of nature, these things are impossible. Chemical analysis is out of the question.

Verse 13. **Who is a wise man]** One truly religious; who, although he can neither bridle nor tame other men's tongues, can restrain his own.

**And endued with knowledge]** *καὶ ἐπιστημῶν*· And qualified to teach others.

**Let him show]** Let him by a holy life and chaste conversation show, through meekness and gentleness, joined to his Divine information, that he is a Christian indeed; his works and his spirit proving that God is in him of a truth; and that, from the fulness of a holy heart, his feet walk, his hands work; and his tongue speaks. We may learn from this that *genuine wisdom* is ever accompanied with *meekness* and *gentleness*. Those *proud, overbearing, and disdainful men*, who pass for *great scholars* and *eminent critics*, may have *learning*, but they have not *wisdom*. Their learning implies their correct knowledge of the *structure* of *language*, and of *composition in general*; but *wisdom* they have none, nor any *self-government*. They are like the blind man who carried a lantern in daylight to keep others from jostling him in the street. That *learning* is not only *little*

worth, but *despicable*, that does not teach a man to *govern his own spirit*, and to be humble in his conduct towards others.

Verse 14. **If ye have bitter envying and strife]** If ye be under the influence of an *unkind, fierce, and contemptuous* spirit, even while attempting or pretending to defend true religion, *do not boast* either of your *exertions* or *success* in silencing an adversary; ye have *no religion*, and no *true wisdom*, and to profess either is *to lie against the truth*. Let all writers on what is called *polemic* (fighting, warring) *divinity* lay this to heart. The pious Mr. Herbert gives excellent advice on this subject:—

"Be calm in arguing, for *fierceness* makes  
Error a fault, and *truth* discourtesy;  
Why should I feel another man's mistakes  
More than his *sickness* or his *poverty*?  
In *love* I should; but *anger* is not *love*,  
Nor *wisdom* neither; therefore *g-e-n-t-l-y m-o-v-e*."

Verse 15. **This wisdom descendeth not from above]** God is not the author of it, because it is *bitter-not meek*. See at the end of this chapter. "**Jas 3:18**"

**Is earthly]** Having *this life* only in view.

**Sensual]** ψυχικη· *Animal*-having for its object the *gratification* of the *passions* and *animal propensities*.

**Devilish]** δαιμονιωδης· *Demoniacal*-inspired by demons, and maintained in the soul by their indwelling influence.

Verse 16. **For where envying and strife is]** ζηλος και εριθεια· *Zeal*-fiery, inflammatory passion, and *contention*-altercations about the different points of the law, of no use for edification, such as those mentioned, **#Tit 3:9**. The *Jews* were the most intolerant of all mankind; it was a maxim with them to kill those who would not conform to their law; and their salvation they believed to be impossible. This has been the spirit of *Popery*, and of the *Romish Church* at large; in vain do they attempt to deny it; they have written it in characters of *blood* and *fire* even in this country, (England,) when they were possessed of political power. With them it is still an established maxim, that out of their Church there is no redemption; and fire and faggot have been in that Church legal means of *conversion* or *extinction*. In the short popish reign of *Mary* in this country, besides multitudes who suffered by fine, imprisonment, confiscation, &c., two hundred and seventy-seven were *burnt alive*, among whom were *one* archbishop, *four* bishops, *twenty-one* clergymen, *eight* lay gentlemen, *eighty-four* tradesmen, *one hundred* husbandmen, *fifty-five* women, and *four* children! O earth! thou hast not drunk their *blood*; but their *ashes* have been strewed on the face of the field.

Verse 17. **The wisdom that is from above]** The pure religion of the Lord Jesus, bought by his blood, and infused by his Spirit. See the rabbinical meaning of this phrase at the end of this chapter.

**Is first pure]** ἄγνη· *Chaste, holy, and clean.*

**Peaceable]** εἰρηνικη· *Living in peace with others, and promoting peace among men.*

**Gentle]** ἐπιεικης· *Meek, modest, of an equal mind, taking every thing in good part, and putting the best construction upon all the actions of others.*

**Easy to be entreated]** εὐπειθης· *Not stubborn nor obstinate; of a yielding disposition in all indifferent things; obsequious, docile.*

**Full of mercy]** *Ready to pass by a transgression, and to grant forgiveness to those who offend, and performing every possible act of kindness.*

**Good fruits]** *Each temper and disposition producing fruits suited to and descriptive of its nature.*

**Without partiality]** ἀδιακριτος· *Without making a difference-rendering to every man his due; and being never swayed by self-interest, worldly honour, or the fear of man; knowing no man after the flesh. One of the *Itala* has it *irreprehensible*.*

**Without hypocrisy.]** ἀυποκριτος· *Without dissimulation; without pretending to be what it is not; acting always in its own character; never working under a mask. Seeking nothing but God's glory, and using no other means to attain it than those of his own prescribing.*

Verse 18. **And the fruit of righteousness is sown]** *The whole is the principle of righteousness in the soul, and all the above virtues are the fruits of that righteousness.*

**Is sown in peace]** *When the peace of God rules the heart, all these virtues and graces grow and flourish abundantly.*

**Of them that make peace.]** *The peace-makers are continually recommending this wisdom to others, and their own conduct is represented as a sowing of heavenly seed, which brings forth Divine fruit. Perhaps sowing in peace signifies sowing prosperously-being very successful. This is not only the proper disposition for every teacher of the Gospel, but for every professed follower of the Lord Jesus.*

Some render this verse, which is confessedly obscure, thus: *And the peaceable fruits of righteousness are sown for the practisers of peace. He who labours to live peaceably shall have peace for his reward.*

1. ALMOST the whole of the preceding chapter is founded on maxims highly accredited in the rabbinical writings, and without a reference to those writings it would have been impossible, in some cases, to have understood St. James' meaning. There is one phrase, the rabbinical meaning and use of which I have reserved for this place, viz.. *The wisdom that is from above*. This is greatly celebrated among them by the terms חכמה עליונה *chocmah elyonah*, the *supernal wisdom*. This they seem to understand to be a *peculiar inspiration of the Almighty*, or a teaching communicated

immediately by the angels of God. In *Sohar, Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 19, *Rabbi Chiya* said: "*The wisdom from above* was in Adam more than in the supreme angels, and he knew all things."

In *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 35, it is said concerning *Enoch*, "That the angels were sent from heaven, and taught him the *wisdom that is from above*." *Ibid.* fol. 42, 4: "Solomon came, and he was perfect in all things, and strongly set forth the praises of the *wisdom that is from above*." See more in *Schoettgen*. St. James gives us the *properties* of this wisdom, which are not to be found in such detail in any of the rabbinical writers. It is another word for the *life of God in the soul of man*, or *true religion*; it is the *teaching of God in the human heart*, and he who has this not is not a *child of God*; for it is written, *All thy children shall be taught of the Lord*.

2. To enjoy the peace of God in the conscience, and to live to promote peace among men, is to answer the end of our creation, and to enjoy as much happiness ourselves as the present state of things can afford. They who are in continual broils live a wretched life; and they who *love* the life of the salamander must share no small portion of the demoniacal nature. In *domestic society* such persons are an *evil disease*; therefore a *canker* in the *Church*, and a pest in the *state*.

# JAMES

## CHAPTER IV.

*The origin of wars and contentions, and the wretched lot of those who are engaged in them, 1, 2. Why so little heavenly good is obtained, 3. The friendship of the world is enmity with God, 4, 5. God resists the proud, 6. Men should submit to God, and pray, 7, 8. Should humble themselves, 9, 10. And not speak evil of each other, 11, 12. The impiety of those who consult not the will of God, and depend not on his providence, 13-15. The sin of him who knows the will of God, and does not do it, 16, 17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. **From whence come wars and fightings]** About the time in which St. James wrote, whether we follow the *earlier* or the *later date* of this epistle, we find, according to the accounts given by Josephus, *Bell. Jud.* lib. ii. c. 17, &c., that the Jews, under pretence of defending their religion, and procuring that liberty to which they believed themselves entitled, made various insurrections in Judea against the Romans, which occasioned much bloodshed and misery to their nation. The *factions* also, into which the Jews were split, had violent contentions among themselves, in which they massacred and plundered each other. In the provinces, likewise, the Jews became very turbulent; particularly in Alexandria, and different other parts of Egypt, of Syria, and other places, where they made war against the heathens, killing many, and being massacred in their turn. They were led to these outrages by the opinion that they were bound by their law to extirpate idolatry, and to kill all those who would not become proselytes to Judaism. These are probably the *wars* and *fightings* to which St. James alludes; and which they undertook rather from a principle of *covetousness* than from any sincere desire to convert the heathen. See *Macknight*.

**Come they not hence-of your lusts]** This was the principle from which these Jewish contentions and predatory wars proceeded, and the principle from which all the wars that have afflicted and desolated the world have proceeded. One nation or king *covets* another's *territory* or *property*; and, as *conquest* is supposed to give right to all the possessions gained by it, they kill, slay, burn, and destroy, till one is overcome or exhausted, and then the other makes his own terms; or, several neighbouring potentates fall upon one that is weak; and, after murdering one half of the people, partition among themselves the fallen king's territory; just as the *Austrians*, *Prussians*, and *Russians* have done with the kingdom of *Poland!*-a stain upon their justice and policy which no lapse of time can ever wash out.

These *wars* and *fightings* could not be attributed to the Christians in that time; for, howsoever fallen or degenerate, they had no power to raise *contentions*; and no political consequence to enable them to resist their enemies by the edge of the sword, or resistance of any kind.

Verse 2. **Ye lust, and have not]** Ye are ever covetous, and ever poor.

**Ye kill, and, desire to have]** Ye are constantly engaged in insurrections and predatory wars, and never gain any advantage.

**Ye have not, because ye ask not.]** Ye get no especial blessing from God as your fathers did, because ye do not pray. Worldly good is your god; ye leave no stone unturned in order to get it; and as ye ask nothing from God but to *consume it upon your evil desires and propensities*, your prayers are not heard.

Verse 3. **Ye ask, and receive not]** Some think that this refers to their prayers for the conversion of the heathen; and on the pretence that they were not converted thus; they thought it lawful to extirpate them and possess their goods.

**Ye ask amiss]** *κακως αιτεισθε*. *Ye ask evilly, wickedly.* Ye have not the proper *dispositions* of prayer, and ye have an improper *object*. Ye ask for worldly prosperity, that ye may employ it in riotous living. This is properly the meaning of the original, *ινα εν ταις ηδοναις υμων δαπανησητε*, *That ye may expend it upon your pleasures.* The rabbins have many good observations on *asking amiss* or *asking improperly*, and give examples of different kinds of this sort of prayer; the phrase is *Jewish* and would naturally occur to St. James in writing on this subject. Whether the *lusting* of which St. James speaks were their desire to make proselytes, in order that they might increase their power and influence by means of such, or whether it were a desire to cast off the Roman yoke, and become independent; the *motive* and the *object* were the same, and the prayers were such as God could not *hear*.

Verse 4. **Ye adulterers and adulteresses]** The Jews, because of their *covenant* with God, are represented as being *espoused* to him; and hence their idolatry, and their iniquity in general, are represented under the notion of *adultery*. And although they had not since the Babylonish captivity been guilty of *idolatry*; according to the *letter*; yet what is intended by idolatry, having their hearts estranged from God, and seeking their portion in this life and out of God, is that of which the Jews were then notoriously guilty. And I rather think that it is in this sense especially that St. James uses the words. "Lo! they that are far from thee shall perish; thou hast destroyed all them that *go a whoring* from thee." But perhaps something more than spiritual adultery is intended. See #Jas 4:9.

**The friendship of the world]** The world was their god; here they committed their *spiritual adultery*; and they cultivated this friendship in order that they might gain this end.

The word *μοιχαλιδες*, *adulteresses*, is wanting in the *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, and one copy of the *Itala*.

**Whosoever-will be a friend of the world]** How strange it is that people professing Christianity can suppose that with a worldly spirit, worldly companions, and their lives governed by worldly maxims, they can be in the favour of God, or ever get to the kingdom of heaven! When the *world* gets into the *Church*, the Church becomes a painted sepulchre; its spiritual vitality being extinct.

Verse 6. **But he giveth more grace]** *μειζονα χαριν*, *A greater benefit*, than all the goods that the world can bestow; for he gives genuine happiness, and this the world cannot confer. May this be St. James' meaning?

**God resisteth the proud]** *αντιτασεται*. *Sets himself in battle array* against him.

**Giveth grace unto the humble.]** The sure way to please God is to submit to the dispensation of his grace and providence; and when a man acknowledges him in all his ways, he will direct all his steps. The covetous man grasps at the *shadow*, and loses the *substance*.

Verse 7. **Submit-to God]** Continue to bow to all his decisions, and to all his dispensations.

**Resist the devil]** He cannot conquer you if you continue to resist. Strong as he is, God never permits him to conquer the man who continues to resist him; he cannot *force* the human will. He who, in the *terrible name* of JESUS, opposes even the devil himself, is sure to have a speedy and glorious conquest. He flees from that *name*, and from his conquering blood.

Verse 8. **Draw nigh to God]** Approach HIM, in the name of Jesus, by faith and prayer, and *he will draw nigh to you*-he will *meet* you at your coming. When a soul sets out to seek God, God sets out to meet that soul; so that while we are drawing near to him, he is drawing near to us. The *delicacy* and *beauty* of these expressions are, I think, but seldom noted.

**Cleanse your hands, ye sinners]** This I think to be the beginning of a new address, and to different persons; and should have formed the commencement of a new verse. Let your whole conduct be changed; cease to do evil learn to do well. *Washing* or *cleansing the hands* was a token of innocence and purity.

**Purify your hearts]** *Separate* yourselves from the world, and consecrate yourselves to God: this is the true notion of sanctification. We have often seen that to sanctify signifies to separate a thing or person from profane or common use, and consecrate it or him to God. This is the true notion of **קדש** *kadash*, in Hebrew, and **αγιαζω** in Greek. The person or thing thus consecrated or separated is considered to be *holy*, and to be God's property; and then God hallows it to himself. There are, therefore, two things implied in a man's sanctification: 1. That he separates himself from evil ways and evil companions, and devotes himself to God. 2. That God separates guilt from his conscience, and sin from his soul, and thus makes him internally and externally *holy*.

This double sanctification is well expressed in Sohar, Levit. fol. 33, col. 132, on the words, *be ye holy, for I the Lord am holy*: **אָרַם מְקֹדֵשׁ עֲצָמוֹ מִלְמַטָּה מִקִּישִׁין אוֹהוּ מִלְמַעֲלָה**, *a man sanctifies himself on the earth, and then he is sanctified from heaven*. As a man is a *sinner*, he must have his *hands cleansed* from wicked works; as he is *double-minded*, he must have his *heart sanctified*. *Sanctification* belongs to the *heart*, because of *pollution of mind*; *cleansing* belongs to the *hands*, because of *sinful acts*. See **Clarke's note on "Jas 1:8"**, for the signification of *double-minded*.

Verse 9. **Be afflicted, and mourn]** Without true and deep repentance ye cannot expect the mercy of God.

**Let your laughter be turned to mourning]** It appears most evidently that many of those to whom St. James addressed this epistle had lived a very *irregular* and *dissolute life*. He had already spoken of their *lust*, and *pleasures*, and he had called them *adulterers* and *adulteresses*; and perhaps they were so in the *gross* sense of the words. He speaks here of their *laughter* and their *joy*; and

all the terms taken together show that a *dissolute life* is intended. What a strange view must he have of the nature of primitive Christianity, who can suppose that these words can possibly have been addressed to people professing the *Gospel of Jesus Christ*, who were few in number, without wealth or consequence, and were persecuted and oppressed both by their brethren the Jews and by the Romans!

Verse 10. **Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord]** In #Jas 4:7 they were exhorted to *submit* to God; here they are exhorted to *humble themselves in his sight*. Submission to God's authority will precede *humiliation* of soul, and genuine repentance is performed as in the *sight* of God; for when a sinner is truly awakened to a sense of his guilt and danger, he seems to see, whithersoever he turns, the *face* of a justly incensed God turned against him.

**He shall lift you up.]** Mourners and penitents lay on the ground, and rolled themselves in the dust. When comforted and pardoned, they arose from the earth, shook themselves from the dust, and clothed themselves in their better garments. God promises to raise these from the dust, when sufficiently humbled.

Verse 11. **Speak not evil one of another]** Perhaps this exhortation refers to evil speaking, slander, and backbiting in general, the writer having no particular persons in view. It may, however, refer to the *contentions* among the *zealots*, and different *factions* then prevailing among this wretched people, or to their calumnies against those of their brethren who had embraced the Christian faith.

**He that speaketh evil of his brother]** It was an avowed and very general maxim among the rabbins, that "no one could speak evil of his brother without denying God, and becoming an atheist." They consider detraction as the devil's crime originally: he calumniated God Almighty in the words, "He doth know that in the day in which ye eat of it, your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be like God, knowing good and evil;" and therefore insinuated that it was through *envy* God had prohibited the tree of knowledge.

**Speaketh evil of the law]** The law condemns all *evil speaking* and *detraction*. He who is guilty of these, and allows himself in these vices, in effect judges and condemns the law; *i.e.* he considers it unworthy to be kept, and that it is no sin to break it.

**Thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.]** Thou rejectest the law of God, and settest up thy own mischievous conduct as a rule of life; or, by allowing this *evil speaking* and *detraction*, dost intimate that the law that condemns them is improper, imperfect, or unjust.

Verse 12. **There is one lawgiver]** και κριτης, *And judge*, is added here by AB, about *thirty* others, with both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Armenian*, *Æthiopic*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, two copies of the *Itala*, *Cyril of Antioch*, *Euthalius*, *Theophylact*, and *Cassiodorus*. On this evidence Griesbach has received it into the text.

The man who breaks the law, and teaches others so to do, thus in effect set himself up as a *lawgiver* and *judge*. But there is only one such lawgiver and judge-God Almighty, who is *able to save* all those who obey him, and *able to destroy* all those who trample under feet his testimonies.

**Who art thou that judgest another?]** Who art thou who darest to usurp the office and prerogative of the supreme Judge? But what is that *law* of which St. James speaks? and who is this *lawgiver* and *judge*? Most critics think that the *law* mentioned here is the same as that which he elsewhere calls the *royal law* and *the law of liberty*, thereby meaning the *Gospel*; and that *Christ* is the person who is called the *lawgiver* and *judge*. This, however, is not clear to me. I believe James means the *Jewish law*; and by the *lawgiver* and *judge*, God Almighty, as acknowledged by the Jewish people. I find, or think I find, from the closest examination of this epistle, but few references to Jesus Christ or his Gospel. His Jewish creed, forms, and maxims, this writer keeps constantly in view; and it is proper he should, considering the persons to whom he wrote. Some of them were, doubtless, *Christians*; some of them certainly *no Christians*; and some of them *half Christians* and *half Jews*. The two latter descriptions are those most frequently addressed.

Verse 13. **Go to now]** *αγε νυν*. *Come now*, the same in meaning as the Hebrew *הבא הבא* *habah*, *come*, #**Ge 11:3, 4, 7**. *Come*, and *hear what I have to say, ye that say, &c.*

**To-day, or to-morrow, we will go]** This presumption on a precarious life is here well reprov'd; and the ancient Jewish rabbins have some things on the subject which probably St. James had in view. In *Debarim Rabba*, sec. 9, fol. 261, 1, we have the following little story; "Our rabbins tell us a story which happened in the days of Rabbi Simeon, the son of Chelpatha. He was present at the circumcision of a child, and stayed with its father to the entertainment. The father brought out wine for his guests that was seven years old, saying, *With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son*. They continued supper till midnight. At that time Rabbi Simeon arose and went out, that he might return to the city in which he dwelt. On the way he saw the angel of death walking up and down. He said to him, Who art thou? He answered, I am the messenger of God. The rabbin said, Why wanderest thou about thus? He answered, I slay those persons who say, *We will do this, or that, and think not how soon death may overpower them*: that man with whom thou hast supped, and who said to his guests, *With this wine will I continue for a long time to celebrate the birth of my new-born son*, behold the end of his life is at hand, for he shall die within thirty days." By this parable they teach the necessity of considering the shortness and uncertainty of human life; and that God is particularly displeas'd with those

"Who, counting on long years of pleasure here,  
Are quite unfurnished for a world to come."

**And continue there a year, and buy and sell]** This was the custom of those ancient times; they traded from city to city, carrying their goods on the backs of camels. The Jews traded thus to *Tyre*, *Sidon*, *Cæsarea*, *Crete*, *Ephesus*, *Philippi*, *Thessalonica*, *Corinth*, *Rome*, &c. And it is to this kind of itinerant mercantile life that St. James alludes. See at the end of this chapter.

Verse 14. **Whereas ye know not]** This verse should be read in a parenthesis. It is not only impious, but grossly absurd, to speak thus concerning futurity, when ye know not what a day may

bring forth. Life is utterly precarious; and God has not put it within the power of all the creatures he has made to *command one moment of what is future*.

**It is even a vapour]** ατμὴ γὰρ ἐστίν· *It is a smoke*, always fleeting, uncertain, evanescent, and obscured with various trials and afflictions. This is a frequent metaphor with the Hebrews; see **#Ps 102:11**; *My days are like a shadow*: **#Job 8:9**; *Our days upon earth are a shadow*: **#1Ch 29:15**; *Our days on the earth are a shadow, and there is no abiding. Quid tam circumcisum, tam breve, quam hominis vita longissima?* Plin. l. iii., Ep. 7. "What is so circumscribed, or so short, as the longest life of man?" "All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof is as the flower of the field. The grass withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the breath of the Lord bloweth upon it. Surely the people is like grass." St. James had produced the same figure, **#Jas 1:10, 11**. But there is a very remarkable saying in the book of *Ecclesiasticus*, which should be quoted: "As of the green leaves of a thick tree, some fall and some grow; so is the generation of flesh and blood: one cometh to an end, and another is born." *Ecclus. xiv. 18*.

We find precisely the same image in *Homer* as that quoted above. Did the apocryphal writer borrow it from the *Greek* poet?

οἱ περ φύλλων γενεῆ, τοιῆδε καὶ ἀνδρῶν·  
φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνεμὸς χαμαδὶς χρεῖ, ἀλλὰ δε θ' ὕλη  
τηλεθώσα φυεῖ, ἐσρος δ' ἐπιγιγνεται ὠρη·  
ὥς ἀνδρῶν γενεῆ, μὲν φυεῖ, ἡ δ' ἀποληγεί.

Il. l. vi., ver. 146.

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,  
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground  
Another race the following spring supplies;  
They fall successive, and successive rise.  
So generations in their course decay;  
So flourish *these*, when *those* are pass'd away.

POPE.

Verse 15. **For that ye ought to say]** ἀντὶ τοῦ λεγεῖν ὑμᾶς· *Instead of saying, or instead of which ye should say,*

**If the Lord will, we shall live]** I think St. James had another example from the rabbins in view, which is produced by *Drusius*, *Gregory*, *Cartwright*, and *Schoettgen*, on this clause: "*The bride went up to her chamber, not knowing what was to befall her there.*" On which there is this comment: "No man should ever say that he *will do this or that, without the condition* IF GOD WILL. A certain man said, 'To-morrow shall I sit with my bride in my chamber, and there shall rejoice with her.' To which some standing by said, אַם גּוֹזֵר הַשֵּׁם *im gozer hashshem*, 'If the Lord will.' To which he answered, 'Whether the Lord will or not, to-morrow will I sit with my bride in my chamber.' He did so; he went with his bride into his chamber, and at night they lay down; but they both died, *antequam illam cognosceret.*" It is not improbable that St. James refers to this case, as he uses the *same phraseology*.

On this subject I shall quote another passage which I read when a schoolboy, and which even then taught me a lesson of caution and of respect for the providence of God. It may be found in Lucian, in the piece entitled, *χαρων, η επισκοπουντες*, c. 6: *επι δειπνον, οιμαι, κληθεις υπο τινος των φιλων ες την υστεραιαν, μαλιστα ηξω, εφη· και μεταξυ λεγοντος, απο του τεγους κεραμις επιπεσουσα, ουκ οιδ' ουτου κινησαντος, απεκτεινεν αυτον· εγελασα ουν, ουκ επιτελεσαντος την υποσχεσιν*. "A man was invited by one of his friends to come the next day to supper. *I will certainly come*, said he. In the mean time a tile fell from a house, I knew not who threw it, and killed him. I therefore laughed at him for not fulfilling his engagement." It is often said *Fas est et ab hoste doceri*, "we should learn even from our enemies." Take heed, Christian, that this heathen buffoon laugh thee not out of countenance.

Verse 16. **But now ye rejoice in your boastings]** Ye glory in your proud and self-sufficient conduct, exulting that ye are free from the trammels of *superstition*, and that ye can live independently of God Almighty. *All such boasting is wicked*, *πονηρα εστιν*, is impious. In an old English work, entitled, *The godly man's picture drawn by a Scripture pencil*, there are these words: "Some of those who despise religion say, *Thank God we are not of this holy number!* They who thank God for their unholiness had best go ring the bells for joy that they shall never see God."

Verse 17. **To him that knoweth to do good]** As if he had said: After this warning none of you can plead *ignorance*; if, therefore, any of you shall be found to act their ungodly part, not acknowledging the Divine providence, the uncertainty of life, and the necessity of standing every moment prepared to meet God—as you will have the greater sin, you will infallibly get the greater punishment. This may be applied to all who know better than they act. He who does not the Master's will because he does *not know* it, will be beaten with few stripes; but he who knows it and does not do it, shall be beaten with many; #**Lu 12:47, 48**. St. James may have the *Christians* in view who were converted from Judaism to Christianity. They had much more light and religious knowledge than the Jews had; and God would require a proportionable improvement from them.

1. SAADY, a celebrated Persian poet, in his *Gulistan*, gives us a remarkable example of this going from city to city to buy and sell, and get gain. "I knew," says he, "a merchant who used to travel with a hundred camels laden with merchandise, and who had forty slaves in his employ. This person took me one day to his warehouse, and entertained me a long time with conversation good for nothing. 'I have,' said he, 'such a partner in Turquestan; such and such property in India; a bond for so much cash in such a province; a security for such another sum.' Then, changing the subject, he said, 'I purpose to go and settle at Alexandria, because the air of that city is salubrious.' Correcting himself, he said, 'No, I will not go to Alexandria; the African sea (the Mediterranean) is too dangerous. But I will make another voyage; and after that I will retire into some quiet corner of the world, and give up a mercantile life.' I asked him (says Saady) what voyage he intended to make. He answered, 'I intend to take *brimstone* to *Persia* and *China*, where I am informed it brings a good price; from *China* I shall take *porcelain* to *Greece*; from *Greece* I shall take *gold tissue* to *India*; from *India* I shall carry *steel* to *Haleb* (Aleppo;) from *Haleb* I shall carry *glass* to *Yemen* (Arabia Felix;) and from *Yemen* I shall carry *printed goods* to *Persia*. When this is accomplished I shall bid farewell to the mercantile life, which requires so many troublesome journeys, and spend the rest of my life in a shop.' He said so much on this subject, till at last he wearied himself with talking; then turning to me he said, 'I entreat thee, Saady, to relate to me something of what thou hast seen and heard in thy

travels.' I answered, Hast thou never heard what a traveller said, who fell from his camel in the desert of Joor? *Two things only can fill the eye of a covetous man-contentment, or the earth that is cast on him when laid in his grave.*"

This is an instructive story, and is taken from *real life*. In this very way, to those same places and with the above specified goods, trade is carried on to this day in the Levant. And often the same person takes all these journeys, and even more. We learn also from it that a covetous man is restless and unhappy, and that to avarice there are no bounds. This account properly illustrates that to which St. James refers: *To-day or to-morrow we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy and sell, and get gain.*

2. Providence is God's government of the world; he who properly trusts in Divine providence trusts in God; and he who expects God's direction and help must walk uprightly before him; for it is absurd to expect God to be our *friend* if we continue to be his *enemy*.

3. That man walks most safely who has the least confidence in himself. True *magnanimity* keeps God continually in view. He appoints it its work, and furnishes discretion and power; and its chief excellence consists in being a resolute worker together with him. Pride ever sinks where humility swims; for that man who abases himself God will exalt. To *know* that we are dependent creatures is well; to *feel* it, and to act suitably, is still better.

# JAMES

## CHAPTER V.

*The profligate rich are in danger of God's judgments, because of their pride, fraudulent dealings, riotous living, and cruelty, 1-6. The oppressed followers of God should be patient, for the Lord's coming is nigh; and should not grudge against each other, 7-9. They should take encouragement from the example of the prophets, and of Job, 10, 11. Swearing forbidden, 12. Directions to the afflicted, 13-16. They should confess their faults to each other, 16. The great prevalence of prayer instanced in Elijah, 17, 18. The blessedness of converting a sinner from the error of his way, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Verse 1. **Go to now]** See Clarke on "Jas 4:13".

**Weep and howl for your miseries]** St. James seems to refer here, in the spirit of prophecy, to the destruction that was coming upon the Jews, not only in Judea, but in all the provinces where they sojourned. He seems here to assume the very air and character of a *prophet*; and in the most dignified language and peculiarly expressive and energetic images, foretells the desolations that were coming upon this bad people.

Verse 2. **Your riches are corrupted]** *σεσηπε*. Are *putrefied*. The term *πλουτος*, *riches*, is to be taken here, not for *gold*, *silver*, or *precious stones*, (for these could not *putrefy*;) but for the produce of the fields and flocks, the different stores of grain, wine, and oil, which they had laid up in their granaries, and the various changes of raiment which they had amassed in their wardrobes.

Verse 3. **Your gold and silver is cankered]** Instead of helping the poor, and thus honouring God with your substance, ye have, through the principle of covetousness, kept all to yourselves.

**The rust of them shall be a witness against you]** Your putrefied stores, your moth-eaten garments, and your tarnished coin, are so many proofs that it was not for want of property that you assisted not the poor, but through a principle of avarice; *loving money*, not for the sake of what it could procure, but for its *own sake*, which is the genuine principle of the *miser*. This was the very character given to this people by our Lord himself; he called them *φιλαργυροι*, *lovers of money*. Against this despicable and abominable disposition, the whole of the 12th chapter of St. Luke is levelled; but it was their easily besetting sin, and is so to the present day.

**Shall eat your flesh as it were fire.]** This is a very bold and sublime figure. He represents the rust of their coin as becoming a canker that should produce gangrenes and phagedenous ulcers in their flesh, till it should be eaten away from their bones.

**Ye have heaped treasure together]** This verse is variously *pointed*. The word *ως*, *like as*, in the preceding clause, is left out by the *Syriac*, and some others; and *πυρ*, *fire*, is added here from that clause; so that the whole verse reads thus: "Your gold and your silver is cankered; and the rust of

them shall be a witness against you, and shall consume your flesh. Ye have treasured up FIRE against the last days." This is a bold and fine image: instead of the *treasures of corn, wine, and oil, rich stuffs, with silver and gold*, which ye have been laying up, ye shall find a *treasure, a magazine of fire*, that shall burn up your city, and consume even your temple. This was literally true; and these solemn denunciations of Divine wrath were most completely fulfilled. See the notes on Matt. 24, where all the circumstances of this tremendous and final destruction are particularly noted.

By the *last days* we are not to understand the *day of judgment*, but the *last days* of the *Jewish commonwealth*, which were not long distant from the date of this epistle, whether we follow the *earlier* or *later* computation, of which enough has been spoken in the preface.

Verse 4. **The hire of the labourers]** The law, #Le 19:13, had ordered: *The wages of him that is hired shall not abide with thee all night until the morning*, every day's labour being paid for as soon as ended. This is more clearly stated in another law, #De 24:15: *At his day thou shalt give him his hire; neither shall the sun go down upon it; -lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be sin unto thee*. And that God particularly resented this defrauding of the hireling we see from #Mal 3:5: *I will come near to you in judgment, and will be a swift witness against those who oppress the hireling in his wages*. And on these laws and threatenings is built what we read in *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 100, l. 45: "When a poor man does any work in a house, the vapour proceeding from him, through the severity of his work, ascends towards heaven. Wo to his employer if he delay to pay him his wages." To this James seems particularly to allude, when he says: *The cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of hosts*; and the rabbins say, "The vapour arising from the sweat of the hard-worked labourer *ascends up before God*." Both images are sufficiently expressive.

**The Lord of sabaoth.]** St. James often conceives in *Hebrew* though he writes in *Greek*. It is well known that **יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת** *Yehovah tsebaoth*, Lord of hosts, or Lord of armies, is a frequent appellation of God in the Old Testament; and signifies his uncontrollable power, and the infinitely numerous means he has for governing the world, and defending his followers, and punishing the wicked.

Verse 5. **Ye have lived in pleasure]** **ετρυφήσατε**. *Ye have lived luxuriously*; feeding yourselves without fear, pampering the flesh.

**And been wanton]** **εσπαταλήσατε**. *Ye have lived lasciviously*. Ye have indulged all your sinful and sensual appetites to the uttermost; and your lives have been scandalous.

**Ye have nourished your hearts]** **εθρέψατε**. *Ye have fattened your hearts*, and have rendered them incapable of feeling, as in a day of slaughter, **ἡμέρα ἀφάγης**, a day of sacrifice, where many victims are offered at once, and where the people feast upon the sacrifices; many, no doubt, turning, on that occasion, a holy ordinance into a riotous festival.

Verse 6. **Ye have condemned and killed the just; and he doth not resist you.]** Several by **τοῦ δικαίου**, *the just one*, understand Jesus Christ, who is so called, #Ac 3:14; 7:52; 22:14; but the structure of the sentence, and the connection in which it stands, seem to require that we should

consider this as applying to the *just* or *righteous in general*, who were persecuted and murdered by those oppressive rich men; and their death was the consequence of their *dragging them before the judgment seats*, #Jas 2:6, where, having no influence, and none to plead their cause, they were unjustly condemned and executed.

And he doth not resist you.-In this, as in *τον δικαιον*, *the just*, there is an *enallege* of the *singular* for the *plural* number. And in the word *ουκ αντιτασσειται*, *he doth not resist*, the idea is included of *defence in a court of justice*. These poor righteous people had none to plead their cause; and if they had it would have been useless, as their oppressors had all power and all influence, and those who sat on these judgment seats were lost to all sense of justice and right. Some think that *he doth not resist you* should be referred to GOD; as if he had said, God permits you to go on in this way at present, but he will shortly awake to judgment, and destroy you as enemies of truth and righteousness.

Verse 7. **Be patient, therefore]** Because God is coming to execute judgment on this wicked people, therefore be patient till he comes. He seems here to refer to the coming of the Lord to execute judgment on the Jewish nation, which shortly afterwards took place.

**The husbandman waiteth]** The *seed* of your deliverance is already sown, and by and by the harvest of your salvation will take place. God's counsels will ripen in due time.

**The early and latter rain.]** The rain of *seed time*; and the rain of ripening before *harvest*: the first fell in Judea, about the beginning of *November*, after the seed was sown; and the second towards the end of *April*, when the ears were filling, and this prepared for a full harvest. Without these two rains, the earth would have been unfruitful. These God had promised: *I will give you the rain of your land in his due season, the first rain and the latter rain, that thou mayest gather in thy corn, and thy wine, and thy oil*, #De 11:14. But for these they were not only to *wait patiently*, but also to *pray*, *Ask ye of the Lord rain in the time of the latter rain; so shall the Lord make bright clouds, and give them showers of rain, to every one grass in the field*; #Zec 10:1.

Verse 8. **Be ye also patient]** Wait for God's deliverance, as ye wait for his bounty in providence.

**Stablish your hearts]** Take courage; do not sink under your trials.

**The coming of the Lord draweth nigh.]** *ηγγικε* *Is at hand*. He is already on his way to destroy this wicked people, to raze their city and temple, and to destroy their polity for ever; and this judgment will soon take place.

Verse 9. **Grudge not]** *μη στεναζετε* *Groan not; grumble not*; do not murmur through impatience; and let not any ill treatment which you receive, induce you to vent your feelings in imprecations against your oppressors. Leave all this in the hands of God.

**Lest ye be condemned]** By giving way to a spirit of this kind, you will get under the condemnation of the wicked.

**The judge standeth before the door.]** His eye is upon every thing that is *wrong in you*, and every *wrong that is done to you*; and he is now entering into judgment with your oppressors.

Verse 10. **Take-the prophets]** The prophets who had spoken to their forefathers by the authority of God, were persecuted by the very people to whom they delivered the Divine message; but they suffered affliction and persecution with patience, commending their cause to him who judgeth righteously; therefore, imitate their example.

Verse 11. **We count them happy which endure.]** According to that saying of our blessed Lord, *Blessed are ye when men shall persecute and revile you-for so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.* #Mt 5:11, 12, &c.

**Ye have heard of the patience of Job]** Stripped of all his worldly possessions, deprived at a stroke of all his children, tortured in body with sore disease, tempted by the devil, harassed by his wife, and calumniated by his friends, he nevertheless held fast his integrity, resigned himself to the Divine dispensations, and charged not God foolishly.

**And have seen the end of the Lord]** The *issue* to which God brought all his afflictions and trials, giving him children, increasing his property, lengthening out his life, and multiplying to him every kind of spiritual and secular good. This was *God's end* with respect to him; but the *devil's end* was to drive him to despair, and to cause him to blaspheme his Maker. This mention of *Job* shows him to have been a real person; for a fictitious person would not have been produced as an example of any virtue so highly important as that of patience and perseverance. *The end of the Lord* is a *Hebraism* for the *issue to which God brings any thing or business*.

**The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy.]** Instead of πολυσπλαγγνος, which we translate *very pitiful*, and which might be rendered *of much sympathy*, from πολυς, *much*, and σπλαγγνον, *a bowel*, (because any thing that affects us with commiseration causes us to feel an indescribable emotion of the bowels,) several MSS. have πολυενσπλαγγνος, from παλυς, *much*, ευ, *easily*, and σπλαγγνον, *a bowel*, a word not easy to be translated; but it signifies *one whose commiseration is easily excited*, and whose commiseration is *great or abundant*.

Verse 12. **Above all things-swear not]** What relation this exhortation can have to the subject in question, I confess I cannot see. It may not have been designed to stand in any connection, but to be a separate piece of advice, as in the several cases which immediately follow. That the Jews were notoriously guilty of *common swearing* is allowed on all hands; and that swearing by *heaven, earth, Jerusalem, the temple, the altar*, different parts of the *body*, was not considered by them as *binding oaths*, has been sufficiently proved. Rabbi Akiba taught that "a man might swear with his *lips*, and annul it in his *heart*; and then the oath was not binding." See Clarke's notes on "Mt 5:33", &c., where the subject is considered in great detail.

**Let your yea be yea, &c.]** Do not pretend to say *yea* with your *lips*, and annul it in your *heart*; let the *yea* or the *nay* which you *express* be *bona fide* such. Do not imagine that any mental reservation can cancel any such *expressions* of obligation in the sight of God.

**Lest ye fall into condemnation.]** ἵνα μὴ ὑπο κρισιν πεσητε· *Lest ye fall under judgment.* Several MSS. join ὑπο and κρισιν together, ὑποκρισιν, and prefix εἰς, *into*, which makes a widely different reading: *Lest ye fall into hypocrisy.* Now, as it is a fact, that the Jews did teach that there might be *mental reservation*, that would *annul the oath*, how solemnly soever it was taken; the object of St. James, if the last reading be genuine, and it is supported by a great number of excellent MSS., some *versions*, and some of the most eminent of the *fathers*, was to guard against that *hypocritical* method of taking an oath, which is subversive of all moral feeling, and must make conscience itself callous.

Verse 13. **Is any among you afflicted? let him pray]** The Jews taught that the meaning of the ordinance, #Le 13:45, which required the leper to cry, *Unclean! unclean!* was, "that thus *making known* his calamity, the people might be led to offer up prayers to God in his behalf," *Sota*, page 685, ed. Wagens. They taught also, that when any sickness or affliction entered a family, they should go to the wise men, and implore their prayers. *Bava bathra*, fol. 116, 1.

In *Nedarim*, fol. 40, 1, we have this relation: "Rabba, as often as he fell sick, forbade his domestics to mention it for the first day; if he did not then begin to get well, he told his family to go and publish it in the highways, that they who hated him might rejoice, and they that loved him might intercede with God for him."

**Is any merry? let him sing psalms.]** These are all general but very useful directions. It is natural for a man to *sing* when he is *cheerful* and *happy*. Now no subject can be more noble than that which is Divine: and as God alone is the author of all that good which makes a man *happy*, then his praise should be the subject of the *song* of him who is merry. But where persons rejoice in iniquity, and not in the truth, God and sacred things can never be the subject of their song.

Verse 14. **Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders]** This was also a Jewish maxim. Rabbi Simeon, in *Sepher Hachaiyim*, said: "What should a man do who goes to visit the sick? *Ans.* He who studies to restore the health of the body, should first lay the foundation in the health of the soul. The wise men have said, No healing is equal to that which comes from the word *of God* and *prayer*. Rabbi Phineas, the son of Chamma, hath said, 'When sickness or disease enters into a man's family, let him apply to a wise man, who will implore mercy in his behalf.'" See *Schoettgen*.

St. James very properly sends all such to the elders of the Church, who had power with God through the great Mediator, that they might pray for them.

**Anointing him with oil]** That St. James neither means any kind of *incantation*, any kind of *miracle*, or such *extreme unction* as the Romish Church prescribes, will be sufficiently evident from these considerations: 1. He was a holy man, and could prescribe nothing but what was holy. 2. If a *miracle* was intended, it could have been as well wrought *without the oil*, as *with* it. 3. It is not intimated that even this unction is to save the sick man, but the prayer of faith, #Jas 5:15. 4. What is here recommended was to be done as a natural means of restoring health, which, while they used prayer and supplication to God, they were not to neglect. 5. *Oil* in Judea was celebrated for its *sanative* qualities; so that they scarcely ever took a journey without carrying oil with them, (see in the case of the Samaritan,) with which they anointed their bodies, healed their wounds, bruises, &c.

6. *Oil* was and is frequently used in the east as a means of cure in very dangerous diseases; and in Egypt it is often used in the cure of the *plague*. Even in Europe it has been tried with great success in the cure of *dropsy*. And *pure olive oil* is excellent for recent wounds and bruises; and I have seen it tried in this way with the best effects. 7. But that it was the custom of the Jews to apply it as a means of healing, and that St. James refers to this custom, is not only evident from the case of the wounded man ministered to by the good Samaritan, #**Lu 10:34**, but from the practice of the Jewish rabbins. In *Midrash Koheleth*, fol. 73, 1, it is said: "Chanina, son of the brother of the Rabbi Joshua, went to visit his uncle at Capernaum; he was taken ill; and Rabbi Joshua went to him and *anointed him with oil, and he was restored.*" They had, therefore, recourse to this as a *natural* remedy; and we find that the disciples used it also in this way to heal the sick, not exerting the miraculous power but in cases where natural means were ineffectual. *And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them*; #**Mr 6:13**. On this latter place I have supposed that it might have been done *symbolically*, in order to prepare the way for a miraculous cure: this is the opinion of many commentators; but I am led, on more mature consideration, to doubt its propriety, yet dare not decide. In short, *anointing the sick with oil*, in order to their recovery, was a constant practice among the Jews. See *Lightfoot* and *Wetstein* on #**Mr 6:13**. And here I am satisfied that it has no other meaning than as a *natural means* of restoring health; and that St. James desires them to use *natural means* while looking to God for an especial blessing. And no wise man would direct otherwise. 8. That the *anointing* recommended here by St. James cannot be such as the Romish Church prescribes, and it is on this passage principally that they found their sacrament of *extreme unction*, is evident from these considerations: 1. St. James orders the sick person to be *anointed* in reference to *his cure*; but they anoint the sick in the *agonies of death*, when there is *no prospect of his recovery*; and never administer that *sacrament*, as it is called, while there is *any hope of life*. 2. St. James orders this *anointing* for the cure of the *body*, but they apply it for the cure of the *soul*; in reference to which use of it St. James gives no directions: and what is said of the *forgiveness of sins*, in #**Jas 5:15**, is rather to be referred to *faith* and *prayer*, which are often the means of restoring lost health, and preventing premature death, when *natural means*, the most skillfully used, have been useless. 3. The *anointing with oil*, if ever used as a means or *symbol* in *working miraculous cures*, was only applied in *some cases*, perhaps *very few*, if any; but the Romish Church uses it in *every case*; and makes it *necessary to the salvation* of every departing soul. Therefore, *St. James' unction*, and the *extreme unction* of the Romish Church, are essentially different. See below.

Verse 15. **And the prayer of faith; shall save the sick]** That is, God will often make these the means of a sick man's recovery; but there often are cases where *faith* and *prayer* are both ineffectual, because God sees it will be prejudicial to the patient's salvation to be restored; and therefore all faith and prayer on such occasions should be exerted on this ground: "If it be most for thy glory, and the eternal good of this man's soul, let him be restored; if otherwise, Lord, pardon, purify him, and take him to thy glory."

**The Lord shall raise him up]** Not the *elders*, how faithfully and fervently soever they have prayed.

**And if he have committed sins]** So as to have occasioned his present malady, *they shall be forgiven him*; for being the *cause* of the affliction it is natural to conclude that, if the *effect* be to cease, the *cause* must be removed. We find that in the miraculous restoration to health, under the

powerful hand of Christ, the sin of the party is generally said to be *forgiven*, and this also *before* the miracle was wrought on the *body*: hence there was a maxim among the Jews, and it seems to be founded in *common sense* and *reason*, that God never restores a man miraculously to health till he has pardoned his sins; because it would be incongruous for God to exert his miraculous power in saving a *body*, the *soul* of which was in a state of condemnation to eternal death, because of the crimes it had committed against its Maker and Judge. Here then it is GOD that *remits the sin*, not in reference to the *unction*, but in reference to the *cure* of the *body*, which he is miraculously to effect.

Verse 16. **Confess your faults one to another]** This is a good general direction to Christians who endeavour to maintain among themselves the communion of saints. This social confession tends much to humble the soul, and to make it watchful. We naturally wish that our friends in general, and our religious friends in particular, should think well of us; and when we confess to them offences which, without this confession, they could never have known, we feel humbled, are kept from self-applause, and induced to watch unto prayer, that we may not increase our offences before God, or be obliged any more to undergo the painful humiliation of acknowledging our weakness, fickleness, or infidelity to our religious brethren.

It is not said, *Confess your faults to the ELDERS that they may forgive them*, or prescribe *penance* in order to forgive them. No; the members of the Church were to *confess their faults to each other*; therefore *auricular confession* to a priest, such as is prescribed by the Romish Church, has no foundation in this passage. Indeed, had it any foundation here it would prove more than they wish, for it would require the *priest to confess his sins to the people*, as well as the people to confess theirs to the priest.

**And pray one for another]** There is no instance in *auricular confession* where the *penitent* and the *priest* pray together for pardon; but here the people are commanded to pray for each other that they may be healed.

**The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.]** The words δυναμις ενεργουμενη signify *energetic supplication*, or such a prayer as is *suggested* to the *soul* and *wrought in it by a Divine energy*. When God designs to do some particular work in his Church he pours out on his followers the spirit of grace and supplication; and this he does sometimes when he is about to do some especial work for an *individual*. When such a power of prayer is granted, faith should be immediately called into exercise, that the blessing may be given: the spirit of prayer is the proof that the power of God is present to heal. *Long prayers* give no particular evidence of *Divine inspiration*: the following was a maxim among the ancient Jews, שתפלת צדיקים קצרה *the prayers of the righteous are short*. This is exemplified in almost every instance in the Old Testament.

Verse 17. **Elias was a man subject to like passions]** This was *Elijah*, and a consistency between the *names* of the same persons as expressed in the Old and the New Testaments should be kept up.

The word *ομοιοπαθης* signifies of *the same constitution*, a human being just as ourselves are. See the same phrase and its explanation in #Ac 14:15, and the note there. There was some reason to apprehend that because Elijah was *translated*, that therefore he was more *than human*, and if so, his example could be no pattern for us; and as the design of St. James was to excite men to pray, expecting the Divine interference whenever that should be necessary, therefore he tells them that *Elijah was a man like themselves, of the same constitution, liable to the same accidents, and needing the same supports.*

**And he prayed earnestly]** *προσευχη προσηυξατο*· *He prayed with prayer; a Hebraism for, he prayed fervently.*

**That it might not rain]** See this history, #1Ki 17:1, &c.

**And it rained not on the earth]** *επι της γης*· *On that land, viz. the land of Judea; for this drought did not extend elsewhere.*

**Three years and six months.]** This is the term mentioned by our Lord, #Lu 4:25; but this is not specified in the original history. In #1Ki 18:1, it is said, *In the third year the word of the Lord came to Elijah*, that is, concerning the *rain*; but this *third year* is to be computed from the time of his going to live at Zarephath, which happened many days after the *drought began*, as is plain from this, that he remained at the *brook Cherith* till it was dried up, and then went to Zarephath, in the country of Zidon; #1Ki 17:7-9. Therefore the *three years* and *six months* must be computed from his denouncing the drought, at which time that judgment commenced. *Macknight.*

Verse 18. **And he prayed again]** This *second* prayer is not mentioned in the history in express words, but as in #1Ki 18:42, it is said, *He cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees*; that was probably the time of the second praying, namely, that rain might come, as this was the proper posture of prayer.

Verse 19. **Err from the truth]** Stray away from the Gospel of Christ; *and one convert him*-reclaim him from his error, and bring him back to the fold of Christ.

Verse 20. **Let him know]** Let him duly consider, for his encouragement, that he who is the instrument of converting a sinner shall save a soul from eternal death, and a body from ruin, *and shall hide a multitude of sins*; for in being the means of his conversion we bring him back to God, who, in his infinite mercy, *hides* or *blots* out the numerous sins which he had committed during the time of his backsliding. It is not the man's sins who is the means of his conversion, but the sins of the backslider, which are here said to be *hidden*. See more below.

1. MANY are of opinion that the *hiding a multitude of sins* is here to be understood of the person who converts the backslider: this is a dangerous doctrine, and what the Holy Spirit never taught to man. Were this true it would lead many a sinner to endeavour the reformation of his neighbour, that himself might continue under the influence of his own beloved sins and *conversion to a particular creed* would be put in the place of *conversion to God*, and thus the substance be lost in the shadow. Bishop Atterbury, (Ser. vol. i. p. 46,) and Scott, (Christian Life, vol. i. p. 368,) contend "that the

*covering a multitude of sins* includes also, that the *pious action* of which the apostle speaks engages God to look with *greater indulgence* on the character of the person that performs it, and to be *less severe in marking what he has done amiss*." See *Macknight*. This from such authorities may be considered doubly dangerous; it argues however great ignorance of God, of the nature of Divine justice, and of the sinfulness of sin. It is besides completely *antievangelical*; it teaches in effect that something besides the *blood of the covenant* will render God propitious to man, and that the performance of a *pious action* will induce God's justice to show *greater indulgence* to the person who performs it, and to be *less severe in marking what he has done amiss*. On the ground of this doctrine we might confide that, had he a certain quantum of *pious acts*, we might have all the sins of our lives forgiven, independently of the *sacrifice of Christ*; for if *one pious act* can procure pardon for a *multitude of sins*, what may not be expected from many?

2. The *Jewish* doctrine, to which it is possible St. James may allude, was certainly more *sound* than that taught by these *Christian divines*. They allowed that the man who was the means of converting another had done a work highly pleasing to God, and which should be rewarded; but they never insinuate that this would *atone* for sin. I shall produce a few examples:—

In *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 47, n. 17, it is said: *Great is his excellence who persuades a sick person to turn from his sins*.

*Ibid*, p. 92, n. 18: *Great is his reward who brings back the pious into the way of the blessed Lord*.

*Yoma*, fol. 87, 1: *By his hands iniquity is not committed, who turns many to righteousness; i.e. God does not permit him to fall into sin. What is the reason? Ans. Lest those should be found in paradise, while their instructor is found in hell*.

This doctrine is both innocent and godly in comparison of the other. It holds out a *motive* to diligence and zeal, but nothing farther. In short, if we allow any thing to *cover our sins* beside the *mercy of God* in *Christ Jesus*, *we shall err* most dangerously *from the truth*, and add this moreover to the *multitude of our sins*, that we maintained that the gift of God could be purchased by our puny acts of comparative righteousness.

3. As one immortal soul is of more worth than all the material creation of God, every man who knows the worth of his own should labour for the salvation of others. To be the means of depriving hell of her expectation, and adding even one soul to the Church triumphant, is a matter of infinite moment; and he who is such an instrument has much reason to thank God that ever he was born. He who lays out his accounts to do good to the souls of men, will ever have the blessing of God in his own. Besides, God will not suffer him to labour in vain, or spend his strength for naught. At first he may see little fruit; but the bread cast upon the waters shall be found after many days: and if he should never see it in this life, he may take for granted that whatsoever he has done for God, in simplicity and godly sincerity, has been less or more effectual.

After the last word of this epistle *αμαρτιων*, *of sins*, some versions add *his*, others *theirs*; and one MS. and the later *Syriac* have *Amen*. But these additions are of no authority.

The subscriptions to this epistle, in the VERSIONS, are the following: The end of the Epistle of James the apostle.-SYRIAC. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle is ended.-SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN. The end.-ÆTHIOPIC. Praise be to God for ever and ever; and may his mercy be upon us. Amen.-ARABIC. The Epistle of James the *son of Zebedee*, is ended.-ITALA, one copy. Nothing.-COPTIC. Nothing.-Printed VULGATE. The Epistle of James is ended.-*Bib. VULG. Edit. Eggestein*. The Epistle of St. James the apostle is ended.-*Complutensian*.

In the MANUSCRIPTS: Of James.-*Codex Vaticanus*, B. The Epistle of James.-*Codex Alexandrinus*. The end of the catholic Epistle of James.-*Codex Vaticanus*, 1210. The catholic Epistle of James the apostle.-A *Vienna MS*. The catholic Epistle of the holy Apostle James.-An ancient MS. in the library of the *Augustins*, at Rome. The end of the Epistle of the holy Apostle James, the *brother of God*.-One of *Petavius's MSS.*, written in the *thirteenth century*. The same is found in a *Vatican MS.* of the *eleventh century*. The most ancient MSS. have little or no subscription.

Two opinions relative to the author are expressed in these MSS. One copy of the *Itala*, the *Codex Corbejensis*, at Paris, which contains this epistle only, attributes it to *James, the son of Zebedee*; and two, comparatively *recent*, attribute it to James, *our Lord's brother*. The former testimony, taken in conjunction with some internal evidences, led Michaelis, and some others, to suppose it probable that *James the elder*, or the *son of Zebedee*, was the author. I should give it to this apostle, in preference to the other, had I not reason to believe that a *James*, different from either; was the author. But *who* or *what* he was, at this distance of time, it is impossible to say. Having now done with all comments on the text, I shall conclude with some particulars relative to *James*, our Lord's brother, and some general observations on the structure and importance of this epistle.

I have entered but little into the history of this James, because I was not satisfied that he is the author of this epistle: however, observing that the current of modern authors are decided in their opinion that he was the author, I perceive I may be blamed unless I be more particular concerning his life; as some of the ancients have related several circumstances relative to him that are very remarkable, and, indeed, singular. Dr. Lardner has collected the whole; and, although the same authors from whom he has taken his accounts are before me, yet, not supposing that I can at all mend either his selections or arrangement, I shall take the accounts as he states them.

"I should now proceed," says this learned man, "to write the history of this person (*James*) from ancient authors; but that is a difficult task, as I have found, after trying more than once, and at distant spaces of time. I shall therefore take *DIVERS* passages of Eusebius and others, and make such reflections as offer for finding out as much truth as we can.

"Eusebius, in his chapter concerning our Saviour's disciples, (*Eccl. Hist. lib. i., cap. 12.*) speaks of James, to whom our Lord showed himself after his resurrection, **#1Co 15:7**, as being one of the seventy disciples.

"The same author has another chapter, (*Hist. Eccl., lib. ii., cap. 1.*) entitled, Of Things constituted by the Apostles after our Saviour's Ascension, which is to this purpose:-

"The first is the choice of Matthias, one of Christ's disciples, into the apostleship, in the room of Judas; then the appointment of the seven deacons, one of whom was Stephen, who, soon after his being ordained, was stoned by those who had killed the Lord, and was the first martyr for Christ; then James, called the Lord's brother, because he was the son of Joseph, to whom the Virgin Mary was espoused. This James, called by the ancients the just, on account of his eminent virtue, is said to have been appointed the first bishop of Jerusalem; and Clement, in the sixth book of his Institutions, writes after this manner: That after our Lord's ascension, Peter, and James, and John, though they had been favoured by the Lord above the rest, did not contend for honour, but chose James the just to be bishop of Jerusalem; and in the seventh book of the same work he says, that after his resurrection the Lord gave to James the just, and Peter, and John, the gift of knowledge; and they gave it to the other apostles, and the other apostles gave it to the seventy, one of whom was Barnabas: for there were two named James, one the just, who was thrown down from the battlement of the temple and killed by a fuller's staff; the other is he who was beheaded. Of him who was called the just, Paul also makes mention, saying, *Other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.*

"I would now take a passage from Origen, in the tenth vol. of his Commentaries upon **#Mt 13:55, 56**: *Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And his brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?* They thought, says Origen, that he was the son of Joseph and Mary. The brethren of Jesus, some say, upon the ground of tradition, and particularly of what is said in the gospel according to Peter, or the book of James, were the sons of Joseph by a former wife, who cohabited with him before Mary. They who say this are desirous of maintaining the honour of Mary's virginity to the last, (or her perpetual virginity,) that the body chosen to fulfil what is said, *The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee*, **#Lu 1:35**, might not know man after that: and I think it very reasonable that, as Jesus was the first fruits of virginity among men, Mary should be the same among women; for it would be very improper to give that honour to any besides her. This James is he whom Paul mentions in his Epistle to the Galatians, saying, *Other of the apostles, saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.* This James was in so great repute with the people for his virtue, that Josephus, who wrote twenty books of the Jewish antiquities, desirous to assign the reason of their suffering such things, so that even their temple was destroyed, says that those things were owing to the anger of God for what they did to James, the brother of Jesus, who is called Christ. And it is wonderful that he, who did not believe our Jesus to be the Christ, should bear such a testimony to James. He also says that the people thought they suffered those things on account of James. Jude, who wrote an epistle, of a few lines indeed, but filled with the powerful word of the heavenly grace, says, at the beginning, *Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.* Of Joses and Simon we know nothing.

"Origen, in his books against Celsus, quotes Josephus again as speaking of James; to the like purpose; but there are not now any such passages in Josephus, though they are quoted as from him by Eusebius also. As the death of James has been mentioned, I shall now immediately take the accounts of it which are in Eusebius, and I will transcribe a large part of the twenty-third chapter of the second book of his Ecclesiastical History: 'But when Paul had appealed to Cæsar, and Festus had sent him to Rome, the Jews being disappointed in their design against him, turned their rage against James, the Lord's brother, to whom the apostles had consigned the episcopal chair of Jerusalem, and

in this manner they proceeded against him: having laid hold of him, they required him, in the presence of all the people, to renounce his faith in Christ; but he, with freedom and boldness beyond expectation, before all the multitude declared our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ to be the Son of God. They, not enduring the testimony of a man who was in high esteem for his piety, laid hold of the opportunity when the country was without a governor to put him to death; for Festus having died about that time in Judea, the province had in it no procurator. The manner of the death of James was shown before in the words of Clement, who said that he was thrown off the battlement of the temple, and then beat to death with a club. But no one has so accurately related this transaction as Hegesippus, a man in the first succession of the apostles, in the fifth book of his Commentaries, whose words are to this purpose: James, the brother of our Lord, undertook together with the apostles, the government of the Church. He has been called the just by all, from the time of our Saviour to ours: for many have been named James; but he was holy from his mother's womb. He drank neither wine nor strong drink, nor did he eat any animal food; there never came a razor upon his head; he neither anointed himself with oil, nor did he use a bath. To him alone was it lawful to enter the holy place. He wore no woollen, but only linen garments. He entered into the temple alone, where he prayed upon his knees; insomuch that his knees were become like the knees of a camel by means of his being continually upon them, worshipping God, and praying for the forgiveness of the people. Upon account of his virtue he was called the just, and Oblias, that is, the defence of the people, and righteousness. Some, therefore, of the seven sects which were among the Jews, of whom I spoke in the former part of these Commentaries, asked him, Which is the gate of Jesus? or, What is the gate of salvation? and he said, Jesus is the Saviour, or the way of salvation. Some of them therefore believed that Jesus is the Christ. And many of the chief men also believing, there was a disturbance among the Jews and among the scribes and Pharisees, who said there was danger lest all the people should think Jesus to be the Christ. Coming therefore to James they said, We beseech thee to restrain the error of this people; we entreat thee to persuade all who come hither at the time of passover to think rightly concerning Jesus, for all the people and all of us put confidence in thee. Stand therefore on the battlement of the temple, that being placed on high thou mayest be conspicuous, and thy words may be easily heard by all the people; for because of the passover all the tribes are come hither, and many Gentiles. Therefore the scribes and Pharisees before named placed James upon the battlement of the temple, and cried out to him and said, O Justus, whom we ought all to believe, since the people are in an error, following Jesus, who was crucified, tell us what is the gate of Jesus. And he answered with a loud voice, Why do you ask me concerning the Son of man? He even sitteth in the heaven, at the right hand of the great Power, and will come in the clouds of heaven. And many were fully satisfied and well pleased with the testimony of James, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David! But the same scribes and Pharisees said one to another, We have done wrong in procuring such a testimony to Jesus. Let us go up and throw him down, that the people may be terrified from giving credit to him. And they went up presently, and cast him down, and said, Let us stone James the just: and they began to stone him because he was not killed by the fall. But he turning himself, kneeled, saying, I entreat thee, O Lord God the Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. As they were stoning him, one said, Give over. What do ye? The just man prays for you. And one of them, a fuller, took a pole, which was used to beat clothes with, and struck him on the head. Thus his martyrdom was completed. And they buried him in that place; and his monument still remains near the temple. This James was a true witness, both to Jews and Gentiles, that Jesus is the Christ. Soon after Judea was invaded by Vespasian, and the people were carried captive.' So writes Hegesippus at large, agreeably to

Clement. For certain, James was an excellent man, and much esteemed by many for his virtue; insomuch that the most thoughtful men among the Jews were of opinion that his death was the cause of the siege of Jerusalem, which followed soon after his martyrdom: and that it was owing to nothing else but the wickedness committed against him. And Josephus says the same in these words: 'These things befell the Jews in vindication of James the just, who was brother of Jesus, called the Christ. For the Jews killed him; who was a most righteous man.'

"The time of the death of James may be determined without much difficulty; he was alive when Paul came to Jerusalem at the pentecost, in the year of Christ 58, and it is likely that he was dead when St. Paul wrote the Epistle to the Hebrews at the beginning of the year 63. Theodoret, upon **#Heb 13:7** supposes the apostle there to refer to the martyrdoms of Stephen, James the brother of John, and James the just. According to Hegesippus, the death of James happened about the time of passover, which might be that of the year 62; and if Festus was then dead, and Albinus not arrived, the province was without a governor. Such a season left the Jews at liberty to gratify their licentious and turbulent disposition, and they were very likely to embrace it."

I have said but little relative to the controversy concerning the *apostleship* of James, our Lord's brother; for, as I am still in doubt whether he was the author of this epistle, I do not judge it necessary to enter into the question. I proceed now to some general observations on the epistle itself, and the evidence it affords of the learning and science of its author.

1. I have already conjectured that this epistle ranks among the *most ancient* of the Christian writings; its total want of reference to the great facts which distinguish the early history of the Church, viz., the calling of the Gentiles, the disputes between them and the Jews, the questions concerning circumcision, and the obligation of the law in connection with the Gospel &c., &c., shows that it must have been written before those things took place, or that they must have been wholly unknown to the author; which is incredible, allowing him to have been a *Christian* writer.

2. The *style* of this epistle is much more elevated than most other parts of the New Testament. It abounds with figures and metaphors, at once bold, dignified, just, and impressive. Many parts of it are in the genuine prophetic style, and much after the manner of the Prophet *Zephaniah*, to whom there is a near resemblance in several passages.

3. An attentive reader of this epistle will perceive the author to be a man of *deep thought* and *considerable learning*. He had studied the Jewish prophets closely, and imitated their style; but he appears also to have read the *Greek poets*: his *language* is such as we might expect from one who had made them his study, but who avoided to quote them. We find a perfect *Greek hexameter* in **#Jas 1:17**, and another may be perceived in **#Jas 4:4**; but these are probably not borrowed, but are the spontaneous, undesigned effort of his own well cultivated mind. His *science* may be noted in several places, but particularly in **#Jas 1:17**, on which see the note and the diagram, and its explanation at the end of the chapter. Images from *natural history* are not unfrequent; and that in **#Jas 1:14, 15** is exceedingly correct and appropriate, but will not bear a closely literal translation.

4. His constant attention and reference to the *writings and maxims of his own countrymen* is peculiarly observable. Several of his remarks tend to confirm the antiquity of the *Talmud*; and the

parallel passages in the different *tracts* of that work cast much light on the allusions of St. James. Without constant reference to the ancient Jewish rabbins, we should have sought for the meaning of several passages in vain.

5. St. James is in many places *obscure*; this may arise partly from his own deep and strong conceptions, and partly from allusions to *arts* or *maxims* which are not come down to us, or which lie yet undiscovered in the *Mishna* or *Talmud*. To elucidate this writer I have taken more than common pains, but dare not say that I have been always successful, though I have availed myself of all the help within my reach. To *Schoettgen's* *Horæ Hebraicæ* I am considerably indebted, as also to *Dr. Macknight, Kypke, Rosenmuller, &c.*, but in many cases I have departed from all these, and others of the same class, and followed my own light.

6. On the controversy relative to the doctrine of *justification*, as taught by Paul and James, I have not entered deeply; I have produced in the proper places what appeared to me to be the most natural method of reconciling those writers. I believe St. James not to be in opposition to St. Paul, but to a corrupt doctrine taught among his *own countrymen* relative to this important subject. The *doctrine of justification by faith in Christ Jesus*, as taught by St. Paul, is *both* rational and true. St. James shows that a *bare belief in the God of Israel* justifies no man; and that the *genuine faith* that justifies works by love, and produces obedience to all the precepts contained in the moral law; and that this obedience is the evidence of the sincerity of that faith which professes to have put its possessor in the enjoyment of the peace and favour of God.

7. This epistle ends *abruptly*, and scarcely appears to be a finished work. The author probably intended to have added more, but may have been prevented by death. James, our Lord's brother, was murdered by the Jews, as we have already seen. James, the son Zebedee, had probably a short race; but whether either of these were its author we know not. The work was probably *posthumous*, not appearing till after the author's death; and this may have been one reason why it was so little known in the earliest ages of the primitive Church.

8. The spirit of *Antinomianism* is as dangerous in the Church as the spirit of *Pharisaism*; to the *former* the Epistle of James is a most *powerful antidote*; and the Christian minister who wishes to improve and guard the morals of his flock will bring its important doctrines, in due proportion, into his public ministry. It is no proof of the improved state of public morals that many, who call themselves *evangelical teachers*, scarcely ever attempt to instruct the public by texts selected from this epistle.

For other particulars, relative to the time of writing this epistle, the *author*, his *inspiration*, *apostleship*, &c., I must refer to Michaelis and Lardner, and to the *preface*.

Millbrook, Dec. 9, 1816

Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 31, 1831.

**PREFACE**  
**TO**  
**THE FIRST AND SECOND EPISTLES**  
**OF**  
**PETER.**

DR. LARDNER and Professor Michaelis have done much to remove several difficulties connected with the *person* of St. Peter, the *people* to whom he wrote, the *places* of their dispersion, and the *time* of writing. I shall extract what makes more immediately for my purpose.

"The land of Palestine, says Cave, at and before the coming of our blessed Saviour, was distinguished into three several provinces, Judea, Samaria, and Galilee. In the upper, called also Galilee of the Gentiles, within the division belonging to the tribe of Naphtali, stood Bethsaida, formerly an obscure and inconsiderable village, till lately re-edified and enlarged by Philip the Tetrarch; and, in honour of Julia, daughter of Augustus, called by him Julias. It was situated upon the banks of the sea of Galilee, called also the lake of Tiberias, and the lake of Gennesareth, which was about forty furlongs in breadth, and a hundred in length; and had a wilderness on the other side called the desert of Bethsaida, whither our Saviour used often to retire.

"At this place was born *Simon*, surnamed *Cephas*, or *Petros*, *Petrus*, *Peter*, signifying a *stone*, or fragment of a rock. He was a fisherman upon the forementioned lake or sea, as was also in all probability his father *Jonas*, *Jonah*, or *John*. He had a brother named *Andrew*: which was the eldest of the two is not certain; for, concerning this, there were different opinions among the ancients. *Epiphanius* supposed *Andrew* to be the elder; but, according to *Chrysostom*, *Peter* was the first-born. So likewise *Bede* and *Cassian*, who even make *Peter's* age the ground of his precedence among the apostles; and *Jerome* himself has expressed himself in like manner, saying, 'that the keys were given to all the apostles alike, and the Church was built upon all of them equally; but, for preventing dissension, precedency was given to one. *John* might have been the person, but he was too young; and *Peter* was preferred on account of his age.'

"The call of *Andrew* and *Peter* to a stated attendance on *Jesus* is recorded in three evangelists. Their father *Jonas* seems to have been dead; for there is no mention of him, as there is of *Zebedee*, when his two sons were called. It is only said of *Andrew* and *Peter* that, when *Jesus* called them, *they left their nets and followed him*. *Follow me, said he, and, I will make you fishers of men*.

"*Simon Peter* was married when called by our Lord to attend upon him; and upon occasion of that alliance, it seems, had removed from *Bethsaida* to *Capernaum*, where was his wife's family. Upon her mother our Saviour wrought a great miracle of healing. And, I suppose, that when our Lord *left Nazareth, and came and dwelled at Capernaum*, he made *Peter's* house the place of his usual abode when he was in those parts. I think we have a proof of it in the history just noticed. When *Jesus* came out of the synagogue at *Capernaum*, he *entered into Simon's house*, #**Lu 4:38**. Compare #**Mr 1:29**, which is well paraphrased by *Dr. Clarke*: 'Now when *Jesus* came out of the synagogue, he went home to *Peter's* house;' and there it was that the people resorted unto him.

"Some time after this, when our Lord had an opportunity of private conversation with the disciples, he inquired of them what men said of him; and then whom they thought him to be. 'Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God;' #Mt 16:13-16. So far likewise in #Mr 8:27-29, and #Lu 9:18-20. Then follows, in #Mt 16:17-19: 'And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven:' that is, 'it is not a partial affection for me, thy Master, nor a fond and inconsiderate regard for the judgments of others for whom thou hast a respect, that has induced thee to think thus of me; but it is a just persuasion formed in thy mind by observing the great works thou hast seen me do by the power of God in the confirmation of my mission and doctrine.' 'And I say unto thee, thou art Peter, and upon this rock will I build my Church-and I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven.' By which many of our interpreters suppose that our Lord promised to Peter that he should have the honour of beginning to preach the Gospel after his resurrection to Jews and Gentiles, and of receiving them into the Church; if so that is personal. Nevertheless, what follows, 'And whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bound in heaven; and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth, shall be loosed in heaven;' this, I say, must have been the privilege of all the apostles, for the like things are expressly said to them, #Lu 22:29, 30, #Joh 20:21-23. Moreover, all the apostles concurred with Peter in the first preaching both to Jews and Gentiles. As he was president in the college of the apostles, it was very fit, and a thing of course, that he should be primarily concerned in the first opening of things. The confession now particularly before us was made by him; but it was in answer to a question that had been put to all; and he spoke the sense of all the apostles, and in their name. I suppose this to be as true in this instance, as in the other before mentioned, which is in #Joh 6:68, 69. In the account which St. John has given us of our Saviour's washing the disciples' feet, Peter's modesty and fervour are conspicuous. When the Jewish officers were about to apprehend our Lord, 'Peter, having a sword, drew it, and smote a servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.' Our Lord having checked Peter, touched the servant's ear, and healed him. So great is Jesus everywhere! They that laid hold of Jesus led him away to the house of Caiaphas; the rest of the disciples now forsook him and fled; 'but Peter followed him afar off, unto the high priest's palace; and went in and sat with the servants to see the end.' Here Peter thrice disowned his Lord, peremptorily denying that he was one of the disciples, or had any knowledge of him, as related by all the evangelists; for which he soon after humbled himself, and wept bitterly. We do not perceive that Peter followed our Lord any farther; or that he at all attended the crucifixion. It is likely that he was under too much concern of mind to appear in public; and that he chose retirement, as most suitable to his present temper and circumstances.

"On the first day of the week, early in the morning, when Mary Magdalene and other women came to the sepulchre, bringing sweet spices which they had prepared, 'they saw an angel, who said unto them, Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus who was crucified: he is not here, for he is risen: Go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead.' As in Matthew, 'Tell his disciples and Peter.' As in Mark, 'Behold he goeth before you into Galilee.' That was a most gracious disposal of Providence to support the disciples, Peter in particular, in their great affliction.

"Our Lord first showed himself to Mary Magdalene, and afterwards to some other women. On the same day likewise on which he arose from the dead, he showed himself to Peter, though the circumstances of this appearance are nowhere related. And it has been observed, that as Mary

Magdalene was the first woman, so Peter was the first man, to whom Jesus showed himself after he was risen from the dead.

"We have nowhere any distinct account of this apostle's travels: he might return to Judea, and stay there a good while after having been at Antioch, at the time spoken of by St. Paul in the Epistle to the Galatians. However, it appears from Epiphanius that Peter was often in the countries of Pontus and Bithynia; and by Eusebius we are assured that Origen, in the third tome of his Exposition of the Book of Genesis, writes to this purpose: 'Peter is supposed to have preached to the Jews of the dispersion in Pontus, Galatia, Bithynia, Cappadocia, and Asia; who, at length coming to Rome, was crucified with his head downwards, himself having desired it might be in that manner.' For the time of Peter's coming to Rome, no ancient writer is now more regarded by learned moderns than Lactantius, or whoever is the author of the book of the Deaths of Persecutors; who says that Peter came thither in the time of Nero. However, it appears to me very probable that St. Peter did not come to Rome before the year of Christ 63 or 64, nor till after St. Paul's departure thence at the end of his two years' imprisonment in that city. The books of the New Testament afford a very plausible, if not certain, argument for it. After our Lord's ascension we find Peter, with the rest of the apostles, at Jerusalem. He and John were sent by the apostles from Jerusalem to Samaria, whence they returned to Jerusalem. When Paul came to Jerusalem, three years after his conversion, he found Peter there. Upon occasion of the tranquility of the Churches in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria, near the end of the reign of Caligula, Peter left Jerusalem, and visited the Churches in several parts of that country, particularly at Lydda and Joppa, where he tarried many days. Thence he went to Cæsarea, by the seaside, where he preached to Cornelius and his company. Thence he returned to Jerusalem, and sometime afterwards was imprisoned there by Herod Agrippa. This brings down the history of our apostle to the year 44. A few years after this he was present at the council of Jerusalem; nor is there any evidence that he came there merely on that occasion. It is more probable that he had not yet been out of Judea: soon after that council he was at Antioch, where he was reprov'd by St. Paul.

"The books of the New Testament afford no light for determining where Peter was for several years after that. But to me it appears not unlikely that he returned after a short time to Judea from Antioch, and that he stayed in Judea a good while before he went thence any more; and it seems to me that, when he left Judea, he went again to Antioch, the chief city of Syria. Thence he might go to other parts of the continent, particularly Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, which are expressly mentioned in the beginning of his first epistle. In those countries he might stay a good while; and it is very likely that he did so; and that he was well acquainted with the Christians there, to whom he afterwards wrote two epistles. When he left those parts, I think he went to Rome, but not till after Paul had been in that city and was gone from it. Several of St. Paul's epistles furnish out a cogent argument of Peter's absence from Rome for a considerable space of time. St. Paul, in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans, written, as we suppose, in the beginning of the year 58, salutes many by name, without mentioning Peter; and the whole tenor of the epistle makes it reasonable to think that the Christians there had not yet had the benefit of the apostle's presence and instructions. During his two years' confinement at Rome, which ended, as we suppose, in the spring of the year 63, St. Paul wrote four or five epistles; those to the Ephesians, the Second Epistle to Timothy, to the Philippians, the Colossians, and Philemon; in none of which is any mention of Peter, nor is any thing said or hinted whence it can be concluded that he had ever been there. I think, therefore, that Peter did not come to Rome before the year 63, or perhaps 64. And, as I suppose,

obtained the crown of martyrdom in the year 64 or 65; consequently, St. Peter could not reside very long at Rome before his death.

"Cave likewise, in his life of St. Peter, written in English in 1676, places his death in 64 or 65; nor was his mind much altered when he published his *Historia Literaria* in 1688; for there also he supposes that St. Peter died a martyr at Rome, in the year of Christ 64, at the beginning of Nero's persecution; and indeed he expresses himself with a great deal of assurance and positiveness. Jerome concludes his article of St. Peter saying, 'He was buried at Rome, in the Vatican, near the triumphal way; and is in veneration all over the world.'

"It is not needful to make any remarks upon this tradition; but it is easy to observe it is the general, uncontradicted, disinterested testimony of ancient writers, in the several parts of the world, Greeks, Latins, and Syrians. As our Lord's prediction concerning the death of Peter is recorded in one of the four gospels, it is very likely that Christians would observe the accomplishment of it, which must have been in some place, and about this place there is no difference among Christian writers of ancient times; never any other place was named besides Rome; nor did any other city ever glory in the martyrdom of Peter. There were, in the second and third centuries, disputes between the bishop of Rome and other bishops and Churches about the time of keeping Easter, and about the baptism of heretics; yet none denied the bishop of Rome what they called the chair of Peter. It is not for our honour or interest, either as Christians or Protestants, to deny the truth of events ascertained by early and well attested tradition. If any make an ill use of such facts, we are not accountable for it. We are not, from the dread of such abuses, to overthrow the credit of all history, the consequences of which would be fatal. Fables and fictions have been mixed with the account of Peter's being at Rome; but they are not in the most early writers, but have been added since: and it is well known that fictions have been joined with histories of the most certain and important facts.\*

\* I commend Dr. Lardner for his candour, and thank him for his advice; but I must think, on the evidence before me, that there is as much danger in believing too much as in believing too little. To me there is not the slightest evidence that St. Peter ever saw Rome; much less that he was first or indeed any bishop of that city. Those who mention his having been there, give us no evidence that they had any fact or history to vouch for their belief, but a sort of uncertain report that never attempts to show its origin or vouch for its truth. The New Testament, by direct inference, is totally against the tradition.

"Having written the history of the Apostle Peter, I now proceed to his epistles; concerning which three or four things are to be considered by us; their genuineness, the persons to whom they were sent, the place where, and the time when, they were written.

"The first epistle was all along considered, by catholic Christians, as authentic and genuine; this we learn from Eusebius, who says: 'Of the controverted books of the New Testament; yet well known and approved by many, are that called the Epistle of James, and that of Jude, and the second and third of John.' And in another place, 'One epistle of Peter, called the first, is universally received. This the presbyters of ancient times have quoted in their writings as undoubtedly genuine; but that called his second, we have been informed, (by tradition,) has not been received as a part of the New Testament; nevertheless, appearing to many to be useful, it has been carefully studied with other

scriptures.' By which, I think, we may be assured that a great regard was shown to this epistle by many Christians in the time of our learned ecclesiastical historian. Jerome says, 'Peter wrote two epistles called catholic, the second of which is denied by many to be his, because of the difference of the style from the former.' And Origen before them, in his commentaries upon the gospel of St. Matthew, as cited by Eusebius, says, 'Peter, on whom the Church is built, has left one epistle universally acknowledged: let it be granted that he also wrote a second, for this has been doubted.'

"What those learned writers of the third and fourth centuries say of those two epistles, we have found agreeable to the testimony of more ancient writers, whom we have consulted: for the first epistle seems to be referred to by Clement of Rome; it is plainly referred to by Polycarp several times; it is also referred to by the martyrs at Lyons; it was received by Theophilus, bishop of Antioch; it was quoted by Papias; it is quoted in the remaining writings of Irenæus, Clement of Alexandria, and Tertullian: consequently it was all along received. But we do not perceive the second epistle to be quoted by Papias, nor by Irenæus, (though in Grabe's edition this epistle is twice quoted,) nor Tertullian, nor Cyprian. However, both these epistles were generally received in the fourth and following centuries by all Christians, except the Syrians: for they were received by Athanasius, Cyril of Jerusalem, the council of Laodicea, Epiphanius, Jerome, Rufin, Augustine, and others.

"The first epistle being allowed to be St. Peter's, we can argue in favour of the other also, in this manner: It bears in the inscription the name of the same apostle; for so it begins, 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.' And in **#2Pe 1:14** are these words: 'Knowing that I must shortly put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ has showed me.'

"The writer of this epistle may have had a particular revelation concerning the time of his death, not long before writing this. But it is probable that here is a reference to our Lord's prediction concerning St. Peter's death, and the manner of it, which are recorded in **#Joh 21:18, 19**. From **#2Pe 1:16-18**, it appears that the writer was one of the disciples who were with Jesus in the mount, when he was transfigured in a glorious manner. This certainly leads us to Peter, who was there, and whose name the epistle bears in the inscription, **#2Pe 3:1**: 'This second epistle, beloved, I now write unto you; in both which I stir up your pure minds by way of remembrance;' plainly referring to the former epistle, which has been always acknowledged to be Peter's. These words are express. But it might have been argued, with some degree of probability, from **#2Pe 1:12, 15**, that he had before written to the same persons. Once more, **#2Pe 3:15, 16**, he calls Paul brother, and otherwise so speaks of him and his epistles as must needs be reckoned most suitable to an apostle. The writer, therefore, is the Apostle Peter, whose name the epistle bears in the inscription. We are led here to the observation which Wall placed at the head of his notes upon this second epistle: 'It is,' says he, 'a good proof of the cautiousness of the ancient Christians in receiving any book for canonical, that they not only rejected all those pieces forged by heretics under the name of apostles; but also if any good book, affirmed by some men or some Churches to have been written and sent by some apostle, were offered to them, they would not, till fully satisfied of the fact, receive it into their canon.' He adds: 'There is more hazard in denying this to be Peter's, than in denying some other books to be of that author to whom they are by tradition ascribed. For they, if they be not of that apostle to whom they are imputed, yet may be of some other apostle, or apostolical man; but this author is either the apostle, or else by setting his name, and by other circumstances, he does designedly personate him,

which no man of piety and truth would do.' And then he concludes: 'This epistle being written by him but a little before his death, **#2Pe 1:14**, and perhaps no more than one copy sent, it might be a good while before a number of copies, well attested, came abroad to the generality of the Christian Churches.'

"Certainly these epistles, and the discourses of Peter, recorded in the Acts, together with the effects of them, are monuments of Divine inspiration, and of the fulfilment of the promise which Christ made to him, when he saw him and his brother Andrew employed in their trade, and casting a net into the sea; *Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men*, **#Mt 4:19**.

"Concerning the *persons* to whom these epistles were sent, there have been different opinions among both ancients and moderns. Mr. Wetstein argues from divers texts that the first epistle was sent to the Gentiles. Mr. Hallett, in his learned introduction to the Epistle to the Hebrews, observes, 'Some go upon the supposition that St. Peter's epistles were written to the Jews, but it seems to me more natural to suppose that they were written to Gentile Christians, if we consider many passages of the epistles themselves:' where he proceeds to allege many passages, and in my opinion, very pertinently; some of which will be also alleged by me by and by.

"To me it seems that St. Peter's epistles were sent to all Christians in general, Jews and Gentiles, living in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia; the greatest part of whom must have been converted by Paul, and had been before involved in ignorance and sin, as all people in general were till the manifestation of the Gospel of Christ. That St. Peter wrote to all Christians in those countries is apparent, from the valedictory blessing or wish at the end of the epistle, **#1Pe 5:14**: *Peace be with you all that are in Christ Jesus*. Lewis Capellus, who thought that St. Peter's first epistle was written to Jewish believers, allows that the second epistle was written to all Christians in general, and particularly to Gentiles, induced thereto by the comprehensiveness of the address at the beginning of that epistle, *To them that have obtained like precious faith with us*. He should have concluded as much of the first epistle likewise, for they were both sent to the same people, as is evident from St. Peter's own words, **#2Pe 3:1**. Moreover, the inscription of the first epistle seems to be as general as that of the second. Let us observe it distinctly: to the elect, *εκλεκτοις*, says Wall upon the place: 'He uses the word *εκλεκτοι*, *choice ones*, just as St. Paul does the word *αγιοι*, *saints*, for the word *Christians*: and as St. Paul directs almost all his epistles *to the saints*, that is, the *Christians* of such a place; so St. Peter here, *to the elect* or *choice ones*, that is, *Christians*, sojourning in the dispersions of Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia. *Strangers*, *παρεπιδημοις*: good men, though at home, are strangers, especially if they meet with opposition, trouble, and affliction, as those Christians did to whom St. Peter is here writing; for he speaks of their trials and temptations, **#1Pe 1:6, 7**, and exhorts them, **#1Pe 2:11**, *as sojourners and strangers*, *ως παροικους και παρεπιδημους*, *to abstain from fleshly lusts*. Says Œcumenius upon **#1Pe 1:1, 2**: 'He calls them *strangers*, either on account of their dispersion, or because all that live religiously are called *strangers* on this earth; as David also says, 'I am a sojourner with thee, and a stranger, as all my fathers were,' **#Ps 39:12**. *Scattered throughout Pontus, or of the dispersion of Pontus, Galatia*; so he calls them, not because they had been driven out from their native country, but because he writes to the Christians of divers countries, who also were but a few or a small number in every place where they dwelt. I shall now show that these Christians were, for the most part, of the Gentile stock and original. **#1Pe 1:14**: 'As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance.' This might be

very pertinently said to men converted from Gentilism to Christianity; but no such thing is ever said by the apostle concerning the Jewish people, who had been favoured with Divine revelation, and had the knowledge of the true God. And **#1Pe 1:20, 21**, he says, that 'through Christ they did now believe in God;' therefore they were not worshippers till they were acquainted with the Christian revelation. In like manner, **#1Pe 2:9**, St. Peter speaks of those to whom he writes as having been 'called out of darkness into God's marvellous light.' Moreover, they were not once God's people; **#1Pe 2:10**: 'Which in times past were not a people, but are now the people of God; which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.' Words resembling those of St. Paul, **#Ro 9:24, 25**, where he is unquestionably speaking of Gentile converts. There are also other expressions which plainly show that these persons had been Gentiles, and had lived in the sins of Gentilism; **#1Pe 1:18**: 'Forasmuch as ye know that ye were redeemed from your vain conversation, received by tradition from your fathers.' And **#1Pe 4:3**: 'For the time past 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.' St. Peter does not charge himself with such things, but they to whom he writes had been guilty in those respects; and, by way of condescension, and for avoiding offence, and for rendering his argument more effectual, he joins himself with them. And more, when St. Peter represents the dignity of those to whom he writes, upon account of their Christian vocation, **#1Pe 2:9**, as 'a chosen generation, a peculiar people, a royal priesthood;' certainly the expressions are most pertinent and emphatical, if understood of such as had been brought from Gentilism to the faith of the Gospel, as indeed they plainly were. For he there says, 'they were to show forth the praises of Him who had called them out of darkness into his marvellous light.' To all which might be added, what was hinted before, that the persons to whom Peter writes were for the most part the Apostle Paul's converts. This must be reckoned probable from the accounts which we have in the Acts of St. Paul's travels and preaching. Whence we know that he had been in Galatia, and the other countries mentioned by St. Peter at the beginning of his first epistle. Moreover he observes, **#2Pe 3:15**, that 'his beloved brother Paul had written unto them.' We may reasonably suppose that he thereby intends St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, the Ephesians, and Colossians, all in those countries, and for the most part Gentile believers. Nor do I see reason to doubt that if Peter had, before now, seen and read St. Paul's Epistles to Timothy; and if we should add them, as here intended also, it would be no prejudice to our argument. For those epistles likewise were designed for the use and benefit of the Churches in those parts. To me these considerations appear unanswerable; I shall, therefore, take notice of but one objection, which is grounded upon **#1Pe 2:12**: 'Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles; that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.' Upon the first clause in that verse Beza says, that this place alone is sufficient to show that this epistle was sent to Jews. But I think not. From St. Paul may be alleged a text of the like sort, **#1Co 10:32**: 'Give no offence, neither to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, (και ἑλλησι,) nor to the Church of God.' It might be as well argued from that text that the Corinthians were by descent neither Jews nor Greeks, as from this, that the persons to whom St. Peter wrote were not originally Gentiles. In the text of St. Paul just quoted, by Jews, and Gentiles or Greeks, are intended such as were unbelievers. So it is likewise in the text of St. Peter which we are considering as is apparent from the latter part of the verse above transcribed at large. St. Peter had a right to distinguish those to whom he writes from the Gentile people among whom they lived, as he had at the beginning of the epistle called them *elect*, or *choice ones*, and *strangers*; and they likewise went by the name of Christians, as we perceive from **#1Pe 4:16**.

"St. Peter's two epistles, then, were sent to all Christians in general, living in those countries, the greatest part of whom had been converted from Gentilism or heathenism.

"Our next inquiry is concerning *where* these epistles were written.

"At the end of the first epistle St. Peter says: 'The *Church that is* at Babylon, elected together with you, saluteth you;' which text, understood literally, has been thought by some to denote, 1. Babylon in Assyria; or, 2. Babylon in Egypt. 3. By others it is interpreted figuratively, and is supposed to denote Jerusalem; or, 4. Rome. So that there are four opinions concerning the place where this epistle was written.

"If St. Peter had read St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans before he wrote his first epistle, it was written after St. Paul's journey from Corinth to Jerusalem, described in Acts 20., 21.; for the Epistle to the Romans was written from Corinth. How much later than the time of this journey the First Epistle of Peter was written it is very difficult, for want of sufficient data, to determine. The epistle itself has hardly any marks which can guide us in deciding the year of its composition; and we know nothing of the history of St. Peter from the time of the apostolic council at Jerusalem, Acts 15., which is the last place where St. Luke mentions him, till his arrival many years afterwards at Rome, where, according to the accounts of ecclesiastical writers, he suffered martyrdom. However, a comparison of the first with the second epistle of St. Peter will enable us to form at least an opinion on this subject. St. Peter says, in his second epistle, **#2Pe 3:1**: ταυτην ηδη, αγαπητοι, δευτεραν υμιν γραφω επιστολην whence we may conclude that his first epistle was written to the same persons as the second. But if the second epistle was written fifteen or twenty years after the first, they who received the one were not the same persons as they who received the other; and we might rather expect that in this case St. Peter would have called his first epistle an epistle which he had written to their fathers. It appears, then, that the interval between the dates of the two epistles could not have been very long; and as the second epistle was written shortly before St. Peter's death; we may infer that the first epistle was written either not long before, or not long after, the year 60. On the other hand, Lardner assigns this epistle too late a date; for he is of opinion that it was written between 63 and 65. This reason for supposing that it was not written till after 63 is, that an earlier date cannot be assigned for St. Peter's arrival at Rome; and as he takes the word Babylon, whence St. Peter dates his epistle, not in its proper but in a mystical sense, as denoting Rome, he concludes that the epistle was not written before the time above mentioned. But if we take Babylon in its proper sense, the argument not only proves not what Lardner intended, but the very reverse; for if St. Peter's arrival in Rome is to be dated about the year 63, an epistle written by St. Peter, in Babylon, must have a date prior to that year.

"St. Peter, in the close of his epistle, sends a salutation from the Church in Babylon, which, consequently, is the place where he wrote his epistle. But commentators do not agree in regard to the meaning of the word Babylon, some taking it in its literal and proper sense, others giving it a figurative and mystical interpretation. Among the advocates for the latter sense have been men of such learning and abilities, that I was misled by their authority in the younger part of my life to subscribe to it; but at present, as I have more impartially examined the question, it appears to me very extraordinary that, when an apostle dates his epistle from Babylon, it should ever occur to any commentator to ascribe to this work a mystical meaning, instead of taking it in its literal and proper

sense. For, in the first century, the ancient Babylon, on the Euphrates, was still in existence; and there was likewise a city on the Tigris, Seleucia, not far distant from the ancient Babylon, to which the name of modern Babylon was given; but through some mistake it has been supposed that the ancient Babylon, in the time of St. Peter, was no longer in being; and in order to furnish a pretence for a mystical interpretation, it has been denied that Seleucia was ever so called.

"It is true that the ancient Babylon, in comparison of its original splendour, might be called in the first century a desolated city; yet it was not wholly a heap of ruins, nor wholly destitute of inhabitants. This appears from the account which Strabo, who lived in the time of Tiberius, has given of it: for he says that Alexander (who died at Babylon, and who intended, if he had lived, to have made it the place of his residence) proposed to rebuild there a pyramid, which was a stadium in length, in breadth, and in height; but that his successors did not put the design into execution: that the Persians destroyed a part of Babylon, and that the Macedonians neglected it; but that Babylon had suffered the most from the building of Seleucia, by Seleucus Nicator, at the distance of three hundred stadia from it, because Seleucia then became the capital of the country, and Babylon was drained of its inhabitants. Strabo then adds: at present Seleucia is greater than Babylon, which last city has been desolated, so that one may say of it, what the comic poet said of Megalopolis in Arcadia: 'A great city is become a great desert.' If this be not sufficient proof that Babylon was still in existence in the first century, the reader may consult Cellarii Geographia, tom. ii., page 747; and Assemani Bibliotheca Orientalis, tom. iii., par. ii., page 7.

"It will be objected, perhaps, that if Babylon still existed in the time of St. Peter, it was yet in such a state of decay that an apostle would hardly have gone to preach the Gospel there. But I can see no reason why he should not; especially as Babylon was at that time so far from being literally destitute of inhabitants that Strabo draws a parallel between this city and Seleucia, saying, at present Babylon is not so great as Seleucia, which was then the capital of the Parthian empire, and, according to Pliny, contained six hundred thousand inhabitants. To conclude therefore that Babylon, whence St. Peter dates this epistle, could not have been the ancient Babylon, because this city was then in a state of decay; and thence to argue that St. Peter used the word mystically to denote Rome, is nearly the same as if, on the receipt of a letter dated from Ghent or Antwerp, in which mention was made of a Christian community there, I concluded that, because these cities are no larger than what they were in the sixteenth century, the writer of the epistle meant a spiritual Ghent or Antwerp, and that the epistle was really written from Amsterdam.

"It is, therefore, at least possible that St. Peter wrote his first epistle in the ancient Babylon, on the Euphrates. But before we conclude that he really did write there, we must first examine whether he did not mean Seleucia on the Tigris, which was sometimes called the modern Babylon. According to Strabo, Seleucia was only three hundred stadia distant from the ancient Babylon; and it was separated by the Tigris from Ctesiphon, the winter residence of the Parthian kings. At present it is not called Bagdad, as some have supposed, which is a very different city; but, in conjunction with Ctesiphon, is named by Syrian and Arabic writers Medinotho, Medain, Madain, under which name it appears in D'Anville's maps in the latitude of 33° 7½.

"Since then, the name of Babylon was given actually to Seleucia, it is not impossible that St. Peter thus understood the word Babylon, and that his first epistle therefore was written at Seleucia on the

Tigris. But I have shown in the preceding part of this section that there is likewise a possibility of its having been written in Babylon, properly so called, or in the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates. The question therefore is, which of these two senses shall we ascribe to the word Babylon? For one of these two we must ascribe to it, unless we give it, without any reason, a mystical interpretation. In the two last editions of this introduction I preferred the former sense; but after a more mature consideration, I think it much more probable, at present, that St. Peter meant the ancient Babylon. It is true that Lucan, Sidonius Apollinaris, and Stephanus Byzantinus, gave the name of Babylon to Seleucia; but the two last of these writers lived so late as the fifth century; and therefore their authority is perhaps not sufficient to prove that Seleucia was called Babylon in the first century. Lucan, indeed, was a contemporary with St. Peter; but then he uses this word in an epic poem, in which a writer is not bound by the same rules as in prose: and it is not improbable that he selected the word Babylon, because, partly, its celebrity added pomp to his diction; and, partly, because neither Ctesiphon nor Seleucia would have suited the verse. The writer of an epistle, on the contrary, can allow himself no such latitude; and perspicuity requires that in the date of his epistle, he should use no other name for the town where he writes than that which properly belongs to it. If, therefore, St. Peter had really written at Seleucia, he would have hardly called this city by the name of Babylon, though this name was sometimes applied to it: consequently, it is most probable that St. Peter wrote his first epistle in ancient Babylon on the Euphrates.

"Before I conclude this section, I must take notice of a passage in Josephus, which not only confutes all notions of a spiritual or mystical Babylon, but throws a great light on our present inquiry; and this passage is of so much the more importance, because Josephus was a historian who lived in the same age with St. Peter; and the passage itself relates to an event which took place thirty-six years before the Christian era, namely, the delivery of Hyrcanus, the Jewish high priest, from imprisonment, by order of Phraates, king of Parthia, with permission to reside in Babylon, where there was a considerable number of Jews. This is recorded by Josephus, Antiq. xv. c. 2, in the following words: *δια τουτο δεσμων μεν αφηκεν, εν βαβυλωνι δε καταγεσθαι παρειχεν, ενθα και πληθος ην ιουδαιων*. Josephus then adds, that both the Jews in Babylon, and all who dwelt in that country, as far as the Euphrates, respected Hyrcanus, as high priest and king. Now the word Babylon in this passage of Josephus evidently means a city in the east; and it cannot possibly be interpreted in a mystical manner either of Jerusalem or Rome. The only question is, whether he meant the ancient Babylon on the Euphrates, or Seleucia on the Tigris. The former is the most obvious interpretation; and is warranted by the circumstance that, in other places where Josephus speaks of Seleucia on the Tigris, he calls it by its proper name Seleucia.

"The first argument in favour of a mystical and against a literal interpretation of the word Babylon is, that in the whole country of Babylonia there were no Jews in the time of St. Peter; and thence it is inferred that he could not have gone to preach the Gospel there. Now in this argument both the premises and inference are false. The inference is false, because even if there had been no Jews in the whole country of Babylonia, St. Peter might have gone to preach the Gospel there; for he preached to the uncircumcised at Cæsarea, and he himself declared that it was ordained by God that the Gentiles, by his mouth, should hear the word of the Gospel and believe. The premises themselves are also totally unfounded; for if we except Palestine, there was no country in the world where the Jews were so numerous and so powerful as in the province of Babylonia, in which they had their two celebrated seats of learning, Nehardea and Susa.

"The second argument in favour of a mystical interpretation of the word Babylon is, that almost all the ancient fathers have explained it in this manner, and have asserted that St. Peter used it to denote Rome. But we must recollect that an assertion of this kind is not testimony to a fact, but a mere matter of opinion, in which the ancients were as liable to mistake as we are. Nor is it true that all the ancient ecclesiastical writers have ascribed to the word Babylon a mystical meaning; for though the Greek and Latin fathers commonly understood Rome, yet the Syriac and Arabic writers understood it literally, as denoting a town in the east; and if we are to be guided by opinion, an oriental writer is surely as good authority, on the present question, as a European.

"The third argument on which Lardner particularly insists is, that, in the accounts which we have on record relative to St. Peter's history, no mention is made of a journey to Babylon. Now this argument would prove nothing, even if our knowledge of St. Peter's life and transactions were more perfect than it really is. Let us suppose an instance of some eminent man in modern times, in the history of whose life no mention is made that, during his travels, he paid a visit to Vienna, but that among his letters to his friends, one of them, notwithstanding the silence of his biographer, is dated from Vienna. In this case, unless we had reason to suppose that the whole epistle was a forgery, or that the author had used a false date, we should immediately conclude, on the bare authority of this single epistle, that he had actually been at Vienna; and we should hardly think of a mystical or spiritual Vienna. Lardner himself has argued in this very manner with respect to Paul, though his history is infinitely better known than that of St. Peter, and has inferred from the single passage, **#Tit 1:5**, 'For this cause left I thee in Crete,' that St. Paul made a voyage into Crete in the year 56, though this voyage is mentioned neither by St. Luke nor by any other historian. No reason therefore can be assigned why we should refuse to argue in the same manner with respect to St. Peter. In fact, Lardner's argument could nowhere have been more unfortunately applied than in the present instance.

"From the time of the apostolic council at Jerusalem, in the year 49, at which St. Peter was present, till the time of his [supposed] arrival in Rome, which Lardner acknowledges was not before 63, there is an interval of fourteen years, during which we have no history of him whatsoever. How then can we form a judgment of his transactions during that period except from his own writings? And how can the silence of history, in respect to his journey to Babylon, afford an argument that he was never there, in contradiction to his own epistle, when the fact is, we have no history at all of St. Peter during this period? We cannot therefore talk of its silence in respect to any one particular transaction, since every transaction of St. Peter, throughout the whole of this interval, is unrecorded. Lardner indeed conjectures, as the epistle is addressed to the inhabitants of Pontus, Galatia, Ac., that St. Peter spent a part of his time in these countries, though he denies that St. Peter ever was in Babylon, whence the epistle is dated. Now this mode of arguing is nearly the same as if I concluded, from a letter dated from Vienna, and addressed to a person in Venice, that the writer of that letter had been in Venice, but that he never was at Vienna. Lardner supposes also that St. Peter spent a part of this time in Jerusalem. Now it is impossible for us to determine what stay St. Peter made in Jerusalem after the holding of the apostolic council, or whether he remained there at all; but this I think is certain, that he was not at Jerusalem when St. Paul returned thither for the last time, since St. Luke makes particular mention of St. James, and describes him as the head of the Christian community at Jerusalem, but says nothing of St. Peter, whom he would hardly have passed over in perfect silence if he had been there. Now St. Paul's last visit to Jerusalem happened in the year 60,

and since I have shown that the First Epistle of St. Peter was written about this time, it is not at all improbable that St. Peter, who was absent from Jerusalem, was then engaged in preaching the Gospel to the Babylonians.

"The last argument in favour of the opinion that the Babylon where Peter wrote was not Babylon properly so called, is derived from **#1Pe 2:13**, where St. Peter commands obedience to the king, and from **#1Pe 2:17**, where he says, 'Honour the king.' Hence Lardner concludes that St. Peter must have written in a place which was subject to the same king or emperor as the people to whom he sent the epistle. But these were subject to the Roman emperor, whereas Babylon, with its whole territory, was then subject, not to the Romans, but the Parthians, and therefore, according to Lardner, could not have been the place where St. Peter wrote. Now this argument rests on a supposition which is contradicted by the common usage of every language, the expression, 'the king,' in a letter from a person in one country to a person in another country, may, according to circumstances, denote the king to which the reader is subject as well as the king to which the writer is subject.

"It appears, then, that the arguments which have been alleged to show that St. Peter did not write his first epistle in the country of Babylonia are devoid of foundation, and consequently the notion of a mystical Babylon, as denoting either Jerusalem or Rome, loses its whole support. For in itself the notion is highly improbable, and therefore the bare possibility that St. Peter took a journey to Babylon, properly so called, renders it inadmissible. The plain language of epistolary writing does not admit of the figures of poetry, and, though it would be very allowable, in a poem written in honour of Gottingen, to style it another Athens, yet if a professor of this university should, in a letter written from Gottingen, date it Athens, it would be a greater piece of pedantry than ever was laid to the charge of the learned. In like manner, though a figurative use of the word Babylon is not unsuitable to the animated and poetical language of the Apocalypse, yet St. Peter, in a plain and unadorned epistle, would hardly have called the place where he wrote by any other appellation than that which literally and properly belonged to it."

That many persons both of learning and eminence have been of a different opinion from Professor Michaelis, the intelligent reader is well aware, but Dr. Lardner, of all others, has written most argumentatively in vindication of the mystical Babylon, i.e. Rome, as being the place from which the apostle wrote this epistle. His weightiest arguments however are here answered by Michaelis, and to me it appears that there is a great balance in favour of the opinion that Babylon on the Euphrates is the place intended. The decision of this question, although not an article of faith, is nevertheless of some importance. I am still of opinion that St. Peter did not write from Rome; that he was neither bishop of Rome nor martyred at Rome, in a word, that he never saw Rome.

# THE FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE OF PETER.

## *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5568.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5562.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5552.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4064.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4288.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3820.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4419.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2408.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3162.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1000.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 809.
- Year of the CCIXth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 807.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 811.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 813.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 372.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 108.
- Year of the Julian era, 105.
- Year of the Spanish era, 98.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 64.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 60.
- Year of Claudius Felix, governor of the Jews, 8.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 11.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 61.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 4; or the second after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 1; or two years before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 13.
- Dominical Letter, it being Bissextile, or Leap Year, FE.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the second of April, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the sixth of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 3.

- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 19, 21, 21.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 12.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 7.
- Roman Consuls, the Emperor Nero Augustus, the fourth time, and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus.

## CHAPTER I.

*Of the persons to whom this epistle was directed, and their spiritual state, 1, 2. He describes their privileges, and thanks God for the grace by which they were preserved faithful in trials and difficulties, 3-5. The spiritual benefit they were to receive out of their afflictions, 6, 7. Their love to Christ, 8. And the salvation they received through believing, 9. This salvation was predicted by the prophets, who only saw it afar off and had only a foretaste of it, 10-12. They should take encouragement, and be obedient and holy, 13-16. They should pray, and deeply consider the price at which they were purchased, that their faith and hope might be in God, 17-21. As their souls had been purified by obeying the truth through the Spirit, they should love each other with a pure and fervent love, 22, 23. The frailty of man, and the unchangeableness of God, 24, 25.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **Peter, an apostle]** Simon Peter, called also *Kephas*: he was a fisherman, son of *Jonah*, brother of *Andrew*, and born at Bethsaida; and one of the first disciples of our Lord. See the *preface*.

**The strangers scattered throughout]** *Jews* first, who had believed the Gospel in the different countries here specified; and converted *Gentiles* also. Though the word *strangers* may refer to all truly religious people, see **#Ge 47:9**; **#Ps 39:12**, in the Septuagint, and **#Heb 11:13**, yet the inscription may have a special reference to those who were driven by persecution to seek refuge in those heathen provinces to which the influence of their persecuting brethren did not extend.

**Pontus]** An ancient kingdom of Asia Minor, originally a part of *Cappadocia*; bounded on the east by *Colchis*, on the west by the river *Halys*, on the north by the *Euxine Sea*, and on the south by *Armenia Minor*. This country probably derived its name from the *Pontus Euxinus*, on which it was partly situated. In the time of the Roman emperors it was divided into three parts: 1. *Pontus Cappadocius*; 2. *Pontus Galaticus*; and, 3. *Pontus Polemoniacus*. The first extended from the Pontus Polemoniacus to Colchis, having *Armenia Minor* and the upper stream of the *Euphrates* for its southern boundary. The *second* extended from the river *Halys* to the river *Thermodon*. The *third* extended from the river *Thermodon* to the borders of the Pontus Cappadocius.

Six kings of the name of *Mithridates* reigned in this kingdom, some of whom are famous in history. The last king of this country was *David Comnenus*, who was taken prisoner, with all his family, by *Mohammed II.* in the year 1462, and carried to Constantinople; since which time this

country (then called the empire of *Trebizond*, from *Trapezas*, a city founded by the Grecians, on the uttermost confines of Pontus) has continued under the degrading power of the Turks.

**Galatia]** The ancient name of a province of *Asia Minor*, now called *Amasia*. It was called also *Gallogræcia*, and *Gallia Parva*. It was bounded on the east by *Cappadocia*, on the south by *Pamphylia*, on the north by the *Euxine Sea*, and on the west by *Bithynia*. See the preface to the Epistle to the Galatians.

**Cappadocia]** An ancient kingdom of Asia, comprehending all the country lying between Mount Taurus and the Euxine Sea.

**Asia]** This word is taken in different senses: It signifies, 1. One of the three general divisions of our continent, and one of the *four* of the whole earth. It is separated from Europe by the Mediterranean Sea, the Archipelago, the Black Sea, the *Palus Mæolis*, the rivers *Don* and *Dwina*; and from Africa by the Arabic Gulf, or Red Sea: it is everywhere else surrounded by water. It is situated between latitude 2° and 77° N., and between longitude 26° E. and 170° W.; and is about 7,583 miles in length, and 5,200 miles in breadth.

2. Asia Minor, that part of Turkey in Asia, now called *Natolia*, which comprehends a great number of province situated between the Euxine, Mediterranean, and Archipelago.

3. That province of Asia Minor of which Ephesus was the capital. It appears, says Calmet, that it is in this latter sense that it is used here by St. Peter, because *Pontus*, *Galatia*, and *Bithynia*, are comprised in the provinces of *Asia Minor*. See *Calmet*.

**Bithynia]** An ancient kingdom of Asia, formerly called *Mysia*, *Mygdonia*, *Bebrycia*, and *Bithonia*. It was bounded on the west by the *Bosphorus*, *Thracius*, and part of the *Propontis*, on the south by the river *Rhyndacus*, and Mount *Olympus*, on the north by the Euxine Sea, and on the east by the river *Parthenius*. This place is in some sort rendered infamous by the conduct of *Prusias*, one of its kings, who delivered up Hannibal, who had fled to him for protection, into the hands of the Romans. *Nicomedes* IV. bequeathed it to the Romans; and it is now in the hands of the Turks.

Verse 2. **Elect according to the foreknowledge of God]** If the apostle had directed his letter to persons *elected to eternal life*, no one, as Drs. Lardner and Macknight properly argue, could have received such a letter, because no one could have been sure of his election in this way till he had arrived in heaven. But the persons to whom the apostle wrote were all, with propriety, said to be *elect according to the foreknowledge of God*; because, agreeably to the original purpose of God, discovered in the prophetic writings, Jews and Gentiles, indiscriminately, were called to be the visible Church, and entitled to all the privileges of the people of God, on their believing the Gospel. In this sense the word *elected* is used in other places of Scripture; see **#1Th 1:4**, and the note there.

The Rev. J. Wesley has an excellent note on this passage, which I shall transcribe for the benefit of those of my readers who may not have his works at hand.

"Strictly speaking, there is no *foreknowledge*, no more than *afterknowledge*, with God; but all things are known to him as *present*, from eternity to eternity. *Election*, in the scriptural sense, is God's doing any thing that our merit or power has no part in. The true predestination or foreappointment of God is, 1. He that believeth shall be saved from the guilt and power of sin. 2. He that endureth to the end shall be saved eternally. 3. They who receive the precious gift of faith thereby become the sons of God; and, being sons, they shall receive the Spirit of holiness, to walk as Christ also walked. Throughout every part of this appointment of God, *promise* and *duty* go hand in hand. All is free gift; and yet, such is the gift, that it depends in the final issue on our future obedience to the heavenly call. But other predestination than this, either to life or death eternal, the Scripture knows not of: moreover, 1. It is cruel respect of persons; an unjust regard of one, and an unjust disregard of another: it is mere *creature partiality*, and not *infinite justice*. 2. It is not *plain* Scripture doctrine, (if true,) but rather inconsistent with the express written word that speaks of God's universal offers of grace; his invitations, promises, threatenings, being all general. 3. We are bid to choose life, and reprehended for not doing it. 4. It is inconsistent with a state of probation in those that *must* be saved, or *must* be lost. 5. It is of fatal consequence; all men being ready, on very slight grounds, to *fancy* themselves of the elect number. But the doctrine of predestination is entirely changed from what it formerly was: now it implies neither faith, peace, nor purity; it is something that will do *without* them all. Faith is no longer, according to the modern predestination scheme, a *Divine evidence of things not seen* wrought in the soul by the immediate power of the Holy Ghost; not an *evidence* at all, but a *mere notion*: neither is faith made any longer a means of holiness, but something that will do without it. Christ is no more a Saviour *from sin*, but a defence and a countenancer of it. He is no more a fountain of spiritual life in the souls of believers, but leaves his elect inwardly *dry*, and outwardly *unfruitful*; and is made little more than a refuge from the image of the heavenly, even from righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost."

*Through sanctification of the Spirit*-through the renewing and purifying influences of his Spirit on their souls, *unto obedience*-to engage and enable them to yield themselves up to all holy obedience, the foundation of all which is the *sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ*-the atoning blood of Jesus Christ which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the law, in allusion to which it is called the *blood of sprinkling*.

Verse 3. **Blessed be the God and Father]** εὐλογητός ο θεός και πατήρ: *Blessed be God even the Father, or blessed be God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.* The και, *and*, is omitted by the Syriac, Erpen's *Arabic*, and the *Æthiopic*. But if we translate και, *even*, a meaning which it frequently has in the New Testament, then we have a very good sense: Let that God have praise who is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and who deserves the praise of every human being for his infinite mercy to the world, in its redemption by Christ Jesus.

**Begotten us again unto a lively hope]** I think the apostle has a reference here to his own case, and that of his fellow apostles, at the time that Christ was taken by the Jews and put to death. Previously to this time they had strong confidence that he was the Messiah, and *that it was he who should redeem Israel*; but when they found that he actually expired upon the cross, and was buried, they appear to have *lost all hope of the great things which before they had in prospect*. This is feelingly expressed by the two disciples whom our Lord, after his resurrection, overtook on the road going to Emmaus, see #**Lu 24:13-24**. And the *hope*, that with them, *died with their Master*, and

seemed to be *buried in his grave*, was restored by the *certainty* of his *resurrection*. From Christ's preaching, miracles, &c., they had a *hope of eternal life*, and all other blessings promised by him; by his *death* and *burial* this hope became nearly, if not altogether, *extinct*; but by his *resurrection* the hope was *revived*. This is very properly expressed here by being *begotten again to a living hope*, εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωσας, as some MSS. and versions have it, εἰς ἐλπίδα ζωης, *to the hope of life*; which one copy of the *Itala*, with *Augustine*, *Gildas*, *Vigilius of Tapsum*, and *Cassiodorus*, have considered as meaning *eternal life*, agreeably to the context; and therefore they read *vita æternæ*.

The expressions, however, may include more particulars than what are above specified; as none can *inherit* eternal life except those who are *children* in the heavenly *family*, and none are *children* but those who are *born again*: then St. Peter may be considered as laying *here* the foundation of the hope of eternal life in the *regeneration of the soul*; for none can *legally* inherit but the children, and none are children of God till they are spiritually *begotten* and *born again*.

It is the Gospel alone that gives the well grounded hope of eternal life; and the ground on which this hope rests is the *resurrection of Christ* himself. The certainty of our Lord's resurrection is the *great seal* of the Gospel. Without this what is vision, what is prophecy, what is promise, what are even miracles, to that unbelief which is natural to man on such a subject as this? But the resurrection of the human nature of Christ, the incontestable proofs of this resurrection, and the ascension of our nature to heaven in his person, are such evidences of the possibility and certainty of the thing, as for ever to preclude all doubt from the hearts of those who believe in him.

Verse 4. **To an inheritance]** Called an *inheritance* because it belongs to the *children* of God. Eternal life cannot be a gift to any but *these*; for, even in heaven, the *lot* is dealt out according to *law*: if *children*, then *heirs*; if *not children*, then *not heirs*.

**Incrruptible]** ἀφθαρτον· It has no principles of *dissolution* or *decay* in it; and, therefore, must be totally different from this earth.

**Undeiled]** ἀμικαντον· Nothing *impure* can enter it; it not only has no principles or seeds of *dissolution* in itself, but it can never admit any; therefore its deterioration is impossible.

**Fadeth not away]** ἀμικαντον· *It cannot wither*, it is always in *bloom*; a metaphor taken from those flowers that never lose their *hue* nor their *fragrance*. From the Greek ἀμικαντος we have our flowers called *amaranths*, because they preserve their hue and odour for a long time.

**Reserved in heaven]** Such a place as that described above is not to be expected on *earth*; it is that which was typified by the earthly *Canaan*, and in reference to which the patriarchs endured all trials and difficulties in this life, as seeing Him who is *invisible*.

Verse 5. **Who are kept]** φρουρουμενους· *Who are defended as in a fortress* or *castle*. There is a remarkable correspondence between the two verbs used in this sentence: the verb τηρεω, signifies to *keep*, *watch*, *guard*; and τηρησις, is a *place of custody* or *prison*. And φρουρεω, from φρουρος, a *sentinel*, signifies to *keep as under a military guard*. See on #Ga 3:22, 23. The true disciples of Christ are under the continual watchful care of God, and the inheritance is *guarded* for them. In

some countries military posts are constantly kept on the *confines*, in order to prevent irruptions from a neighbouring people; and, in many cases, *heirs*, while in their *minority*, are kept in *fortified places* under military guards.

**By the power of God]** *εν δυναμει θεου*· By the *mighty* and *miracle-working power of God*; for nothing less is necessary to keep and preserve, in this state of continual trial, a soul from the contagion that is in the world. But this *power of God* is interested in the behalf of the soul by *faith*; to believe is our work, the exertion of the almighty power is of God. No persevering without the power, and no power without *faith*.

**Ready to be revealed]** Or rather, *Prepared to be revealed*. The inheritance is *prepared* for you; but its glories will not be revealed till the *last time*-till ye have done with life, and passed through your probation, having held fast faith and a good conscience. Some by *salvation* understand the deliverance of the Christians from the sackage of Jerusalem, the end of the Jewish polity being called the *last time*; others suppose it to refer to the *day of judgment*, and the glorification of the body and soul in heaven.

Verse 6. **Wherein ye greatly rejoice]** Some refer *wherein*, *εν ω*, to the salvation mentioned above; others, to the *last time*, *καιρω εσχατω*, in #1Pe 1:5; others think that it applies to the *being kept by the power of God through faith*; and others, that it refers to all the preceding advantages and privileges. It was in the present salvation of God that they rejoiced or gloried, though not without having an eye to the great recompense of reward.

**Though now for a season]** *ολιγον αρτι*· A *little while yet*-during your pilgrimage here below, which is but a *point* when compared with *eternity*.

**If need be]** *ει δεον εστι*· *If it be necessary*-if your situation and circumstances be such that you are exposed to trials and persecutions which you cannot avoid, unless God were to work a miracle for your deliverance, which would not be for your ultimate good, as he purposes to turn all your trials and difficulties to your advantage.

*Sometimes* there is a kind of necessity that the followers of God should be afflicted; when they have no trials they are apt to get careless, and when they have secular prosperity they are likely to become worldly-minded. "God," said a good man, "can neither trust me with health nor money; therefore I am both poor and afflicted." But the disciples of Christ may be very happy in their souls, though grievously afflicted in their bodies and in their estates. Those to whom St. Peter wrote rejoiced greatly, *danced for joy*, *αγαλλιασθε*, while *they were grieved*, *λυπηθεντες*, with *various trials*. The verb *λυπεω* signifies to *grieve*, to *make sorrowful*: perhaps *heaviness* is not the best rendering of the original word, as this can scarcely ever consist with *rejoicing*; but to be *sorrowful* on account of something external to ourselves, and yet exulting in God from a sense of his goodness to us, is quite compatible: so that we may say with St. Paul, *always sorrowing, yet still rejoicing*.

Verse 7. **That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold]** As by the action of fire gold is separated from all alloy and heterogeneous mixtures, and is proved to be gold by its enduring the action of the fire without losing any thing of its nature, weight, colour, or any

other property, so genuine faith is proved by adversities, especially such as the primitive Christians were obliged to pass through. For the word was then, "Renounce Jesus and live," "Cleave to him and die;" for every Christian was in continual danger of losing his life. He then who preferred Christianity to his life gave full proof, not only of his own sincerity, but also of the excellency of the principle by which he was influenced; as his religion put him in possession of greater blessings, and more solid comforts, than any thing the earth could afford.

**Though it be tried with fire]** That is: Though gold will bear the action of the fire for any given time, even millions of years, were they possible, without losing the smallest particle of weight or value, yet even gold, in process of time, will wear away by continual use; and the earth, and all its works, will be burnt up by that *supernatural* fire whose action nothing can resist. But on that day the faith of Christ's followers will be found brighter, and more glorious. The earth, and universal nature, shall be dissolved; but he who doeth the will of God shall abide for ever, and his faith shall then be found to the *praise* of God's grace, the *honour* of Christ, and the *glory* or glorification of his own soul throughout eternity. God himself will *praise* such faith, angels and men will hold it in *honour*, and Christ will crown it with *glory*. For some remarks on the nature and properties of gold see at the end of the chapter.

Verse 8. **Whom having not seen, ye love]** Those to whom the apostle wrote had never seen Christ in the flesh; and yet, such is the *realizing* nature of faith, they loved him as strongly as any of his disciples could, to whom he was *personally known*. For faith in the Lord Jesus brings him into the heart; and by his indwelling all his virtues are proved, and an excellence discovered beyond even that which his disciples beheld, when conversant with him upon earth. In short, there is an equality between believers in the present time, and those who lived in the time of the incarnation; for Christ, to a believing soul, is the same *to-day* that he was *yesterday* and will be *for ever*.

**Ye rejoice with joy unspeakable]** Ye have unutterable happiness through believing; and ye have the fullest, clearest, strongest evidence of eternal glory. Though they did not see him on earth, and men could not see him in glory, yet by that faith which is the evidence of things not seen, and the subsistence of things hoped for, they had the very highest persuasion of their acceptance with God, their relation to him as their Father, and their sonship with Christ Jesus.

Verse 9. **Receiving the end of your faith]** Ye are put in possession of the salvation of your souls, which was the thing presented to your faith, when ye were called by the Gospel of Christ. Your faith has had a proper issue, and has been crowned with a proper recompense. The word *τελος*, *end*, is often used so as to imply the *issue* or *reward* of any labour or action.

**Salvation of your souls.]** The object of the Jewish expectations in their Messiah was the salvation or deliverance of their bodies from a foreign yoke; but the true Messiah came to save the soul from the yoke of the devil and sin. This glorious salvation these believers had already received.

Verse 10. **Of which salvation the prophets have inquired]** The incarnation and suffering of Jesus Christ, and the redemption procured by him for mankind, were made known, in a general way, by the prophets; but they themselves did not know the time when these things were to take place, nor the people among and by whom he was to suffer, &c.; they therefore *inquired accurately* or

earnestly, ἐξεζητησάν, and searched diligently, ἐξηρευνήσάν, inquiring of others who were then under the same inspiration, and carefully searching the writings of those who had, before their time, spoken of these things. The prophets plainly saw that the grace which was to come under the Messiah's kingdom was vastly superior to any thing that had ever been exhibited under the law; and in consequence they made all possible inquiry, and searched as after grains of gold, hidden among sand or compacted with ore, (for such is the meaning of the original word,) in order to ascertain the time, and the signs of that time, in which this wondrous display of God's love and mercy to man was to take place; but all that God thought fit to instruct them in was what is mentioned #1Pe 1:12.

Verse 11. **The glory that should follow.**] Not only the glory of his resurrection, ascension, exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; but that grand manifestation of God's infinite love to the world in causing the Gospel of his Son to be everywhere preached, and the glorious moral changes which should take place in the world under that preaching, and the final glorification of all them who had here received the report, and continued faithful unto death. And we may add to this the ineffable glorification of the human nature of Jesus Christ, which, throughout eternity, will be the glorious Head of his glorified body, the Church.

Verse 12. **Unto whom it was revealed**] We may presume that, in a great variety of cases, the prophets did not understand the meaning of their own predictions. They had a general view of God's designs; but of particular circumstances, connected with those great events, they seem to have known nothing, God reserving the explanation of all particulars to the time of the issue of such prophecies. When they wished to find out the times, the seasons, and the circumstances, God gave them to understand that it *was not for themselves, but for us, that they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by the preaching of the Gospel.* This was all the satisfaction they received in consequence of their earnest searching; and this was sufficient to repress all needless curiosity, and to induce them to rest satisfied that the Judge of all the earth would do right. If all succeeding interpreters of the prophecies had been contented with the same information relative to the predictions still unaccomplished, we should have had fewer books, and more wisdom.

**Angels desire to look into.**] παρακυψαί· *To stoop down to*; the posture of those who are earnestly intent on finding out a thing, especially a *writing* difficult to be read; they bring it to the light, place it so that the rays may fall on it as collectively as possible, and then *stoop down* in order to examine all the parts, that they may be able to make out the whole. There is evidently an allusion here to the attitude of the cherubim who stood at the ends of the ark of the covenant, in the inner tabernacle, with their eyes turned towards the mercy-seat or propitiatory in a bending posture, as if *looking attentively*, or, as we term it, *poring* upon it. Even the holy angels are struck with astonishment at the plan of human redemption, and justly wonder at the incarnation of that infinite object of their adoration. If then these things be objects of deep consideration to the *angels* of God, how much more so should they be to us; in them angels can have no such interest as human beings have.

We learn from the above that it was the *Spirit of Christ* in the Jewish prophets that prophesied of Christ; it was that Spirit which revealed him; and it is the same Spirit which takes of the things of Christ, and shows them unto us. Christ was never known by prophecy, but through his own Spirit;

and he never was known, nor can be known, to the salvation of any soul, but by a revelation of the same Spirit. It is he alone that bears witness with our spirits that we are the children of God.

Verse 13. **Gird up the loins of your mind]** Take courage from this display of God's love now made known to you; and though you must expect trials, yet fortify your minds with the consideration that he who has given you his Son Jesus will withhold from you no manner of thing that is good. The allusion here is to the *long robes* of the Asiatics, which, when they were about to perform any active service, they tucked in their girdles: this they did also when they waited on their superiors at meals.

**Hope to the end for the grace]** Continue to expect all that God has promised, and particularly that utmost salvation, that glorification of body and soul, which ye shall obtain at the revelation of Christ, when he shall come to judge the world.

But if the apostle alludes here to the approaching revelation of Christ to inflict judgment on the Jews for their final rebellion and obstinacy, then the *grace*, *χαρις*, *benefit*, may intend their *preservation* from the evils that were coming upon that people, and their *wonderful escape* from Jerusalem at the time that the Roman armies came against it.

Verse 14. **Not fashioning yourselves]** As the *offices* of certain persons are known by the *garb* or *livery* they wear, so are transgressors: where we see the *world's livery* we see the *world's servants*; they *fashion* or *habit* themselves according to their *lusts*, and we may guess that they have a *worldly mind* by their conformity to *worldly fashions*.

Verse 15. **But as he which hath called you]** Heathenism scarcely produced a god whose example was not the most abominable; their greatest gods, especially, were paragons of impurity; none of their philosophers could propose the objects of their adoration as objects of imitation. Here Christianity has an infinite advantage over heathenism. *God is holy*, and he calls upon all who believe in him to *imitate his holiness*; and the reason why they should be holy is, that *God who has called them is holy*, #1Pe 1:15.

Verse 17. **And if ye call on the Father]** Seeing ye invoke the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and your Father through Christ, and profess to be *obedient children*, and *sojourners* here below for a short time only, see that ye maintain a godly *reverence* for this Father, walking in all his testimonies blameless.

**Who without respect of persons]** God is said to be *no respecter of persons* for this reason among many others, that, being infinitely righteous, he must be infinitely impartial. He cannot prefer one to another, because he has nothing to *hope* or *fear* from any of his creatures. All *partialities* among men spring from one or other of these two principles, *hope* or *fear*; God can feel neither of them, and therefore God can be no *respecter of persons*. He approves or disapproves of men according to their *moral character*. He pities all, and provides salvation for all, but he loves those who resemble him in his holiness; and he loves them in proportion to that resemblance, *i.e.* the more of his image he sees in any, the more he loves him; and *e contra*. And every *man's work* will be the

evidence of his conformity or nonconformity to God, and according to this evidence will God judge him. Here, then, is no *respect of persons*; God's judgment will be according to a *man's work*, and a *man's work* or *conduct* will be according to the moral state of his mind. No *favouritism* can prevail in the day of judgment; nothing will pass there but *holiness of heart and life*. A righteousness imputed, and not possessed and practised, will not avail where God *judgeth according to every man's work*. It would be well if those *sinner*s and *spurious believers* who fancy themselves safe and complete in the righteousness of Christ, while impure and unholy in themselves, would think of this testimony of the apostle.

Verse 18. **Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things]** To *redeem*, λυτροω, signifies to procure life for a captive or liberty for a slave by *paying a price*, and the *precious blood of Christ* is here stated to be the *price* at which the souls of both Jews and Gentiles were redeemed; it was a *price* paid down, and a price which God's righteousness required.

Corruptible things mean here any thing that man usually gives in exchange for another; but the term necessarily includes all created things, as all these are *corruptible* and *perishing*. The meaning of the apostle is, evidently, that created things could not purchase the souls of men, else the sacrifice of Christ had not been offered; could any thing less have done, God would not have given up his only-begotten Son. Even *silver* and *gold*, the most valuable medium of commerce among men, bear no proportion in their value to the souls of a lost world, for there should be a congruity between the *worth* of the thing *purchased* and the *valuable consideration* which is given for it; and the laws and customs of nations require this: on this ground, *perishable things*, or things the value of which must be infinitely less than the worth of the souls of men, cannot purchase those souls. Nothing, therefore, but such a *ransom price* as God provided could be a sufficient ransom, oblation, and satisfaction, for the sins of the world.

**Vain conversation]** Empty, foolish, and unprofitable conduct, full of vain hopes, vain fears, and vain wishes.

**Received by tradition from your fathers]** The *Jews* had innumerable burdens of empty ceremonies and useless ordinances, which they received *by tradition* from their fathers, rabbins, or doctors. The *Gentiles* were not less encumbered with such than the Jews; all were wedded to their *vanities*, because they received them from their *forefathers*, as *they* had done from *theirs*. And this *antiquity* and *tradition* have been the ground work of many a vain ceremony and idle pilgrimage, and of numerous doctrines which have nothing to plead in their behalf but this mere antiquity. But such persons seem not to consider that *error* and *sin* are nearly *coeval* with the world itself.

Verse 19. **The precious blood of Christ]** τιμιω αιματι· *The valuable blood; how valuable* neither is nor could be stated.

**As of a lamb]** Such as was required for a *sin-offering* to God; and *THE Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world*.

**Without blemish]** In himself, and *without spot* from the world; being perfectly *pure* in his *soul*, and *righteous* in his *life*.

Verse 20. **Who verily was foreordained]** προεγνωσμενου· *Foreknown; appointed* in the Divine purpose to be sent into the world, because infinitely *approved* by the Divine justice.

**Before the foundation of the world]** Before the law was given, or any sacrifice prescribed by it. Its whole sacrificial system was appointed in reference to this *foreappointed Lamb*, and consequently from him derived all its significance and virtue. The phrase καταβολη κοσμου, *foundation of the world*, occurs often in the New Testament, and is supposed by some learned men and good critics to signify the *commencement of the Jewish state*. Perhaps it may have this meaning in #Mt 13:35; #Lu 11:50; #Eph 1:4; #Heb 4:3; 9:26. But if we take it here in its common signification, the *creation of universal nature*, then it shows that God, foreseeing the fall and ruin of man, appointed the remedy that was to cure the disease. It may here have a reference to the opinion of the Jewish doctors, who maintain that *seven* things existed before the creation of the world, one of which was the Messiah.

**Last times]** The Gospel dispensation, called the *last times*, as we have often seen, because never to be succeeded by any other.

Verse 21. **Who by him do believe in God]** This is supposed to refer to the *Gentiles*, who never knew the true God till they heard the preaching of the Gospel: the Jews had known him long before, but the Gentiles had every thing to learn when the first preachers of the Gospel arrived amongst them.

**Gave him glory]** Raised him to his right hand, where, as a Prince and a Saviour, he gives repentance and remission of sins.

**That your faith]** In the fulfilment of all his promises, and *your hope* of eternal glory, *might be in God*, who is unchangeable in his counsels, and infinite in his mercies.

Verse 22. **Seeing ye have purified your souls]** Having purified your souls, *in obeying the truth*-by believing in Christ Jesus, *through* the influence and teaching of *the Spirit*; and giving full proof of it by *unfeigned love* to the *brethren*; *ye love one another*, or *ye will love each other*, with a *pure heart fervently*. These persons, *First*, heard the *truth*, that is, the *Gospel*; thus called in a great variety of places in the New Testament, because it contains THE *truth* without mixture of error, and is the *truth* and substance of all the preceding dispensations by which it was typified. *Secondly*, they *obeyed that truth*, by believing on Him who came into the world to save sinners. *Thirdly*, through this believing on the Son of God, their hearts were purified by the word of truth applied to them by the Holy Spirit. *Fourthly*, the love of God being shed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghost, they loved the brethren with pure hearts fervently, εκτενωσ, *intensely* or *continually*; the full proof that their *brotherly love* was *unfeigned*, φιλαδελφικαν ανυποκριτον, a *fraternal affection without hypocrisy*.

Verse 23. **Being born again]** For being born of Abraham's seed will not avail to the entering of the kingdom of heaven.

**Not of corruptible seed]** By no human generation, or earthly means; *but of incorruptible-a* Divine and heavenly principle which is not liable to decay, nor to be affected by the changes and chances to which all sublunary things are exposed.

**By the word of God]** *δια λόγου ζωντος θεου* By the *doctrine of the living God, which remaineth for ever*; which doctrine shall never change, any more than the source shall whence it proceeds.

Verse 24. **For all flesh is as grass]** Earthly seeds, earthly productions, and earthly generations, shall fail and perish like as the grass and flowers of the field; for the *grass withereth, and the flower falleth off*, though, in the ensuing spring and summer, they may put forth new verdure and bloom.

Verse 25. **But the word of the Lord]** The doctrine delivered by God concerning Christ endureth for ever, having, at *all times* and in *all seasons*, the same excellence and the same efficacy.

**And this is the word]** *το πνυμα*, *What is spoken*, by the Gospel preached unto you. "This is a quotation from **#Isa 40:6-8**, where the preaching of the Gospel is foretold; and recommended from the consideration that every thing which is merely human, and, among the rest, the noblest races of mankind, with all their glory and grandeur, their honour, riches, beauty, strength, and eloquence, as also the arts which men have invented, and the works they have executed, shall decay as the flowers of the field. But the Gospel, called by the prophet *the word of the Lord*, shall be preached while the world standeth."-*Macknight*. All human schemes of salvation, and plans for the melioration of the moral state of man, shall come to naught; and the doctrine of Christ crucified, though a stumbling block to the Jews, and foolishness to the Gentiles, shall be alone the power of God for salvation to every soul that believeth.

As the apostle, on **#1Pe 1:7**, mentions *gold*, and gold chemically examined and tried; and as this figure frequently occurs in the sacred writings; I think it necessary to say something here of the nature and properties of that metal.

*Gold* is defined by chemists to be the most perfect, the most ductile, the most tenacious, and the most unchangeable of all metals. Its specific *gravity* is about 19.3. A cubic foot of pure gold, cast and not hammered, weighs 1348*lbs*. In its native state, without mixture, it is *yellow*, and has no perceptible *smell* nor *taste*. When exposed to the action of the fire it becomes *red hot* before it melts, but in melting suffers no alteration; but if a strong heat be applied while in fusion, it becomes of a beautiful green colour. The continual action of any furnace, howsoever long applied, has no effect on any of its properties. It has been kept in a state of fusion for *several months*, in the furnace of a glass house, without suffering the smallest *change*. The *electric* and *galvanic* fluids inflame and convert it into a *purple oxide*, which is volatilized in the form of smoke. In the focus of a very powerful burning glass it becomes *volatilized*, and partially *vitriified*; so that we may say with the apostle, that, though *gold is tried by the fire*-abides the action of all culinary fires, howsoever applied, yet *it perisheth* by the *celestial fire* and the *solar influence*; the rays of the sun collected in the focus of a powerful burning glass, and the application of the electric fluid, destroy its colour, and alter and impair all its properties. This is but a late discovery; and previously to it a philosopher would have ridiculed St. Peter for saying, *gold that perisheth*.

Gold is so very *tenacious* that a piece of it drawn into wire, one-tenth of an inch in diameter, will sustain a weight of 500*lbs.* without breaking.

One grain of gold may be so extended, by its great malleability, as to be easily divided into *two millions* of parts; and a *cubic inch* of gold into *nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three millions, eight hundred and nine thousand, five hundred and twenty-three parts*; each of which may be *distinctly seen* by the naked eye!

A grain and a half of gold may be beaten into *leaves* of one inch square, which, if intersected by parallel lines, drawn at right angles to each other, and distant only the 100th part of an inch; will produce *twenty-five millions* of *little squares*, each of which may be distinctly seen without the help of glasses!

The surface of any given quantity of gold, according to Mr. *Magellan*, may be extended by the hammer 159,092 times!

*Eighty* books, or *two thousand* leaves, of what is called leaf gold, each leaf measuring 3.3 inches square, viz. each leaf containing 10.89 square inches, weigh less than 384 grains; each book, therefore, or *twenty-five* leaves, is equal to 272.25 inches, and weighs about 4.8 grains; so that *each grain* of gold will produce 56.718, or nearly *fifty-seven* square inches!

The *thickness* of the metal thus extended appears to be no more than the *one 282.020th* of an inch! One pound, or *sixteen* ounces of gold, would be sufficient to gild a silver wire, sufficient in length to encompass the whole *terraqueous globe*, or to extend 25,000 miles!

Notwithstanding this extreme degree of *tenuity*, or *thinness*, which some carry much higher, no *pore* can be discerned in it by the strongest magnifying powers; nor is it pervious to the particles of light, nor can the most subtile fluids pass through it. Its *ductility* has never yet been carried to the uttermost pitch, and to human art and ingenuity is probably unlimited.

*Sulphur*, in the state of a *sulphuret*, dissolves it; *tin* and *lead* greatly impair its tenacity; and *zinc* hardens and renders it very brittle. *Copper* heightens its colour, and renders it harder, without greatly impairing its *ductility*. It readily unites with *iron*, which it *hardens* in a remarkable manner.

The *oxigenated muriatic* acid, and the *nitro-muriatic* acid, dissolve gold. In this state it is capable of being applied with great success to the *gilding of steel*. The process is very simple, and is instantaneously performed, viz.:—

To a solution of gold in the *nitro-muriatic* acid add about twice the quantity of *sulphuric ether*. In order to gild either iron or steel, let the metal be *well polished*, the higher the better: the *ether* which has taken up the gold may be applied by a camel hair pencil, or small brush; the ether then evaporates, and the gold becomes strongly attached to the surface of the metal. I have seen *lancets*, *penknives*, &c., gilded in a moment, by being dipped in this solution. In this manner all kinds of figures, letters, mottoes, &c., may be delineated on steel, by employing a pen or fine brush.

The *nitro-muriatic acid*, formerly called *aqua regia*, is formed by adding *muriatic acid*, vulgarly *spirit of salt*, to the *nitric acid*, formerly *aqua fortis*. Two parts of the *muriatic acid* to one of the *nitric* constitute this solvent of gold and platina, which is called the *nitro-muriatic acid*.

*Gold* was considered the *heaviest* of all metals till the year 1748, when the knowledge of *platina* was brought to Europe by *Don Antonio Ulloa*: this, if it be a *real* metal, is the *hardest* and *weightiest* of all others. The specific gravity of gold is, as we have seen, 19·3; that of platina is from 20·6 to 23; but *gold* will ever be the most valuable of all metals, not merely from its *scarcity*, but from its *beautiful colour* and great *ductility*, by which it is applicable to so many uses, and its power of preserving its hue and polish without suffering the least tarnish or oxidation from the action of the air.

# I PETER

## CHAPTER II.

*We should lay aside all evil dispositions, and desire the sincere milk of the word, that we may grow thereby, 1-3. And come to God to be made living stones, and be built up into a spiritual temple, 4, 5. The prophecy of Christ as chief corner stone, precious to believers, but a stumbling stone to the disobedient, 6-8. True believers are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, &c., 9, 10. They should abstain from fleshly lusts, 11. Walk uprightly among the Gentiles, 12. Be obedient to civil authority, according to the will of God, 13-15. Make a prudent use of their Christian liberty, 16. Fear God and honour the king, 17. Servants should be subject to their masters, and serve them faithfully, and suffer indignities patiently, after the example of Christ, 18-23. Who bore the punishment due to our sins in his own body upon the tree, 24. They were formerly like sheep going astray, but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of their souls, 25.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

Verse 1. **Wherefore, laying aside]** This is in close connection with the preceding chapter, from which it should not have been separated, and the subject is continued to the end of the 10th verse. {#1Pe 2:10}

**Laying aside all malice]** See the notes on #Eph 4:22-31. These tempers and dispositions must have been common among the Jews, as they are frequently spoken against: Christianity can never admit of such; they show the mind, not of Christ, but of the old murderer.

Verse 2. **As new-born babes]** In the preceding chapter, #1Pe 1:23, the apostle states that they had been *born again*; and as the new-born infant desires that aliment which nature has provided for it, so they, being *born again*-born from above, should as earnestly require that heavenly nourishment which is suited to their new nature; and this the apostle calls the *sincere milk of the word*, *το λογικον αδολον γαλα*, or, as some translate, *the rational unadulterated milk*; i.e. the pure doctrines of the Gospel, as delivered in the epistles and gospels, and as preached by the apostles and their successors. The rabbins frequently express *learning to know the law*, &c., by the term *sucking*, and their disciples are often denominated *those that suck the breast*. The figure is very expressive: as a child newly born shows an immediate desire for that nourishment, and that only, which is its most proper food; so they, being just *born of God*, should show that the incorruptible seed abides in them, and that they will receive nothing that is not suited to that new nature: and, indeed, they can have no spiritual growth but by the pure doctrines of the Gospel.

**That ye may grow thereby]** *εις σωτηριαν*, *Unto salvation*, is added here by ABC, and about forty others; both the *Syriac*, the *Arabic* of Erpen, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, and several of the ancient *fathers*. The reading is undoubtedly *genuine*, and is very important. It shows why they were regenerated, and why they were to desire the unadulterated doctrines of the Gospel; viz.: that they might *grow up unto salvation*. This was the *end* they should always have in view; and nothing could so effectually promote this end as continually receiving the pure truth of God, claiming the fulfilment of its promises, and acting under its dictates.

Verse 3. **If so be ye have tasted]** εἶπερ ἐγευσασθε· *Seeing ye have tasted.* There could be no doubt that they had tasted the goodness of Christ *who were born again, of incorruptible seed,* and whose hearts were purified by the truth, and who had like precious faith with the apostles themselves.

**That the Lord is gracious.]** ὅτι χρηστος ο κυριος· From the similarity of the letters, many MSS. and several of the *fathers* have read, *χριστος ο κυριος, the Lord is Christ, or Christ is the Lord.*

This seems to refer to **#Ps 34:8:** *O taste and see that the Lord is good; γευσασθε και ιδετε οτι χρηστος ο κυριος, Sept.* And there is still a reference to the *sucking child* that, having once tasted its mother's milk, ever after desires and longs for it. As they were born of God, and had tasted his goodness, they would naturally desire the same pure unadulterated milk of the word.

Verse 4. **To whom coming,** as unto **a living stone]** This is a reference to **#Isa 28:16:** *Behold, I lay in Zion for a foundation a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner stone, a sure foundation.* Jesus Christ is, in both the prophet and apostle, represented as the *foundation* on which the Christian Church is built, and on which it must continue to rest: and the *stone* or *foundation* is called here *living*, to intimate that he is the source of life to all his followers, and that it is in union with him that they live, and answer the end of their regeneration; as the stones of a building are of no use but as they occupy their proper places in a building, and rest on the foundation.

**Disallowed indeed of men]** That is, rejected by the Jews. This is a plain reference to the prophecy, **#Ps 118:22:** *The stone which the builders refused is become the head stone of the corner.*

**Chosen of God]** To be the Saviour of the world, and the Founder of the Church, and the foundation on which it rests; As Christ is the *choice* of the Father, we need have no doubt of the efficacy and sufficiency of all that he has suffered and done for the salvation of a lost world. God can never be mistaken in his *choice*; therefore he that chooses Christ for his portion shall never be confounded.

**Precious]** εντιμον· *Honourable.* Howsoever despised and rejected by men, Jesus, as the sacrifice for a lost world, is infinitely honourable in the sight of God; and those who are united by faith to him partake of the same honour, being *members* of that great and glorious *body* of which he is the *head*, and *stones* in that superb *building* of which he is the *foundation*.

Verse 5. **Ye also, as lively stones]** λιθοι ζωντες· *Living stones;* each being instinct with the principle of life, which proceeds from him who is the foundation, called above *λιθον ζωντα, a living stone.*

The metaphor in this and the following verse is as bold as it is singular; and commentators and critics have found it difficult to hit on any *principle* of explanation. In all metaphors there is something in the natural image that is illustrative of some chief moral property in the thing to be represented. But what analogy is there between the *stones* of a building and a multitude of *human beings*? We shall soon see. The Church of Christ, it is true, is represented under the figure of a

house, or rather *household*; and as a *household* or *family* must have a *place* of residence, hence, by a *metonymy*, the *house* itself, or *material building*, is put for the *household* or *family* which occupies it, the *container* being put for the *contained*. This point will receive the fullest illustration if we have recourse to the Hebrew: in this language, **בֵּית** *beith* signifies both a *house* and a *family*; **בֵּן** *ben* a son; **בַּת** *bath* a daughter; and **אֶבֶן** *eben* a stone. Of all these nouns, **בָּנָה** *banah*, he built, is, I believe, the common *root*. Now as **בֵּית** *beith*, a house, is built of **אֲבָנִים** *abanim*, stones, hence **בָּנָה** *banah*, he built, is a proper radix for both *stones* and *building*; and as **בֵּית** *beith*, a family or *household* (#Ps 68:6) is constituted or made up of **בָּנִים** *banim*, sons, and **בָּנוֹת** *banoth* daughters, hence the same root **בָּנָה** *banah*, he built, is common to all; for sons and daughters *build up* or constitute a *family*, as *stones* do a *building*. Here, then, is the ground of the metaphor: the *spiritual house* is the *holy* or *Christian family* or *household*, this *family* or *household* is composed of the *sons* and *daughters* of God Almighty; and hence the propriety of *living stones*, because this is the *living house* or *spiritual family*. As a building *rests* upon a *foundation*, and this foundation is its *support*; so a *family* or *household* rests on the *father*, who is properly considered the *foundation* or *support* of the building. But as every father is *mortal* and *transitory*, none can be called a *living stone*, foundation, or support, but He who *liveth for ever*, and has *life independent*; so none but Jesus, who hath *life in himself*, i.e. *independently*, and who is the *Way, the Truth, and the LIFE*, can be a *permanent* foundation or support to the whole spiritual house. And as all the stones-sons and daughters, that constitute the spiritual building are made partakers of the *life* of Christ, consequently, they may with great propriety be called *living stones*, that is, *sons and daughters of God*, who *live by Christ Jesus*, because *he lives in them*. Now, following the metaphor; these various *living stones* become one grand *temple*, in which God is *worshipped*, and in which he manifests himself as he did in the temple of old. Every stone-son and daughter, being a spiritual sacrificer or priest, they all offer up praise and thanksgiving to God through Christ; and such sacrifices, being offered up in the name and through the merit of his Son, are all acceptable in his sight.

This is the true metaphor, and which has not, as far as I know, ever been properly *traced out*. To talk of "stones being said to be *alive* as long as they are not cut out of the quarry, but continue to partake of that nourishment which circulates from vein to vein," is as unsatisfactory as it is unphilosophical; the other is the true metaphor, and explains every thing.

Verse 6. **Behold, I lay in Sion]** This intimates that the foundation of the Christian Church should be laid at Jerusalem; and *there* it was laid, for there Christ suffered, and there the preaching of the Gospel commenced.

**A chief corner stone]** This is the same as the foundation stone; and it is called here the *chief corner stone* because it is laid in the foundation, at an angle of the building where its two sides form the ground work of a *side* and *end* wall. And this might probably be designed to show that, in Jesus, both Jews and Gentiles were to be *united*; and this is probably the reason why it was called a *stone of stumbling, and rock of offence*; for nothing stumbled, nothing offended the Jews so much as the calling of the Gentiles into the Church of God, and admitting them to the same privileges which had been before peculiar to the Jews.

**Elect, precious]** *Chosen* and *honourable*. See Clarke on "1Pe 2:4".

**Shall not be confounded.]** These words are quoted from #Isa 28:16; but rather more from the Septuagint than from the Hebrew text. The latter we translate, *He that believeth shall not make haste*-he who comes to God, through Christ, for salvation, shall never be confounded; he need not *haste* to flee away, for no enemy shall ever be able to annoy him.

Verse 7. **Unto you therefore which believe]** You, both Jews and Gentiles.

He is **precious]** ἡ τιμή σου ἡ τιμή τοῖς πιστεύουσιν. *The honour is to you who believe*; i.e. the honour of being in this building, and of having your souls saved through the blood of the Lamb, and becoming sons and daughters of God Almighty.

**Them which be disobedient]** The *Jews*, who continue to reject the Gospel; that very person whom they reject is *head of the corner*-is Lord over all, and has all power in the heavens and the earth.

Verse 8. **A stone of stumbling]** Because in him all Jews and Gentiles who believe are united; and because the latter were admitted into the Church, and called by the Gospel to enjoy the same privileges which the Jews, as the peculiar people of God, had enjoyed for two thousand years before; therefore they rejected the Christian religion, they would have no partakers with themselves in the salvation of God. This was the true cause why the Jews rejected the Gospel; and they rejected Christ because he did not come as a *secular* prince. In the *one case* he was a *stone of stumbling*-he was *poor*, and affected no worldly pomp; in the other he was a *rock of offence*, for his Gospel called the Gentiles to be a peculiar people whom the Jews believed to be everlastingly reprobated, and utterly incapable of any spiritual good.

**Whereunto also they were appointed.]** Some good critics read the verse thus, carrying on the sense from the preceding: *Also a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence: The disobedient stumble against the word, (or doctrine,) to which verily they were appointed.*-Macknight.

Mr. Wakefield, leaving out, with the Syriac, the clause, *The stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner*, reads #1Pe 2:7, 8 thus: *To you therefore who trust thereon, this stone is honourable; but to those who are not persuaded, (ἀπειθεῖσιν,) it is a stone to strike upon and to stumble against, at which they stumble who believe not the word; and unto this indeed they were appointed; that is, they who believe not the word were appointed to stumble and fall by it, not to disbelieve it; for the word of the Lord is either a savour of life unto life, or death unto death, to all them that hear it, according as they receive it by faith, or reject it by unbelief.* The phrase τιθεῖν τινα εἰς τι is very frequent among the purest Greek writers, and signifies *to attribute any thing to another, or to speak a thing of them*; of which Kypke gives several examples from *Plutarch*; and paraphrases the words thus: *This stumbling and offence, particularly of the Jews, against Christ, the corner stone, was long ago asserted and predicted by the prophets, by Christ, and by others; compare #Isa 8:14, 15; #Mt 21:42, 44; #Lu 2:34; and #Ro 9:32, 33.* Now this interpretation of Kypke is the more likely, because it is evident that St. Peter refers to #Isa 8:14, 15: *And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem: and many among them shall stumble, and fall, and be broken, &c.* The *disobedient*, therefore, being appointed to stumble against the word,

or being *prophesied of* as persons that should stumble, necessarily means, from the connection in which it stands, and from the passage in the prophet, that their *stumbling, falling, and being broken*, is the consequence of their disobedience or unbelief; but there is no intimation that they were *appointed or decreed to disobey*, that they might stumble, and fall, and be broken. They stumbled and fell through their *obstinate unbelief*; and thus their stumbling and falling, as well as their unbelief, were of themselves, in consequence of this they were *appointed to be broken*; this was God's work of judgment. This seems to be the meaning which our Lord attaches to this very prophecy, which he quotes against the chief priests and elders, **#Mt 21:44**. On the whole of these passages, see the notes on **#Mt 21:42-44**.

Verse 9. **Ye are a chosen generation]** The titles formerly given to the whole Jewish Church, *i.e.* to all the Israelites without exception, all who were in the covenant of God by circumcision, whether they were holy persons or not, are here given to Christians in general in the same way; *i.e.* to all who believed in Christ, whether Jews or Gentiles, and who received baptism in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.

The Israelites were a *chosen or elected race*, to be a *special people unto the Lord their God, above all people that were upon the face of the earth*, **#De 7:6**.

They were also a *royal priesthood*, or what Moses calls a *kingdom of priests*, **#Ex 19:6**. For all were called to sacrifice to God; and he is represented to be the *King* of that people, and *Father* of those of whom he was king; therefore they were all *royal*.

They were a *holy nation*, **#Ex 19:6**; for they were separated from all the people of the earth, that they might worship the one only true God, and abstain from the abominations that were in the heathen world.

They were also a *peculiar people*, *λαος εις περιποιησιν*, a *purchased people*; *סגולה segullah*, a *private property*, belonging to God Almighty, **#De 7:6**; none other having any *right* in them, and they being under obligation to God alone. All these things the apostle applies to the Christians, to whom indeed they belong, in their spirit and essence, in such a way as they could not belong to the Hebrews of old. But they were called to this state of salvation *out of darkness-idolatry, superstition, and ungodliness, into his marvellous light*-the Gospel dispensation, which, in reference to the discoveries it had made of God, his nature, will, and gracious promises towards mankind, differed as much from the preceding dispensation of the Jews, as the light of the meridian *sun* from the faint twinkling of a *star*. And they had these privileges *that they might show forth the praises of Him who had thus called them*; *αρετας*, the *virtues*, those perfections of the wisdom, justice, truth, and goodness of God, that shone most illustriously in the Christian dispensation. These they were to exhibit in a holy and useful life, being transformed into the image of God, and walking as Christ himself walked.

Verse 10. **Which in time past were not a people]** This is a quotation from **#Ho 1:9, 10; 2:23**, where the *calling of the Gentiles*, by the preaching of the Gospel, is foretold. From this it is evident, that the people to whom the apostle now addresses himself had been *Gentiles*, covered with ignorance and superstition, and now had obtained mercy by the preaching of the Gospel of Christ.

Verse 11. **As strangers and pilgrims]** See Clarke's note on "Heb 11:13". These were *strangers* and *pilgrims* in the most literal sense of the word, see #1Pe 1:1, for they were *strangers* scattered through Asia, Pontus, &c.

**Abstain from fleshly lusts]** As ye are *strangers* and *pilgrims*, and profess to seek a heavenly country, do not entangle your affections with earthly things. While others spend all their time, and employ all their skill, in acquiring earthly property, and totally neglect the salvation of their souls; *they* are not *strangers*, they are here at *home*; they are not *pilgrims*, they are seeking an *earthly possession*: Heaven is *your home*, seek *that*; God is your *portion*, seek *him*. All kinds of earthly desires, whether those of the *flesh* or of the *eye*, or those included in the *pride of life*, are here comprised in the words *fleshly lusts*.

**Which war against the soul]** αἰτινες στρατευονται κατα της ψυχης: Which are *marshalled* and *drawn up in battle array*, to fight against the soul; either to slay it, or to bring it into captivity. This is the object and operation of every earthly and sensual desire. How little do those who indulge them think of the ruin which they produce!

Verse 12. **Having your conversation honest]** Living in such a manner among the Gentiles, in whose country ye sojourn, as becomes the Gospel which ye profess.

**That whereas they speak against you as evil doers]** In all the heathen countries, in the first age of the Church, the Christians and the Jews were confounded together; and as the latter were everywhere exceedingly troublesome and seditious, the Christians shared in their blame, and suffered no small measure of obloquy and persecution on this very account. It was doubly necessary, therefore, that the Christians should be exceedingly cautious; and that their conduct should prove that, although many of them were of the same nation, yet they who had embraced Christianity differed widely in their spirit and conduct from those, whether Jews or Gentiles, who had *not* received the faith of Christ.

**In the day of visitation.]** I believe this refers to the time when God should come to execute judgment on the disobedient Jews, in the destruction of their civil polity, and the subversion of their temple and city. God did at that time put a remarkable difference between the Jews and the Christians: *all the former* were either destroyed or carried into slavery; *not one of the latter*: nor did they deserve it; for not one of them had joined in the sedition against the Roman government. That the *day of visitation* means a time in which punishment should be inflicted, is plain from #Isa 10:3: *And what will ye do in the DAY of VISITATION, and in the desolation which shall come from afar? To whom will ye flee for help? And where will ye leave your glory?* Some think that by the phrase in this place is meant the time in which they should be brought before the heathen magistrates, who, after an impartial examination, should find them innocent, and declare them as such; by which God would be glorified, the work appearing to be his own. Others think that it signifies the time in which God should make them the offer of mercy by Jesus Christ. The words, however, may refer to the time in which the Christians should be called to suffer for the testimony of Christ; the heathens, seeing them bear their sufferings with unconquerable patience, were constrained to confess that God was with them; and not a few, from being *spectators* of their sufferings, became *converts* to Christianity,

Verse 13. **Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man]** In every settled state, and under every form of political government, where the laws are not in opposition to the laws of God, it may be very soundly and rationally said: "Genuine Christians have nothing to do with the laws but to obey them." Society and civil security are in a most dangerous state when the people take it into their heads that they have a right to remodel and change the laws. See the whole of this subject fully handled in the notes on "**Ro 13:1**", &c., to which I beg every reader, who may wish to know the political sentiments of this work, to have recourse.

The words *παση ανθρωπινη κτισει* literally signify, not *every ordinance of man*, but *every human creature*; yet *κτιζειν* signifies sometimes to *arrange, order*, as well as to *create*, and therefore our translation may do: but as the apostle is evidently speaking here of *magistracy*, or *legislative authority*, and as the appointment of magistrates was termed a creating of them, it is better to understand the words thus, All the constituted authorities. So, *Decem tribunos plebis per pontificem creaverunt*; Cor. Nep. "They created ten tribunes of the plebeians, by the high priest." *Carthagine quotannis annui bini reges creabantur*; Cæsar. "They created two kings every year at Carthage." *Consules creantur Cæsar et Servilius*; Sallust. "Cæsar and Servilius are created consuls." *Creare duce[m] gerendo bello*. "To create a general to conduct the war." The meaning of St. Peter appears to be this: the Jews thought it unlawful to obey any ruler that was not of *their own stock*; the apostle tells them they should obey the civil magistrate, let him be of what stock he may, whether a Jew or a Gentile, and let him exercise the government in whatsoever *form*. This is the general proposition: and then he instances *emperors* and their *deputies*; and, far from its being unlawful for them to *obey a heathen magistrate*, they were to do it *for the Lord's sake*, *δια του κυριου*, *on account of the Lord*, whose *will* it was, and who *commanded* it.

Verse 14. **Or unto governors]** By *king as supreme*, the Roman *emperor* is meant; and by *governors*, *ηγεμοσιν*, are meant, leaders, governors, presidents, proconsuls, and other chief magistrates, sent by him into the provinces dependent on the Roman empire.

**For the punishment of evil doers]** This was the object of their mission; they were to punish delinquents, and encourage and protect the virtuous.

Verse 15. **For so is the will of God]** God, as their supreme governor, shows them that it is his will that they should act uprightly and obediently at all times, and thus confound the ignorance of foolish men, who were ready enough to assert that their religion made them bad subjects. The word *φιμουσιν*, which we translate *put to silence*, signifies to *muzzle*, i.e., stop their mouths, leave them nothing to say; let them *assert*, but ever be unable to bring proof to support it.

Verse 16. **As free]** The Jews pretended that they were a free people, and owed allegiance to God alone; hence they were continually rebelling against the Roman government, to which God had subjected them because of their rebellion against him: thus they *used their liberty for a cloak of maliciousness*-for a *pretext* of rebellion, and by it endeavoured to vindicate their seditious and rebellious conduct.

**But as the servants of God.]** These were *free* from sin and Satan, but they were the *servants of God-bound* to obey him; and, as he had made it their duty to obey the civil magistrate, they served God by submitting to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake.

Verse 17. **Honour all men.]** That is, Give honour to whom honour is due, **#Ro 13:7**. Respect every man as a fellow creature, and as one who may be a fellow heir with you of eternal life; and therefore be ready to give him every kind of succour in your power.

**Love the brotherhood.]** All true Christians, who form one great family of which God is the head.

**Fear God.]** Who gives you these commandments, lest he punish you for disobedience.

**Honour the king.]** Pay that respect to the *emperor* which his high authority requires, knowing that civil power is of God; that the authority with which he, in the course of his providence, has invested him, must be respected in order to its being obeyed; and that if the man be even bad, and as a man be worthy of no reverence, yet he should be respected on account of his *office*. If respect be banished, subordination will flee with it, and anarchy and ruin will rise up in their place. Truly *religious* persons are never found in seditions. *Hypocrites* may join themselves with *any* class of the workers of iniquity, and say, *Hail, brethren!*

Verse 18. **Servants, be subject]** See Clarke's notes on "**Eph 6:5**"; "**Col 3:22**"; and "**Tit 2:9**".

**With all fear]** With all submission and reverence.

**The good and gentle]** Those who are ever just in their commands, never requiring more work than is necessary or proper, and always allowing sufficient *food* and sufficient *time*.

**The froward.]** *σκολιους*. The crooked, perverse, unreasonable morose, and austere. Your time belongs to your master; obey him in every thing that is not sinful; if he employs you about unreasonable or foolish things, let him answer for it. He may waste your time, and thus play the fool with his own property; you can only fill up your time: let him assign the work; it is your duty to obey.

Verse 19. **For this is thankworthy]** If, in a conscientious discharge of your duty, you suffer evil, this is in the sight of God thankworthy, pleasing, and proper; it shows that you prefer his authority to your own ease, peace, and emolument; it shows also, as Dr. Macknight has well observed, that they considered their obligation to relative duties not to depend on the character of the person to whom they were to be performed, nor on their performing the duties they owed to their servants, but on the unalterable relations of things established by God.

Verse 20. **For what glory is it]** It appears from this that the poor Christians, and especially those who had been converted to Christianity while in a state of slavery, were often grievously abused, they were *buffeted* because they were Christians, and because they would not join with their masters in idolatrous worship.

Verse 21. **Hereunto were ye called]** Ye were called to a state of suffering when ye were called to be Christians; for the world cannot endure the yoke of Christ, and they that will live godly in Christ must suffer persecution; they will meet with it in one form or other.

**Christ also suffered for us]** And left us the example of his meekness and gentleness; for when he was reviled, he reviled not again. Ye cannot expect to fare better than your master; imitate his example, and his Spirit shall comfort and sustain you. Many MSS. and most of the versions, instead of *Christ also suffered for US, leaving US, &c.*, read, *suffered for YOU, leaving YOU, &c.* This reading, which I think is genuine, is noticed in the *margin*.

Verse 22. **Who did no sin]** He suffered, but not on account of any evil he had either *done* or *said*. In *deed* and *word* he was immaculate, and yet he was exposed to suffering; expect the same, and when it comes bear it in the same spirit. It is very likely that the apostle mentions *guile*, because those who do wrong generally strive to screen themselves by prevarication and lies. These words appear to be a quotation from **#Isa 53:9**.

Verse 23. **But committed himself]** Though he could have inflicted any kind of punishment on his persecutors, yet to give *us*, in this respect also, an example that we should follow his steps, *he committed his cause* to him who is the *righteous Judge*. To avoid evil tempers, and the uneasiness and danger of avenging ourselves, it is a great advantage in all such cases to be able to refer our cause to God, and to be assured that the Judge of all the earth will do right.

The *Vulgate*, one copy of the *Itala*, St. *Cyprian*, and *Fulgentius*, read, *Tradebat autem iudicanti se injuste*; "He delivered himself to him who judged unrighteously;" meaning Pontius Pilate. Some critics approve of this reading, but it has not sufficient evidence to recommend it as genuine.

Verse 24. **Who his own self]** Not *another* in his *place*, as some anciently supposed, because they thought it impossible that the Christ should suffer.

**Bare our sins in his own body]** Bore the punishment due to our sins. In no other sense could Christ bear them. To say that they were so *imputed* to him as if they had been *his own*, and that the Father beheld him as *blackened with imputed sin*, is monstrous, if not blasphemous.

**That we, being dead to sins]** ἵνα ταῖς ἀμαρτιαῖς ἀπογενομενοι· *That we, being freed from sin*-delivered out of its power, and from under its tyranny.

**Should live unto righteousness]** That *righteousness* should be our *master* now, as *sin* was before. He is speaking still to *servants* who were under an oppressive yoke, and were cruelly used by their masters, scourged, buffeted, and variously maltreated.

**By whose stripes ye were healed.]** The apostle refers here to **#Isa 53:4-6**; and he still keeps the case of these persecuted servants in view, and encourages them to suffer patiently by the example of Christ, who was *buffeted* and *scourged*, and who bore all this that the deep and inveterate *wounds*, inflicted on their souls by sin, *might be healed*.

Verse 25. **For ye were as sheep going astray]** Formerly ye were not in a better moral condition than your oppressors; ye were like *stray sheep*, in the wilderness of ignorance and sin, till Christ, the true and merciful Shepherd, called you back from your wanderings, by sending you the Gospel of his grace.

**Bishop of your souls.]** Unless we consider the word *bishop* as a corruption of the word ἐπισκοπος *episcopos*, and that this literally signifies an *overseer*, an *inspector*, or one that *has the oversight*, it can convey to us no meaning of the original. Jesus Christ is the *Overseer of souls*; he has them continually under his eye; he knows their wants, wishes, dangers, &c., and provides for them. As their *shepherd*, he leads them to the best pastures, defends them from their enemies, and guides them by his eye. Jesus is the *good Shepherd that laid down his life for his sheep*. All human souls are inexpressibly dear to him, as they are the purchase of his blood. He is still supreme *Bishop* or *Overseer* in his Church. He alone is *Episcopus episcoporum*, "the Bishop of bishops;" a title which the Romish pontiffs have blasphemously usurped. But this is not the only attribute of Jesus on which they have laid sacrilegious hands. And besides this, with force and with cruelty have they ruled the *sheep*: but the Lord is breaking the staff of their pride, and delivering the nations from the bondage of their corruption. Lord, let thy kingdom come!

# I PETER

## CHAPTER III.

*The duty of wives to their husbands, how they are to be adorned, and be in subjection as Sarah was to Abraham, 1-6. The duty of husbands to their wives, 7. How to obtain happiness, and live a long and useful life, 8-11. God loves and succours them that do good; but his face is against the wicked, 12, 13. They should suffer persecution patiently, and be always ready to give a reason of the hope that is in them; and preserve a good conscience, though they suffered for righteousness, 14-17. Christ suffered for us, and was put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit, 18. How he preached to the old world, while Noah was preparing the ark, 19, 20. The salvation of Noah and his family a type of baptism, 21. Christ is ascended to heaven, all creatures being subject to him, 22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Verse 1. **Ye wives, be in subjection]** Consider that your husband is, by God's appointment, the head and ruler of the house; do not, therefore, attempt to usurp his government; for even though he *obey not the word*-is not a *believer in the Christian doctrine*, his rule is not thereby impaired; for Christianity never alters civil relations: and your affectionate, obedient conduct will be the most likely means of convincing him of the truth of the doctrine which you have received.

**Without the word]** That your holy conduct may be the means of begetting in them a reverence for Christianity, the preaching of which they will not hear. **See Clarke's notes on "1Co 14:34"**, and the other places referred to in the margin.

Verse 2. **Chaste conversation-with fear.]** While they see that ye join modesty, chastity, and the purest manners, to the fear of God. Or perhaps *fear*, *φοβος*, is taken, as in **#Eph 5:33**, for the *reverence* due to the husband.

Verse 3. **Whose adorning]** *κοσμος*. **See Clarke's note on "Heb 9:1"**, where the word *κοσμος*, **world** or **ornament**, is defined; and also the note on **"Ge 2:1"**.

**Plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold]** Plaiting the hair, and variously folding it about the head, was the most ancient and most simple mode of disposing of this chief ornament of the female head. It was practised anciently in every part of the east, and is so to the present day in India, in China, and also in Barbary. It was also prevalent among the Greeks and Romans, as ancient gems, busts, and statues, still remaining, sufficiently declare. We have a remarkable instance of the plaiting of the hair in a statue of Agrippina, wife of Germanicus, an exact representation of which may be seen in a work of *Andre Lens*, entitled *Le Costume de Peuple de l' Antiquite*, pl. 33. Many plates in the same work show the different modes of dressing the hair which obtained among the Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, Persians, and other nations. Thin *plates of gold* were often mixed with the hair, to make it appear more ornamental by the reflection of light and of the solar rays. Small golden *buckles* were also used in different parts; and among the Roman ladies, *pearls* and precious stones of different colours. *Pliny* assures us, *Hist. Nat.*, l. ix. c. 35, that these latter ornaments were not

introduced among the Roman women till the time of Sylla, about 110 years before the Christian era. But it is evident, from many remaining monuments, that in numerous cases the *hair* differently plaited and curled was the *only ornament* of the head. Often a simple *pin*, sometimes of *ivory*, pointed with gold, seemed to connect the plaits. In monuments of antiquity the *heads* of the *married* and *single* women may be known, the former by the hair being *parted* from the forehead over the middle of the top of the head, the latter by being quite close, or being plaited and curled all in a general mass.

There is a remarkable passage in Plutarch, *Conjugalia Præcept.*, c. xxvi., very like that in the text: *κοσμος γαρ εστιν, ως ελεγε κρατης, το κοσμουν· κοσμηι δε το κοσμιωτεραν γυναικα ποιουν ποιει δε ταυτην ου χρυσος, ουτε σμαραγδος, ουτε κοκκος, αλλ' οσα σεμνοτητος, ευταξιας, αιδους εμφασιν περιτιθησιν· Opera a Wyttenb.*, vol. i., page 390. "An *ornament*, as Crates said, is that which *adorns*. The proper ornament of a woman is that which becomes her best. This is neither gold, nor pearls, nor scarlet; but those things which are an evident proof of gravity, regularity, and modesty." The wife of *Phocion*, a celebrated Athenian general, receiving a visit from a lady who was elegantly adorned with *gold* and *jewels*, and her *hair with pearls*, took occasion to call the attention of her guest to the elegance and costliness of her dress, remarking at the same time, "*My ornament is my husband, now for the twentieth year general of the Athenians.*" *Plut.*, in *vit. Phoc.* How few Christian women act this part! Women are in general at as much pains and cost in their dress, as if by it they were to be recommended both to God and man. It is, however, in every case, the argument either of a *shallow mind*, or of a *vain and corrupted heart*.

Verse 4. **The hidden man of the heart]** ὁ κρυπτος της καρδιας ανθρωπος. This phrase is of the same import with that of St. Paul, **#Ro 7:22**, ο εσω ανθρωπος, the *inner man*; that is, the *soul*, with the whole system of affections and passions. Every part of the Scripture treats man as a compound being: the *body* is the *outward* or *visible man*; the *soul*, the *inward*, *hidden*, or *invisible man*. The term *ανθρωπος*, *man*, is derived, according to the best etymologists, from *ανα τρεπων ωπα*, *turning the face upward*. This derivation of the word is beautifully paraphrased by *Ovid*. The whole passage is beautiful; and, though well known, I shall insert it. After speaking of the creation and formation of all the irrational animals, he proceeds thus:—

"Sanctius his animal, mentisque capacius altæ  
Deerat adhuc, et quod dominari in cætera posset.  
Natus HOMO est: sive hunc divino semine fecit  
Ille opifex rerum, mundi melioris origo;  
Sive recens tellus, seductaque nuper ab alto  
Æthere, cognati retinebat semina cœli.—  
Pronaque cum spectent animalia cætera terram,  
OS HOMINI SUBLIME DEDIT; CÆLUMQUE TUERI  
Jussit, et erectos ad sidera tollere veltus."  
METAM, lib. i. ver. 76.

"A creature of a more exalted kind  
 Was wanting yet, and then was MAN design'd;  
 Conscious of thought, of more capacious breast,  
 For empire form'd, and fit to rule the rest.  
 Whether with particles of heavenly fire  
 The God of nature did his soul inspire,  
 Or earth but new divided from the sky,  
 Which still retain'd th' ethereal energy.—  
 Thus, while the mute creation *downward* bend  
*Their sight*, and to their earthly mother tend,  
 Man *looks aloft*, and with *erected eyes*  
 Beholds his own hereditary skies."

DRYDEN.

The word *ανθρωπος*, *man*, is frequently applied to the *soul*, but generally with some epithet. Thus *ο εσω ανθρωπος*, the *inner man*, #Ro 7:22, to distinguish it from the *body*, which is called *ο εξω ανθρωπος*, the *outer man*, #2Co 4:16; *ο κρυπτος ανθρωπος*, the *hidden man*, as in the text; *ο καινος ανθρωπος*, the *new man*, the soul renewed in righteousness, #Eph 2:15, to distinguish him from *ο παλαιος ανθρωπος*, the *old man*, that is, man unregenerate or in a state of sin, #Ro 6:6. And the *soul* is thus distinguished by the Greek philosophers.

**A meek and quiet spirit]** That is, a mind that will not give provocation to others, nor receive irritation by the provocation of others. *Meekness* will prevent the first; *quietness* will guard against the last.

**Great price.]** All the ornaments placed on the head and body of the most illustrious female, are, in the sight of God, of no worth; but a *meek and silent spirit* are, in his sight, invaluable, because proceeding from and leading to himself, being incorruptible, surviving the ruins of the *body* and the ruins of *time*, and enduring eternally.

Verse 5. **For after this manner]** Simplicity reigned in primitive times; *natural ornaments* alone were then in use. Trade and commerce brought in luxuries; and luxury brought *pride*, and all the *excessive nonsense* of DRESS. No female head ever looks so well as when adorned with its own hair alone. This is the ornament appointed by God. To cut it off or to cover it is an unnatural practice; and to exchange the hair which God has given for hair of some other colour, is an insult to the Creator. How the *delicacy* of the female character can stoop to the use of *false hair*, and especially when it is considered that the chief part of this kind of hair was once the *natural* property of some ruffian soldier, who fell in battle by many a ghastly wound, is more than I can possibly comprehend. See the notes on #1Co 11:14-16; and #1Ti 2:9.

**Who trusted in God]** The women *who trust* NOT in God are fond of *dress* and *frippery*; those *who trust in God* follow *nature* and *common sense*.

**Being in subjection unto their own husbands]** It will rarely be found that women who are *fond of dress*, and extravagant in it, have any subjection to their husbands but what comes from *mere*

*necessity*. Indeed, their dress, which they *intend* as an attractive to the eyes of *others*, is a sufficient proof that they have neither *love* nor *respect* for their own husbands. Let them who are concerned refute the charge.

Verse 6. **Even as Sara obeyed]** Almost the same words are in *Rab. Tanchum*, fol. 9, 3: "The wife of Abraham revered him, and called him lord, as it is written, #Ge 18:12: *And my lord is old.*" The words of the apostle imply that she acknowledged his superiority, and her own subjection to him, in the order of God.

**Whose daughters ye are]** As Abraham is represented the *father* of all his male *believing descendants*, so Sara is represented as the *mother* of all her believing female posterity. A *son of Abraham* is a true believer; a *daughter of Sarah* is the same.

**As long as ye do well]** For you cannot maintain your relationship to her longer than ye *believe*; and ye cannot *believe* longer than ye continue to *obey*.

**And are not afraid with any amazement.]** It is difficult to extract any sense out of this clause. The original is not very easy; μη φοβουμεναι μηδεμιαν πτοησις may be rendered, *And not fearing with any terror*. If ye do well, and act conscientiously your part as *faithful wives*, ye will at no time live under the *distressing apprehension* of being *found out*, or terrified at every appearance of the discovery of *infidelties*, or improper conduct. Being not guilty of these, you will not have occasion to fear *detection*. On this subject a learned man has quoted these words, which I have produced elsewhere, #Eph 6:14:—

—————*hic murus aheneus esto,*  
*Nil conscire sibi, nulla pallescere culpa.*

"Let this be my brazen wall, to be *self-convicted* of no private delinquency, nor to *change colour* at being charged with a fault."

Happy is the *wife*, and happy is the *husband*, who can *conscientiously* adopt the saying.

Verse 7. **Dwell with them according to knowledge]** Give your wives, by no species of unkind carriage, any excuse for delinquency. How can a man expect his wife to be faithful to him, if he be unfaithful to her? and *vice versa*.

**Giving honour unto the wife]** Using your superior strength and experience in her behalf, and thus *honouring* her by becoming her protector and support. But the word τιμη *honour*, signifies *maintenance* as well as *respect*;—*maintain, provide for* the wife.

**As-the weaker vessel]** Being more delicately, and consequently more slenderly, constructed. *Roughness* and *strength* go hand in hand; so likewise do *beauty* and *frailty*. The female has what the man wants—beauty and delicacy. The male has what the female wants—courage and strength. The one is as good in its place as the other: and by these things God has made an equality between the

man and the woman, so that there is properly very little superiority on either side. **See Clarke's note on "1Th 4:4"**.

**Being heirs together]** Both the man and woman being equally called to eternal glory: and as *prayer* is one great means of obtaining a meetness for it, it is necessary that they should live together in such a manner as to prevent all family contentions, that they may not be prevented, by disputes or misunderstandings, from uniting daily in this most important duty-family and social prayer.

Verse 8. **Be ye all of one mind]** Unity, both in the family and in the Church, being essentially necessary to *peace* and *salvation*. See on **#Ro 12:16; 15:5**.

**Having compassion]** συμπαθεῖς· Being *sympathetic*; feeling for each other; bearing each other's burdens.

**Love as brethren]** φιλαδελφοί· *Be lovers of the brethren*.

**Pitiful]** ευσπλαγχνοί· *Tender-hearted*; let your *bowels yearn* over the distressed and afflicted.

**Courteous]** φιλοφρονες· *Be friendly-minded*; acquire and cultivate a friendly disposition. But instead of this word, ταπεινοφρονες, *be humble-minded*, is the reading of ABC, more than twenty others, with the *Syriac, Arabic* of Erpen, *Coptic, Armenian, Slavonic*, and some of the *fathers*. This is probably the true reading, and *Griesbach* has admitted it into the text.

Verse 9. **Not rendering evil for evil]** Purposing, saying, doing nothing but *good*; and invariably returning good for evil.

**Ye are thereunto called]** This is your *calling-your business in life*, to do good, and to do good for evil, and to implore God's *blessing* even on your worst enemies. And this is not only your *duty*, but your *interest*; for in so doing you shall obtain God's blessing, even life for evermore.

Verse 10. **For he that will love life]** This is a quotation from **#Ps 34:12-16**, as it stands in the Septuagint; only the aorist of the imperative is changed from the second into the third person, &c. He who wishes to live long and prosperously, must act as he is here directed. 1. He must refrain from *evil-speaking, lying, and slandering*. 2. He must avoid *flattery* and fair speeches, which cover *hypocritical* or wicked intentions. 3. He must *avoid evil*, keep *going away* εκκλινατω, from evil. 4. He must do good; he must walk in the way of righteousness. 5. He must live *peaceably* with all men; *seek peace* where it has been lost; *restore* it where it has been broken; and *pursue it* where it seems to be flying away. He who lives thus must live happy in himself. And as *excess in action* and *passion* always tends to the shortening of life, and nothing preys on the constitution more than disorderly passions, he must live not only happiest but longest who avoids them. It is an edifying story that is told in the book *Mussar*, chap. 1., quoted by Rosenmuller: "A certain person, travelling through the city, continued to call out, *Who wants the elixir of life?* The daughter of Rabbi Joda heard him, and told her father. He said, Call the man in. When he came in, the rabbi said, What is that elixir of life thou sellest? He answered, Is it not written, *What man is he that loveth life, and*

*desireth to see good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips from speaking guile? This is the elixir of life, and is found in the mouth of man."*

Verse 12. **The eyes of the Lord are over the righteous]** That is, He is continually under God's notice and his care; God continually watches *for* him and watches *over* him, and he is *under* his constant protection.

**And his ears are open unto their prayers]** The original is very emphatic: *The eyes of the Lord are upon the righteous, and his ears to their prayers.* The righteous man ever attracts the Divine notice, and wherever he is, there is the ear of God; for, as every righteous man is a *man of prayer*, wherever he prays, there is the ear of God, into which the prayer, as soon as formed, enters.

**But the face of the Lord]** Far from his eye being upon *them*, or his ear open to their requests, (for *prayer* they have none,) his *face*, his *approbation*, his *providence* and *blessing*, are turned away from them; and he only looks upon them to abhor them, and to turn the arm of his justice against them.

Verse 13. **Who is he that will harm you]** Is it possible that a man can be wretched who has God for his friend? "All the devices which the devil or wicked men work against such must be brought to naught, and by the providence of his goodness be dispersed."

**If ye be followers, &c.]** εαν του αγαθου μιμηται γενησθε· *If ye be imitators of the good One*, i.e. of God. 'ο αγαθος, *the good One*, is one of God's prime epithets, see #Mt 19:17, and Satan is distinguished by the reverse, ο πονηρος, the *EVIL one*, #Mt 13:19, where see the notes. Instead of μιμηται, *followers*, or rather *imitators*, ζηλωται, *zealous* of what is good, is the reading of ABC, fifteen others, both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian* and *Vulgate*, with some of the *fathers*. This is a very probable reading, and *Griesbach* has placed it in the *margin* as a candidate for the place of that in the text.

Verse 14. **But and if ye suffer]** God may permit you to be tried and persecuted for righteousness' sake, but this cannot *essentially harm you*; he will press even this into your service, and make it work for your good.

**Happy are ye]** This seems to refer to #Mt 5:10, &c. *Blessed or happy, are ye when men persecute you*, &c. It is a happiness to suffer for Christ; and it is a happiness, because if a man were not *holy* and *righteous* the world would not persecute him, so he is happy in the very *cause* of his sufferings.

**Be not afraid of their terror]** τον δε φοβον αυτων μη φοβηθητε· *Fear not their fear*; see #Isa 8:12. Sometimes *fear* is put for the *object of a man's religious worship*; see #Ge 31:42; #Pr 1:26, and the place in *Isaiah* just quoted. The exhortation may mean, *Fear not their gods*, they can do you no hurt; and supposing that they curse you by them, yet *be not troubled*; "He who fears God need have no other fear."

Verse 15. **But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts]** To sanctify God may signify to offer him the *praises* due to his grace, but as to *sanctify* literally signifies to *make holy*, it is impossible that God should be thus sanctified. We have often already seen that *αγιαζω* signifies to *separate from earth*, that is, from any *common use* or *purpose*, that the *thing* or *person* thus *separated* may be *devoted to a sacred use*. Perhaps we should understand Peter's words thus: Entertain just notions of God; of his nature, power, will, justice, goodness, and truth. Do not conceive of him as being actuated by such *passions* as *men*; *separate him in your hearts* from every thing *earthly, human, fickle, rigidly severe, or capriciously merciful*. Consider that he can neither be like man, feel like man, nor act like man. Ascribe no *human passions* to him, for this would *desecrate* not *sanctify* him. Do not *confine* him in your conceptions to place, space, vacuity, heaven, or earth; endeavour to think worthily of the *immensity* and *eternity* of his nature, of his *omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence*. Avoid the error of the heathens, who bound even their *Dii Majores*, their greatest gods, by *fate*, as many well-meaning Christians do the true God by *decrees*; conceive of him as infinitely *free to act* or *not act*, as he pleases. Consider the *goodness* of his nature; for *goodness*, in every possible state of perfection and infinitude, belongs to him. Ascribe no *malevolence* to him; nor any work, purpose, or decree, that implies it: this is not only a human passion, but a passion of *fallen* man. Do not suppose that he can do evil, or that he can *destroy* when he might save; that he ever did, or ever can, *hate* any of those whom he made in his own image and in his own likeness, so as by a positive decree to doom them, unborn, to everlasting perdition, or, what is of the same import, *pass them by* without affording them the means of salvation, and consequently rendering it impossible for them to be saved. Thus endeavour to conceive of him; and, by so doing, you *separate him* from all that is *imperfect, human, evil, capricious, changeable, and unkind*. Ever remember that he has wisdom without error, power, without limits, truth without falsity, love without hatred, holiness without evil, and justice without rigour or severity on the one hand, or capricious tenderness on the other. In a word, that he neither can *be, say, purpose, or do*, any thing that is not infinitely just, holy, wise, true, and gracious; that he hates nothing that he has made; and has so loved the world, the whole human race, as to give his only-begotten Son to die for them, that they might not perish, but have everlasting life. Thus *sanctify the Lord God in your hearts*, and you will ever be *ready to give a reason of the hope that is in you* to every serious and candid inquirer after truth. Most religious systems and creeds are incapable of rational explanation, because founded on some misconception of the Divine nature.

"They set at odds heaven's jarring attributes,  
And with one excellence another wound."

The system of *humanizing* God, and making him, by our unjust conceptions of him, to act as *ourselves* would in certain circumstances, has been the bane of both religion and piety; and on this ground infidels have laughed us to scorn. It is high time that we should no longer *know God after the flesh*; for even if we have known Jesus Christ after the flesh, we are to know him so no more.

What I have written above is not against any particular creed of religious people, it is against any or all to whom it may justly apply, it may even be against some portions of *my own*; for even in this respect I am obliged daily to labour to sanctify the Lord God in my heart, to *abstract* him from every thing *earthly* and *human*, and apprehend him as far as possible in his own essential nature and attributes through the light of his Spirit and the medium of his own *revelation*. To act thus requires

no common effort of soul: and just apprehensions of this kind are not acquired without much prayer, much self-reflection, much time, and much of the grace and mercy of God.

Instead of *τον θεον*, GOD, ABC, four others, both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, and *Armenian*, with *Clement* and *Fulgentius*, read *τον χριστον*, CHRIST. *Sanctify Christ in your hearts*. This reading is at least equal to the other in the authorities by which it is supported; but *which* was written by St. Peter we know not.

**A reason of the hope]** An *account* of your *hope of the resurrection of the dead* and eternal life in God's glory. This was the great object of their *hope*, as Christ was the grand *object* of their *faith*.

The word *απολογία*, which we translate *answer*, signifies a *defence*; from this we have our word *apology*, which did not originally signify an *excuse* for an act, but a *defence of that act*. The *defences of Christianity* by the primitive fathers are called *apologies*. See Clarke's note on "**Ac 21:1**".

**With meekness and fear]** Several excellent MSS. add the word *αλλα*, *but*, here, and it improves the sense considerably: *Be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, BUT with meekness and fear*. Do not permit your *readiness to answer*, nor the *confidence* you have in the goodness of your cause, to lead you to answer *pertly* or *superciliously* to any person; defend the truth with all possible *gentleness* and *fear*, lest while you are doing it you should forget his presence whose cause you support, or say any thing unbecoming the dignity and holiness of the religion which you have espoused, or inconsistent with that heavenly temper which the Spirit of your indwelling Lord must infallibly produce.

Verse 16. **Having a good conscience]** The testimony of God in your own soul, that in simplicity and godly sincerity you have your conversation in the world. See on the term *conscience* at the end of Hebrews.

**Whereas they speak evil of you]** See the same sentiment in **#1Pe 2:11**, and the note there.

Verse 17. **For it is better]** See on **#1Pe 2:19, 20**.

Verse 18. **Christ also hath once suffered]** See Clarke's notes on "**Ro 5:6**"; "**Heb 9:28**".

**Put to death in the flesh]** In his human nature.

**But quickened by the Spirit]** That very dead body revived by the power of his Divinity. There are various opinions on the meaning of this verse, with which I need not trouble the reader, as I have produced that which is most likely.

Verse 19. **By which]** Spirit, his own Divine energy and authority.

**He went and preached]** By the ministry of Noah, one hundred and twenty years.

**Unto the spirits in prison]** The inhabitants of the antediluvian world, who, having been *disobedient*, and convicted of the most flagrant transgressions against God, were sentenced by his just law to destruction. But their punishment was delayed to see if they would *repent*; and *the long-suffering of God waited* one hundred and twenty years, which were granted to them for this purpose; during which time, as criminals tried and convicted, they are represented as being *in prison*-detained under the arrest of Divine justice, which *waited* either for their *repentance* or the expiration of the *respite*, that the punishment pronounced might be inflicted. This I have long believed to be the sense of this difficult passage, and no other that I have seen is so consistent with the whole scope of the place. That the *Spirit of God* did *strive* with, convict, and reprove the antediluvians, is evident from **#Ge 6:3**: *My Spirit shall not always strive with man, forasmuch as he is flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.* And it was by this Spirit that Noah became a *preacher of righteousness*, and *condemned that ungodly world*, **#Heb 11:7**, who would not believe till wrath-Divine punishment, came upon them to the uttermost. The word πνευμασι, *spirits*, is supposed to render this view of the subject improbable, because this must mean *disembodied* spirits; but this certainly does not follow, for *the spirits of just men made perfect*, **#Heb 12:23**, certainly means *righteous men*, and *men still in the Church militant*; and the *Father of spirits*, **#Heb 12:9**, means *men still in the body*; and *the God of the spirits of all flesh*, **#Nu 16:22; 27:16**, means *men not in a disembodied state*.

But even on this word there are several various readings; some of the Greek MSS. read πνευματι, *in spirit*, and one πνευματι ἄγλω, in the *Holy Spirit*. I have before me one of the first, if not the very *first edition* of the *Latin Bible*; and in it the verse stands thus: *In quo et hiis, qui in carcere erant, SPIRITUALITER veniens prædicavit*; "by which he came *spiritually*, and preached to them that were in prison."

In two very ancient MSS. of the *Vulgate* before me, the clause is thus: *In quo et his qui in carcere erant SPIRITU venient prædicavit*; "in which, coming *by the Spirit*, he preached to those who were in prison." This is the reading also in the *Complutensian Polyglot*.

Another ancient MS. in my possession has the words nearly as in the printed copy: *In quo et hiis qui in carcere CONCLUSI erant SPIRITUALITER veniens prædicavit*; "in which, coming *spiritually*, he preached to those who were SHUT UP in prison."

Another MS., written about A. D. 1370, is the same as the printed copy.

The common *printed Vulgate* is different from all these, and from all the MSS. of the *Vulgate* which I have seen in reading *spiritibus*, "to the spirits."

In my old MS. Bible, which contains the first translation into English ever made, the clause is the following: *In whiche thing and to hem that weren closid togpyder in prison, hi commynge in Spirit, prechide*. The copy from which this translation was taken evidently read *conclusi erdnt*, with one of the MSS. quoted above, as *closid togpyder* proves.

I have quoted all these authorities from the most authentic and correct copies of the *Vulgate*, to show that from them there is no ground to believe that the text speaks of Christ's going to hell to

preach the Gospel to the damned, or of his going to some feigned place where the souls of the patriarchs were detained, to whom he preached, and whom he delivered from that place and took with him to paradise, which the Romish Church holds as an article of faith.

Though the judicious *Calmet* holds with his Church this opinion, yet he cannot consider the text of St. Peter as a proof of it. I will set down his own words: Le sentiment qui veut que Jesus Christ soit descendu aux enfers, pour annoncer sa venue aux anciens patriarches, et pour les tirer de cette espece de prison, ou ils Pattendoient si long tems, est indubitable; et nous le regardons comme un article de notre foi: mais on peut douter que ce soit le sens de Saint Pierre en cet endroit. "The opinion which states that Jesus Christ descended into hell, to announce his coming to the ancient patriarchs, and to deliver them from that species of prison, where they had so long waited for him, is incontrovertible; and we (the Catholics) consider it as an article of our faith: but we may doubt whether this be the meaning of St. Peter in this place."

Some think the whole passage applies to the preaching of the Gospel to the *Gentiles*; but the interpretation given above appears to me, after the fullest consideration, to be the most consistent and rational, as I have already remarked.

Verse 20. **When once the long-suffering of God waited]** In **Pirkey Aboth**, cap. v. 2, we have these words: "There were ten generations from Adam to Noah, that the *long-suffering* of God might appear; for each of these generations provoked him to anger, and went on in their iniquity, till at last the deluge came."

**Were saved by water.]** While the ark was preparing, only Noah's family believed; these amounted to *eight persons*; and these only were saved from the deluge **δι υδατος**, *on the water*: all the rest perished *in the water*; though many of them, while the rains descended, and the waters daily increased, did undoubtedly humble themselves before God, call for mercy, and receive it; but as they had not repented at the preaching of Noah, and the ark was now closed, and the fountains of the great deep broken up, they lost their lives, though God might have extended mercy to their souls.

Verse 21. **The like figure whereunto, &c.]** Dr. Macknight has translated this verse so as to make the meaning more clear: *By which (water) the antitype baptism (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) now saveth us also, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ.*

He remarks that the relative **ω** being in the neuter gender, its antecedent cannot be **κιβωτος**, *the ark*, which is feminine, but **υδωρ**, *water*, which is neuter.

There are many difficulties in this verse; but the simple meaning of the place may be easily apprehended. Noah believed in God; walked uprightly before him, and found grace in his sight; he obeyed him in building the ark, and God made it the means of his salvation from the waters of the deluge. *Baptism* implies a consecration and dedication of the soul and body to God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He who is faithful to his baptismal covenant, taking God through Christ, by the eternal Spirit, for his portion, is saved here from his sins; and *through the resurrection of Christ from the dead*, has the well-grounded hope of eternal glory. This is all plain; but was it the *deluge*, itself,

or the *ark*, or the *being saved* by that ark from the deluge, that was the *antitype* of which St. Peter speaks? Noah and his family were *saved by water*; i.e. it was the instrument of their being saved through the good providence of God. So the water of *baptism*, typifying the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit, is the means of salvation to all those who receive this Holy Spirit in its quickening, cleansing efficacy. Now as the waters of the flood could not have saved Noah and his family, had they not made use of the ark; so the water of baptism saves no man, but as it is the means of his getting his heart purified by the Holy Spirit, and typifying to him that purification. The ark was not *immersed* in the water; had it been so they must all have perished; but it was *borne up on the water*, and *sprinkled* with the rain that fell from heaven. This text, as far as I can see, says nothing in behalf of *immersion* in baptism; but is rather, from the circumstance mentioned above, in favour of *sprinkling*. In either case, it is not the sprinkling, washing, or cleansing the body, that can be of any avail to the salvation of the soul, *but the answer of a good conscience towards God*—the internal evidence and external proof that the soul is purified in the laver of regeneration, and the person enabled to walk in newness of life. We are therefore strongly cautioned here, not to rest in the *letter*, but to look for the *substance*.

Verse 22. **Who is gone into heaven]** Having given the fullest proof of his resurrection from the dead, and of his having accomplished the end for which he came into the world.

**On the right hand of God]** In the place of the highest dignity, honour, and influence.

The Vulgate, one copy of the Itala, Augustine, Fulgentius, Cassiodorus, and Bede, have the following remarkable addition after the above words: *Deglutiens mortem, ut vitæ æternæ hæredes efficeremur*. "Having abolished (swallowed down) death, that we might be made heirs of eternal life." But this addition is found in no Greek copy, nor in any other of the ancient versions.

**Angels and authorities and powers]** That is, all creatures and beings, both in the heavens and in the earth, are put under subjection to Jesus Christ. He has all power in the heavens and in the earth. He alone can save; and he alone can destroy. None need fear who put their trust in him, as he can do whatsoever he will in behalf of his followers, and has good and evil spirits under his absolute command. Well may his enemies tremble, while his friends exult and sing. He can raise the dead, and save to the uttermost all that come unto the Father through him.

If he have all power, if angels and authorities and powers be subject to him, then he can do *what* he will, and employ *whom* he will. To raise the dead can be no difficulty to him, because he has power over all things. He created the world; he can destroy it, and he can create it anew. We can conceive nothing too difficult for Omnipotence. This same omnipotent Being is the friend of man. Why then do we not come to him with confidence, and expect the utmost salvation of which our souls and bodies are capable?

# I PETER

## CHAPTER IV.

*We should suffer patiently, after the example of Christ, 1. And no longer live according to our former custom, but disregard the scoffs of those who are incensed against us because we have forsaken their evil ways, who are shortly to give account to God for their conduct, 2-5. How the Gospel was preached to Jews and Gentiles, 6. As the end of all things was at hand, they should be sober, watchful, charitable, benevolent, good stewards of the bounty of Providence; and, when called to instruct others, speak as the oracles of God, 7-11. Of the persecutions and trials which were coming upon them, and how they were to suffer so as not to disgrace their Christian character, 12-16. Judgment was about to begin at the house of God, and even the righteous would escape with difficulty from the calamities coming upon the Jews; but they must continue in well-doing, and thus commit the keeping of their souls to their faithful Creator, 17-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. **As Christ hath suffered]** He is your proper pattern; have the same disposition he had; the same forgiving spirit, with meekness, gentleness, and complete self-possession.

**He that hath suffered in the flesh, hath ceased from sin]** This is a general maxim, if understood literally: The man who suffers generally reflects on his ways, is humbled, fears approaching death, loathes himself because of his past iniquities, and ceases from them; for, in a state of suffering, the mind loses its relish for the sins of the flesh, because they are embittered to him through the apprehension which he has of death and judgment; and, on his application to God's mercy, he is delivered from his sin.

Some suppose the words are to be understood thus: "Those who have *firmly resolved*, if called to it, to *suffer death* rather than *apostatize* from Christianity, have consequently *ceased from*, or are *delivered* from, the sin of *saving their lives* at the expense of their faith." Others think that it is a parallel passage to **#Ro 6:7**, and interpret it thus: "He that hath mortified the flesh, hath ceased from sin." Dr. Bentley applies the whole to our redemption by Christ: *He that hath suffered in the flesh hath died for our sins*. But this seems a very constrained sense.

Verse 2. **That he no longer should live-in the flesh]** Governed by the base principle of giving up his faith to save his life; *to the lusts of men*-according to the will of his idolatrous persecutors; *but to the will of God*; which will of God is, that he should retain the truth, and live according to its dictates, though he should suffer for it.

Verse 3. **The time past of our life]** This is a complete epitome of the Gentile or heathen state, and a proof that those had been Gentiles to whom the apostle wrote.

1. They *walked in lasciviousness*, **ευ ασελγειαις**: every species of lechery, lewdness, and impurity.
2. In *lusts*, **επιθυμιαις**: strong irregular appetites, and desires of all kinds.

3. In *excess of wine*, οἰνοφλυγίαις· *wine*, and φλυῶ, *to be hot*, or *to boil*; to be inflamed with wine; they were in continual debauches.

4. In *revellings*, κωμοίς· lascivious feasting, with drunken songs, &c. **See Clarke's note on "Ro 13:13"**.

5. In *banquetings*, ποτοίς· *wine feasts, drinking matches*, &c.

6. In *abominable idolatries*, ἀθεμιτοίς εἰδωλοατρειαίς· that is, the abominations practised at their idol feasts, where they not only worshipped the idol, but did it with the most impure, obscene, and abominable rites. This was the general state of the Gentile world; and with this monstrous wickedness Christianity had everywhere to struggle.

Verse 4. **They think it strange**] ξενίζονται· They *wonder* and are *astonished* at you, that ye can renounce these gratifications of the flesh for a spiritual something, the good of which *they* cannot see.

**Excess of riot**] ασωτίας αναχυσιν· *Flood of profligacy*; bearing down all rule, order, and restraints before it.

**Speaking evil of you**] βλασφημοῦντες· Literally, *blaspheming*; i.e. speaking *impiously* against God, and *calumniously* of you.

Verse 5. **To judge the quick and the dead.**] They shall give account of these irregularities to Him who is prepared to judge both the Jews and the Gentiles. The *Gentiles*, previously to the preaching of the Gospel among them, were reckoned to be *dead in trespasses and sins*, #Eph 2:1-5; under the sentence of *death*, because they had sinned. The Jews had at least, by their religious profession, a name to live; and by that profession were bound to give to God.

Verse 6. **Was the Gospel preached also to them that are dead**] This is a most difficult verse; the best translations I have seen of it are the following:—

"For this indeed was *the effect* of the preaching of the Gospel to *the dead*, (the unconverted Gentiles,) that *some* will be punished as carnal men; but *others*, (those converted to Christianity,) lead a spiritual life unto God."-WAKEFIELD.

"For this purpose hath the Gospel been preached even to the dead, (i.e. the Gentiles,) that although they might be condemned, indeed, by men in the flesh, (their persecutors,) yet they might live eternally by God in the Spirit."-MACKNIGHT.

"For this cause was the Gospel preached to them that were dead; that they who live according to men in the flesh, may be condemned; but that they who live according to God in the Spirit, may live."-KNATCHBULL.

There are as many different translations of this verse, and comments upon it, as there are translators and commentators. That of Sir Norton Knatchbull, could the Greek text bear it, appears the most simple; but that of Dr. Macknight, which is nearly the sense given by Mr. Wesley in his *Paraphrase*, is more likely to be the true one among those already proposed.

But if the apostle had the same fact in view which he mentions, **#1Pe 3:19, 20**, then the *antediluvians* are the persons intended: *For this cause-* that Christ is *prepared to judge the quick and the dead*, and to dispense righteous judgment in consequence of having afforded them every necessary advantage, *was the Gospel preached by Noah to them also who are dead-*the antediluvian world, then dead in trespasses and sins, and condemned to death by the righteous judgment of God; but in his great compassion he afforded them a respite, *that though they were condemned as men in the flesh*, (for this was their character; *my Spirit will not always strive with man, forasmuch as he is FLESH, #Ge 6:3*;) yet, hearing this Gospel by Noah, they may believe, *and live according to God in the Spirit*-live a blessed life in eternity according to the mercy of God, who sent his *Spirit* to strive with them. This appears to me to be the most consistent sense; especially as the apostle seems to refer to what he had said of the Spirit of Christ in Noah preaching to the spirits in prison-the rebellions that lived before the flood. See the notes on **#1Pe 3:19, 20**.

Verse 7. **But the end of all things is at hand]** I think that here also St. Peter keeps the history of the deluge before his eyes, finding a parallel to the state of the Jews in his own time in that of the antediluvians in the days of Noah. In **#Ge 6:13**, God said unto Noah, *The end of all flesh is come before me*. This was spoken at a time when God had decreed the destruction of the world by a flood. Peter says, *The end of all things is at hand*; and this he spoke when God had determined to destroy the Jewish people and their polity by one of the most signal judgments that ever fell upon any nation or people.

In a very few years after St. Peter wrote this epistle, even taking it at the lowest computation, viz., A. D. 60 or 61, Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans. To this destruction, which was literally then at hand, the apostle alludes when he says, *The end of all things is at hand*; the end of the temple, the end of the Levitical priesthood, the end of the whole Jewish economy, was then at hand.

If these words could be taken in any general sense, then we might say to every present generation, *The end of all things is at hand*; the *end* of all the *good* which the *wicked* enjoy, and the end of all the *evil* which the *righteous* suffer.

**Be-sober, and watch unto prayer.]** *Be sober*-make a prudent and moderate use of all you possess; and *watch* against all occasions of sin; and *pray* for the supporting hand of God to be upon you for good, that ye may escape the destruction that is coming upon the Jews, and that ye may be saved from among them when the scourge comes.

Verse 8. **Have fervent charity]** *αγαπην εκτενη*: *Intense love; for love shall cover a multitude of sins*. A loving disposition leads us to pass by the faults of others, to forgive offences against ourselves, and to excuse and lessen, as far as is consistent with truth, the transgressions of men. It does not mean that our love to others will induce God to pardon our offences. **See Clarke's note on "Jas 5:20"**.

Verse 9. **Use hospitality]** Be ever ready to divide your bread with the *hungry*, and to succour the *stranger*. See Clarke on "**Heb 13:2**".

**Without grudging.]** *ανευ γαγγυσμων*. *Without grumblings*. Do nothing merely because it is *commanded*, but do it from love to God and man; then it will be *without grumbling*.

Verse 10. **Hath received the gift]** *χαρισμα*. *A gift*; any blessing of *providence* or *grace*. I cannot think that the word means here the *Holy Ghost*, or any of his supernatural gifts or influences; it may include those, but it signifies any thing given by the mere mercy and bounty of God: but perhaps in this place it may signify some or any *office* in the Church; and this sense, indeed, the connection seems to require.

**Stewards of the manifold grace]** Whatever gifts or endowments any man may possess, they are properly speaking, not his own; they are the Lord's property, and to be employed in his work, and to promote his glory.

Verse 11. **If any man speak]** In order to explain or enforce God's word, and edify his neighbour, let him do it as those did to whom the *living oracles* were committed: they spoke as they were inspired by the Holy Ghost. Those, therefore, at Pontus, &c., who undertook to teach others, should speak by the same influence; or, if not under this immediate influence, should speak *as* or *according to* the *oracles* already delivered, grounding all their exhortations and doctrines on some portion of that revelation already given. This command is sent to every man upon earth in *holy orders*, in *pretended holy orders*, or *pretending to holy orders*. Their teaching should be what the oracles of God, the Holy Scriptures, teach and authenticate.

**Of the ability which God giveth]** Perhaps the *ministering* here may refer to the *care of the poor*, and the *ability* is the *quantum of means* which God may have placed in their hands; and they are to minister this as coming immediately *from God*, and lead the minds of the poor to consider *him* as their benefactor, *that he in all things may be glorified through Christ Jesus*. This is implied in the *essence* of any charitable act: the *actor* is not the *author*, God is the author; and the poor man should be taught to consider *him* as his immediate *benefactor*. Those who give any thing *as from themselves*, rob God; for to him the *praise* for all good, and the *dominion* over all men and things, belong *for ever and ever*.

Verse 12. **Think it not strange concerning the fiery trial]** *πυρωσει*. *The burning*. The metaphor is old, but noble; it represents the Christians at Pontus as having *fire* cast upon them for the *trying* of their faith, as *gold* is tried by fire, #1Pe 1:7, to which the apostle alludes.-*Macknight*.

St. Peter returns here to what he had often touched upon in this epistle, namely, to exhort the Christians to behave with patience and integrity under their present severe persecution; to which purpose he uses the following arguments:—

*First*, He intimates that it was not a *strange* or *unusual* thing for the people of God to be persecuted.

*Secondly*, That if they suffered here as *Christ did*, they should hereafter be glorified with him.

*Thirdly*, Besides the prospect of that future glory; they had at present the *Spirit of God* for their support and comfort.

*Fourthly*, That it was an honour for any of them to suffer, not as a *malefactor*, but as a *Christian*.

*Fifthly*, Though the afflictions began with the Christians, yet the weight of the storm would fall upon the unbelievers. From these considerations he exhorted them to persevere in their duty, and trust all events with God. See *Dodd*.

Verse 14. **If ye be reproached for the name of Christ]** To be reproached for the *name of Christ* is to be reproached for being a *Christian*, that is, for being *like Christ*. This is the highest honour to which any man can arrive in this world, and therefore the apostle says to such? *Happy* are ye.

**The Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you]** As this Divine Spirit *rested* upon Jesus, so does it rest upon his persecuted followers. There is a various reading here, *και δυναμεως*, *and of power*, which is found in some of the chief MSS., (the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and above twenty others,) the later *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Vulgate*, some copies of the *Itala*, *Athanasius*, *Theophylact*, *Cyprian*, and *Cassiodorus*; and in them the whole verse reads thus: *If ye be reproached for the name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of glory, AND OF POWER, and of God, resteth upon you.* This is agreeable to our Lord's words, **#Mt 5:11, 12**. So that what constituted them *unhappy* in the sight of the *world* was their *chief happiness* in the sight of *God*; they carried Christ the fountain of *blessedness* in their heart, and therefore could not be unhappy.

**On their part he is evil spoken of]** *κατα μεν αυτους βλασφημειται, κατα δε υμας δοξαζεται.*  
*By them he is blasphemed, by you he is honoured.*

Verse 15. **But let none of you suffer-as a busybody in other men's matters]** *αλλοτριοεπισκοπος* *The inspector of another*; meddling with other people's concerns, and forgetting their own; such persons are hated of all men. But some think that meddling with those in *public office* is here intended, as if he had said: Meddle not with the affairs of state, leave public offices and public officers to their own master, strive to live peaceably with all men, and show yourselves to be humble and un aspiring.

Verse 16. **Yet if-as a Christian]** If he be persecuted because he has embraced the *Christian* faith, let him not be *ashamed*, but let him rather glorify God on this very account. Christ suffered by the Jews because he was *holy*; Christians suffer because they resemble him.

The word *χριστιανος*, *Christian*, is used only here and in **#Ac 11:26; 26:28**. See the note on the former passage.

Verse 17. **Judgment must begin at the house of God]** Our Lord had predicted that, previously to the destruction of Jerusalem, his own followers would have to endure various calamities; see **#Mt 24:9, 21, 22; #Mr 13:12, 13; #Joh 16:2**, &c. Here his true disciples are called *the house or family*

of God. That the converted Jews suffered much from their own brethren, the *zealots*, or *factions* into which the Jews were at that time divided, needs little proof; and some interpreters think that this was in conformity to the purpose of God, (#Mt 23:35: *That on you may come all the righteous blood shed from the foundation of the world.*) "that the Jewish Christians were to be involved in the general punishment; and that it was proper to begin at *them* as a part of the devoted Jewish nation, notwithstanding they were now become the house of God, because the justice of God would thereby be more illustriously displayed." See *Macknight*. But probably the word κριμα, which we here translate *judgment*, may mean no more than affliction and distress; for it was a Jewish maxim that, when God was about to pour down some general judgment, he began with afflicting his *own people* in order to correct and amend them, that they might be prepared for the overflowing scourge. In *Bava Kama*, fol. 60, 1, we have the same sentiment, and in nearly the same words, as in Peter, viz.: "God never punishes the world but because of the wicked, but he always begins with the righteous first. The destroyer makes no difference between the just and the unjust, only he begins first with the righteous." See #Eze 9:1-7, where God orders the destroyer to slay both old and young in the city: *But*, said he, *begin at my sanctuary*.

**And if it first begin at us]** Jews, who have repented, and believed on the Son of God; *what shall the end be of them*-the Jews who continue impenitent, and *obey not the Gospel of God?* Here is the plainest reference to the above Jewish maxim; and this, it appears, was founded upon the text which St. Peter immediately quotes.

Verse 18. **And if the righteous scarcely be saved]** If it shall be with *extreme difficulty* that the *Christians* shall escape from Jerusalem, when the Roman armies shall come against it with the full commission to destroy it, *where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Where shall the proud *Pharisaic boaster* in his own outside holiness, and the *profligate transgressor* of the laws of God, *show themselves*, as having escaped the Divine vengeance? The *Christians*, though with difficulty, did escape, every man; but not one of the Jews escaped, whether found in Jerusalem or elsewhere.

It is rather strange, but it is a fact, that this verse is the Septuagint translation of #Pr 11:31: *Behold, the righteous shall be recompensed in the earth; much more the wicked and the sinner.* For this the *Septuagint* and *St. Peter* have, *If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?* Such a latitude of construction can scarcely be accounted for. The original is this: אֵין צְדִיק בְּאֶרֶץ יִשְׁלָם אִף כִּי רָשָׁע תְּחַוֶּה אֵין *hen tsaddik baarets yeshullam, aph ki rasha vechote*: "Behold, to the righteous it shall be returned on the earth; and also to the wicked and the transgressor."

The *Chaldee* paraphrast has given this a different turn: *Behold, the righteous shall be strengthened in the earth; but the ungodly and the sinners shall be consumed from the earth.*

The *Syriac* thus: *If the righteous scarcely live, the ungodly and the sinner where shall he stand?*

The *Arabic* is nearly the same as the *Septuagint* and the *apostle*; the *Vulgate* follows the Hebrew.

I have on several occasions shown that, when *Cestius Gallus* came against Jerusalem, many *Christians* were shut up in it; when he strangely raised the siege the *Christians* immediately departed

to *Pella* in Coele-syria, into the dominions of King Agrippa, who was an ally of the Romans, and there they were in safety; and it appears, from the ecclesiastical historians, that they had but *barely time* to leave the city before the Romans returned under the command of Titus, and never left the place till they had destroyed the temple, razed the city to the ground, slain upwards of a million of those wretched people, and put an end to their civil polity and ecclesiastical state.

Verse 19. **Suffer according to the will of God]** A man suffers according to the will of God who suffers for righteousness' sake; and who, being reviled, reviles not again.

**Commit the keeping of their souls]** Place their *lives* confidently in his hand, who, being their *Creator*, will also be their preserver, and keep that safely which is committed to his trust. God is here represented as *faithful*, because he will always *fulfil his promises*, and withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly.

But they had no reason to hope that he would care for their *lives* and *souls* unless they continued in *well-doing*. He who is employed in God's work will have God's protection. The path of duty ever was, and ever will be, the only way of safety.

1. THE apostle recommends *fervent charity*-unfeigned love both to God and man. It is well said of this grace that it is a universal virtue which ought to precede, accompany, and follow, all others. A charity which has God for its principle, and Jesus Christ for its pattern, never faileth. If our *charity* be extensive enough to *cover* all the defects of our neighbour in bearing with them; that of God is sufficient to cover all the sins of a sincere penitent by blotting them out. If we ought to be charitable to all, it is after the example of our heavenly Father, who is loving to every man, and hateth nothing that he has made.

2 The difficulty of escaping the corruption that is in the world is great; and, consequently, the danger of losing our souls. In this great work, watchfulness, prayer; faith, and obedience, are indispensably necessary. He who does not walk with God here cannot see nor enjoy him hereafter.

# I PETER

## CHAPTER V.

*Directions to the elders to feed the flock of God, and not to be lord over God's heritage, that when the chief Shepherd does appear, they may receive a crown of glory, 1-4. The young are to submit themselves to the elder, and to humble themselves under the mighty hand of God, and cast all their care upon him, 6-7. They should be sober and watchful, because their adversary the devil is continually seeking their destruction, whom they are to resist, steadfast in the faith, 8, 9. They are informed that the God of all grace had called them to his eternal glory, 10- 11. Of Silvanus, by whom this epistle was sent, 12. Salutations from the Church at Babylon, 13. The apostolic benediction, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Verse 1. **The elders which are among you]** In this place the term *πρεσβυτεροι*, *elders* or *presbyters* is the name of an office. They were as *pastors* or *shepherds* of the flock of God, the Christian people among whom they lived. They were the same as *bishops*, *presidents*, *teachers* and *deacons*, #Ac 14:23; #1Ti 5:17. And that these were the same as *bishops* the next verse proves.

**Who am also an elder]** *συμπρεσβυτερος*: *A fellow elder*; one on a level with yourselves. Had he been what the popes of Rome say he was-*the prince of the apostles*; and *head of the Church*, and what *they* affect to be-mighty secular lords, binding the kings of the earth in chains, and their nobles in fetters of iron; could he have spoken of himself as he here does? It is true that the Roman pontiffs, in all their bulls, each style themselves *servus servorum Dei*, servant of the servants of God, while each affects to be *rex regum*, king of kings, and vicar of Jesus Christ. But the *popes* and the *Scriptures* never agree.

**A witness of the sufferings of Christ]** He was with Christ in the *garden*; he was with him when he was *apprehended*. and he was with him in the *high priest's hall*. Whether he followed him to the *cross* we know not; probably he did not, for in the hall of the high priest he had denied him most shamefully; and, having been deeply convinced of the greatness of his crime, it is likely he withdrew to some private place, to humble himself before God, and to implore mercy. He could, however, with the strictest propriety, say, from the above circumstances, that he was a *witness of the sufferings of Christ*.

**A partaker of the glory]** He had a *right* to it through the blood of the Lamb; he had a blessed *anticipation* of it by the power of the Holy Ghost; and he had the *promise* from his Lord and Master that he should be with him in heaven, to behold his glory; #Joh 17:21, 24.

Verse 2. **Feed the flock]** Do not *fleece* the flock.

**Taking the oversight]** *επιλοκοπουντες*: Discharging the office of *bishops* or *superintendents*. This is another proof that *bishop* and *presbyter* were the same order in the *apostolic* times, though afterwards they were made distinct.

**Not by constraint]** The office was laborious and dangerous, especially in these times of persecution; it is no wonder then that even those who were best qualified for the office should strive to excuse themselves with a genuine *Nolo episcopari*, "I am unwilling to be a bishop."

**Not for filthy lucre]** Could the office of a *bishop*, in those early days, and in the time of persecution, be a *lucrative* office? Does not the Spirit of God lead the apostle to speak these things rather for *posterity* than for that time? **See Clarke's notes on "1Ti 3:3"**.

**But of a ready mind]** Doing all for Christ's sake, and through love to immortal souls.

Verse 3. **Neither as being lords over God's heritage]** This is the voice of St. Peter in his *catholic* epistle to the *catholic Church*! According to him there are to be no lords over God's heritage, the bishops and presbyters who are appointed by the head of the Church are to *feed the flock*, to *guide* and to *defend* it, not to *fleece* and *waste* it; and they are to look for their reward in another world, and in the approbation of God in their consciences. And in humility, self-abasement, self-renunciation, and heavenly-mindedness, they are to be *ensamples*, *τύποι*, *types*, to the flock, *moulds* of a heavenly form, into which the spirits and lives of the flock may be *cast*, that they may come out after a perfect pattern. We need not ask, Does the Church that arrogates to itself the exclusive title of *Catholic*, and do its *supreme pastors*, who affect to be the successors of Peter and the vicars of Jesus Christ, act in this way? They are in every sense the reverse of this. But we may ask, Do the other Churches, which profess to be *reformed* from the abominations of the above, keep the advice of the apostle in their eye? Have they *pastors according to God's own heart, who feed them with knowledge and understanding*? **#Jer 3:15**. Do they feed *themselves*, and not the *flock*? Are they *lords over the heritage of Christ*, ruling with a high ecclesiastico-secular hand, disputing with their flocks about penny-farthing *tithes* and *stipends*, rather than contending for the faith once delivered to the saints? Are they heavenly *moulds*, into which the spirits and conduct of their flocks may be cast? I leave those who are concerned to answer these questions; but I put them, in the name of God, to all the preachers in the land. How many among them properly care for the flock? Even among those reputed *evangelical* teachers, are there not some who, on their first coming to a parish or a congregation, make it their *first* business to *raise the tithes* and the *stipends*, where, in all good conscience, there was before enough, and more than enough, to provide them and their families with not only the *necessaries*, but all the *conveniences* and *comforts* of life? conveniences and comforts which neither Jesus Christ nor his servant Peter ever enjoyed. And is not the great concern among ministers to seek for those *places, parishes, and congregations*, where the provision is the most ample, and the work the smallest? Preacher or minister, whosoever thou art, who readest this, apply not the word to thy *neighbour*, whether he be state-appointed, congregation-appointed, or self-appointed; take all to thyself; *mutato nomine de TE fabula narratur*. See that thy *own* heart, views, and conduct be right with God; and then proceed to the next verse.

Verse 4. **When the chief Shepherd]** That is, the Lord Jesus Christ, whose is the flock, and who provides the pasture, and from whom, if ye are legally called to the most awful work of preaching the Gospel, ye have received your commission; when he *shall appear* to judge the world in righteousness, ye who have fed his flock, who have taken the *superintendency* of it, not by *constraint*, nor for *filthy lucre's sake*, not as *lords over the heritage*, but with a *ready mind*, employing body, soul, spirit, time and talents, in endeavouring to pluck sinners as brands from

eternal burnings, and build up the Church of Christ on its most holy faith; YE shall *receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away*, an eternal nearness and intimacy with the ineffably glorious God; so that ye who have turned many to righteousness shall shine, not merely as stars, but as suns in the kingdom of your Father! O ye heavenly-minded, diligent, self-denying pastors after God's own heart, whether ye be in the *Church* established by the *state*, or in those *divisions* widely separated from, or *nearly* connected with it, take courage; preach Jesus; press through all difficulties in the faith of your God; fear no evil while meditating nothing but good. Ye are stars in the right hand of Jesus, who walks among your golden candlesticks, and has lighted that lamp of life which ye are appointed to trim; fear not, *your* labour in the Lord cannot be in vain! Never, never can ye preach one sermon in the spirit of your office, which the God of all grace shall permit to be unfruitful; ye carry and sow the seed of the kingdom by the command and on the authority of your God; ye sow it, and the heavens shall drop down dew upon it. Ye may go forth weeping, though bearing this precious seed; but ye shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing your sheaves with you. Amen, even so, Lord Jesus!

Verse 5. **Likewise, ye younger]** *νεωτεροι* probably means here *inferiors*, or those not in sacred offices; and may be understood as referring to the *people* at large who are called to obey them that have the rule over them in the Lord. In this sense our Lord, it appears, uses the word, #Lu 22:26.

**Be subject one to another]** Strive all to serve each other; let the pastors strive to serve the people, and the people the pastors; and let there be no contention, but who shall do most to oblige and profit all the rest.

**Be clothed with humility]** To be *clothed* with a *thing* or *person* is a Greek mode of speech for *being that thing* or *person* with which a man is said *to be clothed*. Be ye *truly humble*; and let your *outward garb* and *conduct* be a proof of the humility of your hearts. *εγκομβωμα*, from the original word *εγκομβωσασθε*, signifies often an outward ornamental garment, tied in different places with *knots* or *bows*, probably ornamented all over with bows or knots of different coloured ribands, silk twist, &c. But it also signifies the outward garment worn by *servants*, *slaves*, *girls*, and *shepherds*, which was rather intended to be the *guard* of the other garments than an *ornament* to those thus dressed: and I am rather inclined to take it in this sense than in the former; for as the apostle calls upon them to be subject to each other, he desires them to put on *humility*, as the *encomboma* or *servant's dress*, that they may appear to be such as were *ready to serve*; and that he cannot refer to this article of clothing as an *ornament* the next words sufficiently prove: *God resisteth the PROUD, and giveth grace to the HUMBLE-the proud*, with all their *ornaments*, God *resists*; while those who are clothed with the humble garment he *adorns*.

Verse 6. **Humble yourselves]** Those who submit patiently to the dispensations of God's providence he lifts up; those who lift themselves up, God thrusts down.

If we humble not ourselves under God's *grace*, he will humble us under his *judgments*. Those who patiently submit to him, he exalts in due time; if his hand be *mighty* to *depress*, it is also *mighty* to *exalt*.

Verse 7. **Casting all your care]** *την μεριμναν*. Your *anxiety*, your *distracting care*, on him, for he careth for you, *οτι αυτω μελει περι υμων*, for he meddles or concerns himself, with the things that interest you. Whatever things concern a follower of God, whether they be spiritual or temporal, or whether in themselves great or small, God concerns himself with them; what affects them affects him; in all their afflictions he is afflicted. He who knows that God cares for him, need have no anxious cares about himself. This is a plain reference to **#Ps 55:22**: *Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he will sustain thee*. He will bear both thee and thy burden.

Verse 8. **Be sober]** Avoid *drunkenness* of your *senses*, and *drunkenness* in your *souls*; be not *overcharged* with the concerns of the world.

**Be vigilant]** Awake, and keep awake; be always *watchful*; never be off your guard; your enemies are alert, they are never off theirs.

**Your adversary the devil ]** This is the reason why ye should be sober and vigilant; ye have an ever active, implacable, subtle enemy to contend with. He *walketh about*-he has access to you everywhere; he knows your feelings and your propensities, and informs himself of all your circumstances; only God can know more and do more than he, therefore your care must be cast upon God.

**As a roaring lion]** Satan tempts under *three* forms: 1. The *subtle serpent*; to beguile our senses, pervert our judgment, and enchant our imagination. 2. As an *angel of light*; to deceive us with *false views* of spiritual things, *refinements* in religion, and presumption on the providence and grace of God. 3. As a *roaring lion*; to bear us down, and destroy us by *violent opposition*, *persecution*, and *death*. Thus he was acting towards the followers of God at Pontus, &c., who were now suffering a grievous persecution.

**Walketh about]** Traversing the earth; a plain reference to **#Job 2:2**, which see.

**Seeking whom he may devour]** *τινψ καταπιη*. Whom he may *gulp down*. It is not *every one* that he can *swallow down*: those who are *sober* and *vigilant* are proof against him, these he MAY NOT *swallow down*; those who are *drunken* with the cares of this world, &c., and are *unwatchful*, these he MAY *swallow down*. There is a beauty in this verse, and a striking apposition between the *first* and *last words*, which I think have not been noticed: *Be sober*, *νηψατε* from *νη*, *not*, and *πιειν* to *drink*; *do not drink*, *do not swallow down*: and the word *καταπιη*, from *κατα*, *down*, and *πιειν*, to *drink*. If you swallow strong drink down, the devil will swallow you down. Hear this, ye drunkards, toppers, tipplers, or by whatsoever name you are known in society, or among your fellow sinners. Strong drink is not only the way to the devil, but the devil's way into you; and YE are such as the devil particularly MAY *swallow down*.

Verse 9. **Whom resist]** Stand against him, *αντιστητε*. Though *invulnerable*, he is not *unconquerable*: the weakest follower of God can confound and overpower him, if he continue *steadfast in the faith*-believing on the Son of God, and walking uprightly before him. To a soul thus engaged he can do no damage.

**The same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren]** It is the lot of all the disciples of Christ to suffer persecution. The *brotherhood*, *αδελφοτης*, the *Christian Church*, everywhere is exposed to the assaults of men and devils; you are persecuted by the *heathen* among whom ye live, and from among whom ye are gathered into the fold of Christ: but even those who profess the same faith with you, and who are resident among the *Jews*, (for so I think *εν κοσμω*, *in the world*, is here to be understood,) are also persecuted, both *heathens* and *Jews* being equally opposed to the pure and holy doctrines of the Gospel. Any man who has read the Greek Testament with any attention must have observed a vast number of places in which the word *κοσμος*, which we translate *world*, means the *Jewish people* and the *Jewish state*, and nothing else.

Verse 10. **But the God of all grace]** The Fountain of infinite compassion, mercy, and goodness. *Mohammed* has conveyed this fine description of the Divine Being in the words with which he commences every surat or chapter of his *Koran*, two excepted; viz.;

[ A r a b i c ]

*Bismillahi arrahmani arraheemi.*

Of which the best translation that can be given is that of the apostle, *In the name of the God of all grace*; the God who is the most merciful and the most compassionate, who is an exuberant Fountain of love and compassion to all his intelligent offspring.

**Who hath called us]** By the preaching of the Gospel.

**Unto his eternal glory]** To the infinite felicity of the heavenly state.

**By Christ Jesus]** Through the *merit* of his *passion* and *death*, by the *influence* of his *Holy Spirit*, by the *precepts* of his *Gospel*, and by the *splendour* of his own *example*.

**After that ye have suffered a while]** *ολιγον παθοντας*· *Having suffered a little time*; that is, while ye are enduring these persecutions, God will cause all to work together for your good.

**Make you perfect]** *καταρτισει, στηριξει, σθενωσει, θεμελιωσει*· All these words are read in the *future* tense by the best MSS. and versions.

*He will make you perfect.*-*καταρτισει*· Put you in *complete joint* as the timbers of a building.

**Stablish]** *στηριξει*· Make you *firm* in every part; adapt you strongly to each other, so that you may be mutual supports, the whole building being one in the Lord.

**Strengthen]** *σθενωσει*· Cramp and bind every part, so that there shall be no danger of warping, splitting, or falling.

**Settle]** *θεμελιωσει*· Cause all to rest so *evenly* and *firmly* upon the best and surest foundation, that ye may grow together to a holy temple in the Lord: in a word, that ye may be *complete* in all the mind that was in Christ; *supported* in all your trials and difficulties; *strengthened* to resist and

overcome all your enemies; and after all *abide*, firmly *founded*, in the truth of grace. All these phrases are *architectural*; and the apostle has again in view the fine image which he produced #1Pe 2:5, where see the notes.

Verse 11. **To him]** The God of all grace, *be glory*-all honour and praise be ascribed, and *dominion*-the government of heaven, earth, and hell, *for ever*-through time, and *ever*-through eternity. *Amen*-so be it, so let it be, and so it shall be. Amen and Amen!

Verse 12. **By Silvanus, a faithful brother unto you, as I suppose]** To say the least of this translation, it is extremely obscure, and not put together with that elegance which is usual to our translators. I see no reason why the clause may not be thus translated: *I have written to you, as I consider, briefly, by Silvanus, the faithful brother*. On all hands it is allowed that this *Silvanus* was the same as *Silas*, Paul's faithful companion in travel, mentioned #Ac 15:40; 16:19; and, if he were the same, Peter could never say *as I suppose* to his faith and piety: but he might well say this to the shortness of his epistle, notwithstanding the many and important subjects which it embraced. See the *Syriac, Vulgate, &c*. If the words be applied to *Silvanus*, they must be taken in a sense in which they are often used: "I conclude him to be a trustworthy person; one by whom I may safely send this letter; who will take care to travel through the different regions in Asia, Pontus, Galatia, and Bithynia; read it in every Church; and leave a copy for the encouragement and instruction of Christ's flock." And in such a state of the Church, in such countries, no ordinary person could have been intrusted with such a message.

**Exhorting]** Calling upon you to be faithful, humble, and steady.

**And testifying]** *επιμαρτυρων*, *Earnestly witnessing*, that it is the true grace-the genuine Gospel of Jesus Christ, *in which ye stand*, and in which ye should persevere to the end.

Verse 13. **The Church that is at Babylon]** After considering all that has been said by learned men and critics on this place, I am quite of opinion that the apostle does not mean Babylon in *Egypt*, nor *Jerusalem*, nor *Rome* as *figurative* Babylon, but the ancient celebrated Babylon in Assyria, which was, as Dr. Benson observes, the metropolis of the eastern dispersion of the Jews; but as I have said so much on this subject in the *preface*, I beg leave to refer the reader to that place.

Instead of *Babylon*, some MSS. mentioned by *Syncellus* in his *Chronicon* have *ιοππη*, *Joppa*; and one has *ρωμη*, *Rome*, in the margin, probably as the meaning, according to the writer, of the word *Babylon*.

**Elected together with you]** *συνεκλεκτη*. *Fellow elect*, or *elected jointly* with you. Probably meaning that they, and the believers at Babylon, received the Gospel about the same time. On the *election* of those to whom St. Peter wrote, see **Clarke's notes on "1Pe 1:2"**.

**And-Marcus my son.]** This is supposed to be the same person who is mentioned #Ac 12:12, and who is known by the name of *John Mark*; he was sister's son to Barnabas, #Col 4:10, his mother's name was Mary, and he is the same who wrote the gospel that goes under his name. He is called here *Peter's son*, i.e. according to the *faith*, Peter having been probably the means of his conversion.

This is very likely, as Peter seems to have been intimate at his mother's house. See the account, #Ac 12:6-17.

Verse 14. **Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity.]** See Clarke's notes on "Ro 16:16", and on "1Co 16:20". In the above places the kiss is called a *holy kiss*; here, *φιληματι αγαπης*, a *kiss of LOVE*; i.e. as a mark of their love to each other, in order that misunderstandings might be prevented. But ten or twelve MSS., with the *Syriac, Arabic, Armenian*, and *Vulgate*, have *αγιω*, *holy*; *salute one another with a HOLY kiss*. The difference is not great.

**Peace be with you all]** May all *prosperity*, spiritual and temporal, be with all *that are in Christ Jesus*-that are truly converted to him, and live in his Spirit obedient to his will.

**Amen.]** Is wanting, as usual, in some of the principal MSS. and versions.

The *subscriptions* are, as in other cases, various.

#### In the VERSIONS:

The end of the First Epistle of the Apostle Peter.-SYRIAC.

The First Catholic Epistle of Peter the apostle is ended.-SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN.

The end of the Epistle of St. Peter; may his supplication preserve us! Amen. Praise be to the Lord of never ending and eternal glory! Amen.-ARABIC.

The First Epistle of Peter is completed; may his intercession be with us! Amen, and Amen.-ÆTHIOPIC.

Nothing in the COPTIC.

Nothing in the printed VULGATE.

The end of the First Epistle of St. Peter.-COMPLUTENSIAN *Polyglott*.

The First Epistle of St. Peter is ended.-BIB. VULGAT. Edit. *Princ*.

#### In the MANUSCRIPTS:

The First of Peter.-Codex *Alexand.* and Codex *Vatican*.

Written from Rome.-A MS. of the twelfth century,

The end of the First Catholic Epistle of Peter, written from Rome.-A MS. of the thirteenth century.

These later subscriptions are of little value, nor do any of them help to ascertain the *place* where the epistle was written. The word *Rome* is only the supposed interpretation of the word *Babylon*, as in **#1Pe 5:13**, which see.

As the true Church of Christ has generally been in a state of *suffering*, the epistles of St. Peter have ever been most highly prized by all believers. That which we have just finished is an admirable letter, containing some of the most important maxims and consolations for the Church in the wilderness. No Christian can read it without deriving from it both light and life. Ministers, especially, should study it well, that they may know how to comfort their flocks when in persecution or adversity. He never speaks to good effect in any spiritual case who is not furnished out of the Divine treasury. God's words invite, solicit, and command assent; on them a man may confidently rely. The words of man may be *true*, but they are not *infallible*, This is the character of God's word alone.

I SHALL sum up the contents of this chapter in the words of a good commentator: "Because the knowledge and good behaviour of the people depend, in a great measure, upon the kind of instruction which they receive from their teachers, the apostle in this chapter addressed the *elders*, that is, the bishops, pastors, rulers, and deacons among the brethren of Pontus, &c., **#1Pe 5:1**, exhorting the bishops in particular to feed the flock of God committed to their care faithfully, and to exercise their episcopal office, not as by constraint, but willingly; not from the love of gain, but from love to their Master and to the flock, **#1Pe 5:2**; and not to lord it over God's heritage, but to be patterns of humility and disinterestedness to the people, **#1Pe 5:3**. This exhortation to bishops to feed Christ's flock was given with much propriety by Peter, who had himself been appointed by Christ to feed his lambs and his sheep. Next, because the faithful performance of the bishop's office was, in that age, attended with great difficulty and danger, the apostle, to encourage the bishops, assured them that; when the chief Shepherd shall appear, they shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away, **#1Pe 5:4**. The distinguished reward which Christ is to bestow on those who have suffered for his sake being a favourite topic with our apostle, he introduces it often in this epistle.

"Having thus exhorted the pastors, the apostle turned his discourse to the people, charging them to be subject to their elders, and to one another; that is, to be of a teachable disposition, and to receive instruction from every one capable of giving it, and to do all the duties which they could to each other, according to their different stations and relations, **#1Pe 5:5**. But especially to be subject to God, by humbly submitting themselves to the judgments which were coming upon them, that God might exalt them in due time, **#1Pe 5:6**. Casting all their anxious care on God, because he cared for them, **#1Pe 5:7**. And to watch against the devil, who went about as a roaring lion, seeking to destroy them by instigating the wicked to persecute them, and drive them into apostasy, **#1Pe 5:8**. But they were to resist that terrible enemy by steadfastness in the faith, and not to think themselves hardly dealt with when persecuted, knowing that their brethren everywhere were exposed to the same temptations of the devil, **#1Pe 5:9**. In the meantime, to give them all the assistance in his power, the apostle prayed earnestly to God to stablish and strengthen them, **#1Pe 5:10**. And ended his prayer with a doxology to God, expressive of his supreme dominion over the universe, and all the things it contains.

"The apostle informed the brethren of Pontus that he had sent this letter to them by Silvanus, whom he praised for his fidelity to Christ, **#1Pe 5:12**. Then, giving them the salutation of the Church in Babylon, where it seems he was when he wrote this letter, he added the salutation of Mark, whom he called *his son*, either because he had converted him, or on account of the great attachment which Mark bore to him, **#1Pe 5:13**. And having desired them to salute one another, he concluded with giving them his apostolical benediction, **#1Pe 5:14**." See Dr. *Macknight*.

*Finished correcting this epistle for a new edition, Dec. 31, 1831,-A. C.*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

As the preface to the preceding epistle embraces the question of the authenticity of both epistles, and also considers several matters common to both, I need not take up the subject here afresh; but simply consider those matters which are peculiar to the epistle before me, and which have not been examined in the foregoing preface.

"This epistle, as appears from **#2Pe 3:1**, (says *Michaelis*.) was written to the same communities as the first epistle; and the author gives us thus to understand, that he was the person who wrote the first epistle; that is, the Apostle Peter. He calls himself likewise, **#2Pe 1:1**, *συμεων πετρος, δοσλος και αποστολος ιησου χριστου*, *Symeon Peter, a servant and apostle of Jesus Christ*; and **#2Pe 1:16-18** says that he was present at the transfiguration of Christ on the mount. The notion therefore entertained by Grotius, that this epistle was written by a bishop of Jerusalem of the name of Simeon, is absolutely inadmissible; and we have no other alternative than this: either it was written by the apostle St. Peter, or it is a forgery in his name.

"The ancients entertained very great doubts whether St. Peter was really the author. Eusebius, in his chapter where he speaks of the books of the New Testament in general, reckons it among the *αντιλεγόμενα*, those *not canonical*. He says that tradition does not reckon, as a part of the New Testament, the second epistle ascribed to Peter; but that, as in the opinion of most men, it is useful, it is therefore much read. Origen had said, long before, that Peter had left behind him one epistle universally received, and perhaps a second, though doubts are entertained about it.

"The old Syriac version, though it contains the Epistle of St. James, which Eusebius likewise reckons among the *αντιλεγόμενα*, does not contain the Second Epistle of St. Peter. Now it cannot be said that the other books of the New Testament were translated into Syriac before St. Peter's second epistle was written; for St. Paul's Second Epistle to Timothy was written certainly as late, and yet is contained in this very version. And if an epistle, addressed only to an individual, was known to the Syriac translator, it may be thought that a circular epistle addressed to communities dispersed in several countries in Asia, would hardly have escaped his notice. The circumstance, therefore, that the old Syriac translator did not translate the Second Epistle of St. Peter as well as the first, may be used as an argument against its antiquity, and of course against its authenticity.

"It appears then that, if the authenticity of this epistle were determined by external evidence, it would have less in its favour than it would have against it. But, on the other hand, the internal evidence is greatly in its favour; and indeed so much so, that the epistle gains in this respect more than it loses in the former. Wetstein, indeed, says that since the ancients themselves were in doubt, the moderns cannot expect to arrive at certainty, because we cannot obtain more information on the subject in the eighteenth, than ecclesiastical writers were able to obtain in the third and fourth,

centuries. Now this is perfectly true as far as relates to historical knowledge, or to the testimony of others in regard to the matter of fact, whether St. Peter was the author or not. But when this question is to be decided by an examination of the epistle itself, it is surely possible that the critical skill and penetration of the moderns may discover in it proofs of its having been written by St. Peter, though these proofs escaped the notice of the ancients. After a diligent comparison of the First Epistle of St. Peter with that which is ascribed to him as his second, the agreement between them appears to me to be such, that, if the second was not written by St. Peter as well as the first, the person who forged it not only possessed the power of imitation in a very unusual degree, but understood likewise the design of the first epistle, with which the ancients do not appear to have been acquainted. Now, if this be true, the supposition that the second epistle was not written by St. Peter himself, involves a contradiction. Nor is incredible that a pious impostor of the first or second century should have imitated St. Peter so successfully as to betray no marks of a forgery; for the spurious productions of those ages, which were sent into the world in the name of the apostles, are for the most part very unhappy imitations, and discover very evident marks that they were not written by the persons to whom they were ascribed. Other productions of this kind betray their origin by the poverty of their materials, or by the circumstance that, instead of containing original thoughts, they are nothing more than a rhapsody of sentiments collected from various parts of the Bible, and put together without plan or order.

"This charge cannot possibly be laid to the Second Epistle of Peter, which is so far from containing materials derived from other parts of the Bible, that the third chapter exhibits the discussion of a totally new subject. Its resemblance to the Epistle of Jude will hardly be urged as an argument against it; for no doubt can be made that the Second Epistle of St. Peter was, in respect to the Epistle of St. Jude, the original, and not the copy. Lastly, it is extremely difficult, even for a man of the greatest talents, to forge a writing in the name of another, without sometimes inserting what the pretended author either would not or could not have said; and support the imposture in so complete a manner as to militate, in not a single instance, either against his character or against the age in which he lived. Now, in the Second Epistle of St. Peter, though it has been a subject of examination full seventeen hundred years, nothing has hitherto been discovered which is unsuitable either to the apostle or the apostolic age. Objections, indeed, have been made on account of its style; but the style of the second epistle, when compared with that of the first, warrants rather the conclusion that both were written by the same person. We have no reason, therefore, to believe that the Second Epistle of St. Peter is spurious, especially as it is difficult to comprehend what motive could have induced a Christian, whether orthodox or heretic, to attempt the fabrication of such an epistle, and then falsely ascribe it to St. Peter.

"Having shown that the supposition that this epistle is spurious is without foundation, I have, in the next place, to show that there are positive grounds for believing it to be genuine. The arguments in favour of its genuineness are of two kinds, being founded on the similarity of the two epistles, either in respect to their *materials*, or in respect to their *style*. The arguments of the former kind are as follow:—

"The design of the first epistle was to assure the uncircumcised Christians that they stood in the grace of God. Now it was not generally known that this was the design of it; and therefore we cannot suppose that any person whose object was to forge an epistle in St. Peter's name should have

observed it. But the design of the second epistle was certainly the same as that of the first, as appears from the address, **#2Pe 1:1**: *τοις ισοτιμον ημιν λαχουσι πισθιν εν δικαιοσυνη του θεου*. To them who have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God. If we explain *ημιν*, as denoting 'us apostles,' the address will imply what was wholly unnecessary, since no one could doubt that the faith of other Christians might be as good as the faith of the apostles; and it will sound likewise rather haughty and assuming; but if we explain *ημιν* as denoting 'us who were born Jews,' and consider that the second epistle, as well as the first, was directed to persons who were born heathens, the address becomes clear and consistent: *δικαιοσυνη του θεου*, will then signify the impartiality of God in estimating the faith of native heathens as highly as the faith of native Jews, which St. Peter has extolled in other places. We shall likewise be able to explain **#2Pe 1:8-10**, which appears to contain the tautology that those who are diligent in good works are not idle; whereas, if this epistle be explained from the design of the first, we shall perceive the meaning of the passage to be this, that they who are diligent in good works need not fear the reproach that they observe not the Levitical law, since their good works, which are the fruit of their religious knowledge, will be the means of making their calling and election sure. (See the note on this place.)

"The deluge, which is not a common subject in the apostolic epistles, is mentioned both in **#1Pe 3:20**, and in **#2Pe 2:5**; and in both places the circumstance is noted, that eight persons only were saved; though in neither place does the subject require that the number should be particularly specified. Now it is true that St. Peter was not the only apostle who knew how many persons were saved in the ark; but he only, who by habit had acquired a familiarity with the subject, would ascertain the precise number, where his argument did not depend upon it. The author of the first epistle had read St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans; and the author of the second epistle speaks in express terms, **#2Pe 3:15, 16**, of the epistles of St. Paul. Now, no other writer of the New Testament has quoted from the New Testament; consequently, we have in these epistles a criterion from which we may judge that they were written by the same author.

"Before I consider the arguments which are derived from the *style* of these epistles, I must observe that several commentators have on the contrary contended that the style is very different; and hence have inferred that they were written by different authors; but it is extremely difficult to form from a single epistle so complete a judgment of the author's style and manner as to enable us to pronounce with certainty that he was *not* the author of another epistle ascribed to him. The style of the same writer is not always the same at every period of his life, especially when he composes not in his native, but in a foreign, language.

"From what has been said in the course of this section, it appears that even the second chapter of the second epistle has some resemblance both in style and contents to the first epistle. This is to be particularly noted, because even the advocates for the second epistle have in general granted that the style of this chapter is not the usual style of St. Peter. Bishop Sherlock, for instance, acknowledges it; nor, though I contend that there is some similarity, as in **#2Pe 2:5-7**, will I assert that there is no difference. But it will not therefore follow that the whole epistle was not written by St. Peter: and if it is allowable to draw a conclusion from one or two passages, it will be no other than this, that the second chapter is spurious, because the style of it is said to be as different from the first and third chapters as it is from the first epistle. This conclusion, however, no one will draw who has examined the connection of the whole epistle; in fact the difference in question is rather of a negative kind; for

though I am unable to discover any remarkable *agreement* in style between the first epistle and the second chapter of the second epistle, I do not perceive any remarkable *difference*. This second chapter has indeed several words which are unusual in other parts of the New Testament, but the same may be said of the first epistle: and some of the expressions which to us appear extraordinary were borrowed perhaps from the Gnostics, whose doctrines are here confuted; for it is not unusual in combatting the opinions of a particular sect to adopt their peculiar terms. Thus in **#2Pe 2:17**, the Gnostics are called 'clouds, agitated by a tempest;' and we know that the Manicheans, who had many doctrines in common with the Gnostics, taught that there were five good and five bad elements, and that one of the latter was called 'tempest.' In like manner they frequently speak of darkness under the name of ζοφος, which occurs more than once in this chapter. The Epistle of St. Jude has a still greater number of unusual figurative expressions; and it is not impossible that these also were borrowed from the Gnostics. The Second Epistle of St. Peter must have been written only a short time before his death; for he says, **#2Pe 1:14**, 'shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath showed me.' St. Peter here alludes to his conversation with Christ after the resurrection, recorded in **#Joh 21:18-22**, where Christ had foretold his death in the following manner: 'When thou shalt be old thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.' Hence St. Peter might very easily conclude that he would not survive the coming of Christ to judge Jerusalem. But Christ has declared that Jerusalem would be destroyed before one generation passed away. St. Peter, therefore, after a lapse of thirty years, that is, in the year 64, necessarily considered his death as an event not far distant. As to the design of this epistle, it appears that St. Peter wrote against certain persons who, though members of the Church, denied the doctrine of a general judgment and a dissolution of the world. They inferred that this event, because it had been long delayed, would never take place; to which objection St. Peter replies by saying, That one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day: that the Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is long-suffering, not willing that any man should perish, but that all should come to repentance. Farther, St. Peter argues, that as the earth has already undergone a great revolution at the deluge, another revolution equally great is not incredible; and that since the former event was at the time when it happened as unexpected as the latter will be, we ought to believe in God's declaration, that the world will one day be totally destroyed. This destruction, St. Peter says, will be effected, not by water, as at the deluge, but by fire. 'The elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burned up.' Now, a general conflagration will be more easily admitted by those who are unacquainted with the state of the earth, than a universal deluge; for though it may be difficult to comprehend whence a sufficient quantity of water could be brought to cover the whole earth, yet no one can deny that the bowels of the earth abound with inflammable matter, and that fiery eruptions may spread themselves throughout the surface of the globe. (See the notes on **#2Pe 3:9-11**.)

"It must be observed that St. Peter's appeal to the deluge in the time of Noah implies that the adversaries whom he combats admitted that the Mosaic account of it was true, since it would have been useless to have argued from a fact which they denied. This must be kept in view, because it will assist us in determining who these adversaries were.

"St. Peter describes these false teachers, **#2Pe 2:10-12**, as *calumniators of the angels*; which the apostle highly censures, even though the calumny should be directed against the fallen angels, since some respect is due to their former greatness and power. St. Peter says, 'angels themselves, which

are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord; but these as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things which they understand not.' Here we have a description of these false teachers, which points them out more distinctly than any of the preceding accounts, and shows they were *Gnostics*. For the *ecclesiastical* history furnishes many examples of improper adoration paid to the angels. I know of no sect which calumniated them, except that of the Gnostics. Now the Gnostics *calumniated the angels* by their doctrine in respect to the creation of the world. They raised certain angels to the rank of creators; but described the creation as very imperfect, and the authors of it as wicked and rebellious against the supreme Being.

"Having thus shown that St. Peter in his second epistle combats the opinion of a *Gnostic* sect, I will now venture to go a step farther, and attempt to determine the *name* which the orthodox gave to this particular sect in the first century. St. Peter describes them, **#2Pe 2:15**, as *following the way of Balaam*, that is, as following the *religious doctrine of Balaam*. The doctrine of Balaam, as St. John says, **#Re 2:14**, was *to eat things sacrificed to idols*, and *to commit fornication*. And since *Nicolaus*, in Greek, has the same meaning as *Balaam* in Hebrew, the followers of Balaam are called by St. John, **#Re 2:15**, *Nicolaitans*. Now it is well known that the Nicolaitans were *a sect of the Gnostics*; and therefore it was probable that this was the sect against which St. Peter wrote. To this opinion it has been objected, that if St. Peter had meant the *Nicolaitans*, he would have called them, not *followers of Balaam*, but by their proper name, *Nicolaitans*; first, because in general proper names are retained and not translated; and, secondly, because in the present instance, no one before *Cocceius* observed the analogy between the *Hebrew* word *Balaam* and the *Greek* word *Nicolaus*. But neither of these reasons are true. For to say nothing of the general custom which once prevailed among the literati of Germany, of translating their names into Greek or Latin; I could produce examples of such translations amongst the Jews, of which it will be sufficient to mention that which occurs in **#Ac 9:36**. And the derivation of the *Nicolaitans* from *Balaam* must have been long known, at least in Asia; for in the Arabic version published by

*Erpenius*, we find an instance of it in **#Re 2:6**, where *τα εργα των νικολαιτων* is rendered [Arabic] that is 'works of the Shuaibites.' Now the Arabic word [Arabic] (*Shuaib*) is equivalent to the Hebrew *Balaam*. *Shuaib* is mentioned in the *Koran* (Surat vii. 86; xxvi. 176, and in other places) as the prophet of the *Midianites*. Some suppose that by *Shuaib* is meant *Jethro*; but in my opinion no other person is meant but *Balaam*, who was sent for by the *Midianites* as well as by the *Moabites*. At least I cannot comprehend how the *Nicolaitans*, or any other heretics, could be considered as *followers of Jethro*. The Arabic verb [Arabic] *shaaba*, signifies *he destroyed*, and the noun [Arabic] *shaabon*, the *people*. It is not improbable, therefore, that the Arabs adopted the word [Arabic] *shuaib*, as corresponding to the Hebrew word **בַּלְעָם** *Balaam*, which is compounded of **בָּלַע** *bala*, *he swallowed up* or *destroyed*, and **עַם** *am*, the *people*. So *νικολαος*, *Nicolas*, is from *νικαω*, to *overcome*, and *λαος*, the *people*."-See *Michaelis's Introduction*.

I shall not attempt to dispute the propriety of these derivations and etymologies; but I must make one remark on the *Shuaibites*. In general, the Arabic writers say that *Shuaib* was *Jethro*, the father-in-law of *Moses*, and that God had sent him, according to the *Koran*, to preach pure morality to the *Midianites*; but I do not remember to have met with a sect of idolaters or heretics called *Shuaibites*. In both the places of the *Koran* mentioned above, *Shuaib* is spoken of with respect. But

the conjecture that *Shuaib* and *Balaam* are the same is exceedingly probable; and this makes the etymology the more likely.

We may safely conclude from all the evidence before us, 1. That St. Peter, the apostle, was the author of this, as well as of the other, epistle. 2. That it was written to the same persons. 3. That they were in a state of persecution, and had also to contend with Gnostics or other heretics in the Church. 4. That it was written a short time after the first epistle, and not long before St. Peter's martyrdom; but the precise year cannot be ascertained.

**THE  
SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE  
OF  
PETER.**

*Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5568.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5562.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5552.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4064.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4288.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3820.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4419.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2408.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3162.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1000.
- Year of the era of Nahonassar, king of Babylon, 809.
- Year of the CCIXth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 807.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 811.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 813.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 372.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 108.
- Year of the Julian era, 105.
- Year of the Spanish era, 98.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 64.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 60.
- Year of Claudius Felix, governor of the Jews, 8.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 11.
- Jesus, high priest of the Jews, 1.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 61.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 4; or the second after the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 1; or two years before the first embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 13.
- Dominical Letter, it being the Bissextile, or Leap Year, FE.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the second of April, which happened in this year on the fourth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the sixth of April.

- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 3.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 11.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 11, 13, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 19, 21, 21.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 12.
- Year of the reign of Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, the fifth Roman monarch, computing from Octavianus, or Augustus Cæsar, properly the first Roman emperor, 7.
- Roman Consuls, the Emperor Nero Augustus, the fourth time, and Cossus Cornelius Lentulus.

## CHAPTER I.

*The apostolical address, and the persons to whom the epistle was sent described by the state into which God had called, and in which he had placed, them, 1-4. What graces they should possess in order to be fruitful in the knowledge of God, 5-8. The miserable state of those who either have not these graces, or have fallen from them, 9. Believers should give diligence to make their calling and election sure, 10, 11. The apostle's intimations of his speedy dissolution, and his wish to confirm and establish those Churches in the true faith, 12-15. The certainty of the Gospel, and the convincing evidence which the apostle had of its truth from being present at the transfiguration, by which the word of prophecy was made more sure, 16-19. How the prophecies came, and their nature, 20, 21.*

## NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **Simon Peter]** *Symeon*, συμεων, is the reading of almost all the versions, and of all the most important MSS. And this is the more remarkable, as the surname of Peter occurs upwards of seventy times in the New Testament, and is invariably read σιμων, *Simon*, except here, and in **Ac 15:14**, where James gives him the name of *Symeon*. Of all the versions, only the *Armenian* and *Vulgate* have *Simon*. But the *edit. princ.*, and several of my own MSS. of the *Vulgate*, write *Symon*; and *Wiclif* has *Symont*.

**A servant]** Employed in his Master's work.

**And an apostle]** Commissioned immediately by Jesus Christ himself to preach to the Gentiles, and to write these epistles for the edification of the Church. As the writer was an *apostle*, the epistle is therefore necessarily *canonical*. All the MSS. agree in the title *apostle*; and of the *versions*, only the *Syriac* omits it.

**Precious faith]** λοοτιμον πιστιν *Valuable faith*; faith worth a great price, and faith which cost a great price. The word *precious* is used in the *low* religious phraseology for *dear*, *comfortable*, *delightful*, &c.; but how much is the dignity of the subject let down by expressions and meanings more proper for the nursery than for the noble science of salvation! It is necessary however to state, that the word *precious* literally signifies *valuable*, of *great price*, *costly*; and was not used in that *low*

sense in which it is now employed when our translation was made. That *faith* must be of infinite value, the grace of which Christ purchased by his blood; and it must be of infinite value also when it is the very instrument by which the soul is saved unto eternal life.

**With us]** God having given to *you*-believing *Gentiles*, the same faith and salvation which he had given to *us*-believing *Jews*.

**Through the righteousness of God]** Through his *method* of bringing a lost world, both Jews and Gentiles, to salvation by Jesus Christ; through his gracious impartiality, providing for Gentiles as well as Jews. See the notes on **#Ro 3:21-26**.

**Of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ]** This is not a proper translation of the original του θεου ημων και σωτηρος ιησου χριστου, which is literally, *Of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ*; and this reading, which is indicated in the *margin*, should have been received into the text; and it is an absolute proof that St. Peter calls Jesus Christ GOD, even in the properest sense of the word, with the *article* prefixed. It is no evidence against this doctrine that one MS. of little authority, and the *Syriac* and two *Arabic* versions have κυριου, *Lord*, instead of θεου, *God*, as all other MSS. and versions agree in the other reading, as well as the fathers. See in *Griesbach*.

Verse 2. **Grace]** God's favour; *peace*-the effects of that favour in the communication of spiritual and temporal blessings.

**Through the knowledge of God]** εν επιγνωσει. *By the acknowledging of God, and of Jesus our Lord*. For those who acknowledge him in all their ways, he will direct their steps. Those who know Christ; and do not acknowledge him before men, can get no multiplication of grace and peace.

Verse 3. **As his Divine power]** His power, which no power can resist, because it is *Divine*-that which properly belongs to the infinite Godhead.

**Hath given unto us]** δεδωρημενης. *Hath endowed us with the gifts*; or, *hath gifted us*, as Dr. *Macknight* translates it, who observes that it refers to the gifts which the Holy Spirit communicated to the apostles, to enable them to bring men to *life* and *godliness*; which were, 1. A complete knowledge of the doctrines of the Gospel. 2. Power to preach and defend their doctrines in suitable language, which their adversaries were not able to gainsay or resist. 3. Wisdom to direct them how to behave in all cases, *where* and *when* to labour; and the *matter* suitable to all different cases, and every variety of persons. 4. Miraculous powers, so that on all proper and necessary occasions they could work miracles for the confirmation of their doctrines and mission.

By *life* and *godliness* we may understand, 1. a *godly life*; or, 2. eternal life as the end, and godliness the way to it; or, 3. what was essentially necessary for the *present life*, food, raiment, &c., and what was requisite for the life to come. As they were in a suffering state, and most probably many of them *strangers* in those places, one can scarcely say that they had *all things that pertained to life*; and yet so had God worked in their behalf, that none of them perished, either through lack of food or raiment. And as to what was *necessary for godliness*, they had that from the *Gospel ministry*, which it appears was still continued among them, and the *gifts of the Holy Spirit* which

were not withdrawn; and what was farther necessary in the way of personal caution, comfort, and instruction, was supplied by means of these *two epistles*.

**That hath called us to glory and virtue]** To *virtue* or *courage* as the *means*; and *glory*-the kingdom of heaven, as the *end*. This is the way in which these words are commonly understood, and this sense is plain enough, but the construction is harsh. Others have translated *δια δοξης και αρετης*, by *his glorious benignity*, a Hebraism for *δια της ενδοξου αρετης*; and read the whole verse thus: *God by his own power hath bestowed on us every thing necessary for a happy life and godliness, having called us to the knowledge of himself, by his own infinite goodness*. It is certain that the word *αρετη*, which we translate *virtue* or *courage*, is used, #1Pe 2:9, to express the perfection of the Divine nature: *That ye may show forth τας αρετας, the virtues or PERFECTIONS, of him who hath called you from darkness into his marvellous light*.

But there is a various reading here which is of considerable importance, and which, from the authorities by which it is supported, appears to be genuine: *του καλεσαντος ημας ιδια δοξη και αρετη*, through the knowledge of him who hath called us *by his own glory and power, or by his own glorious power*. This is the reading of AC, several others; and, in effect, of the *Coptic, Armenian, Syriac, Æthiopic, Vulgate, Cyril, Cassiodorus, &c.*

Verse 4. **Whereby are given unto us]** By his own glorious power he hath *freely given unto us exceeding great and invaluable promises*. The Jews were distinguished in a very particular manner by the *promises* which they received from God; the promises to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and the prophets. God promised to be their God; to protect, support, and save them; to give them what was emphatically called the promised land; and to cause the Messiah to spring from their race. St. Peter intimates to these *Gentiles* that God had also given unto them exceeding great promises; indeed all that he had given to the Jews, the mere settlement in the promised land excepted; and this also he had given in all its *spiritual* meaning and force. And besides *τα μεγαιστα επαγγελματα*, these superlatively great promises, which distinguished the Mosaic dispensation, he had given them *τα τιμια επαγγελματα*; the *valuable* promises, those which came through the great *price*; enrolment with the Church of God, redemption in and through the blood of the cross, the continual indwelling influence of the Holy Ghost, the resurrection of the body, and eternal rest at the right hand of God. It was of considerable consequence to the comfort of the *Gentiles* that these promises were made to *them*, and that salvation was not exclusively of the Jews.

**That by these ye might be partakers]** The object of all God's promises and dispensations was to bring fallen man back to the *image of God*, which he had lost. This, indeed, is the sum and substance of the religion of Christ. We have partaken of an *earthly, sensual, and devilish* nature; the design of God by Christ is to remove this, and to make us *partakers of the Divine nature*; and save us from all the *corruption* in principle and fact *which is in the world*; the source of which is *lust, επιθυμια*, irregular, unreasonable, in ordinate, and impure desire; desire to have, to do, and to be, what God has prohibited, and what would be ruinous and destructive to us were the desire to be granted.

*Lust*, or irregular, impure desire, is the *source* whence all the corruption which is in the world springs. Lust conceives and brings forth sin; sin is finished or brought into act, and then brings forth

death. This destructive principle is to be rooted out; and love to God and man is to be implanted in its place. This is every Christian's privilege; God has promised to purify our hearts by faith; and that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so shall grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life; that here we are to be delivered out of the hands of all our enemies, and have even "the thoughts of our hearts so cleansed by the inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, that we shall perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his holy name."

This blessing may be expected by those who are continually *escaping*, *αποφυγοντες*, *flying from*, the corruption that is in the world and in themselves. God purifies no heart in which sin is *indulged*. Get pardon through the blood of the Lamb; feel your need of being purified in heart; seek that with all your soul; plead the exceeding great and invaluable promises that refer to this point; abhor your inward self; abstain from every appearance of evil; flee from self and sin to God; and the very God of peace will sanctify you through body, soul, and spirit, make you burning and shining lights here below, (a proof that he can save to the uttermost ail that come to him by Christ,) and afterwards, having guided you by his counsel through life, will receive you into his eternal glory.

Verse 5. **And beside this]** Notwithstanding what God hath done for you, in order that ye may not receive the grace of God in vain;

**Giving all diligence]** *Furnishing* all *earnestness* and *activity*: the original is very emphatic.

**Add to your faith]** *επιχορηγησατε* *Lead up hand in hand*; alluding, as most think, to the *chorus* in the Grecian dance, who danced with joined hands. **See Clarke's note on this word, "2Co 9:10"**.

*Your faith*-That faith in Jesus by which ye have been led to embrace the whole Gospel, and by which ye have the evidence of things unseen.

**Virtue]** *αρετην* *Courage* or *fortitude*, to enable you to profess the faith before men, in these times of persecution.

**Knowledge]** True wisdom, by which your faith will be increased, and your courage directed, and preserved from degenerating into *rashness*.

Verse 6. **Temperance]** A proper and limited use of all earthly enjoyments, keeping every sense under proper restraints, and never permitting the animal part to subjugate the rational.

**Patience]** Bearing all trials and difficulties with an even mind, enduring in all, and persevering through all.

**Godliness]** Piety towards God; a deep, reverential, religious fear; not only worshipping God with every becoming *outward* act, but adoring, loving, and magnifying him in the heart: a disposition indispensably necessary to salvation, but exceedingly rare among professors.

Verse 7. **Brotherly kindness]** *φιλαδελφικαν* *Love of the brotherhood*-the strongest attachment to Christ's flock; feeling each as a member of your own body.

**Charity]** *αγαπην*. Love to the whole human race, even to your persecutors: love to God and the brethren they had; love to all *mankind* they must also have. True religion is neither selfish nor insulated; where the love of God is, bigotry cannot exist. Narrow, selfish people, and people of a party, who scarcely have any hope of the salvation of those who do not believe as they believe, and who do not follow with them, have scarcely any religion, though in their own apprehension none is so truly orthodox or religious as themselves.

After *αγαπην*, *love*, one MS. adds these words, *εν δε τη αγαπη την παρακλησιν*, and to this *love consolation*; but this is an idle and useless addition.

Verse 8. **For if these things be in you and abound]** If ye possess all these graces, and they increase and abound in your souls, *they will make-show*, you to be neither *αργους*, *idle*, nor *ακαρπους*, *unfruitful*, in the acknowledgment of our Lord Jesus Christ. The common translation is here very unhappy: *barren* and *unfruitful* certainly convey the same ideas; but *idle* or *inactive*, which is the proper sense of *αργους*, takes away this tautology, and restores the sense. The graces already mentioned by the apostle are in themselves active principles; he who was possessed of them, and had them *abounding* in him, could not be *inactive*; and he who is not inactive in the way of life must be *fruitful*. I may add, that he who is thus active, and consequently fruitful, will ever be ready at all hazard to acknowledge his Lord and Saviour, by whom he has been brought into this state of salvation.

Verse 9. **But he that lacketh these things]** He, whether Jew or Gentile, who professes to have FAITH in God, and has not added to that FAITH *fortitude, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness, brotherly kindness*, and *universal love*; is *blind*-his understanding is darkened, and *cannot see afar off*, *μωπαζων*, *shutting his eyes against the light, winking*, not able to look truth in the face, nor to behold that God whom he once knew was reconciled to him: and thus it appears he is *wilfully blind*, and *hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins*-has at last, through his nonimprovement of the grace which he received from God, his faith ceasing to work by love, lost the evidence of things not seen; for, having grieved the Holy Spirit by not showing forth the virtues of him who called him into his marvellous light, he has lost the testimony of his sonship; and then, darkness and hardness having taken place of *light* and *filial confidence*, he first calls all his former experience into doubt, and questions whether he has not put enthusiasm in the place of religion. By these means his darkness and hardness increase, his memory becomes indistinct and confused, till at length he forgets the work of God on his soul, next denies it, and at last asserts that the knowledge of salvation, by the remission of sins, is impossible, and that no man can be saved from sin in this life. Indeed, some go so far as to deny the Lord that bought them; to renounce Jesus Christ as having made atonement for them; and finish their career of apostasy by utterly denying his Godhead. Many cases of this kind have I known; and they are all the consequence of believers not continuing to be workers together with God, after they had experienced his pardoning love.

Reader, see that the light that is in thee become not darkness; for if it do, *how great a darkness!*

Verse 10. **Wherefore]** Seeing the danger of apostasy, and the fearful end of them who obey not the Gospel, and thus receive the grace of God in vain; *give all diligence*, *σπουδασατε*, hasten, be deeply careful, labour with the most intense purpose of soul.

**To make your calling]** From deep Gentile darkness into the marvellous light of the Gospel.

**And election]** Your being *chosen*, in consequence of obeying the heavenly *calling*, to be the people and Church of God. Instead of κλησιν, *calling*, the *Codex Alexandrinus* has παρακλησιν, *consolation*.

**Sure]** βεβαιαν· *Firm, solid*. For your *calling* to believe the Gospel, and your *election* to be members of the Church of Christ, will be ultimately unprofitable to you, unless you hold fast what you have received by adding to your faith virtue, knowledge, temperance, &c.

**For if ye do these things]** If ye be careful and diligent to work out your own salvation, through the grace which ye have already received from God; *ye shall never fall*, ου μη πταισητε ποτε, *ye shall at no time stumble or fall*; as the Jews have done, and lost their election, #Ro 11:11, where the same word is used, and as apostates do, and lose their peace and salvation. We find, therefore, that they who *do not* these things *shall fall*; and thus we see that there is nothing absolute and unconditional in their *election*. There is an addition here in some MSS. and versions which should not pass unnoticed: the *Codex Alexandrinus*, nine others, with the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, later *Syriac* with an asterisk, the *Vulgate*, and *Bede*, have ινα δια των καλων (υμων) εργαων, THAT BY (your) GOOD WORKS *ye may make your calling and election firm*. This clause is found in the edition of *Colinaeus*, Paris, 1534, and has been probably omitted by more recent editors on the supposition that the edition does not make a very *orthodox* sense. But on this ground there need be no alarm, for it does not state that the good works thus required merit either the *calling* and *election*, or the *eternal glory*, of God. He who does not by good works *confirm* his *calling* and *election*, will soon have *neither*; and although no good works ever did purchase or ever can purchase the kingdom of God, yet no soul can ever scripturally expect to see God who has them not. *I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: go, ye cursed. I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; &c., &c.; come, ye blessed.*

Verse 11. **For so an entrance shall be ministered]** If ye *give diligence*; and do *not fall*, an abundant, free, honourable, and triumphant entrance shall be ministered to you into the everlasting kingdom. There seems to be here an allusion to the *triumphs* granted by the Romans to their generals who had distinguished themselves by putting an end to a war, or doing some signal military service to the state. (See the whole account of this military pageant in **Clarke's note on "2Co 2:14"**.) "Ye shall have a triumph, in consequence of having conquered your foes, and led captivity captive."

Instead of *everlasting kingdom*, αιωνιον βασιλειαν, two MSS. have επουρανιον, *heavenly kingdom*; and several MSS. omit the word και σωτηρος, and *Saviour*.

Verse 12. **Wherefore I will not be negligent]** He had already written *one* epistle, this is the *second*; and probably he meditated more should he be spared. He plainly saw that there was no way of entering into eternal life but that which he described from the 5th to the 10th verse; {#2Pe 1:5-10} and although they knew and were established in the present truth, yet he saw it necessary to bring these things frequently to their recollection.

Verse 13. **As long as I am in this tabernacle]** By *tabernacle* we are to understand his *body*; and hence several of the versions have *σωματι*, *body*, instead of *σκηνωματι*, *tabernacle*. Peter's mode of speaking is very remarkable: as long as I AM in this *tabernacle*, so then the *body* was not *Peter*, but *Peter* dwelt in that *body*. Is not this a proof that St. Peter believed his soul to be very distinct from his body? As a man's house is the place where he dwells, so the body is the house where the soul dwells.

Verse 14. **Knowing that shortly I must put off]** St. Peter plainly refers to the conversation between our Lord and himself, related #Joh 21:18, 19. And it is likely that he had now a particular intimation that he was *shortly* to seal the truth with his blood. But as our Lord told him that his death would take place when he should be *old*, being aged now he might on this ground fairly suppose that his departure was at hand.

Verse 15. **Moreover, I will endeavour]** And is not this endeavour seen in these two epistles? By leaving these among them, even after his decease, they had *these things always in remembrance*.

**After my decease]** *μετα την εμην εξοδον*. *After my going out*, i.e. of his *tabernacle*. The real Peter was not open to the eye, nor palpable to the touch; he was concealed in that *tabernacle* vulgarly supposed to be *Peter*. There is a thought very similar to this in the last conversation of Socrates with his friends. As this great man was about to drink the poison to which he was condemned by the Athenian judges, his friend CRITO said, "But how would you be buried?—SOCRATES: Just as you please, *if you can but catch me*, and I do not elude your pursuit. Then, gently smiling, he said: I cannot persuade Crito, *ως εγω ειμι ουτος ο σωκρατης ο νυνι διαλεγομενος*, that I AM *that Socrates who now converses with you*; but he thinks that *I am he*, *ον οψεται ολιγον υστερον νεκρον, και ερωτα πως εδι με θαπτειν*, *whom he shall shortly see dead*; and he asks how I would be buried? I have asserted that, after I have drunk the poison, *I should no longer remain with you, but shall depart to certain felicities of the blessed.*" PLATONIS *Phædo*, Oper., vol. i, edit. Bipont., p 260.

Verse 16. **Cunningly devised fables]** *σεσοφισμενοις μυθοις*. I think, with Macknight and others, from the apostle's using *εποπται*, *eye witnesses*, or rather *beholders*, in the end of the verse, it is probable that he means those *cunningly* devised *fables* among the heathens, concerning the *appearance of their gods on earth in human form*. And to gain the greater credit to these fables, the priests and statesmen instituted what they called the *mysteries* of the gods, in which the fabulous appearance of the gods was represented in mystic *shows*. But one particular show none but the fully initiated were permitted to *behold*; hence they were entitled *εποπται*, *beholders*. This show was probably some resplendent image of the god, imitating life, which, by its *glory*, dazzled the eyes of the beholders, while their ears were ravished by hymns sung in its praise; to this it was natural enough for St. Peter to allude, when speaking about the transfiguration of Christ. Here the indescribably resplendent majesty of the great God was *manifested*, as far as it could be, in conjunction with that human body in which the fulness of the Divinity dwelt. *And we*, says the apostle, *were εποπται, beholders, της εκεινου μεγαλειοτητος*, *of his own majesty*. Here was no *trick*, no feigned show; we saw him in his glory whom thousands saw before and afterwards; and we have made known to you the *power and coming*, *παρουσιαν*, the appearance and presence, of our Lord Jesus; and we call you to feel the exceeding greatness of this power in your conversion, and the glory of this appearance in his revelation by the power of his Spirit to your souls. These things we have

witnessed, and these things ye have experienced: and therefore we can confidently say that neither you nor we have followed cunningly devised fables, but that blessed Gospel which is the power of God to the salvation of every one that believes.

Verse 17. **For he received honour and glory]** In his transfiguration our Lord received from the Father honour in the voice or declaration which said, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted. And he received glory, when, penetrated with, and involved in, that excellent glory, the fashion of his countenance was altered, for his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white and glistening, exceeding white like snow; which most glorious and preternatural appearance was a confirmation of the supernatural voice, as the voice was of this preternatural appearance: and thus his Messiahship was attested in the most complete and convincing manner.

Verse 18. **And this voice-we heard]** That is, himself, James, and John heard it, and saw this glory; for these only were the [εποπται](#), beholders, on the holy mount. It is worthy of remark that our blessed Lord, who came to give a new law to mankind, appeared on this holy mount with splendour and great glory, as God did when he came on the holy mount, Sinai, to give the old law to Moses. And when the voice came from the excellent glory, This is my Son, the beloved One, in whom I have delighted; hear him: the authority of the old law was taken away. Neither Moses nor Elijah, the law nor the prophets, must tabernacle among men, as teaching the whole way of salvation, and affording the means of eternal life; these things they had pointed out, but these things they did not contain; yet the fulfilment of their types and predictions rendered their declarations more firm and incontestable. See below.

Verse 19. **We have also a more sure word of prophecy]** [εχομεν βεβαιωτερον τον προφητικον λογον](#). We have the prophetic doctrine more firm or more confirmed; for in this sense the word [βεβαιω](#) is used in several places in the New Testament. See **#1Co 1:6**: Even as the testimony of Christ [εβεβαιωθη](#), was CONFIRMED, among you. **#2Co 1:21**: Now he which stablisheth us, [ο δε βεβαιων ημας](#), who CONFIRMETH US. **#Col 2:7**: Rooted and built up in him, and established in the faith, [βεβαιουμενοι](#), CONFIRMED in the faith. **#Heb 2:3**: How shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation [ητις εβεβαιωτη](#), which was CONFIRMED to us. **#Heb 6:16**: And an oath, [εις βεβαιωσιν](#), for CONFIRMATION. This is the literal sense of the passage in question; and this sense removes that ambiguity from the text which has given rise to so many different interpretations. Taken according to the common translation, it seems to say that prophecy is a surer evidence of Divine revelation than miracles; and so it has been understood. The meaning of the apostle appears to be this: The law and the prophets have spoken concerning Jesus Christ, and Isaiah has particularly pointed him out in these words: Behold my servant whom I uphold, my CHOSEN IN WHOM MY SOUL DELIGHTETH; I have put my Spirit upon him, and he shall bring forth judgment to the Gentiles; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and THEM THAT SIT IN DARKNESS out of the prison house, **#Isa 42:1, 7**. Now both at his baptism, **#Mt 3:17**, and at his transfiguration, Jesus Christ was declared to be this chosen person, God's only Son, the beloved One in WHOM HE DELIGHTED. The voice, therefore, from heaven, and the miraculous transfiguration of his person, have confirmed the prophetic doctrine concerning him. And to this doctrine, thus confirmed, ye do well to take heed; for it is that light that shines in the dark place-in the Gentile world, as well as among the Jews; giving light to them that sit in darkness, and bringing the prisoners out of the prison house: and this ye must continue to do till the day of his second, last, and most glorious appearing to judge the world comes;

and the day star, *φωσφορος*, this light-bringer, arise in your hearts-manifest himself to your eternal consolation. Or perhaps the latter clause of the verse might be thus understood: The prophecies concerning Jesus, which have been so signally confirmed to us on the holy mount, have always been as a light shining in a dark place, from the time of their delivery to the time in which the bright day of Gospel light and salvation dawned forth, and the Son of righteousness has arisen in our souls, with healing in his rays. And to this all who waited for Christ's appearing have taken heed. The word *φωσφορος*, phosphorus, generally signified the planet Venus, when she is the morning star; and thus she is called in most European nations.

Verse 20. **Knowing this first]** Considering this as a first principle, that no prophecy of the Scripture, whether that referred to above, or any other, is of any private interpretation-proceeds from the prophet's own knowledge or invention, or was the offspring of calculation or conjecture. The word *επιλυσις* signifies also impetus, impulse; and probably this is the best sense here; not by the mere private impulse of his own mind.

Verse 21. **For the prophecy came not in old time]** That is, in any former time, by the will of man-by a man's own searching, conjecture, or calculation; but holy men of God-persons separated from the world, and devoted to God's service, spake, moved by the Holy Ghost. So far were they from inventing these prophetic declarations concerning Christ, or any future event, that they were *φερομενοι*, carried away, out of themselves and out of the whole region, as it were, of human knowledge and conjecture, by the Holy Ghost, who, without their knowing any thing of the matter, dictated to them what to speak, and what to write; and so far above their knowledge were the words of the prophecy, that they did not even know the intent of those words, but searched 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. See **#1Pe 1:11, 12**, and the notes there.

1. As the writer of this epistle asserts that he was on the holy mount with Christ when he was transfigured, he must be either *Peter, James, or John*, for there was no other person present on that occasion except *Moses and Elijah*, in their glorious bodies. The epistle was never attributed to *James nor John*; but the uninterrupted current, where its Divine inspiration was granted, gave it to *Peter alone*. See the *preface*.

2. It is not unfrequent for the writers of the New Testament to draw a comparison between the Mosaic and Christian dispensations; and the comparison generally shows that, *glorious* as the former was, it had no glory in comparison of the glory that excelleth. St. Peter seems to touch here on the same point; the Mosaic dispensation, with all the light of prophecy by which it was illustrated, was only as a *lamp shining in a dark place*. There is a propriety and delicacy in this image that are not generally noticed: a lamp in the dark gives but a very small portion of light, and only to those who are *very near to it*; yet it always gives light enough to make *itself visible*, even at a *great distance*; though it enlightens not the space between it and the beholder, it is still literally the *lamp shining in a dark place*. Such was the Mosaic dispensation; it gave a little light to the Jews, but shone not to the Gentile world, any farther than to make itself *visible*. This is compared with the Gospel under the emblem of *daybreak*, and the *rising of the sun*. When the sun is even eighteen degrees below the horizon *daybreak* commences, as the rays of light begin then to diffuse themselves in our atmosphere, by which they are reflected upon the earth. By this means a whole *hemisphere* is

enlightened, though but in a partial degree; yet this increasing every moment, as the sun approaches the horizon, prepares for the full manifestation of his resplendent orb: so the ministry of John Baptist, and the initiatory ministry of Christ himself, prepared the primitive believers for his full manifestation on the day of pentecost and afterwards. Here the sun rose in his strength, bringing light, heat, and life to all the inhabitants of the earth. So far, then, as a *lantern* carried in a *dark night* differs from and is inferior to the beneficial effects of *daybreak*, and the *full light* and *heat of a meridian sun*; so far was the Mosaic dispensation, in its beneficial effects, inferior to the Christian dispensation.

3. Perhaps there is scarcely any point of view in which we can consider *prophecy* which is so satisfactory and conclusive as that which is here stated; that is, far from *inventing* the subject of their own predictions, the ancient prophets did not even *know* the meaning of what themselves wrote. They were *carried beyond themselves* by the influence of the *Divine Spirit*, and after ages were alone to discover the object of the prophecy; and the fulfilment was to be the absolute proof that the prediction was of God, and that it was of no *private invention*-no *discovery* made by *human sagacity* and *wisdom*, but by the especial revelation of the all-wise God. This is sufficiently evident in all the prophecies which have been already fulfilled, and will be equally so in those yet to be fulfilled; the events will point out the prophecy, and the prophecy will be seen to be fulfilled in that event.

## II PETER

### CHAPTER II.

*False teachers foretold, who shall bring in destructive doctrines and shall pervert many, but at last be destroyed by the judgments of God, 1-3. Instances of God's judgments in the rebellious angels, 4. In the antediluvians, 5. In the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, 6-8. The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly, as well as to punish the ungodly, 9. The character of those seducing teachers and their disciples; they are unclean, presumptuous, speak evil of dignities, adulterous, covetous, and cursed, 10-14. Have forsaken the right way, copy the conduct of Balaam, speak great swelling words, and pervert those who had escaped from error, 15-19. The miserable state of those who, having escaped the corruption that is in the world, have turned back like the dog to his vomit, and the washed swine to her wallowing in the mire, 20-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

Verse 1. **But there were false prophets]** There were not only holy men of God among the Jews, who prophesied by Divine inspiration, but there were also false prophets, whose prophecies were from their own imagination, and perverted many.

**As there shall be false teachers among you]** At a very early period of the Christian Church many heresies sprung up; but the chief were those of the Ebionites, Cerinthians, Nicolaitans, Menandrians, and Gnostics, of whom many strange things have been spoken by the primitive fathers, and of whose opinions it is difficult to form any satisfactory view. They were, no doubt, bad enough, and their opponents in general have doubtless made them worse. By what name those were called of whom the apostle here speaks, we cannot tell. They were probably some sort of apostate Jews, or those called the Nicolaitans. See the *preface*.

**Damnable heresies]** *αἰρεσεις ἀπωλειας*. Heresies of destruction; such as, if followed, would lead a man to perdition. And these *παρεισάξουσιν*, they will *bring in privately-cunningly*, without making much noise, and as covertly as possible. It would be better to translate *destructive heresies* than *damnable*.

**Denying the Lord that bought them]** It is not certain whether God the Father be intended here, or our Lord Jesus Christ; for God is said to have *purchased* the Israelites, **#Ex 15:16**, and to be the *Father that had bought them*, **#De 32:6**, and the words may refer to these or such like passages; or they may point out Jesus Christ, who had *bought them with his blood*; and the *heresies*, or *dangerous opinions*, may mean such as opposed the Divinity of our Lord, or his meritorious and sacrificial death, or such opinions as bring upon those who hold them swift destruction. It seems, however, more natural to understand the Lord that bought them as applying to *Christ*, than otherwise; and if so, this is another proof, among many, 1. That none can be saved but by Jesus Christ. 2. That through their own wickedness some may perish for whom Christ died.

Verse 2. **Many shall follow]** WILL follow, because determined to gratify their sinful propensities.

**Pernicious ways]** ταις απωλειαις· *Their destructions*; i.e. the *heresies of destruction*, or *destructive opinions*, mentioned above. But instead of απωλειαις, *destructions*, ασελγειαις, *lasciviousnesses* or *uncleannesses*, is the reading of ABC, and upwards of *sixty others*, most of which are among the most ancient, correct, and authentic. This is the reading also of both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, *Chrysostom*, *Theophylact*, *Æcumenius*, and *Jerome*. A very few, and those of little repute, have the word in the text.

The word *lasciviousnesses* is undoubtedly the true reading, and this points out what the nature of the heresies was: it was a sort of Antinomianism; they pampered and indulged the lusts of the flesh; and, if the Nicolaitans are meant, it is very applicable to them, for they taught the community of wives, &c. Griesbach has received this reading into the text.

**By reason of whom]** These were persons who professed *Christianity*; and because they were called Christians, and followed such abominable practices, the *way of truth*-the Christian religion, βλασφημηθησεται, was *blasphemed*. Had they called themselves by any name but that of *Christ*, his religion would not have suffered.

Verse 3. **And through covetousness]** That they might get money to spend upon their lusts, *with feigned words*, πλαστοις λογοις, with *counterfeit tales*, *false narrations*, of pretended facts, *lying miracles*, *fabulous legends*. "In this single sentence," says Dr. Macknight, "there is a clear prediction of the iniquitous practices of those great merchants of souls, the Romish clergy, who have rated all crimes, even the most atrocious, at a fixed price; so that if their doctrine be true, whoever pays the price may commit the crime without hazarding his salvation." How the popish Church has made merchandise of souls, needs no particular explanation here. It was this abominable doctrine that showed to some, then in that Church, the absolute necessity of a reformation.

**Whose judgment now of a long time]** From the beginning God has condemned sin, and inflicted suitable punishments on transgressors; and has promised in his word, from the earliest ages, to pour out his indignation on the wicked. The punishment, therefore, *so long ago predicted*, shall fall on these impure and incorrigible sinners; and the *condemnation* which is denounced against them *slumbers not*-it is alert, it is on its way, it is hurrying on, and must soon overtake them.

Verse 4. **For if God spared not the angels]** The angels were originally placed in a state of probation; some having fallen and some having stood proves this. How long that probation was to last to them, and what was the particular *test* of their fidelity, we know not; nor indeed do we know what was their *sin*; nor *when* nor *how* they fell. St. Jude says *they kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation*; which seems to indicate that they got *discontented* with their lot, and aspired to higher honours, or perhaps to celestial domination. The tradition of their fall is in all countries and in all religions, but the accounts given are various and contradictory; and no wonder, for we have no direct revelation on the subject. *They kept not their first estate, and they sinned*, is the sum of what we know on the subject; and here curiosity and conjecture are useless.

**But cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness]** αλλα σειραις ζοφου ταρταρωσας παρεδωκεν εις κρισιν τετηρημενους *But with chains of darkness confining them in Tartarus, delivered them over to be kept to judgment*; or, *sinking them into Tartarus, delivered them*

over into custody for punishment, to chains of darkness. *Chains of darkness* is a highly poetic expression. Darkness binds them on all hands; and so dense and strong is this darkness that it cannot be broken through; they cannot deliver themselves, nor be delivered by others.

As the word *Tartarus* is found nowhere else in the *New Testament*, nor does it appear in the *Septuagint*, we must have recourse to the Greek writers for its meaning. Mr. *Parkhurst*, under the word *ταρταρω*, has made some good collections from those writers, which I here subjoin.

"The Scholiast on *ÆSCHYLUS, Eumen.*, says: *Pindar* relates that *Apollo* overcame the *Python* by force; wherefore the earth endeavoured *ταρταρωσαι*, to cast him into *Tartarus*. *Tzetzes* uses the same word, *ταρταρω*, for casting or sending into *Tartarus*; and the compound verb *καταταρταρουν*, is found in *Apollodorus*; in *Didymus'* Scholia on *Homer*; in *Phurnutus, De Nat, Deor.*, p. 11, edit. *Gale*; and in the book *περι ποταμων*, which is extant among the works of *Plutarch*. And those whom *Apollodorus* styles *καταταρταρωθεντας*, he in the same breath calls *ριφθεντας εις ταρταρον*, cast into *Tartarus*. Thus the learned *Windet*, in *Pole's Synopsis*. We may then, I think, safely assert that *ταρταρωσας*, in *St. Peter*, means not, as *Mede* (*Works*, fol., p. 23) interprets it, to adjudge to, but to cast into, *Tartarus*; *ριπτειν εις ταρταρον*, as in *Homer*, cited below. And in order to know what was the precise intention of the apostle by this expression, we must inquire what is the accurate import of the term *ταρταρος*. Now, it appears from a passage of *Lucian*, that by *ταρταρος* was meant, in a physical sense, the bounds or verge of this material system; for, addressing himself to *ερως*, *Cupid* or *Love*, he says: *συ γαρ εξ αφανους και κεχυμενης αμορφιας το παν εμορφωσας, κ. τ. λ.* 'Thou formedst the universe from its confused and chaotic state; and, after separating and dispersing the circumfused chaos, in which, as in one common sepulchre, the whole world lay buried, thou drovest it to the confines or recesses of outer *Tartarus*—

'Where iron gates and bars of solid brass  
Keep it in durance irrefrangible,  
And its return prohibit.'

"The ancient Greeks appear to have received, by tradition, an account of the punishment of the 'fallen angels,' and of bad men after death; and their poets did, in conformity I presume with that account, make *Tartarus* the place where the giants who rebelled against *Jupiter*, and the souls of the wicked, were confined. 'Here,' saith *Hesiod, Theogon.*, lin. 720, 1, 'the rebellious *Titans* were bound in penal chains.'

τοσσον ενερθ' υπο γης, οσον ουρανος εστ' απο γαιης.  
ισον γαρ τ' απο γης ες ΤΑΡΤΑΡΟΝ ηεροεντα.

'As far beneath the earth as earth from heaven;  
For such the distance thence to *Tartarus*.'

Which description will very well agree with the proper sense of *Tartarus*, if we take the earth for the centre of the material system, and reckon from our zenith, or the extremity of the heavens that is over our heads. But as the Greeks imagined the earth to be of a boundless depth, so it must not

be dissembled that their poets speak of *Tartarus* as a vast pit or gulf in the bowels of it. Thus Hesiod in the same poem, lin. 119, calls it—

ΤΑΡΤΑΡΑ τ' ηεροεντα μυχω χθονος ευρυοδειης·

'Black Tartarus, within earth's spacious womb.'

"And Homer, *Iliad* viii., lin. 13, &c., introduces Jupiter threatening any of the gods who should presume to assist either the Greeks or the Trojans, that he should either come back wounded to heaven, or be sent to *Tartarus*.

η μιν ελων ριψω ες ΤΑΡΤΑΡΟΝ ηερεντα,  
τηλε μαλ', ηχι βαθιστον υπο χθονος εστι βεπεθρον,  
ενθα σιδηρειαι τε πυλαι, και χαλκεος ουδος,  
τοσσον ενερθ' αιδεω, οσον ουρανος εστ' απο γαιης.

'Or far, O far, from steep *Olympus* thrown,  
Low in the deep *Tartarean* gulf shall groan.  
That gulf which iron gates and brazen ground  
*Within the earth* inexorably bound;  
As deep beneath th' infernal centre hurl'd,  
As from that centre to the ethereal world.'

POPE.

'Where, according to Homer's description, *Iliad* viii., lin. 480, 1,—

----- ουτ' αυγησ υπεριοнос ηελιοιο  
τερποντ', ουτ' ανεμοισι· βαθυς δε τε ΤΑΡΤΑΡΟΣ αμοις.

'No sun e'er gilds the gloomy horrors there,  
No cheerful gales refresh the lazy air,  
But murky *Tartarus* extends around.'

POPE.

"Or, in the language of the old Latin poet, (cited by Cicero, *Tuscul.*, lib. i. cap. 15,)

*Ubi rigida constat crassa caligo inferum.*

"On the whole, then, *ταρταρον*, in St. Peter, is the same as *ριπτειν ες ταρταρον*, to throw into *Tartarus*, in *Homer*, only rectifying the poet's mistake of *Tartarus* being in the bowels of the earth, and recurring to the original sense of that word above explained, which when applied to *spirits* must be interpreted *spiritually*; and thus *ταρταρωσας* will import that *God* cast the apostate angels out of his presence into that ζοφος του σκοτους, blackness of darkness, (#2Pe 2:17; #Jude 1:13,) where they will be for ever banished from the light of his countenance, and from the beatifying influence of the ever blessed Three, as truly as a person plunged into the torpid boundary of this created system would be from the light of the sun and the benign operations of the material heavens."

By *chains of darkness* we are to understand a *place of darkness and wretchedness*, from which it is *impossible for them to escape*.

Verse 5. **Spared not the old world]** The apostle's argument is this: If God spared not the rebellious angels, nor the sinful antediluvians, nor the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, he will not spare those wicked teachers who corrupt the pure doctrines of Christianity.

**Saved Noah the eighth]** Some think that the words should be translated, *Noah the eighth preacher of righteousness*; but it seems most evident, from #1Pe 3:20, that *eight persons* are here meant, which were the whole that were saved in the ark, viz. Shem, Ham, Japhet, and their three wives, six; Noah's wife seven; and Noah himself the *eighth*. The form of expression, ογδοον μωε, *Noah the eighth*, i.e. Noah and *seven* more, is most common in the Greek language. So in APPIAN, *Bell. Pun.*, p. 12, τριτος δε ποτε εν σπηλαιω κρυπτομενος ελαθε, *sometimes he the third* (i.e. he with two others) *lay hid in a cave*. ANDOCIDES, *Orat. iv. p. 295*: αιρεθεις επι τουτω δεκατος αυτος, *he himself the tenth* (i.e. he and nine others) *were chosen to this*. See a number of other examples in *Kypke*.

**World of the ungodly]** A whole race *without God*-without any pure *worship* or rational religion.

Verse 6. **The cities of Sodom and Gomorrha]** See the notes on Gen. 19, for an account of the sin and punishment of these cities.

**Making them an ensample]** These three words, υποδειγμα, παραδειγμα, and δειγμα, are used to express the same idea; though the former may signify an *example to be shunned*, the second an *example to be followed*, and the third a *simple exhibition*. But these differences are not always observed.

Verse 7. **Vexed with the filthy conversation]** καταπονουμενον υπο της των αθεσμων εν ασελγεια αναστροφης· *Being exceedingly pained with the unclean conduct of those lawless persons*. What this was, see in the history, Gen. 19., and the notes there.

Verse 8. **That righteous man dwelling among them]** Lot, after his departure from Abraham, A. M. 2086, lived at Sodom till A. M. 2107, a space of about twenty years; and, as he had a *righteous soul*, he must have been *tormented* with the abominations of that people *from day to day*.

The word βασανιζεν, *tormented*, is not less emphatic than the word καταπονουμενον, *grievously pained*, in the preceding verse, and shows what this man must have felt in dwelling so long among a people so abandoned.

Verse 9. **The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly]** The preservation and deliverance of Lot gave the apostle occasion to remark, that God knew as well to *save* as to *destroy*; and that his *goodness* led him as forcibly to save righteous Lot, as his *justice* did to destroy the rebellious in the instances already adduced. And the design of the apostle in producing these examples is to show to the people to whom he was writing that, although God would destroy those false teachers, yet he would powerfully save his faithful servants from their contagion and from their destruction. We

should carefully observe, 1. That the godly man is not to be preserved *from* temptation. 2. That he will be preserved *in* temptation. 3. That he will be delivered *out* of it.

Verse 10. **But chiefly them that walk]** That is, God will in the most signal manner punish them that walk after the flesh- addict themselves to sodomitical practices, and the *lust of pollution*; probably alluding to those most abominable practices where men abuse themselves and abuse one another.

**Despise government.]** They brave the power and authority of the civil magistrate, practising their abominations so as to keep out of the reach of the letter of the law; and they *speak evil of dignities*-they blaspheme civil government, they abhor the restraints laid upon men by the laws, and would wish all governments destroyed that they might live as they list.

**Presumptuous** are they] *τολμηται*. They are bold and daring, headstrong, regardless of fear.

**Self-willed]** *αυθαδεις*. Self-sufficient; presuming on themselves; following their own opinions, which no authority can induce them to relinquish.

**Are not afraid to speak evil of dignities.]** They are lawless and disobedient, spurn all human authority, and speak contemptuously of all legal and civil jurisdiction. Those in general despise governments, and speak evil of dignities, who wish to be under no control, that they may act as freebooters in the community.

Verse 11. **Whereas angels, &c.]** This is a difficult verse, but the meaning seems to be this: The holy angels, who are represented as bringing an account of the actions of the fallen angels before the Lord in judgment, simply state the facts without exaggeration, and without permitting any thing of a bitter, reviling, or railing spirit, to enter into their accusations. See #**Zec 3:1**, and #**Jude 1:9**; to the former of which St. Peter evidently alludes. But these persons, not only speak of the actions of men which they conceive to be wrong, but do it with untrue colourings, and the greatest malevolence. Michael, the archangel, treated a damned spirit with courtesy; he only said, *The Lord rebuke thee, Satan!* but these treat the rulers of God's appointment with disrespect and calumny.

**Before the Lord.]** *παρα κυριω* is wanting in a number of MSS. and most of the *versions*.

Verse 12. **But these, as natural brute beasts]** *ως αλογα ζωα φυσικα*. *As those natural animals void of reason*, following only the gross instinct of nature, being governed neither by reason nor religion.

**Made to be taken and destroyed]** Intended to be taken with nets and gins, and then destroyed, because of their fierce and destructive nature; so these false teachers and insurgents must be treated; first incarcerated, and then brought to judgment, that they may have the reward of their doings. And thus, by *blaspheming what they do not understand*, they at last *perish in their own corruption*; i.e. their corrupt doctrines and vicious practices.

Verse 13. **They that count it pleasure to riot in the day time.**] Most sinners, in order to practise their abominable pleasures, seek the secrecy of the night; but these, bidding defiance to all decorum, decency, and shame, take the open day, and thus proclaim their impurities to the sun.

**Spots-and blemishes]** They are a disgrace to the Christian name.

**Sporting themselves]** Forming opinions which give license to sin, and then acting on those opinions; and thus rioting in their own deceits.

**With their own deceivings]** *εν ταις απαταις*. But instead of this, AB, and almost all the versions and several of the fathers, have *εν ταις αγαπαις*, *in your love feasts*, which is probably the true reading.

**While they feast with you]** It appears they held a kind of communion with the Church, and attended sacred festivals, which they desecrated with their own unhallowed opinions and conduct.

Verse 14. **Having eyes full of adultery]** *μοιχαλιδος*: *Of an adulteress*; being ever bent on the gratification of their sensual desires, so that they are represented as having *an adulteress constantly before their eyes*, and that their eyes can take in no other object but *her*. But instead of *μοιχαλιδος* of an *adulteress*, the *Codex Alexandrinus*, three others, with the *Coptic*, *Vulgate*, and one copy of the *Itala*, together with several of the *fathers*, have *μοιχαλιας*, *of adultery*.

**Cannot cease from sin]** *Which cease not from sin*; they might cease from sin, but they do not; they love and practise it. Instead of *ακαταπαυστους*, *which cannot cease*, several MSS. and versions have *ακαταπαυστου*, and this requires the place to be read, *Having eyes full of adultery and incessant sin*. The images of sinful acts were continually floating before their disordered and impure fancy. This figure of speech is very common in the Greek writers; and *Kypke* gives many instances of it, which indeed carry the image too far to be here translated.

**Beguiling unstable souls]** The metaphor is taken from adulterers seducing unwary, inexperienced, and light, trifling women; so do those false teachers seduce those who are not established in righteousness.

**Exercised with covetous practices]** The metaphor is taken from the *agonistæ* in the Grecian games, who exercised themselves in those feats, such as *wrestling*, *boxing*, *running*, &c., in which they proposed to contend in the public games. These persons had their hearts schooled in nefarious practices; they had *exercised themselves* till they were perfectly *expert* in all the arts of seduction, overreaching, and every kind of fraud.

**Cursed children]** Such not only live under God's curse here, but they are heirs to it hereafter.

Verse 15. **Which have forsaken the right way]** As Balaam did, who, although God showed him the right way, took one contrary to it, preferring the reward offered him by Balak to the approbation and blessing of God.

**The way of Balaam]** Is the *counsel* of Balaam. He counselled the Moabites to give their most beautiful young women to the Israelitish youth, that they might be enticed by them to commit *idolatry*. See Clarke's notes on "Nu 22:5", &c., and "Nu 23:1", &c.

The son of **Bosor]** Instead of βοσορ, BOSOR two ancient MSS. and some of the versions have βεωρ, *Beor*, to accommodate the word to the Hebrew text and the Septuagint. The difference in this name seems to have arisen from mistaking one letter for another in the Hebrew name, כ ע ו ר *Beor*, for כ צ ו ר *Betsor* or *Bosor*; *tsaddi* צ and *ain* ע, which are very like each other, being interchanged.

Verse 16. **The dumb ass, speaking with man's voice]** See Clarke's note on "Nu 22:28".

**The madness of the prophet.]** Is not this a reference to the speech of the ass, as represented in the Targums of Jonathan ben Uzziel and Jerusalem? "Wo to thee, Balaam, thou sinner, thou madman: there is no wisdom found in thee." These words contain nearly the same expressions as those in St. Peter.

Verse 17. **These are wells without water]** Persons who, by their profession, should furnish *the water of life* to souls athirst for salvation; but they have not this water; they are *teachers* without *ability* to *instruct*; they are *sowers*, and have no *seed* in their basket. Nothing is more cheering in the deserts of the east than to meet with a *well of water*; and nothing more distressing, when parched with thirst, than to meet with a well that contains no water.

**Clouds that are carried with a tempest]** In a time of great *drought*, to see *clouds* beginning to cover the face of the heavens raises the expectation of rain; but to see these *carried off* by a sudden *tempest* is a dreary disappointment. These false teachers were equally as unprofitable as the empty well, or the light, dissipated cloud.

**To whom the mist of darkness is reserved]** That is, an eternal separation from the presence of God, and the glory of his power. They shall be thrust into *outer darkness*, #Mt 8:12; into the utmost degrees of misery and despair. False and corrupt teachers will be sent into the lowest hell; and be "the most downcast, underfoot vassals of perdition."

It is scarcely necessary to notice a various reading here, which, though very different in sound, is nearly the same in sense. Instead of νεφελαι, *clouds*, which is the common reading, και ομιχλαι, *and mists*, or perhaps more properly *thick darkness*, from ομου, *together*, and αχλυσ, *darkness*, is the reading in ABC, sixteen others, Erpen's *Arabic*, later *Syriac*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, and *Vulgate*, and several of the *fathers*. This reading Griesbach has admitted into the text.

Verse 18. **They speak great swelling words of vanity]** The word υπερογκα signifies things of great magnitude, grand, superb, sublime; it sometimes signifies *inflated*, *tumid*, *bombastic*. These false teachers spoke of great and high things, and no doubt promised their disciples the greatest privileges, as they themselves pretended to a high degree of illumination; but they were all false and vain, though they tickled the fancy and excited the desires of the flesh; and indeed this appears to have been their object. And hence some think that the impure sect of the Nicolaitans is meant. See the *preface*.

**Those that were clean escaped]** Those who, through hearing the doctrines of the Gospel, had been converted, were perverted by those false teachers.

Verse 19. **While they promise them liberty]** Either to live in the highest degrees of spiritual good, or a freedom from the Roman yoke; or from the yoke of the law, or what they might term needless restraints. Their own conduct showed the falsity of their system; for they were slaves to every disgraceful lust.

**For of whom a man is overcome]** This is an allusion to the ancient custom of selling for slaves those whom they had conquered and captivated in war. The ancient law was, that a man might either kill him whom he overcame in battle, or *keep him* for a slave. These were called *servi*, slaves, from the verb *servare*, to *keep* or *preserve*. And they were also called *mancipia*, from *manu capiuntur*, they are taken captive by the hand of their enemy. Thus the person who is overcome by his lusts is represented as being the slave of those lusts. See **#Ro 6:16**, and the note there.

Verse 20. **The pollutions of the world]** *Sin* in general, and particularly superstition, idolatry, and lasciviousness. These are called **μιασματα**, *miasmata*, things that *infect*, *pollute*, and *defile*. The word was anciently used, and is in use at the present day, to express those noxious particles of effluvia proceeding from persons infected with contagious and dangerous diseases; or from dead and corrupt bodies, stagnant and putrid waters, marshes &c., by which the sound and healthy may be infected and destroyed.

The world is here represented as one large, putrid marsh, or corrupt body, sending off its destructive *miasmata* everywhere and in every direction, so that none can escape its contagion, and none can be healed of the great epidemic disease of sin, but by the mighty power and skill of God. St. Augustine has improved on this image: "The whole world," says he, "is one great diseased man, lying extended from east to west, and from north to south; and to heal this great sick man, the almighty Physician descended from heaven." Now, it is by the *knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, as says St. Peter, that we *escape* the destructive influence of these contagious *miasmata*. But if, *after having been* healed, and *escaped* the death to which we were exposed, we *get again entangled*, **εμπλακέντες**, *enfolded*, *enveloped* with them; then *the latter end will be worse than the beginning*: forasmuch as we shall have sinned against more light, and the soul, by its conversion to God, having had all its powers and faculties greatly improved, is now, being repolluted, more capable of iniquity than before, and can bear more expressively the image of the earthly.

Verse 21. **For it had been better for them not to have known]** For the reasons assigned above; because they have sinned against more mercy, are capable of more sin, and are liable to greater punishment.

**The holy commandment]** The whole religion of Christ is contained in this one commandment, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself." He who obeys this great commandment, and this by the grace of Christ is possible to every man, is saved from sinning either against his God or against his neighbour. Nothing less than this does the religion of Christ require.

Verse 22. **According to the true proverb]** This seems to be a reference to #Pr 26:11: **ל קאל שבאל ככלב** *kekeleb shab al keo*; as the dog returneth to his vomit, so a fool repeateth his folly. In substance this proverb is found among the rabbins; so Midrash Ruth, in Sohar Chadash, fol. 62: *Orpah is returned to her mire, Ruth persevered in spirit*; and again, Ibid. fol. 64: "Orpah, which is **נצש הבהמית** *nephesh habbehemith*, the bestial soul, is returned to her mire."

The Greeks have something like it; so *Arrian*, Dissert. Epict. l. iv. c. 11, says: *απελθε και χοιρω διαλεγου, ιν' εν βορβορω μη κυλιηται*, "Go and reason with the swine, lest he be rolled in the mire." This is called a *true proverb*: for it is a *fact* that a dog will eat up his own vomit; and the swine, howsoever carefully washed, will again wallow in the mire. As applied here it is very expressive: the poor sinner, having heard the Gospel of Christ, was led to *loathe* and *reject* his sin; and, on his application to God for mercy, was *washed* from his unrighteousness. But he is here represented as *taking up again* what he had before *rejected*, and *defiling* himself in that from which he had been *cleansed*.

Here is a sad proof of the possibility of falling from grace, and from very high degrees of it too. These had *escaped from the contagion that was in the world*; they had had true repentance, and *cast up* "their soursweet morsel of sin;" they had been *washed* from all their filthiness, and this must have been through the blood of the Lamb; yet, after all, they went back, got *entangled* with their old sins, *swallowed down* their formerly *rejected* lusts, and rewallowed in the mire of corruption. It is no wonder that God should say, *the latter end is worse with them than the beginning*: reason and nature say it *must* be so; and Divine justice says it *ought* to be so; and the person himself must confess that it is *right* that it *should* be so. But how dreadful is this state! How dangerous when the person has abandoned himself to his old sins! Yet it is not said that it is impossible for him to return to his Maker; though his case be deplorable, it is not utterly hopeless; the leper may yet be made clean, and the dead may be raised. Reader, is thy backsliding a grief and burden to thee? Then thou art not far from the kingdom of God; believe on the Lord Jesus, and thou shalt be saved.

## II PETER

### CHAPTER III.

*The apostle shows his design in writing this and the preceding epistle, 1, 2. Describes the nature of the heresies which should take place in the last times, 3-8. A thousand years with the Lord are but as a day, 9. He will come and judge the world as he has promised, and the heavens and the earth shall be burnt up, 10. How those should live who expect these things, 11, 12. Of the new heavens and the new earth, and the necessity of being prepared for this great change, 13, 14. Concerning some difficult things in St. Paul 's epistles, 15, 16. We must watch against the error of the wicked, grow in grace, and give all glory to God, 17, 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Verse 1. **This second epistle]** In order to guard them against the seductions of false teachers, he calls to their remembrance the doctrine of the ancient prophets, and the commands or instructions of the apostles, all founded on the same basis.

He possibly refers to the prophecies of *Enoch*, as mentioned by *Jude*, #**Jude 1:14, 15**; of *David*, #**Ps 1:1**, &c.; and of *Daniel*, #**Da 12:2**, relative to the coming of our Lord to judgment: and he brings in the instructions of the apostles of Christ, by which they were directed how to prepare to meet their God.

Verse 3. **Knowing this first]** Considering this in an *especial* manner, that those prophets predicted the coming of false teachers: and their being now in the Church proved how clearly they were known to God, and showed the Christians at Pontus the necessity of having no intercourse or connection with them.

**There shall come-scoffers]** Persons who shall endeavour to turn all religion into ridicule, as this is the most likely way to depreciate truth in the sight of the giddy multitude. The scoffers, having no solid argument to produce against revelation, endeavour to make a scaramouch of some parts; and then affect to laugh at it, and get superficial thinkers to laugh with them.

**Walking after their own lusts]** Here is the true *source* of all infidelity. The Gospel of Jesus is *pure* and *holy*, and requires a *holy heart* and *holy life*. They wish to follow their own *lusts*, and consequently cannot brook the restraints of the Gospel: therefore they labour to prove that it is not true, that they may get rid of its injunctions, and at last succeed in persuading themselves that it is a forgery; and then throw the reins on the neck of their evil propensities. Thus their opposition to revealed truth began and ended in their own lusts.

There is a remarkable *addition* here in almost every MS. and *version* of note: *There shall come in the last days*, IN MOCKERY, εν εμπαλγμωνη, *scoffers walking after their own lusts*. This is the reading of ABC, eleven others, both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Vulgate*, and several of the *fathers*. They come *in mockery*; this is their *spirit* and *temper*; they have no desire to

find out *truth*; they take up the Bible merely with the design of *turning it into ridicule*. This reading Griesbach has received into the text.

**The last days]** Probably refer to the conclusion of the Jewish polity, which was then at hand.

Verse 4. **Where is the promise of his coming?]** Perhaps the false teachers here referred to were such as believed in the *eternity of the world*: the prophets and the apostles had foretold its destruction, and they took it for granted, if this were true, that the terrestrial machine would have begun long ago to have shown some symptoms of decay; but they found that since the patriarchs died all things remained as they were from the foundation of the world; that is, men were propagated by natural generation, one was born and another died, and the course of nature continued regular in the seasons, succession of day and night, generation and corruption of animals and vegetables, &c.; for they did not consider the power of the Almighty, by which the whole can be annihilated in a moment, as well as created. As, therefore, they saw none of these changes, they presumed that there *would be none*, and they intimated that there *never had been any*. The apostle combats this notion in the following verse.

Verse 5. **For this they willingly are ignorant of]** They shut their eyes against the light, and refuse all evidence; what does not answer their purpose *they will not know*. And the apostle refers to a *fact* that militates against their hypothesis, with which they refused to acquaint themselves; and their ignorance he attributes to their unwillingness to learn the true state of the case.

**By the word of God the heavens were of old]** I shall set down the Greek text of this extremely difficult clause: ουρανοι ησαν εκπαλαι, και γη εξ υδατος και δι' υδατος συνεστωσα, τω του θεου λογω translated thus by Mr. *Wakefield*: "A heaven and an earth formed out of water, and by means of water, by the appointment of God, had continued from old time." By Dr. *Macknight* thus; "The heavens were anciently, and the earth of water: and through water the earth consists by the word of God." By *Kypke* thus: "The heavens were of old, and the earth, which is framed, by the word of God, from the waters, and between the waters." However we take the words, they seem to refer to the origin of the earth. It was the opinion of the remotest antiquity that the earth was formed out of *water*, or a primitive moisture which they termed υλη, *hule*, a *first matter* or *nutriment* for all things; but *Thales* pointedly taught αρχην δε των πανθως υδωρ ειναι, *that all things derive their existence from water*, and this very nearly expresses the sentiment of Peter, and nearly in his own terms too. But is this doctrine true? It must be owned that it appears to be the doctrine of Moses: *In the beginning*, says he, *God made the heavens and the earth; and the earth was without form and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep*. Now, these *heavens* and *earth* which God made in the beginning, and which he says were at first *formless* and *empty*, and which he calls the *deep*, are in the very next verse called *waters*; from which it is evident that Moses teaches that the earth was made out of some *fluid substance*, to which the name of *water* is properly given. And that the earth was at first in a *fluid mass* is most evident from its *form*; it is not *round*, as has been demonstrated by measuring some *degrees* near the north *pole*, and under the *equator*; the result of which proved that the figure of the earth was that of an *oblate spheroid*, a figure nearly resembling that of an *orange*. And this is the form that any *soft* or elastic body would assume if whirled rapidly round a centre, as the earth is around its axis. The measurement to which I have referred shows the earth to

be *flatted* at the *poles*, and *raised* at the *equator*. And by this measurement it was demonstrated that the diameter of the earth at the *equator* was *greater* by about twenty-five miles than at the *poles*.

Now, considering the earth to be thus formed ἐξ ὑδατος, *of water*, we have next to consider what the apostle means by δι' ὑδατος, variously translated by *out of*, *by means of*, and *between, the water*.

*Standing out of the water* gives no sense, and should be abandoned. If we translate *between the waters*, it will bear some resemblance to #Ge 1:6, 7: *And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of, בְּתוֹכָם bethoch, between, the waters; and let it divide the waters from the waters: and God divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament*; then it may refer to the whole of the *atmosphere*, with which the earth is everywhere surrounded, and which contains all the *vapours* which belong to our globe, and without which we could neither have animal nor vegetative life. Thus then the *earth*, or *terraqueous globe*, which was originally formed *out of water*, subsists *by water*; and by *means* of that very *water*, the water compacted with the earth—the *fountains of the great deep*, and the waters in the atmosphere—the *windows of heaven*, #Ge 7:11, the antediluvian earth was *destroyed*, as St. Peter states in the next verse: the *terraqueous globe*, which was formed originally of water or a fluid substance, the *chaos* or *first matter*, and which was suspended in the *heavens*—the atmosphere, enveloped with water, by means of which water it was preserved; yet, because of the wickedness of its inhabitants, was destroyed by those very same waters out of which it was originally made, and by which it subsisted.

Verse 7. **But the heavens and the earth, which are now]** The present earth and its atmosphere, which are liable to the same destruction, because the same *means* still exist, (for there is still *water* enough to drown the earth, and there is *iniquity* enough to induce God to destroy it and its inhabitants,) are nevertheless *kept in store*, τεθησαυρισμενοι, *treasured up*, kept in God's storehouse, to be destroyed, not by *water*, but by *fire* at the day of judgment.

From all this it appears that those *mockers* affected to be ignorant of the *Mosaic account* of the formation of the earth, and of its destruction by the waters of the deluge; and indeed this is implied in their stating that *all things continued as they were from the creation*. But St. Peter calls them back to the *Mosaic account*, to prove that this was false; for the earth, &c., which were then formed, had perished by the *flood*; and that the present earth, &c., which were formed out of the preceding, should, at the day of judgment, perish by the *fire* of God's wrath.

Verse 8. **Be not ignorant]** Though *they* are wilfully ignorant, neglect not ye the means of instruction.

**One day is with the Lord as a thousand years]** That is: All time is as nothing before him, because in the *presence* as in the *nature* of God all is *eternity*; therefore nothing is *long*, nothing *short*, before him; no *lapse* of ages impairs his purposes, nor need he *wait* to find convenience to execute those purposes. And when the *longest period* of time has passed by, it is but as a *moment* or indivisible *point* in comparison of *eternity*. This thought is well expressed by PLUTARCH, *Consol. ad Apoll.*: "If we compare the time of life with eternity, we shall find no difference between *long* and *short*. τα γαρ χιλια, και τα μυρια ετη, στιγμή τις εστιν αοριστος, μαλλον δε μοριον

τι βραχυτατον στυγμης: for a *thousand* or *ten thousand years* are but a certain *indefinite point*, or rather the *smallest part of a point*." The words of the apostle seem to be a quotation from #Ps 90:4.

Verse 9. **The Lord is not slack]** They probably in their *mocking* said, "Either God had made no such promise to judge the world, destroy the earth, and send ungodly men to perdition; or if he had, he had forgotten to fulfil it, or had not convenient time or leisure." To some such *mocking* the apostle seems to refer: and he immediately shows the reason why deserved punishment is not inflicted on a guilty world.

**But is long-suffering]** It is not *slackness*, *remissness*, nor want of due *displacence* at sin, that induced God to prolong the respite of ungodly men; but his long-suffering, his *unwillingness* that any should perish: and therefore he spared them, that they might have additional offers of grace, and *be led to repentance*-to deplore their sins, implore God's mercy, and find redemption through the blood of the Lamb.

As God is *not willing that any should perish*, and as he is *willing that all should come to repentance*, consequently he has never devised nor decreed the damnation of any man, nor has he rendered it impossible for any soul to be saved, either by *necessitating* him to do evil, that he might die for it, or *refusing him the means* of recovery, without which he could not be saved.

Verse 10. **The day of the Lord will come]** See #Mt 24:43, to which the apostle seems to allude.

**The heavens shall pass away with a great noise]** As the *heavens* mean here, and in the passages above, the whole *atmosphere*, in which all the terrestrial vapours are lodged; and as *water* itself is composed of two gases, eighty-five parts *in weight* of oxygen, and fifteen of hydrogen, or two parts *in volume* of the latter, and one of the former; (for if these quantities be put together, and several electric sparks passed through them, a chemical union takes place, and water is the product; and, *vice versa*, if the galvanic spark be made to pass through water, a portion of the fluid is immediately decomposed into its two constituent gases, oxygen and hydrogen;) and as the *electric* or *ethereal fire* is that which, in all likelihood, God will use in the general conflagration; the noise occasioned by the application of this fire to such an immense *congeries* of *aqueous* particles as float in the atmosphere, must be terrible in the extreme. Put a drop of water on an anvil, place over it a piece of iron red hot, strike the iron with a hammer on the part above the drop of water, and the report will be as loud as a musket; when, then, the whole strength of those opposite agents is brought together into a state of conflict, the *noise*, the *thunderings*, the *innumerable explosions*, (till every particle of water on the earth and in the atmosphere is, by the action of the fire, reduced into its component gaseous parts,) will be *frequent*, *loud*, *confounding*, and *terrific*, beyond every comprehension but that of God himself.

**The elements shalt melt with fervent heat]** When the *fire* has conquered and decomposed the *water*, the elements, *στοιχεια*, the *hydrogen* and *oxygen* airs or gases, (the former of which is most highly inflammable, and the latter an eminent supporter of all combustion,) will occupy *distinct* regions of the atmosphere, the hydrogen by its very great levity ascending to the top, while the oxygen from its superior specific gravity will keep *upon* or *near* the surface of the earth; and thus, if different substances be once ignited, the fire, which is supported in this case, not only by the

oxygen which is one of the constituents of atmospheric air, but also by a great additional quantity of oxygen obtained from the decomposition of all aqueous vapours, will rapidly seize on all other substances, on all terrestrial particles, and the whole frame of nature will be necessarily torn in pieces, and *thus the earth and its works be burned up.*

Verse 11. **All these things shall be dissolved]** They will all be *separated*, all *decomposed*; but none of them *destroyed*. And as they are the original matter out of which God formed the terraqueous globe, consequently they may enter again into the *composition* of a *new system*; and therefore the apostle says, **#2Pe 3:13:** *we look for new heavens and a new earth*-the others being *decomposed*, a new system is to be formed out of their materials. There is a wonderful philosophic propriety in the words of the apostle in describing this most awful event.

**What manner of persons ought ye to be]** Some put the note of interrogation at the end of this clause, and join the remaining part with the 12th verse, {**#2Pe 3:12**} thus: *Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be? By holy conversation and godliness, expecting and earnestly desiring the coming of the day of God, &c.* Only those who walk in holiness, who live a godly and useful life, can contemplate this most awful time with joy.

The word **σπευδοντας**, which we translate *hasting unto*, should be tendered *earnestly desiring*, or *wishing for*; which is a frequent meaning of the word in the best Greek writers.

Verse 12. **The heavens being on fire]** See Clarke on "**2Pe 3:10**". It was an ancient opinion among the heathens that the earth should be burnt up with fire; so OVID, *Met.*, lib. i. v. 256.

*Esse quoque in fatis reminiscitur, adfore tempus,  
Quo mare, quo tellus, correptaque regis cæli  
Ardeat; et mundi moles operosa laboret.*

"Remembering in the fates a time when fire  
Should to the battlements of heaven aspire,  
And all his blazing world above should burn,  
And all the inferior globe to cinders turn."

DRYDEN.

*Minucius Felix* tells us, xxxiv. 2, that it was a common opinion of the Stoics that, the moisture of the earth being consumed, the whole world would catch fire. The *Epicureans* held the same sentiment; and indeed it appears in various authors, which proves that a tradition of this kind has pretty generally prevailed in the world. But it is remarkable that none have fancied that it will be destroyed by *water*. The tradition, founded on the declaration of God, was against this; therefore it was not received.

Verse 13. **We, according to his promise, look for new heavens]** The promise to which it is supposed the apostle alludes, is found **#Isa 65:17:** *Behold, I create new heavens and a new earth; and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind;* and **#Isa 66:22:** *For as the new heavens and the new earth which I will make shall remain before me, saith the Lord, so shall your*

seed, &c. Now, although these may be interpreted of the *glory of the Gospel dispensation*, yet, if St. Peter refer to them, they must have a more *extended* meaning.

It does appear, from these promises, that the apostle says here, and what is said **#Re 21:27; 22:14, 15**, that the present earth, though destined to be burned up, will not be *destroyed*, but be *renewed* and *refined*, *purged* from all *moral* and *natural* imperfection, and made the endless abode of blessed spirits. But this state is certainly to be expected *after the day of judgment*; for on this the apostle is very express, who says the conflagration and renovation are to take place at *the judgment of the great day*; see **#2Pe 3:7, 8, 10, 12**. That such an event *may* take place is very *possible*; and, from the terms used by St. Peter, is very *probable*. And, indeed, it is more *reasonable* and *philosophical* to conclude that the earth shall be *refined* and *restored*, than finally *destroyed*. But this has nothing to do with what some call the *millennium state*; as this shall take place when *time*, with the present state and order of things, shall be no more.

Verse 14. **Seeing that ye look for such things]** As ye profess that such a state of things shall take place, and have the expectation of enjoying the blessedness of it, *be diligent* in the use of every means and influence of grace, *that ye may be found of him*-the Lord Jesus, the Judge of quick and dead, *without spot*-any contagion of sin in your souls, *and blameless*-being not only *holy* and *innocent*, but *useful* in your lives.

Verse 15. **And account that the long-suffering of our Lord]** Conclude that God's long-suffering with the world is a proof that he designs men to be saved; *even as our beloved brother Paul*. "This epistle being written to those to whom the *first epistle* was sent, the persons to whom the Apostle Paul wrote concerning the *long-suffering* of God were the Jewish and Gentile Christians in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia. Accordingly, we know he wrote to the *Ephesians*, (**#Eph 2:3-5**), to the *Colossians*, (**#Col 1:21**), and to *Timothy*, (**#1Ti 2:3, 4**), things which imply that God's bearing with sinners is intended for their salvation. The persons to whom Peter's epistles were sent were, for the most part, Paul's converts."-*Macknight*.

**According to the wisdom given unto him]** That is, according to the measure of the Divine inspiration, by which he was qualified for the Divine work, and by which he was so capable of entering into the deep things of God. It is worthy of remark that Paul's epistles are ranked among the *Scriptures*; a term applied to those writings which are divinely inspired, and to those only.

Verse 16. **As also in all his epistles, speaking in them of these things]** Paul, in all his epistles, says Dr. *Macknight*, has spoken of the things written by Peter in this letter. For example, he has spoken of *Christ's coming to judgment*; **#1Th 3:13; 4:14-18; #2Th 1:7-10; #Tit 2:13**. And of the *resurrection of the dead*, **#1Co 15:22; #Php 3:20, 21**. And of the *burning of the earth*; **#2Th 1:8**. And of the *heavenly country*; **#2Co 5:1-10**. And of the *introduction of the righteous into that country*; **#1Th 4:17; #Heb 4:9; 12:14, 18, 24**. And of the *judgment of all mankind by Christ*; **#Ro 14:10**.

**In which are some things hard to be understood]** *δυσνοητα τινα*: That is, if we retain the common reading *εν οις*, *in or among which things*, viz., what he says of the day of judgment, the resurrection of the body &c., &c., there are some things difficult to be comprehended, and from

which a wrong or false meaning may be taken. But if we take the reading of AB, twelve others, with both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, and *Theophylact*, *εν αις*, the meaning is more general, as *εν αις* must refer to *επιστολαις*, *epistles*, for this would intimate that there were difficulties in all the epistles of St. Paul; and indeed in what ancient writings are there not difficulties? But the papists say that the decision of all matters relative to the faith is not to be expected from the Scriptures on this very account, but must be received from the Church; *i.e.* the Popish or Romish Church. But what evidence have we that that Church can infallibly solve any of those difficulties? We have none! And till we have an express, unequivocal revelation from heaven that an unerring spirit is given to that Church, I say, for example, to the present Church of Rome, with the pope called *Pius VII.* at its head, we are not to receive its pretensions. Any Church may pretend the same, or any number of equally learned men as there are of *cardinals* and *pope* in the conclave; and, after all, it would be but the opinion of so many men, to which no absolute certainty or infallibility could be attached.

This verse is also made a pretext to deprive the common people of reading the word of God; because the *unlearned* and *unstable* have sometimes *wrested this word to their own destruction*: but if it be human learning, and stability in any system of doctrine, that qualifies men to judge of these difficult things, then we can find many thousands, even in Europe, that have as much learning and stability as the whole college of cardinals, and perhaps ten thousand times more; for that conclave was never very reputable for the learning of its members: and to other learned bodies we may, with as much propriety, look up as infallible guides, as to this *conclave*.

Besides, as it is only the *unlearned* and the *unestablished* (that is, young Christian converts) that are in danger of wresting such portions; the *learned*, that is, the *experienced* and the *established* in the knowledge and life of God, are in no such danger; and to such we may safely go for information: and these abound everywhere, especially in *Protestant* countries; and by the labours of learned and pious men on the sacred writings there is not one difficulty relative to the things which concern our salvation left unexplained. If the members of the Romish Church have not these advantages, let them go to those who have them; and if their teachers are afraid to trust them to the instruction of the Protestants, then let them who pretend to have *infallibly* written their exposition of these *difficult* places, also put them, with a wholesome text in the vulgar language, into the hands of their people, and then the appeal will not lie to *Rome*, but to the *Bible*, and those interpretations will be considered according to their worth, being weighed with other scriptures, and the expositions of equally learned and equally *infallible* men.

We find, lastly, that those who wrest such portions, are those who wrest the *other scriptures* to their destruction; therefore they are no patterns, nor can such form any precedent for withholding the Scriptures from the common people, most of whom, instead of wresting them to their *destruction*, would become *wise unto salvation* by reading them. We may defy the Romish Church to adduce a single instance of any soul that was perverted, destroyed, or damned, by reading of the Bible; and the insinuation that they may is blasphemous. I may just add that the verb *στρεβλωω*, which the apostle uses here, signifies to *distort*, to *put to the rack*, to *torture*, to *overstretch* and *dislocate the limbs*; and hence the persons here intended are those who proceed according to no fair plan of interpretation, but *force unnatural* and *sophistical meanings* on the word of God: a practice which the common simple Christian is in no danger of following. I could illustrate this by a multitude of interpretations from popish writers.

Verse 17. **Seeing ye know-before]** Seeing that by prophets and apostles you have been thus forewarned, *beware*, φυλασσεσθε, *keep watch*, be on *your guard*; cleave to God and the word of his grace, *lest ye be led away* from the truth delivered by the prophets and apostles, *by the error of the wicked*, αθεσμων, *of the lawless*- those who wrest the Scriptures to make them countenance their lusts, exorbitant exactions, and lawless practices.

**Fall from your own steadfastness.]** From that faith in Christ which has put you in possession of that *grace* which *establishes the heart*.

Verse 18. **But grow in grace]** Increase in the image and favour of God; every grace and Divine influence which ye have received is a seed, a heavenly seed, which, if it be watered with the dew of heaven from above, will endlessly increase and multiply itself. He who continues to *believe*, *love*, and *obey*, will grow in grace, and continually increase in the knowledge of Jesus Christ, as his sacrifice, sanctifier, counsellor, preserver, and final Saviour. The life of a Christian is a *growth*; he is at first *born of God*, and is a *little child*; becomes a *young man*, and a *father* in Christ. Every *father* was once an *infant*; and had he not *grown*, he would have never been a *man*. Those who content themselves with the grace they received when *converted to God*, are, at best, in a continual state of *infancy*: but we find, in the order of nature, that the *infant* that does not grow, and grow daily, too, is sickly and soon dies; so, in the order of grace, those who do not *grow up* into Jesus Christ are sickly, and will soon die, die to all sense and influence of heavenly things.

There are many who boast of the grace of their conversion; persons who were never more than *babes*, and have long since lost even that grace, because they did not *grow* in it. Let him that readeth understand.

**To him.]** The Lord Jesus, *be glory*-all honour and excellency attributed, *both now*-in this present state, *and for ever*, εις ημεραν αιωνος, *to the day of eternity*-that in which death, and misery, and trial, and darkness, and change, and time itself, are to the righteous for ever at an end: it is *eternity*; and this eternity is one unalterable, interminable, unclouded, and unchangeable DAY!

**Amen.]** So let it be! and so it shall be! Though this word is wanting in some reputable MSS., get it should be retained, as it has here more than usual authority in its support.

*Subscriptions* to this epistle in the VERSIONS:

The end of the Second Epistle of Peter the apostle.-SYRIAC.

The Second Epistle of Peter the apostle is ended.-SYRIAC PHILOXENIAN.

Nothing in the printed Vulgate.

The end of the epistles of blessed Peter the apostle, the rock of the faith.-ARABIC.

The Second Epistle of Peter is ended; and glory be to God for ever and ever!-ÆTHIOPIC.

Nothing in the COPTIC.

The end of the Second catholic Epistle of St. Peter.- COMPLUTENSIAN POLYGLOT.

The end of the Second Epistle of St. Peter.-BIB. LAT., edit. antiq.

*Subscriptions* in the MANUSCRIPTS;

Of the second of Peter.-CODEX ALEXANDRIUS, and CODEX VATICANUS.

Of the catholic epistle of Peter.-CODEX EPHREM.

The Second Epistle of the holy Apostle Peter.-Other MSS.

WE have now passed over all the canonical writings of Peter that are extant; and it is worthy of remark that, in no place of the two epistles already examined, nor in any of this apostle's sayings in any other parts of the sacred writings do we find any of the *peculiar* tenets of the Romish Church: not one word of *his* or the *pope's supremacy*; not one word of those who affect to be his *successors*; nothing of the *infallibility* claimed by those pretended successors; nothing of *purgatory*, *penances*, *pilgrimages*, *auricular confession*, *power of the keys*, *indulgences*, *extreme unction*, *masses*, and *prayers for the dead*; and not one word on the most essential doctrine of the Romish Church, *transubstantiation*. Now, as all these things have been considered by themselves most essential to the being of that Church; is it not strange that *he*, from whom they profess to derive all their power, authority, and influence, in spiritual and secular matters, should have said nothing of these most necessary things? Is it not a proof that they are all *false* and *forged*; that the holy apostle knew nothing of them; that they are *no part* of the doctrine of God; and, although they *distinguish* the *Church of Rome*, do not belong to the *Church of Christ*? It is no wonder that the rulers of this Church endeavour to keep the *Scriptures* from the common people; for, were they permitted to consult these, the imposture would be detected, and the solemn, destructive cheat at once exposed.

**PREFACE  
TO  
THE FIRST EPISTLE  
OF  
JOHN.**

AS the author of this epistle is the same who wrote the gospel, I need not detain the reader with any particulars of his life, having taken up the subject pretty much at large in my preface to his gospel, to which I must refer for that species of information.

Two questions have been urged relative to this epistle, which are very difficult to be solved: 1. *When* was it written? 2. To *whom* was it sent? The precise year it is impossible to determine; but it was probably written before the destruction of Jerusalem; and perhaps about the year 68 or 69, though some think not before 80. The second question *Michaelis* answers thus:—

"This question is still more difficult to decide than the preceding. In the Latin version it was formerly called *The Epistle of St. John to the Parthians*; and this title was adopted by some of the ancient fathers, and in modern times has been defended by Grotius. But if St. John had intended this epistle for the use of the Parthians, he would hardly have written it in Greek, but would have used either the language of the country, or, if he was unacquainted with it, would have written at least in Syriac, which was the language of the learned in the Parthian empire, and especially of the Christians. We know, from the history of Manes, that even the learned in that country were for the most part unacquainted with the Greek language; for to Manes, though he united literature with genius, his adversaries objected that he understood only the barbarous Syriac. That a Grecian book would not have been understood in the Parthian empire, appears from what Josephus says in the preface to his History of the Jewish War, where he declares that a work intended for Parthian Jews must be written, not in Greek, but Hebrew. However, it is worth while to examine whence the superscription 'ad Parthos' took its rise. Whiston conjectures that an ancient Greek superscription of this epistle was *προς παρθενους*, (*to virgins*;) because this epistle is chiefly addressed to uncorrupted Christians, and that this title was falsely copied *προς παρθαυς*, whence was derived the Latin superscription, 'ad Parthos.' But this conjecture is without foundation; for since the faithful are not called in a single instance throughout the whole epistle by the name of *παρθενους*, it is very improbable that the title *προς παρθενους* was ever affixed to it. I would rather suppose, therefore, that the frequent use in this epistle of the words 'light' and 'darkness,' which occur in the Persian philosophy, and on the same occasions as those on which St. John has used them, gave rise to the opinion that St. John wrote it with a view of correcting the abuses of the Persian philosophy; whence it was inferred that he designed it for the use of the Christians in the Parthian empire. That St. John really designed his epistle as a warning to those Christians who were in danger of being infected with Zoroastrian principles, is very probable, though the language of the epistle will not permit us to place St. John's readers in a country to the east of the Euphrates.

"LAMPE, who appeals to Theodoret, contends that it, was not designed for any particular community, but that it was written for the use of Christians of every denomination; and this is really

the most probable opinions since the epistle contains no reference to any individual Church. The only difficulty attending this opinion lies in the name 'epistle,' because the frequent use in an epistle of the terms 'light and darkness,' taken in the Persian sense of these words, seems to imply that it was written to persons of a particular description. But if we call it a treatise, this difficulty will cease; and in fact, the name 'epistle' is improperly applied to it, since it has nothing which entitles it to this appellation. It does not begin with the salutation which is used in Greek epistles, and with which St. John himself begins his two last epistles; nor does it contain any salutations, though they are found in almost all the epistles of the apostles. It is true that St. John addresses his readers in the second person; but this mode of writing is frequently adopted in books, and especially in prefaces: for instance, in Wolfe's Elements of Mathematics, the reader is addressed throughout in the second person, I therefore consider that which is commonly called the First Epistle of St. John as a book or treatise, in which the apostle declared to the whole world his disapprobation of the doctrines maintained by Cerinthus and the Gnostics. However, as I do not think it worth while to dispute about words, I have retained the usual title, and have called it the First Epistle of St. John.

"That the design of this epistle was to combat the doctrine delivered by certain false teachers, appears from **#1Jo 2:18-26; #1Jo 3:7; 4:1-3:** and what this false doctrine was may be inferred from the counter doctrine delivered by St. John, **#1Jo 5:1-6.** The apostle here asserts that Jesus is the Christ,' and that he was the Christ, 'not by water only, but by water and blood.' Now these words, which are not in themselves very intelligible, become perfectly clear if we consider them as opposed to the doctrine of Cerinthus, who asserted that Jesus was by birth a mere man; but that the Æon, Christ, descended on him at his baptism, and left him before his death. But if what St. John says, **#1Jo 5:1-6,** was opposed to Cerinthus, the Antichrists of whom he speaks, **#1Jo 2:18, 19,** and who, according to **#1Jo 2:22,** denied that Jesus was the Christ, as also the false prophets, mentioned **#1Jo 4:1, 3,** must be Cerinthians, or at least Gnostics. That they were neither Jews nor heathens may be inferred from **#1Jo 2:19,** where St. John says, 'They went out from us.' Farther, he describes them, **#1Jo 2:18,** as persons who had lately appeared in the world. But this description suits neither Jews nor heathens, who, when this epistle was written, had not lately begun to deny that Jesus was the Christ. Lastly, in the same verse, he describes them as tokens of the last time, saying, 'As ye have heard that Antichrist shall come, even now there are many Antichrists, *whereby* we know that it is the last time.' But this inference could not be drawn from the refusal of the Jews to acknowledge that Jesus was the Messiah. Now, as soon as we perceive that the position, 'Jesus is the Christ,' is a counter position against Cerinthus, we may infer, as I have already observed, that the Antichrists who denied that Jesus was the Christ, or who denied that Christ had appeared in the flesh, were Cerinthians; or perhaps the latter were Docetes. It is, therefore, highly probable that the whole epistle, which in various places discovers an opposition to false teachers, was written against Cerinthians, or at least against Gnostics and Magi. A proposition can never be completely understood, unless we know the author's design in delivering it. For instance, 'God is light, and in him is no darkness,' appears to contain a tautology, if we consider it as a detached dogma; and if it be considered as an admonitory proposition, it may be thought to contain a severe reproof; but if we regard it in a polemical view, it will present itself under a very different form. This epistle abounds with exhortations; but no man who wishes to understand it will be satisfied without asking the following questions: Why did St. John give these admonitions? Why has he so frequently repeated them? Why has he admonished, if he thought admonition necessary, merely in general terms, to holiness and brotherly love? And why has he not sometimes descended to particulars, as other

apostles have done? An answer to these questions will throw great light on the epistle; and this light I will endeavour to procure for the reader, by pointing out the several propositions which, in my opinion, are laid down in opposition to Gnostic errors.

"1. In the first chapter the four first verses are opposed to the following assertion of the Gnostics: 'That the apostles did not deliver the doctrine of Jesus as they had received it, but made additions to it, especially in the commandments which were termed legal; whereof they themselves (the Gnostics) retained the genuine and uncorrupted mystery.' St. John therefore says: 'That he declared that which was from the beginning, which he himself had seen and heard;' that is, that he taught the doctrine of Christ as it was originally delivered, as he had heard it from Christ's own mouth, whose person he had seen and felt; and that he made no additions of his own, but only reported as a faithful witness. In like manner he appeals, **#1Jo 2:13, 14**, to the elder Christians, whom he calls fathers, 'because they knew him who was from the beginning;' that is, because they knew how Christ had taught from the beginning; and **#1Jo 2:24**, he says: 'Let that abide in you which ye have heard from the beginning.' Farther he says, **#1Jo 2:7**: 'Brethren, I write no new commandment unto you, but an old commandment, which ye had from the beginning.' In the next verse he adds: 'Again a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you, because the darkness is past, and the light now shineth.' Now Christ himself had given his disciples a commandment which he called a new commandment, and this was, 'that they should love one another.' The term 'new commandment,' therefore, St. John borrowed from Christ; but in the present instance he appears to have applied it to a different subject, because the special command which Christ gave to his disciples, that they should love one another, and which he called a new commandment, could not well be called an old commandment, being very different from the general commandment, that we should love our neighbour. St. John, therefore, very probably meant that the commandment of love and sanctification was no new commandment, as the Gnostics contended, but the old commandment which the Christians had heard from the beginning. It was, indeed, become a new commandment, in consequence of the false doctrines which then prevailed; or rather, it appeared to be so, because the Gnostics had endeavoured to banish it from their system of theology. But whether a new or an old commandment, St. John thought proper to enforce it.

"2. The Gnostics, who contended that those commandments which were legal were not given by Christ, but were added by the apostles without his authority, counteracted, by so doing, the whole doctrine of sanctification. St. John, therefore, devotes the greatest part of his epistle to the confirmation and enforcement of this doctrine. In **#1Jo 1:5, 7**, he asserts, as a principal part of the message which he had heard from Christ, that no one who does not walk in the light has fellowship with God. In the three following verses he limits this proposition in such a manner as was necessary in arguing with an adversary; and **#1Jo 2:1, 2**, he removes the objection, that, according to his doctrine, a Christian who was guilty of wilful sins lost thereby all hopes of salvation. He then maintains, **#1Jo 2:3-5**, and apparently in allusion to the word *γνωσις*, knowledge, the favourite term of the Gnostics, that he who boasted of profound knowledge, and at the same time rejected the commandments of Christ, had not a real but only a pretended knowledge; and that in him only the love of God is perfected, *τετελειωται*, who keeps God's word. The expression *τετελειωται* is a term which was used in the schools of the philosophers, and applied to the scholars called *esoterici*, who had made a considerable progress in the inner school. Now the Gnostics were, in their own opinion, scholars of this description; but since they, whose imaginary system of theology annuls the

commands of God, are so far from being perfect that they are not even beginners in the science, St. John very properly refuses to admit their pretensions, and opposes to them others who were perfect in a different way, and who were more justly entitled to the appellation. With respect to the expressions, 'keeping the commandments of God,' or 'not keeping his commandments,' it must be observed that, when used in a polemical work, they denote, not merely the observance or violation of God's commands in our own practice, but the teaching of others that they are to be observed or rejected. What St. John says, **#1Jo 2:7, 8**, has been already explained in the preceding paragraph.

"The whole of the third chapter, and part of the fourth, is devoted to the doctrine of sanctification, on which I have to make the following remarks. When St. John says, **#1Jo 3:7**, 'Let no man deceive you; he who doeth righteousness is righteous,' he probably intends, not merely to deliver a precept, but to oppose the doctrine of those who asserted that a man, though he sinned, might be righteous in respect to his spiritual soul, because sin proceeded only from the material body. A similar observation may be applied to **#1Jo 3:4**: 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law;' which, considered by itself, appears to be an identical proposition; but when considered as an assertion opposed to the Gnostics, it is far from being superfluous, because, evident as it appears to be, they virtually denied it. From the passage above quoted from the works of Irenæus, we have seen that they rejected the legal commandments as parts of the Christian religion which were not warranted by the authority of Christ; consequently, they denied that sin was a transgression of the law. Farther, it was consistent with their principles to regard sins as diseases; for they believed in a metempsychosis, and imagined that the souls of men were confined in their present bodies as in a prison, and as a punishment for having offended in the region above. According to this system, the violent and irregular passions of anger, hatred, &c., were tortures for the soul; they were diseases, but not punishable transgressions of the law. I will not assert that all who believed in a transmigration of souls argued in this manner, but some of them certainly did so; and against these it was not superfluous to write, 'Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law, for sin is the transgression of the law.'

"The love of the brethren, which St. John enforced as a chief commandment, is generally understood of that special love which Christ commanded his disciples to have towards each other. But I rather think that St. John means the love of our neighbour in general, which Christ commanded, as comprehending the half of the law; for this general love St. John might very properly call the love of our brother, since God has created us all, and is our common Father. Besides, as St. John calls Cain, Abel's brother, he could not intend to signify by this term a person of the same religious sentiments. Nor would it have been consistent with candour to have censured the Gnostics for not having Christian brotherly love towards St. John and other true believers, for in this particular sense they were not brethren; and St. John himself, in his second epistle, **#2Jo 1:10**, forbids the exercise of Christian brotherly love towards those who teach false doctrines. I believe, therefore, that the brotherly love of which St. John speaks in the third chapter of this epistle, is not confined to that special love which we owe to those who are allied to us by religion, but denotes the love of our neighbour in general. Nor do I except even **#1Jo 3:16**, where some think that St. John would require too much, if he meant brotherly love in general, or charity toward all men. But are there not certain cases in which it is our duty to hazard and even sacrifice our lives, in order to rescue our neighbour! Is not this duty performed by the soldier? And is it not performed by him who visits those who are infected with contagious diseases? It is true that this is not a duty which every man owes in all cases

to his neighbour; but then, on the other hand, is it not a duty which every man owes to his spiritual brother? Nor was it St. John's design so much to enforce this duty, and to recommend the exercise of it, as to argue from the acknowledgment of this duty in certain cases, to the necessity of performing the less painful duty of supporting our brethren in distress, by a participation of our temporal possessions. But though I believe that in the third chapter St. John speaks of the love of our neighbour in general, I do not mean to affirm that he nowhere understands that special love which Christians owe one to another, of which we meet with an instance in **#1Jo 5:1, 2**.

"With respect to the moral conduct of the Gnostics, against whom St. John wrote, we may infer, therefore, that the apostle found more reason to censure them for their want of charity toward their neighbours, than for dissoluteness or debauchery. This want of charity they probably displayed by a hatred of the true believers.

"What St. John says, **#1Jo 5:3**, that 'God's commandments are not grievous,' appears in the clearest light when we consider it as opposed to the Gnostics, to whom the Divine commandments, as delivered by the apostles, appeared to be too legal.

"St. John declares, **#1Jo 1:5**, as the message which he had heard from Christ, that 'God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.' Now if this proposition had been then as generally admitted as it is at present, there could have been no necessity for declaring it at the very beginning of the epistle, with so much energy, to be the grand message of Christ. We may reasonably infer, therefore, that it was opposed to certain persons who delivered a contrary doctrine. Farther, the words 'light' and 'darkness,' which are here applied to the Deity in a manner which is not usual in the Bible, remind us of the technical terms used by the Persian Magi, and afterwards by the Manicheans. It is true that in the Bible we meet with the expressions 'works of the light,' 'children of the light,' 'to walk in the light,' and others of the same kind; but in these instances the term 'light' is not synonymous with 'holiness;' works of the light denoting nothing more than works which no man need be ashamed to perform openly, and in the face of the whole world. This explanation of the word 'light' is inapplicable in the proposition 'God is light;' because there would be an impropriety in representing God either as fearing or not fearing to act in the face of the whole world. St. John, therefore, uses the term 'light' as equivalent to holiness.

"Now, the Gnostics admitted that the supreme Being was perfectly holy and pure light; but they denied that the supreme Being was the God whom the Jews and the Christians worshipped. For the Jews and the Christians worshipped the Creator of the world; and the Gnostics asserted that the Creator of the world was either a spirit of darkness, or, if he was a spirit of light, that he was not free from darkness.

"From **#1Jo 2:23**, where St. John says, that 'he who denies the Son, rejects also the Father,' it appears that his adversaries did not deny the Father in positive terms, since the apostle argues only that they virtually did so by denying the Son. Now, the Gnostics did not positively deny the Father of Christ, whom they allowed to be the supreme Being, but then they did not allow that he was the Creator. The terms, therefore, 'God' and the 'Father of Christ,' though they denote in reality the same person, must not be considered as having precisely the same import; since the adversaries of St. John

admitted that the Father of Christ was the supreme Being, and pure light; but denied that the Creator, who is in fact God, was light without darkness.

"4. In some places, especially **#1Jo 4:2, 3**, St. John opposes false teachers of another description, namely, those who denied that Christ was come in the flesh. Now they who denied this were not Cerinthians, but another kind of Gnostics, called Docetes. For as, on the one hand, Cerinthus maintained that Jesus was a mere and therefore real man, the Docetes on the other hand contended that he was an incorporeal phantom, in which the Æon, Christ, or Divine nature, presented itself to mankind. **#1Jo 1:1**: 'Our hands have handled,' appears likewise to be opposed to this error of the Docetes.

"The doctrines which St. John has delivered in this epistle he has not supported, either by arguments drawn from reason, or by quotations from the Old Testament; for neither of them are necessary, since the bare assertion of an apostle of Christ is sufficient authority. It is true that, in one respect, this epistle has less energy than St. John's gospel, because in his gospel he warrants his doctrines by the speeches of Christ. But then, on the other hand, St. John declares in this epistle, **#1Jo 3:24; 4:4; 5:14, 16**, that God sent his Spirit to the apostolic Church, and heard their prayers. And it is evident that St. John alludes to the extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and to the miraculous powers obtained by prayer.

"The close of this epistle, 'Keep yourselves from idols,' has no immediate connection with the preceding discourse. I am therefore in doubt whether St; John meant to warn his readers against taking part in heathen sacrifices, which was allowed by these Gnostics, who are called Nicolaitans in the Apocalypse; or whether he meant to describe the system of the Gnostics in general as a system of idolatry, which in fact it was."

Dr. *Macknight* has some judicious observations on the authenticity of this epistle, from the similarity of the style to that of the gospel of John.

"The authenticity of any ancient writing is established, first, by the testimony of contemporary and succeeding authors, whose works have come down to us, and who speak of that writing as known to be the work of the person whose name it bears. Secondly, by the suitableness of the things contained in such writing to the character and circumstances of its supposed author, and by the similarity of its style to the style of the other acknowledged writings of that author. The former of these proofs is called the *external evidence* of the authenticity of a writing; The latter, its *internal evidence*. When these two kinds of evidence are found accompanying any writing, they render its genuineness indubitable.

"The external evidence of the authenticity of John's first epistle has been amply detailed by Dr. Lardner, who shows that the earliest and best Christian writers have all, with one consent, and without any hesitation, ascribed the first epistle to him. And their testimony is confirmed by this circumstance, that the Syriac translator, who omitted the Second Epistle of Peter, the Second and Third Epistles of John, and the Epistle of Jude, because some doubts were entertained concerning them in the first age, or perhaps because they had not come to his knowledge, has translated John's

first epistle, as an apostolical writing of which there never was any doubt in that or in any other Christian Church.

"In this preface, therefore, we shall state the internal evidence of the authenticity of John's first epistle, by showing, *first*, that, in respect of its matter, and, *secondly*, in respect of its style, it is perfectly suitable to the character and circumstances of its supposed author. In respect of the matter or subject of the epistle under consideration, the writer of it has discovered himself to be John the apostle, by introducing a number of sentiments and expressions found in the gospel, which all Christians from the beginning have acknowledged to be the work of John the apostle.

#### EPISTLE.

**#1Jo 1:1.** That which was from the beginning  
ο *εθεασαμεθα*, which we have contemplated,  
concerning the living Word.

**#1Jo 2:5.** Whosoever keepeth his word truly,  
in that man the love of God is perfected.

**#1Jo 2:6.** He who saith he abideth in him,  
ought himself also so to walk, even as he  
walked. See **#1Jo 3:24; 4:13-16.**

**#1Jo 2:8.** I write to you a new  
commandment.

**#1Jo 3:11.** This is the message which ye  
heard from the beginning, that ye should love  
one another.

**#1Jo 2:8.** The darkness passeth away, and the  
light which is true now shineth.

**#1Jo 2:10.** Abideth in the light, and there is  
no stumbling block to him.

**#1Jo 2:13.** Young children, I write to you,  
because ye have known the Father.

**#1Jo 2:14.** Because ye have known him  
from the beginning.

#### GOSPEL.

**#Joh 1:1.** In the beginning was the Word:  
**#Joh 1:14;** And *εθεασαμεθα*, we beheld his  
glory: **#Joh 1:4;** In him was light: **#Joh 1:14;**  
The Word was made flesh.

**#Joh 14:23.** If a man love me he will keep  
my words, and my Father will love him.

**#Joh 15:4.** Abide in me, and I in you. As the  
branch cannot bring forth fruit of itself, except  
it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye  
abide in me.

**#Joh 13:34.** A new commandment I give  
unto you,

That ye love one another, as I have loved you.

**#Joh 1:5.** The light shineth in darkness.

**#Joh 1:9.** That was the true light.

**#Joh 11:10.** If a man walk in the night he  
stumbleth, because there is no light in him.

**#Joh 17:3.** This is the eternal life, that they  
might know thee, the only true God,

And Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent.

**#1Jo 3:7-9.** Every one who worketh righteousness is begotten of God. See also **#1Jo 5:1.**

**#1Jo 3:1.** Behold how great love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!

**#1Jo 3:2.** We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

**#1Jo 3:8.** He who worketh sin is of the devil; for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

**#1Jo 3:13.** Do not wonder, my brethren, that the world hateth you.

**#1Jo 4:9.** By this the love of God was manifested, that God sent his Son, the only begotten, into the world, that we might live through him.

**#1Jo 4:12.** No man hath seen God at any time.

**#1Jo 5:13.** These things I have 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 in the name of the Son of God.

**#1Jo 5:14.** If we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

**#1Jo 5:20.** 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.

"From the above comparison of the first epistle of John with his gospel, there appears such an exact agreement of sentiment in the two writings, that no reader who is capable of discerning what is peculiar in an author's turn of thinking, can entertain the least doubt of their being the productions of one and the same writer. Farther, since John has not mentioned his own name in his gospel, the

**#Joh 3:3.** Except a man be begotten again, **#Joh 3:5;** Except a man be begotten of water and of the Spirit.

**#Joh 1:12.** To them he gave power to become the sons of God, even to them who believe on his name.

**#Joh 17:24.** Be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.

**#Joh 8:44.** Ye are of your father the devil; he was a murderer from the beginning.

**#Joh 15:20.** If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.

**#Joh 3:16.** God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him might not perish, but have eternal life.

**#Joh 1:18.** No man hath seen God at any time.

**#Joh 20:31.** These things are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name.

**#Joh 14:14.** If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

**#Joh 17:2.** Thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he might give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him. **#Joh 17:3:** And this is the eternal life, that they might know thee, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom thou hast sent.

want of his name in the epistle is no proof that it was not written by him; but rather a presumption that it is his; especially as he has sufficiently discovered himself to be an apostle, by affirming, in the beginning of the epistle, that he was an eye and an ear witness of the things he has written concerning the living word.

"The style of this epistle being the same with the style of the gospel of John, it is, by that internal mark likewise, denoted to be his writing. In his gospel, John does not content himself with simply affirming or denying a thing; but, to strengthen his affirmation, he denies the contrary. In like manner, to strengthen his denial of a thing, he affirms its contrary. See #Joh 1:20; 3:36; 5:22. The same manner of expressing things strongly, is found in this epistle; for example, #1Jo 2:4: 'He who saith, I have known him, and doth not keep his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.' #1Jo 2:27: 'The same unction teacheth you concerning all things, and is truth, and is no lie.' #1Jo 4:2: 'Every spirit which confesseth that Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh, is from God.' #1Jo 4:3: 'And every spirit which doth not confess that Jesus Christ hath come in the flesh, is not from God.'

"In his gospel likewise, John, to express things emphatically, frequently uses the demonstrative pronoun *this*. #Joh 1:19; αυτη· 'This is the testimony.' #Joh 3:19; αυτη· 'This is the condemnation, that light,' &c. #Joh 6:29: τουτο· 'This is the work of God.' #Joh 6:40: τουτο· 'This is the will of him.' #Joh 6:50: ουτος· 'This is the bread which cometh down from heaven.' #Joh 17:3: αυτη· 'This is the eternal life.' In the epistle the same emphatical manner of expression is found, #1Jo 1:5; 2:25: 'This is the promise.' #1Jo 3:23: αυτη· 'This is the commandment.' #1Jo 5:3: αυτη· 'This is the love of God.' #1Jo 5:4: 'This is the victory.' #1Jo 5:6: ουτος· 'This is he who came by water.' #1Jo 5:14: αυτη· 'This is the boldness which we have with him.'

"Such is the internal evidence on which all Christians, from the beginning, have received the First Epistle of John as really written by him, and of Divine authority, although his name is not mentioned in the inscription, nor in any part of the epistle."

On the term *epistle*, as applied to this work of St. John, it may be necessary to make a few remarks. There is properly nothing of the *epistolary style* in this work: it is addressed neither to any particular *person*, nor to any *Church*.

The writer does not mention himself either in the beginning or ending; and, although this can be no objection against its *authenticity*, yet it is some proof that the work was never intended to be considered in the light of an *epistle*.

1. Is it a *tract* or *dissertation* upon the more sublime parts of Christianity. 2. Is it a *polemical discourse* against *heretics*, particularly the *Gnostics*, or some of their teachers, who were disturbing the Churches where John dwelt. 3. Is it a *sermon*, the subject of which is God's love to man in the mission of Jesus Christ; from which our obligations to love and serve him are particularly inferred. 4. Or is it a *collection* of Christian *aphorisms*, made by John himself; and put together as they occurred to his mind, without any intended *order* or *method*. Much might be said on all these heads of inquiry; and the issue would be, that the idea of its being an *epistle* of any kind must be relinquished; and yet *epistle* is its general denomination through all antiquity.

It is a matter, however, of little importance what its *title* may be, or to what species of literary composition it belongs; while we know that it is the genuine work of St. John; of the holiest man who ever breathed; of one who was most intimately acquainted with the doctrine and mind of his Lord; of one who was admitted to the closest fellowship with his Saviour; and who has treated of the deepest things that can be experienced or comprehended in the Christian life.

As to *distinct heads of discourse*, it does not appear to me that any were intended by the apostle; he wrote just as the subjects occurred to his mind, or rather as the Holy Spirit gave him utterance; and, although *technical order* is not here to be expected, yet nothing like disorder or confusion can be found in the whole work.

As Professor Michaelis has considered it in the light of a *polemical treatise*, written against the *Gnostics*, and other false teachers of that time, I have thought it right to give his view of the work considered in this light; but as I, in general, pursue another plan of interpretation in the *notes*, I have inserted his elucidations in the preceding pages of this preface.

On the controverted text of the three heavenly Witnesses I have said what truth and a deep and thorough examination of the subject have obliged me to say. I am satisfied that it is not genuine, though the *doctrine* in behalf of which it has been originally introduced into the epistle is a doctrine of the highest importance, and most positively revealed in various parts both of the Old and New Testament. The stress which has been laid on the testimony of this text in behalf of the doctrine of the Trinity has done much evil; for when its own authenticity has come to be critically examined, and has been found to rest on no sure foundation, the adversaries of the doctrine itself have thought they had full cause for triumph, and have in effect said, "If this text be to the epistle, and to the doctrine in question, what the sun is in the world, what the heart is in man, and what the needle is in the mariner's compass, then the doctrine is spurious, for the text is a most manifest forgery." I would just observe, that incautious or feeble defences of any doctrine do not affect the doctrine itself but in the view of superficial minds. The *proof* that this text is an interpolation which, first existing as an illustrative marginal note, has afterwards been unfortunately introduced into the text, has "demolished *no strong hold* of the orthodox, has taken away *no pillar* from the Christian faith." The grand defences of the doctrine of the Trinity, brought down to us from the highest Christian antiquity, stand still in all their force; not one of them was built upon this text, because the text, as a supposed part of St. John's work, did not then exist; therefore neither *evidence*, *prop*, nor *pillar* of the grand doctrine is injured. We have what we ever had in this respect, and we may make the same illustrating use of the words in reference to this doctrine which many Latin writers, since the time of St. Cyprian, made; and which was proper enough in its own place, but became useless when incorporated with the sure sayings of God.

No man, it is hoped, will be so obstinate, perverse, or disingenuous, as to say or insinuate that the man who gives up this text is unsound in the faith; it would be as reasonable to assert, on the other hand, that he who understands the mass of evidence that is against the authenticity of this verse, and who nevertheless *will contend* for its continuance in the sacred canon, is a Deist in his heart, and endeavours to discredit the truth by mixing it with error and falsehood. Those whose doubts are not removed by the dissertation at the end of his epistle had better read the late Professor *Porson's* Answer to Dean *Travis*, where it is presumed they will receive the fullest satisfaction.

**THE  
FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE  
OF  
JOHN.**

*Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern Writers, 5577.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5571.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5561.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4073.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4297.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3829.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4428.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2417.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3171.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1009.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 818.
- Year of the CCXIIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 820.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 821.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 822.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 381.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 117.
- Year of the Julian era, 114.
- Year of the Spanish era, 107.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 73.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 69.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 20.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 70.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 13; or the fifth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 22.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, A.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-fourth of March, which happened in this year on the sixth day after the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the twenty-sixth of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 12.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 20.

- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 20, 22, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 27, 28, 0, 0, 2, 2.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 3.
- In this year reigned four Roman emperors, viz., Galba, from Jan. 1 to Jan. 15, Otho ninety days, Vitellius eight months, and Vespasian for the remainder of the year.
- Roman Consuls, Servius Sulpicius Galba Augustus, the second time, and Titus Vinius Rufinus, from Jan. 1 to the death of Galba, Jan. 15; Salvius Otho Augustus, and L. Salvius Otho Titianus, from Jan. 15 to March 1; L. Virginius Rufus, and Vopiscus Pompeius Silvanus, from March 1 to May 1; Titus Arrius Antoninus and P. Marius Celsus, the second time, from May 1 to Sept. 1; C. Fabius Valens and Aulus Alienus Cæcina, from Sept. 1, the former holding the Consulship to Nov. 1, the latter being succeeded by Roscius Regulus, on Oct. 31; Cn. Cæcilius Simplex and C. Quintius Atticus, from Nov. 1, to the end of the year.

## CHAPTER I.

*The testimony of the apostle concerning the reality of the person and doctrine of Christ; and the end for which he bears this testimony, 1-4. God is light, and none can have fellowship with him who do not walk in the light; those who walk in the light are cleansed from all unrighteousness by the blood of Christ, 5-7. No man can say that he has not sinned; but God is faithful and just to cleanse from all unrighteousness them who confess their sins, 8-10.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. I.

Verse 1. **That which was from the beginning]** That glorious personage, JESUS CHRIST *the LORD*, who was from *eternity*; him, being *manifested in the flesh*, we have heard proclaim the *doctrine of eternal life*; with *our own eyes have we seen him*, not transiently, for we have *looked upon him* frequently; and *our hands have handled*-frequently touched, his person; and we have had every proof of the identity and reality of this glorious being that our senses of *hearing*, ο ακηκοαμεν, *seeing*, ο εωρακαμεν τοις αφθαλμοις ημων, and *feeling*, και αι χειρες ημων εψηλαφησαν could possibly require.

Verse 2. **For the Life was manifested]** The Lord Jesus, who is the creator of all things, and the *fountain of life* to all sentient and intellectual beings, and from whom *eternal life* and *happiness* come, *was manifested* in the flesh, and we *have seen him*, and in consequence *bear witness* to him as the fountain and author of eternal life; for he who *was from eternity with the Father was manifested unto us* his apostles, and to the whole of the Jewish nation, and preached that doctrine of eternal life which I have before delivered to the world in my gospel, and which I now farther confirm by this epistle.

Verse 3. **That which we have seen and heard]** We deliver nothing by hearsay, nothing by tradition, nothing from conjecture; we have had the fullest certainty of all that we write and preach.

**That ye also may have fellowship with us]** That ye may be preserved from all false doctrine, and have a real *participation* with us apostles of the grace, peace, love, and life of God, which

communion we have *with God* the Father, who hath loved us, and given his Son Jesus Christ to redeem us; and *with his Son Jesus Christ*, who laid down his life for the life of the world and *through* whom, being God manifested in the flesh, we have union with God, are made partakers of the Divine nature and dwell in God, and God in us.

Verse 4. **That your joy may be full.**] Ye have already *tasted* that the Lord is good; but I am now going to show you the height of your Christian calling, that your *happiness may be complete*, being thoroughly cleansed from all sin, and filled with the fulness of God.

Verse 5. **This then is the message**] This is the *grand principle* on which all depends, *which we have heard of* ἀπ' αὐτοῦ, FROM *him*; for neither Moses nor the prophets ever gave that full instruction concerning God and communion with him which Jesus Christ has given, for the only-begotten Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, has alone declared the fulness of the truth, and the extent of the blessings, which believers on him are to receive. See #Joh 1:18.

**God is light**] The source of wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness; and *in him is no darkness at all*-no ignorance, no imperfection, no sinfulness, no misery. And from him wisdom, knowledge, holiness, and happiness are received by every believing soul. This is the grand message of the Gospel, the great principle on which the happiness of man depends. LIGHT implies every essential excellence, especially wisdom, holiness, and happiness. DARKNESS implies all imperfection, and principally *ignorance, sinfulness, and misery*. LIGHT is the purest, the most subtle, the most useful, and the most diffusive of all God's creatures; it is, therefore, a very proper emblem of the *purity, perfection, and goodness* of the Divine nature. God is to human soul, what the light is to the world; without the latter all would be dismal and uncomfortable, and terror and death would universally prevail: and without an indwelling God what is religion? Without his all-penetrating and diffusive light, what is the soul of man? Religion would be an empty science, a dead letter, a system unauthoritated and uninfluencing, and the soul a trackless wilderness, a howling waste, full of evil, of terror and dismay, and ever racked with realizing anticipations of future, successive, permanent, substantial, and endless misery. No wonder the apostle lays this down as a first and grand principle, stating it to be the essential message which he had received from Christ to deliver to the world.

Verse 6. **If we say that we have fellowship**] Having fellowship, κοινωνία, *communion*, with God, necessarily implies a *partaking of the Divine nature*. Now if a man profess to have such communion, and *walk in darkness*-live an irreligious and sinful life, *he lies*, in the profession which he makes, and *does not the truth*-does not walk according to the directions of the Gospel, on the grace of which he holds his relation to God, and his communion with him.

The *Gnostics*, against whose errors it is supposed this epistle was written, were great pretenders to *knowledge*, to the highest degrees of the Divine illumination, and the nearest communion with the fountain of holiness, while their manners were excessively corrupt.

Verse 7. **But if we walk in the light**] If, having received the principle of holiness from him, we live a holy and righteous life, deriving continual light, power, and life from him, then *we have fellowship one with another*; that is, we have communion with God, and God condescends to hold

communion with us. This appears to be the intention of the apostle; and so he was understood by some versions and MSS., which, instead of *μετ' ἀλλήλων*, *with each other*, have *μετ' αὐτον*, *with him*. Those who are deeply experienced in Divine things converse with God, and God with them. What John says is no *figure*; God and a holy heart are in continual correspondence.

**The blood of Jesus Christ]** The meritorious efficacy of his passion and death has purged our consciences from dead works, *and cleanseth us*, *καθαρίζει η̅μας*, *continues to cleanse us*, i.e., to *keep clean* what it has made clean, (for it requires the same merit and energy to preserve holiness in the soul of man, as to produce it,) or, as several MSS. and some versions read, *καθαρίζει* and *καθαρίσει*, *will cleanse*; speaking of those who are already justified, and are expecting *full redemption* in his blood.

And being cleansed from all sin is what every believer should look for, what he has a right to expect, and what he must have *in this life*, in order to be prepared to meet his God. Christ is not a *partial Saviour*, he saves to the uttermost, and he cleanses from ALL *sin*.

Verse 8. **If we say that we have no sin]** This is tantamount to **#1Jo 1:10**: *If we say that we have not sinned. All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God*; and therefore every man needs a *Saviour*, such as Christ is. It is very likely that the heretics, against whose evil doctrines the apostle writes, denied that they had any sin, or needed any Saviour. In deed, the *Gnostics* even denied that Christ suffered: the *Æon*, or Divine Being that dwelt in the man Christ Jesus, according to them, left him when he was taken by the Jews; and he, being but a common man, his sufferings and death had neither merit nor efficacy.

**We deceive ourselves]** By supposing that we have no guilt, no sinfulness, and consequently have no need of the blood of Christ as an atoning sacrifice: this is the most dreadful of all deceptions, as it leaves the soul under all the guilt and pollution of sin, exposed to hell, and utterly unfit for heaven.

**The truth is not in us.]** We have no *knowledge* of the *Gospel* of Jesus, the whole of which is founded on this most awful truth—all have sinned, all are guilty, all are unholy; and none can redeem himself. Hence it is as necessary that Jesus Christ should become incarnated, and suffer and die to bring men to God.

Verse 9. **If we confess our sins]** If, from a deep sense of our guilt, impurity, and helplessness, we humble ourselves before God, acknowledging our iniquity, his holiness, and our own utter helplessness, and implore mercy for his sake who has died for us; *he is faithful*, because to such he has *promised* mercy, **#Ps 32:5**; **#Pr 28:13**; *and just*, for Christ has died for us, and thus made an atonement to the Divine justice; so that God can now be just, and yet the justifier of him who believeth in Jesus.

**And to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.]** Not only to *forgive the sin*, but to *purify the heart*.

OBSERVE here, 1. Sin exists in the soul after two modes or forms: (1.) In *guilt*, which requires *forgiveness* or *pardon*. (2.) In *pollution*, which requires *cleansing*.

2. *Guilt*, to be forgiven, must be *confessed*; and *pollution*, to be *cleansed*, must be also *confessed*. In order to *find mercy*, a man must *know* and *feel* himself to be a *sinner*, that he may fervently apply to God for pardon; in order to get a *clean heart*, a man must know and feel its depravity, acknowledge and deplore it before God, in order to be *fully sanctified*.

3. Few are pardoned, because they do not feel and confess their sins; and few are sanctified or cleansed from all sin, because they do not feel and confess their own sore, and the plague of their hearts.

4. As the blood of Jesus Christ, the merit of his passion and death, applied by faith, purges the conscience from *all dead works*, so the same *cleanses the heart* from *all unrighteousness*.

5. As all unrighteousness is *sin*, so he that is cleansed from all unrighteousness is cleansed from all sin. To attempt to evade this, and plead for the continuance of sin in the heart through life, is ungrateful, wicked, and even blasphemous; for as he who *says he has not sinned*, #1Jo 1:10, *makes God a liar*, who has declared the contrary through every part of his revelation; so he that says the *blood of Christ* either *cannot* or *will not cleanse us from all sin* in this life, gives also the lie to his Maker, who has declared the contrary, and thus shows that the *word-the doctrine of God is not in him*.

Reader, it is the birthright of every child of God to be cleansed from all sin, to keep himself unspotted from the world, and so to live as never more to offend his Maker. All things are possible to him that believeth; because all things are possible to the infinitely meritorious blood and energetic Spirit of the Lord Jesus. See the notes on the parallel passages in the margin; and particularly in St. John's gospel, John i.

# I JOHN

## CHAPTER II.

*He exhorts them not to sin; yet encourages those who may have fallen, by the hope of mercy through Christ, who is a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, 1, 2. He who knows God keeps his commandments; and he who professes to abide in Christ ought to walk as Christ walked, 3-6. The old and new commandment, that we should walk in the light, and love the brethren, 7-11. The apostle's description of the different states in the family of God; little children, young men, and fathers; and directions to each, 12-15. A statement of what prevails in the world, 16, 17. Cautions against antichrists, 18-23. Exhortations to persevere in what they had received, and to continue to follow that anointing of the Divine Spirit, by which they could discern all men, and know all things necessary to their salvation, and proper to prepare them for eternal glory, 24-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II

Verse 1. **My little children]** *τεκνία μου*. *My beloved children*; the address of an affectionate father to children whom he tenderly loves. The term also refers to the apostle's *authority* as their spiritual father, and their *obligation* to obey as his spiritual children.

**That ye sin not.]** This is the language of the whole Scripture; of every dispensation, ordinance, institution, doctrine, and word of God. *Sin not*-do not run into ruin; live not so as to promote your own misery; be happy, for it is the will of God that ye should be so; therefore he wills that ye should be holy: *holiness* and *happiness* are inseparable; *sin* and *misery* are equally so.

**And if any man sin]** If, through ignorance, inexperience, the violence of temptation, unwatchfulness, &c., ye have fallen into sin, and grieved the Spirit of God, do not continue in the sin, nor under the guilt; do not despair of being again restored to the favour of God; your case, it is true, is deeply deplorable, but not desperate; there is still hope, for—

**We have an advocate with the Father]** We still have him before the throne who died for our offences, and rose again for our justification; and *there* he makes intercession for us. He is the *righteous*; he who suffered, the just for the *unjust*, that he might bring us to God. Do not, therefore, despair, but have immediate recourse to God through him.

Verse 2. **And he is the propitiation]** *ἵλασμος*. The *atoning sacrifice* for our sins. This is the proper sense of the word as used in the *Septuagint*, where it often occurs; and is the translation of *אָשָׁם* *asham*, an *oblation for sin*, #Am 8:14. *חַטָּאת* *chattath*, a *sacrifice for sin*, #Eze 44:27. *כִּפּוּר* *kippur*, an *atonement*, #Nu 5:8. See Clarke's note on "Ro 3:25", and particularly see Clarke's note on "Lu 18:13". The word is used only here and in #1Jo 4:10.

**And not for ours only]** It is not for us *apostles* that he has died, nor exclusively for the *Jewish people*, but *περι ολου του κοσμου*, *for the whole world*, Gentiles as well as Jews, all the descendants of Adam. The apostle does not say that he died for any select *part* of the inhabitants of the earth, or

for *some out of every nation, tribe, or kindred*; but for ALL MANKIND; and the attempt to limit this is a violent outrage against God and his word.

For the meaning of the word παρακλητος, which we here translate *advocate*, see **Clarke's note on "Joh 14:16"**.

From these verses we learn that a poor backslider need not despair of again finding mercy; this passage holds out sufficient encouragement for his hope. There is scarcely another such in the Bible, and why? That sinners might not *presume* on the mercy of God. And why this *one*? That no backslider might utterly despair. Here, then, is a guard against presumption on the one hand, and despondency on the other.

Verse 3. **And hereby we do know that we know him]** If we keep the commandments of God, loving him with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, we have the fullest proof that we have the true saving knowledge of God and his Christ. The *Gnostics* pretended to much *knowledge*, but their knowledge left them in possession of all their bad passions and unholy habits; they, therefore, gave no proof that they had known either God or his Son Jesus-nor is any man properly acquainted with God, who is still under the power of his sins.

Verse 4. **He that saith, I know him]** This is a severe blow against those false teachers, and against all pretenders to religious knowledge, who live under the power of their sins; and against all Antinomians, and false boasters in the righteousness of Christ as a covering for their personal unholiness. They are all *liars*, and no *truth of God* is in them.

Verse 5. **But whoso keepeth his word]** Conscientiously observes his doctrine, the spirit and letter of the religion of Christ.

**Is the love of God perfected]** The design of God's love in sending Jesus Christ into the world to die for the sin of man τετελειωται, *is accomplished*, in that man who receives the doctrine, and applies for the salvation provided for him. This seems to be the meaning of the apostle.

**That we are in him.]** That we have entered into his spirit and views, received his salvation, have been enabled to walk in the light, and have communion with him by the Holy Spirit.

Verse 6. **Abideth in him]** He who not only professes to have known Christ, but also that he has communion with him, and abides in his favour, should prove the truth of his profession by walking as Christ walked; living a life of devotion and obedience to God, and of benevolence and beneficence to his neighbour. Thus Christ walked; and he has left us an example that we should follow his steps.

To *be in Christ*, #1Jo 2:5, is to be converted to the Christian faith, and to have received the remission of sins. To *abide in Christ*, #1Jo 2:6, is to *continue* in that state of salvation, growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Verse 7. **Brethren, I write no new commandment]** There seems a contradiction between this and the next verse. But the apostle appears to speak, not so much of any difference in the *essence* of the precept itself, as in reference to the *degrees* of light and grace belonging to the Mosaic and Christian dispensations. It was *ever* the command of God that men should receive his light, walk by that light, and love him and one another. But this commandment was *renewed* by Christ with much latitude and spirituality of meaning; and also with much additional *light* to see its extent, and *grace* to observe it. It may therefore be called the *OLD commandment*, which was from the beginning; and also a *NEW commandment* revealed afresh and illustrated by Christ, with the important addition to the meaning of *Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself*, ye shall love the brethren so as to lay down your lives for each other. **See Clarke's note on "Joh 13:34"**.

Instead of *αδελφοι*, *brethren*, ABC, thirteen others, with both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, and *Vulgate*, with several of the *fathers*, have *αγαπητοι*, *beloved*. This is without doubt the *true reading*.

Verse 8. **Which thing is true in him and in you]** It is true that Christ loved the world so well as to lay down his life for it; and it was true in them, in all his faithful followers at that time, who were ready to lay down their lives for the testimony of Jesus. There is a saying in *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 94, n. 51, that may cast some light on this passage: *That way in which the just have walked, although it be OLD, yet may be said to be NEW in the love of the righteous*. The love that the righteous bear to God and to each other is a *renewal* of the commandment.

**The darkness is past]** The total thick darkness of the heathen world, and the comparative darkness of the Mosaic dispensation, are now *passing away*; and the pure and superior light of Christianity is now diffusing its beams everywhere. He does not say that the darkness was *all gone by*, but *παραγεται*, *it is passing away*; he does not say that the *fulness* of the *light had appeared*, but *ηδη φαινει*, *it is now shining* and will shine more and more to the perfect day; for the darkness passes away in proportion as the light shines and increases.

Verse 9. **He that saith he is in the light]** He that professes to be a convert to Christianity, even in the lowest degree; *and hateth his brother*-not only does not love him, but wills and does him evil, as the Jews did the Gentiles; *is in darkness*-has received no saving knowledge of the truth; and, whatever he may pretend, is in heathen ignorance, or even worse than heathen ignorance, to the present time, notwithstanding the clear shining of the light of the Gospel.

Verse 10. **He that loveth his brother]** That is, his neighbour, his fellow creature, whether Jew or Gentile, so as to bear him continual good will, and to be ready to do him every kind office; *abideth in the light*-not only gives proof that he has received Christ Jesus the Lord, but that he walks in him, that he *retains* the grace of his justification, and grows therein.

**And there is none occasion of stumbling in him.]** *και σκανδαλον εν αυτω ουκ εστιν* *And there is no stumbling block in him*; he neither *gives* nor *receives* offence: love prevents him from giving any to his neighbour; and love prevents him from receiving any from his neighbour, because it leads him to put the best construction on every thing. Besides, as he walks in the light, he sees the stumbling blocks that are in the way, and avoids them; every part of his path being illuminated.

Many fall into sin because they do not see the snares that are in the way; and they do not see the snares because they either have not received, or do not abide in, the light.

Verse 11. **But he that hateth his brother is in darkness]** He is still in his heathen or unconverted state; and *walketh in darkness*, his conduct being a proof of that state; *and knoweth not whither he goeth*-having no proper knowledge of God or eternal things; and *cannot tell whether he is going to heaven or hell*, because that darkness has blinded his eyes-darkened his whole soul, mind, and heart.

Verse 12. **I write unto you, little children]** **τεκνία**: *Beloved children*, (see Clarke on "**1Jo 2:1**",) those who were probably the apostle's own converts, and members of the Church over which he presided. But it may be applied to young converts in general; those who can call God *Abba, Father*, by the Holy Spirit: therefore he says of them, *that their sins were forgiven them for his name's sake*: i.e. on account of *Jesus, the Saviour*, who had died for them, and was now their Mediator at the right hand of God.

Verse 13. **I write unto you, fathers]** By fathers it is very likely that the apostle means persons who had embraced Christianity on its first promulgation in Judea and in the Lesser Asia, some of them had probably seen Christ in the flesh; for this appears to be what is meant by, *Ye have known him from the beginning*. These were the *elders* and *eye witnesses*, who were of the longest standing in the Church, and well established in the truths of the Gospel, and in Christian experience. But **του απ' αρχης**, *him who is from the beginning*, may mean Jesus Christ in the eternity of his nature, see **#Joh 1:1, 2**; but the sense is the same.

**I write unto you, young men]** These were confirmed disciples of Christ; persons who were well-grounded in the truth, had been thoroughly exercised in the Christian warfare, were no longer agitated by doubts and fears, but had arrived at the abiding testimony of the Spirit of God in their consciences; hence they are said to have *overcome the wicked one*, **#1Jo 2:14**. They were persons in the prime of life, and in the zenith of their faith and love.

**I write unto you, little children]** **παιδια**, a very different term from that used in the 12th verse {**#1Jo 2:12**}, **τεκνία**, which means *beloved children*, as we have already seen. This is another *class*, and their state is differently described: *Ye have known the Father*. If the apostle does not use these two words indifferently, *four* states instead of *three*, are here described:—

1. FATHERS, **πατερες**: those who had been converted at the very commencement of Christianity, and had seen the eternal Word manifested in the flesh.

2. YOUNG MEN, **νεανισκοι**: youths in the prime of their spiritual life, *valiant soldiers*, fighting under the banner of Christ, who had confounded Satan in his wiles, and overcome him by the blood of the Lamb.

3. LITTLE CHILDREN, **παιδια**: disciples of Christ, not of very long standing in the Church, nor of much experience, but who had *known the Father*; i.e. persons who had been made sons: God had sent the Spirit of his Son into their hearts, whereby they cried *Abba, Father!*

4. BELOVED CHILDREN, *τεκνία*: the most recent converts, and particularly those among *young men* and *women* who, from their youth, simplicity, openheartedness, and affectionate attachment to God and his cause, were peculiarly dear to this aged apostle of Jesus Christ. These are represented as having their *sins forgiven them on account of his name*, *διὰ τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ*, that is, for the sake of Jesus, or on account of his merit or worthiness.

These *four classes* constituted the household or family of God; each class, in ascending gradation, seems to have had more light, experience, and holiness than the other. 1. The *τεκνία*, *beloved children*, or *infants*, are those who are just born into the heavenly family. 2. The *παῖδια*, *little children*, are those who are able to walk and speak; they know their heavenly Father, and can call him by that name. 3. The *νεανίσκοι*, *young men*, are such as are grown up to man's estate; these perform the most difficult part of the labour, and are called to fight the battles of the Lord. 4. The *πατέρες*, *fathers*, are those who are at the foundation of the spiritual family, and have known the whole economy of the work of God in themselves and in others. These have the largest stock of spiritual wisdom and religious experience. All these answer to the component members of a perfect human family. 1. There is the *beloved infant* dandled on the knees of its parents. 2. There are the *little children* that can speak a little, run about, answer to their own names, distinguish and call on their father and mother, and are now put under *instruction*. 3. There are the *youths*, those who are grown up to man's estate, are *strong* to labour, *retain* the instructions they have received, act upon them, and are occasionally called upon to *defend* their family, property, and country, against spoilers and oppressors. 4. There are the *parents*, the *father* and *mother*, from whom the family sprang, and who are the governors and directors of the household. To these *four classes*, in a perfect family, the apostle appears to allude; and we see, considered in this light, with what delicacy and propriety he uses these images.

Verse 14. **The word of God abideth in you]** Ye have not only thoroughly known and digested the Divine doctrine, but your hearts are moulded into it; ye know it to be the truth of God from the *power* and happiness with which it inspires you, and from the constant abiding testimony of the Spirit of that truth which lives and witnesses wherever that truth lives and predominates.

Verse 15. **Love not the world]** Though these several classes were so well acquainted with Divine things, and had all tasted the powers of the world to come: yet so apt are men to be drawn aside by sensible things, that the Holy Spirit saw it necessary to caution these against the love of the world, the inordinate desire of earthly things. *Covetousness* is the predominant vice of old age: *Ye fathers, love not the world*. The things which are in the world, its profits, pleasures, and honours, have the strongest allurements for *youth*; therefore, ye *young men, little children, and babes*, love not the things of this world. Let those hearts abide faithful to God who have taken him for their portion.

**The love of the Father is not in him.]** The love of God and the love of earthly things are incompatible. If you give place to the love of the world, the love of God cannot dwell in you; and if you have not his love, you can have no peace, no holiness, no heaven.

Verse 16. **For all that is in the world]** All that it can boast of, all that it can promise, is only sensual, transient gratification, and even this promise it cannot fulfil; so that its warmest votaries can complain loudest of their disappointment.

**The lust of the flesh]** Sensual and impure desires which seek their gratification in women, strong drink, delicious viands, and the like.

**Lust of the eyes]** Inordinate desires after *finery* of every kind, gaudy dress, splendid houses, superb furniture, expensive equipage, trappings, and decorations of all sorts.

**Pride of life]** Hunting after honours, titles, and pedigrees; boasting of ancestry, family connections, great offices, honourable acquaintance, and the like.

**Is not of the Father]** Nothing of these inordinate attachments either comes from or leads to God. They are of this world; here they begin, flourish, and end. They deprave the mind, divert it from Divine pursuits, and render it utterly incapable of spiritual enjoyments.

Verse 17. **The world passeth away]** All these things are continually fading and perishing; and the very *state* in which they are possessed is changing perpetually, and the earth and its works will be shortly burnt up.

**And the lust thereof]** The men of this world, their vain pursuits, and delusive pleasures, are passing away in their successive generations, and their very memory perishes; *but he that doeth the will of God*-that seeks the pleasure, profit, and honour that comes from above, shall abide for ever, always happy through time and eternity, because God, the unchangeable source of felicity, is his portion.

Verse 18. **Little children, it is the last time]** This place is variously understood. This is the *last dispensation* of grace and mercy to mankind; the *present age* is the *conclusion* of the Jewish state, as the temple and holy city are shortly to be destroyed. But as there are many who suppose that this epistle was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, consequently the words cannot, on that supposition, refer to this. Others think that *εσχατη ωρα* should be translated, a most *difficult, perilous, and wretched time*; a time in which all kinds of vices, heresies, and pollutions shall have their full reign; that time which our Lord predicted, #Mt 7:15, when he said, *Beware of false prophets*. And #Mt 24:11, 12: *Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many; and because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold*. And #Mt 24:24: *There shall arise false Christs and false prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders*. And #Mt 24:25: *Behold, I have told you before*. Now the apostle may allude to these predictions of our Lord; but all these refer to a time antecedent to the destruction of Jerusalem. I am therefore inclined to think, whatever may be here the precise meaning of the *last time*, that the epistle before us was written while Jerusalem yet stood. See what is said in the preface on this head.

**Antichrist shall come]** Who is this *αντιχριστος* antichrist? Is he the Emperor *Domitian*, the *Gnostics, Nicolaitans, Nazareans, Cerinthians, Romish pontiffs, &c., &c.*! Ans. Any *person, thing, doctrine, system of religion, polity, &c.,* which is *opposed to Christ*, and to the spirit and spread of

his Gospel, is antichrist. We need not look for this imaginary being in any of the above exclusively. Even *Protestantism* may have its antichrist as well as *Popery*. Every *man* who opposes the spirit of the Gospel, and every *teacher* and *writer* who endeavours to lower the Gospel standard to the spirit and taste of the world, is a genuine *antichrist*, no matter *where* or *among whom* he is found. The heresies which sprang up in the days of St. John were the *antichrist* of that time. As there has been a succession of oppositions to Christianity in its spirit and spread through every age since its promulgation in the world, so there has been a succession of *antichrists*. We may bring this matter much lower; every enemy of Christ, every one who opposes his reign in the world, in others, or in himself, is an *antichrist*; and consequently every *wicked man* is an antichrist. But the name has been generally applied to whatever *person* or *thing systematically* opposes Christ and his religion.

**Many antichrists]** Many false prophets, false Messiahs, heretics, and corrupters of the truth.

**Whereby we know that it is the last time.]** That time which our Lord has predicted, and of which he has warned us.

Verse 19. **They went out from us]** These heretics had belonged to our Christian assemblies, they professed Christianity, and do so still; but we apostles did not commission them to preach to you, for they have disgraced the Divine doctrine with the most pernicious opinions; they have given up or explained away its most essential principles; they have mingled the rest with heathenish rites and Jewish glosses. While, therefore, we acknowledge that they once belonged to us, we assert that they are not of us. They are not Christians; we abhor their conduct and their creed. We never sent them to teach.

**They were not of us]** For a considerable time before they left our assemblies they gave proofs that they had departed from the faith; *for if they had been of us*-if they had been apostles, and continued in the firm belief of the Christian doctrines, they would not have departed from us to form a sect of themselves.

**That they were not all of us.]** They were not expelled from the Christian Church; they were not sent out by us; but they separated from it and us. None of them had been inspired as we apostles were, though they pretended to a very high teaching; but their separating from us *manifested* that they were not taught, as we were, by the Spirit of God. These false teachers probably drew many sincere souls away with them; and to this it is probable the apostle alludes when he says, *they were not ALL of us*. Some *were*; others were not.

Verse 20. **But ye have an unction]** The word *χρισμα* signifies not an *unction*, but an *ointment*, the very thing itself by which *anointing* is effected; and so it was properly rendered in our former translations. Probably this is an allusion to the holy anointing oil of the law, and to **#Ps 14:7**: *God hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness*-he hath given thee the *plenitude of the Spirit*, which none of thy *fellows*-none of the prophets, ever received in such abundance. By this it is evident that not only the gifts of the Spirit, but the Holy Spirit himself, is intended. This Spirit dwelt at that time in a peculiar manner in the Church, to teach apostles, teachers, and all the primitive believers, every thing requisite for their salvation; and to make them the instruments of handing down to posterity that glorious system of truth which is contained in the New Testament. As *oil* was used among the

Asiatics for the inauguration of persons into important offices, and this oil was acknowledged to be an emblem of the *gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit*, without which the duties of those offices could not be discharged; so it is put here for the Spirit himself, who presided in the Church, and from which all gifts and graces flowed. The *χρῖσμα*, *chrism* or *ointment* here mentioned is also an allusion to the *holy anointing ointment* prescribed by God himself, #Ex 30:23-25, which was composed of fine *myrrh*, sweet *cinnamon*, sweet *calamus*, *cassia lignea*, and *olive oil*. This was an emblem of the gifts and graces of the Divine Spirit. See the notes on the above place. And for the *reason* of this anointing see **Clarke's note on "Ex 29:7"**.

**Ye know all things.]** Every truth Of God necessary to your salvation and the salvation of man in general, and have no need of that knowledge of which the Gnostics boast.

But although the above is the sense in which this verse is generally understood, yet there is reason to doubt its accuracy. The adjective *παντα*, which we translate *all things*, is most probably in the accusative case singular, having *ανθρωπον*, *man*, or some such substantive, understood. The verse therefore should be translated: *Ye have an ointment from the Holy One, and ye know or discern EVERY MAN*. This interpretation appears to be confirmed by *των πλαωντων* in #1Jo 2:26, *those who are deceiving or misleading you*; and in the same sense should *παντων*, #1Jo 2:27, be understood: *But as the same anointing teacheth you παντων*, not of *all things*, but of *ALL MEN*. It is plain, from the whole tenor of the epistle, that St. John is guarding the Christians against seducers and deceivers, who were even then disturbing and striving to corrupt the Church. In consequence of this he desires them *to try the spirits whether they were of God*, #1Jo 4:1. But how were they to try them? Principally by that *anointing—that spiritual light and discernment* which they had received from God; and also by comparing the doctrine of these men with *what they had heard from the beginning*. The *anointing* here mentioned seems to mean the spirit of illumination, or great knowledge and discernment in spiritual things. By this they could readily distinguish the false apostles from the true.

Verse 21. **I have not written, &c.]** It is not because ye are *ignorant* of these things that I write to you, but because you *know them*, and can by these judge of the doctrines of those false teachers, and clearly perceive that they are *liars*; for they contradict the *truth* which ye have already received, and consequently their doctrine is a lie, and no lie can be of the truth, i.e. consistent with Christianity.

Verse 22. **Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ?]** Here we see some of the false doctrines which were then propagated in the world. There were certain persons who, while they acknowledged Jesus to be a *Divine teacher*, denied him to be the *Christ*, i.e. the MESSIAH.

**He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son,]** He is antichrist who denies the supernatural and miraculous birth of Jesus Christ, who denies Jesus to be the *Son of God*, and who denies God to be the Father of the Lord Jesus; thus he denies the *Father* and the *Son*. The Jews in general, and the Gnostics in particular, denied the *miraculous conception* of Jesus; with both he was accounted no more than a *common man*, the son of Joseph and Mary. But the Gnostics held that a Divine person, *Æon*, or angelical being, dwelt in him; but all things else relative to his miraculous generation and Divinity they rejected. These were antichrists, who denied *Jesus* to be the Christ.

Verse 23. **Whosoever denieth the Son]** He who denies Jesus to be the Son of God, and consequently the Christ or Messiah, *he hath not the Father*-he can have no birth from above, he cannot be enrolled among the children of God, because none can be a child of God but by faith in Christ Jesus.

**He that acknowledgeth the Son hath the Father also.]** This clause is printed by our translators in Italics to show it to be of doubtful authority, as it was probably wanting in the chief of those MSS. which they consulted, as it was in Coverdale's Bible, printed 1535; Tindall's Text, printed 1548; and in all the early printed editions (which I have seen) previously to 1566; the Bible of *Richard Cardmarden*, printed in English at Rouen, where this clause is inserted in a different letter between brackets. But that the clause is genuine, and should be restored to the text without any mark of spuriousness, as I have done in the text of this work, is evident from the authorities by which it is supported. It is found in ABC, and in between twenty and thirty others of the best authority; as also in both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*. It is also quoted as a part of the text by *Origen*, *Meletius*, *Athanasius*, both the *Cyrils*, *Theophylact*, *Vigilius* of Tapsum, *Pelagius*, *Cerealis*, *Cassian*; and in substance by *Euthalius*, *Epiphanius*, *Cyprian*, *Hilary*, *Faustinus*, *Lucifer* of Cagliari, *Augustine*, and *Bede*. It is wanting in the *Arabic*, in the Polyglot, in a MSS. in the *Harleian* library, and in some few others. It is doubtless genuine, and Griesbach has with propriety restored it to the text, from which it never should have been separated.

Verse 24. **Let that therefore abide in you]** Continue in the doctrines concerning the incarnation, passion, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of the Lord Jesus, which you have heard preached from the beginning by us his apostles.

**Ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.]** Ye who are preachers shall not only be acknowledged as ministers of the Church of Christ, but be genuine children of God, by faith in the Son of his love; and ye all, thus continuing, shall have fellowship with the Father and with the Son.

Verse 25. **This is the promise]** God has promised eternal life to all who believe on Christ Jesus. So they who receive his doctrine, and continue in communion with the Father and the Son, shall have this eternal life.

Verse 26. **These things have I written]** Either meaning the whole epistle, or what is contained in the preceding verses, from the beginning of the 18th to the end of the 25th. {#1Jo 2:18-25}

**Them that seduce you.]** περι των πλανωντων υμας· That is, the *deceivers that were among them*, and who were labouring to pervert the followers of Christ.

Verse 27. **But the anointing which ye have received]** That *ointment*, the gifts of the Holy Spirit, mentioned #1Jo 2:20, where see the note.

**Ye need not that any man teach you]** The *Gnostics*, who pretended to the highest illumination, could bring no proof that they were divinely taught, nor had they any thing in their teaching worthy the acceptance of the meanest Christian; therefore they had no need of that, nor of any other teaching but that which *the same anointing teacheth*, the same Spirit from whom they had already received

the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Whatever that taught, they needed; and whatever those taught whose teaching was according to this Spirit, they needed. St. John does not say that those who had once received the teaching of the Divine Spirit had no farther need of the ministry of the Gospel; no, but he says they had no need of such teaching as their false teachers proposed to them; nor of any other teaching that was different from *that anointing*, i.e. the teaching of the Spirit of God. No man, howsoever holy, wise, or pure, can ever be in such a state as to have no need of the Gospel ministry: they who think so give the highest proof that they have never yet learned of Christ or his Spirit.

**And is truth]** Because it is the Spirit of truth #**Joh 16:13**.

**And is no lie]** It has nothing like the fables of the *Gnostics*. It can neither deceive, nor be deceived.

Verse 28. **And now, little children]** *τεκνία*, *Beloved children, abide in him*-in Christ Jesus. Let his word and spirit continually abide in you, and have communion with the Father and the Son.

**That when he shall appear]** To judge the world, *we may have confidence*, *παρρησιαν*, *freedom of speech, liberty of access, boldness*, from a conviction that our cause is good, and that we have had proper ground for exultation; *and not be ashamed*-confounded, when it appears that those who were brought to Christ Jesus, have apostatized, and are no longer found in the congregation of the saints, and consequently are not our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Abide in him, that this may not be the case.

Verse 29. **If ye know that he is righteous]** That God is a holy God, *ye know also, that every one who doeth righteousness*-who lives a holy life, following the commandments of God, *is born of him*, *BEGOTTEN of him*-is made a partaker of the Divine nature, without which he could neither have a holy heart, nor live a holy life.

This verse properly belongs to the following chapter, and should not be separated from it. The subject is the same, and does not stand in any strict relation to that with which the 28th verse concludes.

THE *titles* bestowed on Christians in the New Testament have been misunderstood by many. *What belongs, strictly speaking, to the PURE and HOLY, is often applied to those who, though bound by their PROFESSION to be such, were very far from it.* This has been strongly denied by writers who should have known better. Dr. Taylor has handled this point well in his *Key to the Apostolic Writings*, from which I have given a copious extract in my preface to the Epistle to the Romans, from the conviction that the subject had been most dangerously misapprehended; and that several of the worst heresies which disgrace religion had sprung from this misapprehension. With some, Dr. Taylor's being an *Arian* was sufficient to invalidate any testimony he might offer; but it is no discovery of Dr. Taylor; it is what every attentive, *unprejudiced* reader finds on reading the Old Testament in connection with the New. Perhaps the testimony of a judicious *Calvinist* may be better received, not that this truth needs the testimony of either, because it everywhere speaks for itself, but

because those who have too little grace, sense, and candour to search for themselves, may be pleased that Dr. *Macknight* saves them the trouble.

After having remarked that the words *born of him*, ἐξ αὐτου γεννηται, should be translated *hath been BEGOTTEN of him*, which is the literal signification of the word, from γεννωω, genero, gigno, *I beget*, (BORN of God being nowhere found in the Scripture,) he goes on to say:—

"To understand the import of the high titles which in the New Testament are given to the disciples of Christ, viz.: *the begotten of God*, as here; *children of God*, as in the next chapter; *heirs of God*, #Ro 8:17; *elect of God-adopted of God-saints-a royal priesthood-a holy nation-a peculiar people*, #1Pe 2:9; the following observations may be of use.

"1. These high titles were anciently given to the Israelites as a nation, because they were separated from mankind to be God's visible Church, for the purpose of preserving the knowledge and worship of him in the world, as the only true God.

"This appears from God's own words, #Ex 19:3-6, &c.: *Tell the children of Israel; Ye have seen what I did to the Egyptians, and how I bare you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people. And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation.* #De 14:1-2, &c.: *Ye are the children of the Lord your God-for thou art a holy people to the Lord thy God.* In particular, the title of *God's Son, even his first-born*, was given to the *whole Israelitish nation by God himself*, #Ex 4:22, chiefly because they were the descendants of Isaac, who was supernaturally begotten by Abraham, through the power which accompanied the promise, #Ge 18:10: *Lo, Sarah shall have a son.* So St. Paul informs us, #Ro 9:7: *Neither because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children; (namely of God;) but in Isaac shall a seed be to thee-the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of promise are counted for the seed.* The apostle's meaning is, that Ishmael and his posterity, whom Abraham procreated by his own natural strength, being children of the flesh, were not children of God; that is, they were not made the visible Church and people of God. But Isaac and his descendants, whom Abraham procreated through the strength which accompanied the promise, being more properly procreated by GOD than by *Abraham*, were *the children of God*, i.e. were made the visible Church and people of God, because, by their supernatural generation and title to inherit Canaan, they were a fit image to represent the catholic invisible Church of God, consisting of believers of all ages and nations, who, being regenerated by the Spirit of God, are the true children of God, and heirs of the heavenly country of which Canaan was a type.

"2. As the promise, *Lo, Sarah shall have a son*, which was given to Abraham when he was a hundred years old, and Sarah was *ninety*, implied that that son was to be supernaturally procreated; so the promise given to Abraham, #Ge 17:5, *A father of many nations have I constituted thee*, implied that the many nations of believers who, by this promise, were given to Abraham for a seed, were to be *generated by the operation of the Spirit of God*, producing in them faith and obedience, similar to those for which Abraham was constituted the father of all believers. This higher generation, by which believers have the moral image of God communicated to them, is well described, #Joh 1:12: *As many as received him, to them gave he power to be called the sons of God*,

even to them who believe on his name; οἱ ἐγεννηθησαν, who were BEGOTTEN, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. That is: Men become the true sons of God, not by their being naturally descended from this or that father, nor by their being called the *sons of God* by men like themselves, but by God's bestowing on them that high appellation on account of their faith and holiness," (which were produced in them by their regeneration through the Spirit of God.)

"3. If the Israelites, of whom the ancient visible Church and people of God were composed, were all called the *sons of God* because Isaac, from whom they were descended, was supernaturally begotten by the power of God; certainly the believers of all ages and nations, of whom the visible Church is composed, may with much greater propriety be called *the sons of God*, since they are begotten of God, and possess his moral nature.

"4. Thus it appears that the high titles above mentioned, namely, the *sons of God, the children of God, the elect of God, the adoption of sons, the election, saints, holy nation, royal priesthood, peculiar people*, were anciently given to the Israelites AS A NATION, merely on account of their being the *visible Church* and people of God, without any regard to the *personal character* of the *individuals* of whom that nation was composed. It appears, also, that under the Gospel the same high titles were bestowed *on whole Churches*, merely on account of their *profession of Christianity*, without any regard to the *personal character* of the *individuals* who composed these Churches. But these high titles, with some others of greater importance, such as the *begotten of God, the heirs of God, the adoption*, were given in an appropriated sense to individuals likewise, on account of their faith and holiness. When given to *whole Churches*, these titles imported nothing more than that the society to which they were given was a *Church of Christ*, (i.e. professed Christianity,) and that the individuals of which that society was composed were entitled to all the privileges belonging to the visible Church of God. But when appropriated to *individuals*, these titles implied that the persons to whom they were given were really partakers of the nature of God; and that they were the objects of his paternal love, and heirs of his glory.

"Wherefore, in reading the Scriptures, by attending to the different foundations of these titles, and by considering whether they are applied to *Churches* or *individuals*, we shall easily understand their true import. Thus, when St. Paul, writing to the Thessalonians, says, #1Th 1:4, *Knowing, brethren, beloved of God, your election*, he could not mean their election to eternal life, since many of them were living disorderly, #2Th 3:11, but their election to be the visible Church of God under the Gospel; whereas, when John, in the verse before us, says, *Every one who doeth righteousness hath been begotten of God*, by restricting the title to a specific character he teaches us that the persons of whom he speaks are the *sons of God* in the highest sense, and heirs of eternal glory." How forcible are right words! See also the introduction to the Epistle to the Romans.

# I JOHN

## CHAPTER III.

*The extraordinary love of God towards mankind, and the effects of it, 1-3. Sin is the transgression of the law, and Christ was manifested to take away our sins, 4-6. The children of God are known by the holiness of their lives, the children of the devil by the sinfulness of theirs, 7-10. We should love one another, for he that hateth his brother is a murderer; as Christ laid down his life for us, so we should lay down our lives for the brethren, 11-16. Charity is a fruit of brotherly love; our love should be active, not professional merely, 17, 18. How we may know that we are of the truth, 19-21. They whose ways please God, have an answer to all their prayers, 22. The necessity of keeping the commandment of Christ, that he may dwell in us and we in him by his Spirit, 23, 24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

Verse 1. **Behold, what manner of love]** Whole volumes might be written upon this and the two following verses, without exhausting the extraordinary subject contained in them, viz., *the love of God to man*. The apostle himself, though evidently filled with God, and walking in the fulness of his light, does not attempt to describe it; he calls on the world and the Church to *behold it*, to *look upon it*, to *contemplate it*, and *wonder at it*.

*What manner of love.*-ποταπην αγαπην· *What great love*, both as to *quantity* and *quality*; for these ideas are included in the original term. The length, the breadth, the depth, the height, he does not attempt to describe.

**The Father hath bestowed]** For we had neither *claim* nor *merit that we should be called*, that is, *constituted* or *made*, the *sons of God*, who were before children of the wicked one, animal, earthly, devilish; therefore, the love which brought us from such a depth of misery and degradation must appear the more extraordinary and impressive. After κληθωμεν, *that we might be called*, και εσμεν, *and we are*, is added by ABC, seventeen others, both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Æthiopic*, *Slavonic*, and *Vulgate*.

**Therefore the world]** The Jews, and all who know not God, and are seeking their portion in this life; *knoweth us not*-do not *acknowledge*, *respect*, *love*, or *approve* of us. In this sense the word γενωσκεν is here to be understood. The *world* KNEW well enough that there were such persons; but they did not *approve* of them. We have often seen that this is a frequent use of the term *know*, both in *Hebrew* and *Greek*, in the *Old Testament* and also in the *New*.

**Because it knew him not.]** The Jews did not *acknowledge* Jesus; they neither *approved* of him, his doctrine, nor his manner of life.

Verse 2. **Now are we the sons of God]** He speaks of those who are *begotten* of God, and who work righteousness. See the preceding chapter.

**And it doth not yet appear what we shall be]** οὐπω ἐφανερώθη· *It is not yet manifest*; though we *know* that we are the children of God, we do not know that state of glorious excellence to which, as such, we shall be raised.

**When he shall appear]** εἰν φανερώθη· *When he shall be manifested*; i.e., when he comes the second time, and shall be manifested in his glorified human nature to judge the world.

**We shall be like him]** For our vile bodies shall be made like unto his glorious body; *we shall see him as he is*, in all the glory and majesty both of the Divine and human nature. See **#Php 3:21**; and **#Joh 17:24**: *Father, I will that they also whom thou hast given me be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory*. John had seen his glory on the mount when he was transfigured; and this we find was ineffably grand; but even this must have been partially obscured, in order to enable the disciples to bear the sight, for they were not then *like him*. But when they shall be like him, they shall see him *as he is*-in all the splendour of his infinite majesty.

Verse 3. **And ever man that hath this hope in him]** All who have the hope of seeing Christ as he is; that is, of *enjoying* him in his own glory; *purifieth himself*-abstains from all evil, and keeps himself from all that is in the world, viz., the lusts of the flesh, of the eye, and the pride of life. God having purified his heart, it is his business to *keep himself in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life*. The apostle does not here speak of any man purifying his own heart, because this is impossible; but of his *persevering* in the state of purity into which the Lord hath brought him. The words, however, may be understood of a man's anxiously using all the means that lead to purity; and imploring God for the sanctifying Spirit, to "cleanse the thoughts of his heart by its inspiration, that he may perfectly love him, and worthily magnify his name."

**As he is pure.]** Till he is as completely saved from his sins as Christ was free from sin. Many tell us that "this never can be done, *for* no man can be saved from sin in this life." Will these persons permit us to ask, how much sin may we be saved from in this life? Something must be *ascertained* on this subject: 1. That the soul may have some *determinate object* in view; 2. That it may not lose its time, or employ its faith and energy, in praying for what is *impossible* to be attained. Now, as he was manifested to take away our sins, **#1Jo 3:5**, to destroy the works of the devil, **#1Jo 3:8**; and as his blood cleanseth from all sin and unrighteousness, **#1Jo 1:7, 9**; is it not evident that God means that believers in Christ shall be saved from all sin? For if his blood cleanses from all sin, if he destroys the works of the devil, (and sin is the work of the devil,) and if he who is born of God does not commit sin, **#1Jo 3:9**, then he must be cleansed from all sin; and, while he continues in that state he lives without sinning against God, *for the seed of God remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born, or begotten, of God*, **#1Jo 3:9**. How strangely warped and blinded by prejudice and system must men be who, in the face of such evidence as this, will still dare to maintain that no man can be saved from his sin in this life; but must daily commit sin, in thought, word, and deed, as the Westminster divines have asserted: that is, every man is laid under the *fatal necessity* of sinning as many ways against God as the devil does through his natural wickedness and malice; for even the devil himself can have no other way of sinning against God except by *thought, word, and deed*. And yet, according to these, and others of the same creed, "even the most regenerate sin thus against God as long as they live." It is a miserable salvo to say, they do not sin so much as they used to do; and they do not sin *habitually*, only occasionally. Alas for this system! Could not the grace

that saved them *partially* save them *perfectly*? Could not that power of God that saved them from *habitual* sin, save them from *occasional* or *accidental* sin? Shall we suppose that sin, how potent soever it may be, is as potent as the Spirit and grace of Christ? And may we not ask, If it was for God's glory and their good that they were *partially saved*, would it not have been more for God's glory and their good if they had been *perfectly saved*? But the letter and spirit of God's word, and the design and end of Christ's coming, is to save his people *from* their sins. Dr. Macknight having stated that *αγνιζει*, *purifieth*, is in the *present* tense, most ridiculously draws this conclusion from it: "In this life no one can attain to perfect purity; by this text, therefore, as well as by #1Jo 1:8, those fanatics are condemned who imagine they are able to live without sin." Yes, doctor, the men you call *fanatics* do most religiously believe that, by the grace of Christ cleansing and strengthening them, they can love God with all their heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves; and live without grieving the Spirit of God, and without sinning against their heavenly Father. And they believe that, if they are not thus saved, it is *their own fault*. But a blind man must ever be a bad judge of colours.

Verse 4. **Sin is the transgression of the law.**] The spirit of the law as well as of the Gospel is, that "we should love God with all our powers, and our neighbour as ourselves." All disobedience is contrary to love; therefore sin is the *transgression of the law*, whether the act refers immediately to God or to our neighbour.

Verse 5. **And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins**] He came into the world to destroy the power, pardon the guilt, and cleanse from the pollution of sin. This was the very *design* of his manifestation in the flesh. He was born, suffered, and died for this very purpose; and can it be supposed that he either *cannot* or *will not* accomplish the object of his own coming?

**In him is no sin.**] And therefore he is properly qualified to be the atoning sacrifice for the sins of men.

Verse 6. **Whosoever abideth in him**] By faith, love, and obedience.

**Sinneth not**] Because his heart is purified by faith, and he is a worker together with God, and consequently does not receive the grace of God in vain. **See Clarke on "1Jo 3:3"**.

**Hath not seen him**] It is no unusual thing with this apostle, both in his gospel and in his epistles, to put occasionally the *past* for the *present*, and the *present* for the *past* tense. It is very likely that here he puts, after the manner of the Hebrew, the *preterite* for the *present*: He who sins against God *doth not see him, neither doth he know him*-the eye of his faith is darkened, so that he cannot see him as he formerly did; and he has no longer the experimental *knowledge* of God as his Father and portion.

Verse 7. **Let no man deceive you**] Either by asserting that "you cannot be saved from sin in this life," or "that sin will do you no harm and cannot alter your state, if you are adopted into the family of God; for sin cannot annul this adoption." Hear God, ye deceivers! *He that doeth righteousness is righteous*, according to his state, nature, and the extent of his moral powers.

**Even as he is righteous.]** Allowing for the disparity that must necessarily exist between that which is *bounded*, and that which is *without limits*. As God, in the infinitude of his nature, is righteous; so they, being filled with him, are in their limited nature righteous.

Verse 8. **He that committeth sin is of the devil]** Hear this, also, ye who plead for Baal, and cannot bear the thought of that doctrine that states believers are to be saved from all sin in this life! *He who committeth sin is a child of the devil*, and shows that he has still the nature of the devil in him; *for the devil sinneth from the beginning*-he was the father of sin, brought sin into the world, and maintains sin in the world by living in the hearts of his own children, and thus leading *them* to transgression; and persuading *others* that they cannot be saved from their sins in this life, that he may secure a continual residence in their heart. He knows that if he has a place there throughout life, he will probably have it at death; and, if so, throughout eternity.

**For this purpose]** εἰς τούτου· *For this very end*-with this *very design*, was Jesus manifested in the flesh, *that he might destroy, ἡλύθη, that he might loose*, the bonds of sin, and *dissolve* the power, influence, and connection of sin. **See Clarke on "1Jo 3:3"**.

Verse 9. **Whosoever is born of God]** γεγεννημενος, *Begotten of God, doth not commit sin*: "that is," say some, "as he used to do, he does not sin *habitually* as he formerly did." This is bringing the influence and privileges of the heavenly birth very low indeed. We have the most indubitable evidence that many of the heathen philosophers had acquired, by mental discipline and cultivation, an entire ascendancy over all their wonted vicious habits. Perhaps my reader will recollect the story of the physiognomist, who, coming into the place where Socrates was delivering a lecture, his pupils, wishing to put the principles of the man's science to proof, desired him to examine the face of their master, and say what his moral character was. After a full contemplation of the philosopher's visage, he pronounced him "the most gluttonous, drunken, brutal, and libidinous old man that he had ever met." As the character of Socrates was the reverse of all this, his disciples began to insult the physiognomist. Socrates interfered, and said, "The principles of his science may be very correct, *for such I was, but I have conquered it by my philosophy*." O ye Christian divines! ye real or pretended Gospel ministers! will ye allow the influence of the grace of Christ a sway not even so extensive as that of the philosophy of a heathen who never heard of the true God?

Verse 10. **In this the children of God are manifest]** Here is a fearful text. Who is a child of the devil? *He that commits sin*. Who is a child of God? *He that works righteousness*. By this text we shall stand or fall before God, whatever our particular *creed* may say to the contrary.

**Neither he that loveth not his brother.]** No man is of God who is not ready on all emergencies to do any act of kindness for the comfort, relief, and support of any human being. For, as God made of one blood an the nations of men to dwell upon the face of the whole earth, so all are of *one family*; and consequently all are *brethren*, and should love as brethren.

Verse 11. **For this is the message]** See #1Jo 1:5. From the *beginning* God hath taught men that they should *love one another*. How essentially necessary this is to the comfort and well-being of man in this state of trial and difficulty, every sensible man must see. All are dependent upon all; all upon each, and each upon all. Mutual love makes this dependence pleasant and doubly profitable.

Nothing can be more pleasing to an ingenuous and generous mind than to communicate acts of kindness.

Verse 12. **Not as Cain]** Men should not act to each other as Cain did to his brother Abel. He murdered him because he was better than himself. But who was Cain? *εκ του πονηρου ην*, *he was of the devil*. And who are they who, through pride, lust of power, ambition, gain, &c., murder each other in *wars* and political contentions? *εκ του πονηρου εισι*. To attempt to justify the *principle*, and excuse the *instigators, authors, abettors, &c.*, of such wars, is as vain as it is wicked. They are opposed to the *nature of God*, and to that *message* which he has sent to man from the beginning: *Love one another. Love your enemies*. Surely this does not mean, *Blow out their brains*, or, *Cut their throats*. O, how much of the spirit, temper, and letter of the Gospel have the nations of the world, and particularly the nations of Europe, to learn!

**And wherefore slew he him?]** What could induce a brother to imbrue his hands in a brother's blood? Why, his brother was righteous, and he was wicked; and the seed of the wicked one which was in him induced him to destroy his brother, because the seed of God-the Divine nature, was found in him.

Verse 13. **Marvel not-if the world hate you.]** Expect no better treatment from unconverted Jews and Gentiles than Abel received from his wicked and cruel brother. This was a lesson to the Church, preparatory to *martyrdom*. Expect neither justice nor mercy from the men who are enemies of God. They are either full of malice and envy, hateful, hating one another, or they are specious, hollow, false, and deceitful.

"A foe to GOD was ne'er true friend to MAN."

Verse 14. **We know that we have passed from death unto life]** *Death* and *life* are represented here as two distinct *territories, states, or kingdoms*, to either of which the inhabitants of either may be removed. This is implied in the term *μεταβηκαμεν*, from *μετα*, denoting *change of place*, and *βαινω*, *I go*. It is the same figure which St. Paul uses, **#Col 1:13**: *Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and translated us into the kingdom of the Son of his love*. The believers to whom St. John writes had been once in the region and shadow of death, in the place where sin and death reigned, whose subjects they were; but they had left that kingdom of oppression, wretchedness, and wo, and had *come over* to the kingdom of *life*, whose king was the *Prince and Author of life*; where all was *liberty, prosperity, and happiness*; where *life* and *love* were universally prevalent, and *death* and *hatred* could not enter. We *know*, therefore, says the apostle, *that we are passed over from the territory of death to the kingdom of life, because we love the brethren*, which those who continue in the old kingdom-under the old covenant, can never do; for *he that loveth not his brother abideth in death*. He has never changed his original residence. He is still an unconverted, unrenewed sinner.

Verse 15. **Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer]** He has the same principle in him which was in Cain, and it may lead to the same consequences.

**No murderer hath eternal life]** Eternal life springs from an *indwelling God*; and God cannot dwell in the heart where *hatred* and *malice* dwell. This text has been quoted to prove that *no*

*murderer can be saved.* This is not said in the text; and there have been many instances of persons who have been guilty of murder having had deep and genuine repentance, and who doubtless found mercy from his hands who prayed for his murderers, *Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do!* It is, however, an awful text for the consideration of those who shed human blood on frivolous pretences, or in those *wars* which have their origin in the worst passions of the human heart.

Verse 16. **Hereby perceive we the love of God]** This sixteenth verse of this third chapter of John's first epistle is, in the main, an exact counterpart of the sixteenth verse of the third chapter of St. John's gospel: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son, &c.* Here the apostle says, We perceive, *εγνωκαμεν*, *we have known*, the love of God, because he laid down his life for us. *Of God* is not in the text, but it is preserved in one MS., and in two or three of the versions; but though this does not establish its authenticity, yet *του θεου*, *of God*, is necessarily understood, or *του χριστου*, *of Christ*, as Erpen's *Arabic* has it; or *αυτου εις ημας*, *his love to us*, as is found in the Syriac. A higher proof than this of his love Christ could not have possibly given to the children of men.

**We ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.]** We should *risk* our life to save the lives of others; and we should be ready to lay down our lives to redeem their souls when this may appear to be a means of leading them to God.

Verse 17. **But whoso hath this worlds good]** Here is a *test* of this love; if we do not *divide our bread* with the hungry, we certainly would not *lay down our life* for him. Whatever love we may pretend to mankind, if we are not charitable and benevolent, we give the lie to our profession. If we have not bowels of compassion, we have not the love of God in us; if we *shut up* our bowels against the poor, we shut Christ out of our hearts, and ourselves out of heaven.

*This worlds good.*-*του βιον του κοσμου*. *The life of this world*, i.e. *the means of life*; for so *βιος* is often used. See #Mr 12:44; #Lu 8:43; 15:12, 30; 21:4, and other places.

**How dwelleth the love of God in him?]** That is, it cannot possibly dwell in such a person. Hardheartedness and God's love never meet together, much less can they be associated.

Verse 18. **My little children]** *τεκνια μου*, *My beloved children*, *let us not love in word*-in merely *allowing* the general *doctrine* of love to God and man to be just and right;

**Neither in tongue]** In making *professions* of love, and of a charitable and humane disposition, and resting there; *but in deed*- by humane and merciful acts;

**And in truth.]** Feeling the disposition of which we speak. There is a good saying in *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 145, 4, on this point: "If love consisted in *word only*, then love ceaseth as soon as the word is pronounced. Such was the love between Balak and Balaam. But if love consisteth not in *word*, it cannot be *dissolved*; such was the love of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the patriarchs which were before them."

Verse 19. **Hereby we know that we are of the truth]** That we have the true religion of the Lord Jesus, *and shall assure our hearts*-be persuaded in our consciences, that we have the truth as it is in Jesus; as no man can *impose upon himself* by imagining he *loves* when he *does not*: he may make empty *professions* to *others*, but if he loves either God or man, he *knows* it because he *feels* it; and love *unfelt* is not love, it is *word* or *tongue*. This the apostle lays down as a *test* of a man's Christianity, and it is the strongest and most infallible test that can be given. He that loves *feels* that he does love; and he who *feels* that he loves God and man has true religion; and he who is careful to show the fruits of this love, in obedience to God and humane acts to man, gives *others* the fullest proof that he has the loving mind that was in Jesus.

Verse 20. **If our heart condemn us]** If we be *conscious* that our love is *feigned*, we shall feel inwardly condemned in professing to have what we have not. *And if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart*, for he knows every hypocritical winding and turning of the soul, he searches the heart, and tries the reins, and sees all the deceitfulness and desperate wickedness of the heart which we cannot see, and, if we could see them, could not comprehend them; and as he is the just Judge, he will condemn us more *strictly* and *extensively* than we can be by our own *conscience*.

Verse 21. **If our heart condemn us not]** If we be *conscious* to ourselves of our own sincerity, that we practise not deceit, and use no mask, then have *we confidence toward God*-we can appeal to him for our sincerity, and we can come with boldness to the throne of grace, to obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. And therefore says the apostle,

Verse 22. **Whatsoever we ask]** In such a spirit, *we receive of him*, for he delights to bless the humble, upright, and sincere soul.

**Because we keep his commandments]** Viz., by loving him and loving our neighbour. These are the great commandments both of the old covenant and the new. And whoever is filled with this love to God and man will *do those things which are pleasing to him*; for *love* is the very soul and principle of obedience.

The word *heart* is used in the preceding verses for *conscience*; and so the Greek fathers interpret it, particularly Origen, Nicephorus, and Œcumenius; but this is not an unfrequent meaning of the word in the sacred writings.

Verse 23. **That we should believe on the name of his Son]** We are commanded to believe on Christ, that for the sake of his passion and death we may be justified from all things from which we could not be justified by the law of Moses; and being through him redeemed from the guilt of sin, restored to the Divine favour, and made partakers of the Holy Ghost, we are enabled to *love one another as he gave us commandment*; for without a renewal of the heart, love to God and man is impossible, and this renewal comes by Christ Jesus.

Verse 24. **Dwelleth in him]** i.e. in God; *and he*-God, *in him*-the believer.

**And hereby we know]** We know by the Spirit which he hath given us that we dwell in God, and God in us. It was not by *conjecture* or *inference* that Christians of old knew they were in the favour

of God, it was by the testimony of God's own Spirit in their hearts; and this testimony was not given in a *transient* manner, but was *constant* and *abiding* while they continued under the influence of that faith that worketh by love. Every good man is a temple of the Holy Ghost, and wherever he is, he is both *light* and *power*. By his *power* he *works*; by his *light* he makes both himself and his work *known*. Peace of conscience and joy in the Holy Ghost must proceed from the indwelling of that Holy Spirit; and those who have these blessings *must know that they have them*, for we cannot have heavenly peace and heavenly joy without *knowing* that we have them. But this Spirit in the soul of a believer is not only manifest by its *effects*, but it *bears its own witness to its own indwelling*. So that a man not only knows that he has this Spirit from the *fruits* of the Spirit, but he knows that he has it from its *own direct witness*. It may be said, "How can these things be?" And it may be answered, By the power, light, and mercy of God. But that such things are, the Scriptures uniformly attest, and the experience of the whole genuine Church of Christ, and of every truly converted soul, sufficiently proves. As the wind bloweth where it listeth, and we cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth, so is every one that is born of the Spirit: the thing is certain, and fully known by its effects; but *how* this testimony is given and confirmed is inexplicable. Every good man feels it, and knows he is of God by the Spirit which God has given him.

# I JOHN

## CHAPTER IV.

*We must not believe every teacher who professes to have a Divine commission to preach, but try such, whether they be of God; and the more so because many false prophets are gone out into the world, 1. Those who deny that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh have the spirit of antichrist, 2, 3. The followers of God have been enabled to discern and overcome them, 4-6. The necessity of love to God and one another shown, from God's love to us, 7-11. Though no man hath seen God, yet every genuine Christian knows him by the spirit which God has given him, 12, 13. The apostles testified that God sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world; and God dwelt in those who confessed this truth, 14, 15. God is love, 16. The nature and properties of perfect love, 17, 18. We love him because he first loved us, 19. The wickedness of pretending to love God while we hate one another, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. **Beloved, believe not every spirit]** Do not be forward to believe every teacher to be a man sent of God. As in those early times every teacher professed to be *inspired* by the Spirit of God, because all the prophets had come thus accredited, the term *spirit* was used to express the man who pretended to *be* and *teach* under the Spirit's influence. See #1Co 12:1-12; #1Ti 4:1.

**Try the Spirits]** δοκιμαζετε τα πνευματα· Put these teachers to the proof. Try them by that testimony which is known to have come from the Spirit of God, the word of revelation already given.

**Many false prophets]** Teachers not inspired by the Spirit of God, *are gone out into the world*-among the Jewish people particularly, and among them who are carnal and have not the Spirit.

Verse 2. **Hereby know ye the Spirit of God]** We know that the man who teaches that Jesus Christ is the promised Messiah, and that he is come in the flesh, *is of God*-is inspired by the Divine Spirit; for no man can call Jesus Lord but by the Holy Ghost.

Verse 3. **Every spirit]** Every teacher, *that confesseth not Jesus, is not of God*-has not been inspired by God. The words εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα, *is come in the flesh*, are wanting in AB, several others, both the Syriac, the Polyglot Arabic, Æthiopic, Coptic, Armenian, and Vulgate; in Origen, Cyril, Theodoret, Irenæus, and others. Griesbach has left them out of the text.

**Spirit of antichrist]** All the opponents of Christ's *incarnation*, and consequently of his *passion*, *death*, and *resurrection*, and the benefits to be derived from them.

**Ye have heard that it should come]** See #2Th 2:7.

**Even now already is it in the world.]** Is working powerfully both among the Jews and Gentiles.

Verse 4. **Ye are of God]** Ye are under the influence of the Divine Spirit, *and have overcome them*-your testimony, proceeding from the Spirit of Christ, has invalidated theirs which has proceeded from the influence of Satan; *for greater* is the Holy Spirit *which is in you, than the spirit which is in the world.*

Verse 6. **We are of God]** We, apostles, have the Spirit of God, and speak and teach by that Spirit. *He that knoweth God*-who has a truly spiritual discernment, *heareth us*-acknowledges that our doctrine is from God; that it is spiritual, and leads from earth to heaven.

**Hereby know we the Spirit of truth]** The *doctrine* and *teacher* most prized and followed by *worldly men*, and by the *gay, giddy, and garish multitude*, are not from God; they savour of the *flesh*, lay on no restraints, prescribe no cross-bearing, and leave every one in full possession of his heart's lusts and easily besetting sins. And by this, false doctrine and false teachers are easily discerned.

Verse 7. **Beloved, let us love one another]** And ever be ready to promote each other's welfare, both spiritual and temporal.

**For love is of God]** And ever acts like him; he loves man, and daily loads him with his benefits. *He that loveth most* has most of God in him; and he that loveth God and his neighbour, as before described and commanded, *is born of God*, *εκ του θεου γεγεννηται*, *is begotten of God*-is a true child of his heavenly Father, for he is made a partaker of the Divine nature; and this his love to God and man proves.

Verse 8. **He that loveth not]** As already described, *knoweth not God*-has no experimental knowledge of him.

**God is love.]** An infinite fountain of benevolence and beneficence to every human being. He hates no thing that he has made. He cannot *hate*, because he is *love*. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends his rain on the just and the unjust. He has made no human being for perdition, nor ever rendered it impossible, by any necessitating decree, for any fallen soul to find mercy. He has given the fullest proof of his love to the whole human race by the incarnation of his Son, who tasted death for every man. How can a *decree* of absolute, unconditional *reprobation*, of the greater part or any part of the human race, stand in the presence of such a text as this? It has been well observed that, although God is holy, just, righteous, &c., he is never called *holiness, justice, &c.*, in the *abstract*, as he is here called LOVE. This seems to be the essence of the Divine nature, and all other attributes to be only modifications of this.

Verse 9. **In this was manifested the love of God]** The mission of Jesus Christ was the fullest proof that God could give, or that man could receive, of his infinite love to the world.

**That we might live through him.]** The whole world was sentenced to *death* because of sin; and every individual was *dead in trespasses* and sins; and Jesus came to die in the stead of the world, and to *quicken* every believer, that all might live to him who died for them and rose again. This is another strong allusion to **#Joh 3:16**: *God so loved the world, that he gave his only-begotten Son,*

that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life; where the reader is requested to see the note.

Verse 10. **Not that we loved God]** And that he was thereby induced to give his Son *to be a propitiation for our sins*. No: we were enemies to God, and yet Christ died for our ungodly souls. (See **#Ro 5:6-11**, and the notes there.) So it was God's love, not our merit, that induced him to devise means that his banished might not be expelled from him.

Verse 11. **If God so loved us]** Without any reason or consideration on our part, and without any *desert* in us; *we ought also*, in like manner, *to love one another*, and not suspend our love to a fellow-creature, either on his *moral worth* or his *love to us*. We should love one another for *God's sake*; and then, no unkind carriage of a brother would induce us to withdraw our love from him; for if it have GOD for its *motive* and *model*, it will *never fail*.

Verse 12. **No man hath seen God at any time.]** The very words, with the change of *εωρακε* for *θεαται*, of this apostle in his gospel, **#Joh 1:18**. We may *feel* him, though we cannot *see* him; and if we love one another he *dwelleth in us*, and *his love is perfected in us*-it has then its full *accomplishment*, having moulded us according to its own nature.

Verse 13. **Hereby know we, &c.] See Clarke's note on "1Jo 3:24".**

Verse 14. **And we have seen]** Jesus Christ manifested in the flesh; see **#1Jo 1:1**, &c.; *and do testify*-bear witness, in consequence of having the fullest conviction, *that the Father sent the son to be the Saviour of the world*. We have had the fullest proof of this from his *doctrine* and *miracles*, which we *heard* and *saw* during the whole time that he sojourned among men.

Verse 15. **Whosoever shall confess]** Much stress is laid on this confession, because the false teachers denied the reality of the incarnation; but this confession implied also such a belief in Christ as put them in possession of his pardoning mercy and indwelling Spirit.

Verse 16. **God is love]** See Clarke on **"1Jo 4:8"**. *He that dwelleth in love*-he who is full of love to God and man is full of God, for God is love; and where such love is, there is God, for he is the fountain and maintainer of it.

Verse 17. **Herein is our love made perfect]** By God dwelling in us, and we in him; having cast out all the carnal mind that was *enmity* against himself, and filled the whole heart with the spirit of love and purity. Thus the love is made perfect; when it thus fills the heart it has all its *degrees*; it is all in all; and all in every power, passion, and faculty of the soul.

**May have boldness in the day of judgment]** *παρησιαν*· *Freedom of speech*, and *liberty of access*; seeing in the person of our Judge, him who has died for us, regenerated our hearts, and who himself fills them.

**As he is]** Pure, holy, and loving; *so are we in this world*; being saved from our sins, and made like to himself in righteousness and true holiness. No man can contemplate the *day of judgment* with

any comfort or satisfaction but on this ground, that the blood of Christ hath cleansed him from all sin, and that he is kept by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation. This will give him boldness in the day of judgment.

Verse 18. **There is no fear in love]** The man who feels that he loves God with all his heart can never *dread* him as his *Judge*. As he is now made a partaker of his Spirit, and carries a sense of the Divine approbation in his conscience, he has nothing of that *fear* that produces *terror* or brings *torment*. The *perfect love*-that fulness of love, which he has received, *casteth out fear*-removes all terror relative to this day of judgment, for it is of this that the apostle particularly speaks. And as it is inconsistent with the gracious design of God to have his followers miserable, and as he cannot be unhappy whose heart is full of the love of his God, this love must necessarily exclude this fear or terror; because that brings *torment*, and hence is inconsistent with that happiness which a man must have who continually enjoys the approbation of his God.

**He that feareth]** He who is still *uncertain* concerning his interest in Christ; who, although he has many heavenly drawings, and often sits with Christ some moments on a throne of love, yet feels from the evils of his heart a dread of the day of judgment; *is not made perfect in love*-has not yet received the abiding witness of the Spirit that he is begotten of God; nor that fulness of love to God and man which excludes the *enmity* of the *carnal mind*, and which it is his privilege to receive. But is the case of such a man *desperate*? No: it is neither *desperate* nor *deplorable*; he is in the way of salvation, and not far from the kingdom of heaven. Let such earnestly seek, and fervently believe on the Son of God; and he will soon give them another baptism of his Spirit, will purge out all the old leaven, and fill their whole souls with that love which is the fulfilling of the law. He who is not yet perfect in love may speedily become so, because God can say in a moment, *I will, be thou clean; and immediately his leprosy will depart*. Among men we find some that have neither love nor fear; others that have fear without love; others that have love and fear; and others that have love without fear.

1. Profligates, and worldly men in general, have neither the fear nor love of God.
2. Deeply awakened and distressed penitents have the fear or terror of God without his love.
3. Babes in Christ, or young converts, have often distressing fear mixed with their love.
4. Adult Christians have love without this fear; because fear hath torment, and they are ever happy, being filled with God. See Mr. *Wesley's* note on this place.

1. We must not suppose that the love of God shed abroad in the heart is ever *imperfect* in itself; it is only so in *degree*. There may be a *less* or *greater degree* of what is *perfect* in itself; so it is with respect to the love which the followers of God have; they may have *measures* or *degrees* of perfect love without its *fulness*. There is nothing *imperfect* in the love of God, whether it be considered as existing in himself, or as communicated to his followers.

2. We are not to suppose that the love of God casts out *every kind of fear* from the soul; it only casts out that which has *torment*. 1. A *filial fear* is consistent with the highest degrees of love; and

even necessary to the preservation of that grace. This is properly its guardian; and, without this, love would soon degenerate into listlessness, or presumptive boldness. 2. Nor does it cast out that *fear* which is so necessary to the *preservation of life*; that fear which leads a man to *flee from danger* lest his life should be destroyed. 3. Nor does it cast out that *fear* which may be engendered by *sudden alarm*. All these are necessary to our well-being. But it destroys, 1. The fear of *want*; 2. The fear of *death*; and 3. The fear or terror of *judgment*. All these fears bring torment, and are inconsistent with this perfect love.

Verse 19. **We love him because he first loved us.**] This is the foundation of our love to God. 1. We love him because we find he has loved us. 2. We love him from a sense of obligation and gratitude. 3. We love him from the influence of his own love; from his love shed abroad in our hearts, our love to him proceeds. It is the seed whence our love springs. The verse might be rendered, *Let us therefore love him, because he first loved us*: thus the *Syriac* and *Vulgate*.

Verse 20. **If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother**] This, as well as many other parts of this epistle, seems levelled against the Jews, who pretended much love to God while they hated the *Gentiles*; and even some of them who were brought into the Christian Church brought this leaven with them. It required a miracle to redeem St. Peter's mind from the influence of this principle. See Acts 10.

**Whom he hath seen**] We may have our love excited towards our brother, 1. By a consideration of his *excellences* or *amiable qualities*. 2. By a view of his *miseries* and *distresses*. The *first* will excite a love of *complacency* and *delight*; the *second*, a love of *compassion* and *pity*.

**Whom he hath not seen?**] If he love not his brother, it is a proof that the love of God is not in him; and if he have not the love of God, he cannot love God, for God can be loved only through the influence of his own love. **See Clarke on "1Jo 4:19"**. The man who hates his fellow does not love God. He who does not love God has not the love of God in him, and he who has not the love of God in him can neither love God nor man.

Verse 21. **This commandment have we**] We should love one another, and love our neighbour as ourselves. The love of God and the love of man can never be separated; he who loves God will love his brother; he who loves his brother gives this proof that he loves God, because he loves with a measure of that love which, in its infinitude, dwells in God.

# I JOHN

## CHAPTER V.

*He that believeth is born of God; loves God and his children; and keeps his commandments, which are not grievous, 1-3. Faith in Christ overcomes the world, 4, 5. The three earthly and heavenly witnesses, 6-9. He that believeth hath the witness in himself, 10. God has given unto us eternal life in his Son, 11, 12. The end for which St. John writes these things, 13-16. The sin unto death, and the sin not unto death, 16, 17. He that is born of God sinneth not, 18. The whole world lieth in the wicked one, 19. Jesus is come to give us understanding, that we may know the true God, 20. All idolatry to be avoided, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Verse 1. **Whosoever believeth, &c.]** Expressions of this kind are to be taken in *connection with the subjects necessarily implied in them.* *He that believeth that Jesus is the Messiah, and confides in him for the remission of sins, is begotten of God;* and they who are pardoned and begotten of God love him in return for his love, and love all those who are his children.

Verse 2. **By this we know that we love the children of God]** Our love of God's followers is a *proof* that we love God. Our love to God is the *cause* why we love his children, and our *keeping the commandments of God* is the *proof* that we love *him*.

Verse 3. **For this is the love of God]** This the love of God necessarily produces. It is vain to pretend love to God while we live in opposition to his will.

**His commandments]** To love him with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves, *are not grievous*-are not burdensome; for no man is burdened with the duties which his own *love* imposes. The old proverb explains the meaning of the apostle's words, *Love feels no loads.* Love to God brings *strength* from God; through his *love* and his *strength*, all his commandments are not only easy and light, but pleasant and delightful.

On the love of God, as being the foundation of all religious worship, there is a good saying in *Sohar Exod.*, fol. 23, col. 91: "Rabbi Jesa said, how necessary is it that a man should love the holy blessed God! For he can bring no other worship to God than love; and whoever loves him, and worships him from a principle of love, him the holy blessed God calls his beloved."

Verse 4. **Whatsoever is born of God]** *παν το γεγεννημενον.* *Whatsoever* (the neuter for the masculine) *is begotten of God: overcometh the world.* "I understand by this," says *Schoettgen*, "the *Jewish Church, or Judaism*, which is often termed *עולם הזה olam hazzeh*, this world. The reasons which induce me to think so are, 1. Because this *κοσμος, world*, denied that the Messiah was come; but the Gentiles did not oppose this principle. 2. Because he proves the truth of the Christian religion against the *Jews*, reasoning according to the *Jewish manner*; whence it is evident that he contends, not against the *Gentiles*, but against the *Jews*. The sense therefore is, he who possesses the true Christian faith can easily convict the Jewish religion of falsity." That is, He can show the vanity

of their expectations, and the falsity of their glosses and prejudices. Suppose we understand by the world the *evil principles* and *practices* which are among men, and in the human heart; then the influence of God in the soul may be properly said to *overcome* this; and by faith in the Son of God a man is able to overcome all that is in the world, viz., *the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life.*

Verse 5. **He that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?**] That he is the promised Messiah, that he came by a supernatural generation; and, although truly *man*, came not *by man*, but by the power of the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The person who believes this has the privilege of applying to the Lord for the benefits of the incarnation and passion of Jesus Christ, and receives the blessings which the Jews cannot have, because they believe not the Divine mission of Christ.

Verse 6. **This is he that came by water and blood]** Jesus was attested to be the Son of God and promised Messiah by *water*, i.e. his *baptism*, when the Spirit of God came down from heaven upon him, and the voice from heaven said, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* Jesus Christ came also by *blood*. He shed his blood for the sins of the world; and this was in accordance with all that the Jewish prophets had written concerning him. Here the apostle says that the Spirit witnesses this; that *he came not by water only*-being baptized, and baptizing men in his own name that they might be his followers and disciples; *but by blood also*-by his sacrificial death, without which the world could not be saved, and he could have had no disciples. As, therefore, the Spirit of God witnessed his being the Son of God at his baptism, and as the same Spirit in the prophets had witnessed that he should die a cruel, yet a sacrificial, death; he is said here to *bear witness*, because he is the *Spirit of truth.*

Perhaps St. John makes here a mental comparison between CHRIST, and *Moses* and *Aaron*; to both of whom he opposed our Lord, and shows his superior excellence. *Moses came by water*-all the Israelites were baptized unto him in the cloud and in the sea, and thus became his flock and his disciples; **#1Co 10:1, 2.** *Aaron came by blood*-he entered into the holy of holies with the blood of the victim, to make atonement for sin. Moses initiated the people into the covenant of God by bringing them *under the cloud* and *through the water.* *Aaron* confirmed that covenant by shedding the *blood*, sprinkling part of it upon them, and the rest before the Lord in the holy of holies. *Moses* came only by *water*, *Aaron* only by *blood*; and both came as *types.* But CHRIST came both by *water* and *blood*, not typically, but really; not by the authority of *another*, but by his own. Jesus initiates his followers into the Christian covenant by the baptism of water, and confirms and seals to them the blessings of the covenant by an application of the blood of the atonement; thus purging their consciences, and purifying their souls.

Thus, his religion is of infinitely greater efficacy than that in which Moses and Aaron were ministers. See *Schoettgen.*

It may be said, also, that the *Spirit* bears witness of Jesus by his *testimony* in the *souls of genuine Christians*, and by the *spiritual gifts* and *miraculous* powers with which he endowed the apostles and primitive believers. This is agreeable to what St. John says in his gospel, **#Joh 15:26, 27:** *When the Comforter is come, the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me; and ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning.* This place the apostle

seems to have in his eye; and this would naturally lead him to speak concerning the *three witnesses*, the SPIRIT, the WATER, and the BLOOD, #1Jo 5:8.

Verse 7. **There are three that bear record]** The FATHER, who bears testimony to his Son; the WORD or λογος, *Logos*, who bears testimony to the Father; and the HOLY GHOST, which bears testimony to the Father and the Son. And *these three* are one in essence, and *agree in the one* testimony, that Jesus came to die for, and give life to, the world.

But it is likely this verse is not genuine. It is wanting in every MS. of this epistle written *before* the invention of printing, one excepted, the *Codex Montfortii*, in Trinity College, Dublin: the others which omit this verse amount to *one hundred and twelve*.

It is wanting in both the *Syriac*, all the *Arabic*, *Æthiopic*, the *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonian*, &c., in a word, in all the ancient *versions* but the *Vulgate*; and even of this version many of the most ancient and correct MSS. have it not. It is wanting also in all the ancient Greek fathers; and in most even of the Latin.

The words, as they exist in all the Greek MSS. with the exception of the *Codex Montfortii*, are the following:-

"6. This is he that came by water and blood, Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of man, the witness of God is greater, &c."

The words that are omitted by all the MSS., the above excepted, and all the *versions*, the *Vulgate* excepted, are these:—

[In heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and these three are one, and there are three which bear witness in earth.]

To make the whole more clear, that every reader may see what has been *added*, I shall set down these verses, with the *inserted* words in brackets.

"6. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth. 7. For there are three that bear record [in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, and these three are one. 8. And there are three that bear witness in earth,] the Spirit, and the water, and the blood, and these three agree in one. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, &c." Any man may see, on examining the *words*, that if those included in brackets, which are wanting in the MSS. and *versions*, be omitted, there is no want of *connection*; and as to the *sense*, it is complete and perfect without them; and, indeed much more so than with them. I shall conclude this part of the note by observing, with Dr. Dodd, "that there are some internal and accidental marks which may render the passage suspected; for the sense is complete, and indeed more clear and better preserved, without it. Besides, the Spirit is mentioned, both as a witness in heaven and on earth; so that the six witnesses are thereby reduced to five, and the equality of number, or antithesis between the witnesses

in heaven and on earth, is quite taken away. Besides, what need of witnesses in *heaven*? No one there doubts that Jesus is the Messiah; and if it be said that Father, Son, and Spirit are witnesses on earth, then there are five witnesses on earth, and none in heaven; not to say that there is a little difficulty in interpreting how the Word or the Son can be a witness to himself."

It may be necessary to inquire how this verse stood in our earliest English Bibles. In COVERDALE'S Bible, printed about 1535, for it bears no date, the *seventh* verse is put in brackets thus:—

And it is the Sprete that beareth wptnes; for the Sprete is the truth. (For there are thre which beare recorde in heaven: the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost, and these thre are one.) And there are thre which beare record in earth: the Sprete, water, and bloude and these thre are one. If we receyve, &c.

TINDAL was as critical as he was conscientious; and though he admitted the words into the text of the first edition of his New Testament printed in 1526, yet he distinguished them by a different letter, and put them in brackets, as *Coverdale* has done; and also the words *in earth*, which stand in #1Jo 5:8, without proper authority, and which being excluded make the text the same as in the MSS., &c.

Two editions of this version are now before me; one printed in English and Latin, quarto, with the following title:—

The New Testament, both in Englyshe and Laten, of Master Erasmus translation-and imprinted by William Powell-the yere of our Lorde M.CCCCC.XLVII. And the fyrste yere of the kynges (Edw. VI.) moste gracious reygne.

In this edition the text stands thus:—

And it is the Spirite that beareth wptnes, because the Spirite is truth (for there are thre whiche beare recorde in heaven, the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost, and these thre are one.) For there are thre which beare recorde, (in earth,) the Spirite, water, and blode, and these thre are one. If we receyve, &c.

The other printed in London "by William Tylle, 4to; without the Latin of Erasmus in M.CCCCC.XLIX. the thyrde yere of the reigne of our moost dreade Soverayne Lorde Kynge Edwarde the Syxte," has, with a small variety of spelling, the text in the same order, and the same words included in brackets as above.

The English Bible, with the book of Common Prayer, printed by *Richard Cardmarden*, at Rouen in Normandy, fol. 1566, exhibits the text faithfully, but in the following singular manner:—

And it is the Sprryte that beareth witnesse, because the Sprryte is truthe. (for there are three which beare recorde in heaven, the Father, the Woorde, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One) And three which beare recorde\* (in earth) the Spirite, and water, and blood; and these three are one.

The first English Bible which I have seen, where these *distinctions* were omitted, is that called *The Bishops' Bible*, printed by Jugge, fol. 1568. Since that time, all such distinctions have been generally disregarded.

Though a conscientious believer in the doctrine of the ever blessed, holy, and undivided Trinity, and in the proper and essential Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ, which doctrines I have defended by many, and even new, arguments in the course of this work, I cannot help doubting the authenticity of the text in question; and, for farther particulars, refer to the *observations* at the end of this chapter.

Verse 8. **The Spirit, and the water, and the blood]** This verse is supposed to mean "*the Spirit*-in the word confirmed by miracles; the *water*-in baptism, wherein we are dedicated to the Son, (with the Father and the Holy Spirit,) typifying his spotless purity, and the inward purifying of our nature; and *the blood*-represented in the Lord's Supper, and applied to the consciences of believers: and all these harmoniously agree in the same testimony, that Jesus Christ is the Divine, the complete, the only Saviour of the world."-Mr. *Wesley's* notes.

By the *written word*, which proceeded from the Holy Spirit, that Spirit is continually witnessing upon earth, that God hath given unto us eternal life.

By *baptism*, which points out our *regeneration*, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, and which is still maintained as an initiatory rite in the Christian Church, we have another witness on earth of the truth, certainty, importance, and efficacy of the Christian religion. The same may be said of the *blood*, represented by the *holy eucharist*, which continues to show forth the death and atoning sacrifice of the Son of God till he comes. See **Clarke's note on "1Jo 5:6"**.

Verse 9. **If we receive the witness of men]** Which all are obliged to do, and which is deemed a sufficient testimony to truth in numberless cases; *the witness of God is greater*-he can neither be deceived nor deceive, but man may deceive and be deceived.

Verse 10. **He that believeth on the Son of God]** This is God's witness to a truth, the most important and interesting to mankind. God has witnessed that *whosoever believeth on his Son* shall be saved, and have *everlasting life*; and shall have the *witness* of it *in himself*, the Spirit bearing witness with his spirit that he is a child of God. To *know*, to *feel* his sin forgiven, to have the testimony of this in the heart from the Holy Spirit himself, is the privilege of every true believer in Christ.

Verse 11. **This is the record]** The great truth to which the *Spirit*, the *water*, and the *blood* bear testimony. *God hath given us eternal life*-a right to endless glory, and a *meetness* for it. *And this life is in his Son*; it comes *by* and *through* him; he is its *author* and its *purchaser*; it is only *in* and *through* HIM. No other scheme of salvation can be effectual; God has provided none other, and in such a case a man's invention must be vain.

Verse 12. **He that hath the Son hath life]** As the eternal life is given IN the Son of God, it follows that it cannot be enjoyed without him. No man can have it without having Christ; therefore *he that hath the Son hath life*, and *he that hath not the Son hath not life*. It is in vain to expect eternal

glory, if we have not Christ in our heart. The indwelling Christ gives both a title to it, and a meetness for it. This is God's record. Let no man deceive himself here. An *indwelling Christ* and GLORY; *no indwelling Christ*, NO glory. God's record must stand.

Verse 13. **That ye may know that ye have eternal life**] I write to show your privileges—to lead you into this holy of holies—to show what believing on the Son of God is, by the glorious effects it produces: it is not a blind reliance *for*, but an actual enjoyment *of*, salvation; Christ living, working, and reigning in the heart.

**And that ye may believe**] That is, continue to believe: for Christ dwells in the heart *only by FAITH*, and *faith* lives only by LOVE, and *love* continues only by OBEDIENCE; he who BELIEVES *loves*, and he who LOVES *obeys*. He who *obeys* loves; he who *loves believes*; he who *believes has the witness in himself*: he who has this witness has Christ in his heart, the hope of glory; and he who believes, loves, and obeys, has Christ in his heart, and is a man of *prayer*.

Verse 14. **This is the confidence**] *παρρησια*, The *liberty of access and speech, that if we ask any thing according to his will*, that is, which he has *promised* in his word. His word is a *revelation of his will*, in the things which concern the salvation of man. All that God has *promised* we are justified in expecting; and what he has *promised*, and we *expect*, we should *pray for*. Prayer is the language of the children of God. He who is begotten of God *speaks* this language. He calls God Abba, Father, in the true spirit of supplication. *Prayer* is the language of dependence on God; where the soul is *dumb*, there is neither life, love, nor faith. Faith and prayer are not boldly to advance *claims* upon God; we must take heed that what we *ask* and *believe for* is agreeable to the *revealed will* of God. What we find *promised*, that we may *plead*.

Verse 15. **And if we know that he hear us**] Seeing we are satisfied that he hears the prayer of faith, requesting the things which himself has promised; *we know*, consequently, *that we have the petitions*—the answer to the *petitions, that we desired of him*; for he cannot deny himself; and we may consider them *as sure as if we had them*; and we shall have them *as soon* as we plead for and need them. We are not to ask *to-day* for mercy that we *now* need, and not receive it till *to-morrow*, or some *future* time. God gives it to him who prays, *when* it is needful.

Verse 16. **A sin which is not unto death**] This is an extremely difficult passage, and has been variously interpreted. What is the *sin not unto death*, for which we *should ask*, and life shall be given to him that commits it? And what is the *sin unto death*, for which we *should not pray*?

I shall note three of the chief opinions on this subject:—

1. It is supposed that there is here an allusion to a distinction in the Jewish law, where there was *חטאה למיתה* *chattaah lemithah*, "a sin unto death;" and *חטאה לא למיתה* *chattaah lo lemithah*, "a sin not unto death;" that is, 1. A *sin*, or transgression, to which the law had assigned the punishment of *death*; such as idolatry, incest, blasphemy, breach of the Sabbath, and the like. And 2. A sin not unto death, i.e. transgressions of ignorance, inadvertence, &c., and such is, in their own nature, appear to be comparatively light and trivial. That such distinctions did exist in the Jewish synagogue both *Schoettgen* and *Carpzovius* have proved.

2. By the *sin not unto death*, for which intercession might be made, and *unto death*, for which prayer might not be made, we are to understand transgressions of the *civil law* of a particular place, some of which must be punished with *death*, according to the *statutes*, the crime admitting of *no pardon*: others *might* be punished with death, but the magistrate had the power of commuting the punishments, i.e. of changing *death* into *banishment*, &c., for reasons that might appear to him satisfactory, or at the *intercession* of powerful friends. To *intercede* in the *former case* would be useless, because the law would not relax, therefore they need *not pray for it*; but *intercession* in the *latter case might be prevalent*, therefore they *might pray*; and if they did not, the person might suffer the punishment of death. This opinion, which has been advanced by *Rosenmuller*, intimates that men should feel for each other's distresses, and use their influence in behalf of the wretched, nor ever abandon the unfortunate but where the case is utterly hopeless.

3. *The sin unto death* means a case of transgression, particularly of grievous backsliding from the life and power of godliness, which God determines to punish with *temporal death*, while at the same time he extends mercy to the penitent soul. The *disobedient prophet*, #1Ki 13:1-32, is, on this interpretation, a case in point: many others occur in the history of the Church, and of every religious community. The *sin not unto death* is any sin which God does not choose *thus* to punish. This view of the subject is that taken by the late Rev. J. Wesley, in a sermon entitled, *A Call to Backsliders*.-WORKS, vol ii. page 239.

I do not think the passage has any thing to do with what is termed *the sin against the Holy Ghost*; much less with the popish doctrine of *purgatory*; nor with sins committed *before* and *after* baptism, the *former* pardonable, the latter *unpardonable*, according to some of the fathers. Either of the last opinions (viz., 2 and 3) make a good sense; and the *first* (1) is not unlikely: the apostle may allude to some *maxim* or *custom* in the Jewish Church which is not now distinctly known. However, this we know, that any penitent may find mercy through Christ Jesus; for through him every kind of sin may be forgiven to man, except the sin against the Holy Ghost; which I have proved no man can now commit. See the note on #Mt 12:31, 39.

Verse 17. **All unrighteousness is sin]** *πασα αδικια*, Every act contrary to *justice* is *sin-is a transgression of the law* which condemns all *injustice*.

Verse 18. **Whosoever is born of God sinneth not]** This is spoken of adult Christians; *they are cleansed from all unrighteousness*, consequently from all *sin*, #1Jo 1:7-9.

**Keepeth himself]** That is, *in the love of God*, #Jude 1:21, by building up himself on his most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost; *and that wicked one*-the devil, *toucheth him not*-finds nothing of his own nature in him on which he can work, Christ dwelling in his heart by faith.

Verse 19. **We know that we are of God]** Have the fullest proof of the truth of Christianity, and of our own reconciliation to God through the death of his Son.

**The whole world lieth in wickedness.]** *εν τω πονηρω κεταλι*. *Lieth in the wicked one*-is embraced in the arms of the devil, where it lies fast asleep and carnally secure, deriving its heat and power from its infernal fosterer. What a truly awful state! And do not the actions, tempers,

propensities, opinions and maxims of all worldly men prove and illustrate this? "In this short expression," says Mr. Wesley, "the horrible state of the world is painted in the most lively colours; a comment on which we have in the actions, conversations, contracts, quarrels and friendships of worldly men." Yes, their ACTIONS are opposed to the law of God; their CONVERSATIONS shallow, simulous, and false; their CONTRACTS forced, interested, and deceitful; their QUARRELS puerile, ridiculous, and ferocious; and their FRIENDSHIPS hollow, insincere, capricious, and fickle:-all, all the effect of their lying in the arms of the wicked one; for thus they become instinct with his own spirit: and because they are of their father the devil, therefore his lusts they will do.

Verse 20. **We know that the Son of God is come]** In the flesh, and has made his soul an offering for sin; *and hath given us an understanding*-a more eminent degree of light than we ever enjoyed before; for as he lay in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him unto us; and he hath besides given us a spiritual understanding, that we may know him who is true, even the TRUE GOD, and get eternal life from him through his Son, IN whom we are by faith, as the branches in the vine, deriving all our knowledge, light, life, love, and fruitfulness from him. And it is through this revelation of Jesus that we know the ever blessed and glorious Trinity; and the Trinity, *Father, Word, and Holy Ghost*, in the eternal, undivided unity of the ineffable Godhead.

Verse 21. **Little children]** *τεκνία* *Beloved children*; he concludes with the same affectionate feeling with which he commenced.

**Keep yourselves from idols.]** Avoid the idolatry of the heathens; not only have no *false gods*, but have the *true God*. Have no idols in your *houses*, none in your *churches*, none in your *hearts*. Have no object of idolatrous worship; no *pictures, relics, consecrated tapers, wafers, crosses, &c.*, by attending to which your minds may be divided, and prevented from worshipping the infinite Spirit in spirit and in truth.

The apostle, says Dr. Macknight cautioned his disciples against going with the heathens into the temple of their idol gods, to eat of their feasts upon the sacrifices they had offered to these gods; and against being present at any act of worship which they paid them; because, by being present, they participated of that worship, as is plain from what St. Paul has written on the subject, **#1Co 8:10**, where see the notes.

That is a man's *idol* or *god* from which he seeks his *happiness*; no matter whether it be Jupiter, Juno, Apollo, Minerva, Venus, or Diana; or pleasure, wealth, fame, a fine house, superb furniture, splendid equipage, medals, curiosities, books, titles, human friendships, or any earthly or heavenly thing, God, the supreme good, only excepted. That is a man's idol which prevents him from seeking and finding his ALL in God.

Wiclif ends his epistle thus: *My little sones, kepe ye you fro mawmitis, i.e. puppets, dolls, and such like*; for thus Wiclif esteemed all *images* employed in religious worship. They are the *dolls* of a spurious Christianity, and the drivellings of religion in *nonage* and *dotage*. *Protestants*, keep yourselves from such *mawmets*!

**Amen.]** So be it! So let it be! And so it shall be, God being our helper, for ever and ever!

Subscriptions in the VERSIONS:—

The end of the Epistle of the Apostle John.-SYRIAC.

The First Epistle of John the apostle is ended.-SYR. *Philoxenian*.

Nothing in either the COPTIC or VULGATE.

Continual and eternal praise be to God!-ARABIC.

The end.-ÆTHIOPIC;

In this version the epistle is thus introduced:-

In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God, the Epistle of John, the son of Zebedee, the evangelist and apostle of our Lord Jesus Christ; may his intercession be with us for ever and ever! Amen.

In the MANUSCRIPTS:—

The First of John.-AB.

The First Epistle of John the evangelist.

The First catholic Epistle of St. John the divine, written from Ephesus.

The Epistle to the Parthians.-See several Latin MSS.

The word *amen* is wanting in all the best MSS. and in most of the *versions*.

For other matters relative to the epistle itself see the *preface*: and for its heavenly doctrine and unction read the *text*, in the *original* if you can; if not, in our own excellent *translation*.

**OBSERVATIONS ON THE TEXT OF THE THREE DIVINE WITNESSES.**

*Accompanied with a plate, containing two very correct fac-similes of 1 JOHN, #1Jo 5:7-9, as they stand in the first edition of the New Testament, printed at Complutum, 1514, and in the Codex Montfortii, a manuscript marked G. 97, in the library of Trinity College, Dublin.*

παντα δοκιμαζετε, το καλον κατεχετε. #1Th 5:21.

The *seventh verse* of the *fifth chapter* of 1 JOHN, has given rise to more theological disputes than any other portion of the sacred writings. Advocates and antagonists have arisen in every quarter of

the civilized world: but the dispute has been principally confined to the *Unitarians* of all classes, and those called *Orthodox*; the former asserting that it is an *interpolation*, and the latter contending that it is a *part of the original text* of St. John. It is asserted that (one excepted, which shall be noticed by and by) all the Greek MSS. written *before the invention of printing* omit the passage in dispute. How the seventh and eighth verses stand in these may be seen in the following view, where the words included between brackets are those which are wanting in the MSS.

Ὅτι τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες [ἐν τῷ οὐρανῷ, ὁ πατήρ, ὁ λόγος, καὶ τὸ ἅγιον πνεῦμα· καὶ οὗτοι οἱ τρεῖς ἐν εἰσι. καὶ τρεῖς εἰσὶν οἱ μαρτυροῦντες ἐν γῆ] τὸ πνεῦμα, καὶ τὸ ὕδωρ, καὶ τὸ αἶμα· καὶ οἱ τρεῖς εἰς τὸ ἐν εἰσιν.

Of all the MSS. yet discovered which contain this epistle, amounting to *one hundred and twelve, three* only; two of which are of no authority, have the text, viz.:-

1. The *Codex Guelpherbytanus* G, which is demonstrably a MS. of the seventeenth century; (for it contains the Latin translation of Beza, written by the same hand,) and therefore of no use or importance in sacred criticism.

2. The *Codex Ravianus* or *Berolinensis*, which is a forgery, and only a copy of the Greek text in the *Complutensian Polyglot*, printed in 1514, and so close an imitation of it, that it copies even its typographical errors; hence, and from the similarity of the letters, it appears to have been forged that it might pass for the original MS. from which the Complutensian text was taken. In this MS. some various readings are inserted from the margin of Stevens' edition of 1550.

3. The *Codex Montfortii*, or *Codex Dubliniensis*, cited by Erasmus, under the title of *Codex Britannicus*, in Trinity College, Dublin. This may be said to be the only *genuine* MS. which contains this text; as no advocate of the sacred doctrine contained in the disputed passage would wish to lay any stress whatever on such evidence as the two preceding ones afford. *Michaelis* roundly asserts, vol. iv., page 417, of his *Introductory Lectures*, that this MS. was written after the year 1500. This, I scruple not to affirm, is a perfectly unguarded assertion, and what *no man can prove*. In 1790 I examined this MS. myself, and though I thought it to be comparatively modern, yet I had no doubt that it existed before the invention of printing, and was never written with an intention to deceive. I am rather inclined to think it the work of an unknown bold critic, who formed a text from one or more MSS. in conjunction with the Vulgate, and was by no means sparing of his own conjectural emendations; for it contains many various readings which exist in no other MS. yet discovered. But how far the writer has in any place faithfully copied the text of any ancient MS. is more than can be determined. To give the reader a fair view of this subject, I here subjoin what I hope I may call a perfect *fac-simile* of the seventh and eighth verses, as they exist in this MS., copied by the accurate hand of the Rev. Dr. Barrett, the present learned librarian of Trinity College.



*Second.* The sixth and seventh lines of the *fac-simile* of the *Codex Montfortii* belong to the second page of that leaf on which the other *five* lines are written.

This MS. is a thick duodecimo, written on paper, without *folios*. There is an inscription in it in these words, *Sum Thomæ Clementis, olim fratris Froyhe*. On this inscription Dr. Barrett remarks: "It appears *Froyhe* was a *Franciscan*; and I find in some blank leaves in the book these words written (by the same hand, in my opinion, that wrote the MS.) *ιυσους μαρια φραγκισκος*; by the latter, I understand the founder of that order." If *St. Francis d'Assise* be here meant, who was the founder of the order of *Franciscans*, and the inscription be written by the same who wrote the MS., then the MS. could not have been written before the thirteenth century, as St. Francis founded his order in 1206, and died in 1226, and consequently quotes that the MS. could not have been written in the eleventh century, as Mr. *Martin* of Utrecht, and several others, have imagined.

Much stress has been laid on the dots over the *ι* and *υ* which frequently appear in this MS. Montfaucon has observed, *Palæographia Græca*, page 33, that such dots were in use a thousand years ago: hence the advocates of the antiquity of the *Codex Montfortii* have inferred that this MS. must have been written at least in the tenth or eleventh century. But as these are found in *modern* MSS. (see *Palæog.* pages 324, 333,) they are therefore no proof of antiquity. In *Michaelis' Introduction*, vol. ii., page 286, where he is describing the MSS. of the Greek Testament, he gives the text in question *as it is supposed to exist in the Codex Montfortii*, in which two dots appear over every *iota* and *upsilon* in the whole five lines there introduced; but on comparing this of Michaelis with the *fac-simile* here produced, the reader will at once perceive that the *arrangement* is false, and the dotting egregiously inaccurate. Deceived by this false representation, Dr. *Marsh*, (bishop of Peterborough,) in his notes on the passage, page 754, observes, "that no MS. written in *small characters* before the twelfth century has these dots. That a MS. written in the twelfth century has these dots *sometimes* on the *iota*, but never on the *upsilon*; but MSS. written in the fourteenth century have these dots on *both letters*, but not in all cases. Now as these letters are *dotted always* in the *Codex Montfortianus*, but not always in the MSS. of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, and still less often in those of the twelfth century, we may infer that the *Codex Montfortianus* is at least as modern as the fifteenth century."

On this quotation I beg leave to make a few remarks.

Dr. Marsh says, "that no MS. written in small letters previous to the twelfth century has these dots." This excellent critic has only to consult the *Palæographia Græca*, page 293, in which he will find No. 1, a *fac-simile* of one of the Colbert MSS. (No. 4954,) written A. D. 1022, where the *iota* appears thrice dotted; and in No. 2, on the same page, another *fac-simile* of a MS. written A. D. 1045, the *iota* is dotted in the word *ιησου*. *Ibid.*, page 283, (No. 7,) a MS. written in 986, has the *iota* twice dotted in the word *ιευει*. *Ibid.*, page 275, (No. 2,) a MS. of the ninth or beginning of the tenth century, has the *iota* dotted in *αχαλας* and in No. 3, a specimen of the *Codex Reginus*, (No. 2271,) written A. D. 914, the *iota* is dotted in *θεικην*. *Ibid.*, page 271, (No. 4,) written about 890, the *iota* is dotted in *ιερων* and in Spec. v. in the word *ποια*. See also *Ibid.*, page 320, No. 3, another of the Colbert MSS. (4111,) written A. D. 1236, where the *iota* is dotted *seven* times. All these specimens are taken from MSS. written in *small characters*, and, as the dates show, (the last excepted,) long before the twelfth century. As to these dots being more frequent in manuscripts of

the fifteenth than those of the twelfth, thirteenth, and fourteenth centuries, I cannot say much; it is certain they became more frequent towards the fourteenth century than they were in the twelfth, and yet this was not a general case. In two well-written manuscripts now before me, one of which I suppose to be of the fourteenth century, and the other of the fifteenth, these dots often occur, but they are by no means *regular*. I have noticed several pages in the oldest manuscript where they occur but *once*; and in other pages they may be met with ten or twelve times. On the contrary, in the more *recent* manuscript, *whole pages* occur without one of them; and where they do occur, they are much less frequent than in the former. So that it rather appears from this evidence; that they began to disappear in the fifteenth century. Dr. Marsh, misled by the specimen in *Michaelis*, vol. ii. page 286, says: "The letters in question are *always dotted* in the *Codex Montfortianus*." By referring to the fac-simile, the reader will be able at once to correct this mistake. The *iota* in the fac-simile occurs *thirty* times, and is dotted only in *five* instances; and the *upsilon* occurs *nineteen* times, and is dotted only in *seven*.

But arguments *for* or *against* the age of any MS., on account of such dots, are futile in the extreme; as the most ancient MSS. have them not only on the *iota* and *upsilon*, but upon several other letters, as may be seen in the *Codex Alexandrinus*, the *Codex Rescriptus*, published by Dr. Barrett, and the *Codex Bezae*; in the latter of which they seem to occur more frequently than they do even in the *Codex Montfortii*.

On the evidence of these *dots*, Mr. Martin of Utrecht supposed the Dublin manuscript to be as old as the eleventh century and on the same evidence Dr. Marsh argues, "that it is at least as modern as the *fifteenth*." Both these judgments are too hastily formed; *medio tutissimus ibis* is the best counsel in such a case; the manuscript is more likely to have been a production of the thirteenth than of either the eleventh or fifteenth. The former date is as much *too high* as the latter is *too low*; the zeal of the critics for and against this controverted text having carried them, in my opinion; much too far on either side.

In comparing the *writing* of the *Codex Montfortii*, with the different specimens given by Montfaucon in the *Palæographia Græca*, it appears to approach nearest to that on page 320, No. 4, which was taken from one of the *Colbert* manuscripts, (No. 845,) written in the year of our Lord 1272, which I am led to think may be nearly about the date of the *Codex Montfortii*; but on a subject of so much difficulty, where critics of the first rank have been puzzled, I should be sorry to hazard any more than an *opinion*, which the reader is at liberty to consider either correct or incorrect, as may seem best to his own judgment.

Though a conscientious advocate for the *sacred doctrine* contained in the disputed text, and which I think expressly enough revealed in several other parts of the sacred writings, I must own the passage in question stands on a most dubious foundation. All the Greek manuscripts (the *Codex Montfortii* alone excepted) omit the passage; so do *all* the *ancient versions*; the *Vulgate* excepted; but in many of the ancient MSS. even of this version it is wanting. There is one in the British Museum, of the tenth or eleventh century, where it is added by a more recent hand in the margin; for it is wanting in the text. It is also *variously written* in those manuscripts which retain it. This will appear more plainly by comparing the following extracts taken from four manuscripts of the *Vulgate* in my own possession:-

1. —Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in cœlo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, sanguis, et aqua. This is the same with the text in the Complutensian Polyglot, only *aqua* is placed before *sanguis*.

2. —Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in cœlo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt.

3. —Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in cœlo, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis.

4. —Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in cœlo, Pater, et Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt.

5. —Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et tres sunt qui testimonium perhibent in cœlo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hi tres unum sunt.

This last I took from an ancient manuscript in Marsh's library, St. Patrick's, Dublin.

In what has been denominated the *Editio Princeps* of the Latin Bible, and supposed to have been printed between 1455 and 1468, the text stands thus: "Quoniam tres sunt qui testimonium dant in cœlo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus, et hii tres unum sunt. Et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra. Spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et tres unum sunt."

In the Bible printed by *Fradin* and *Pinard*, Paris, 1497, fol., the text is the same with No. 2, only instead of *testimonium dant*, it reads *dant testimonium*.

The reader will observe that in Nos. 2, 4, and 5, the *eighth* verse is put *before* the *seventh*, and that 3 and 4 have *filius* instead of *verbum*. But both these readings are united in an ancient English manuscript of my own, which contains the Bible from the beginning of Proverbs to the end of the New Testament, written on thick strong vellum, and evidently prior to most of those copies attributed to Wiclif.

*For three ben that geven witnessing in heben the Fadur, the Word or Sone and the Hooly Goost, and these three ben oon. And three ben that geven witnessing in erthe, the Spirit, Water, and Blood, and these three ben oon.*

As many suppose the Complutensian editors must have had a manuscript or manuscripts which contained this disputed passage, I judge it necessary to add the *note* which they subjoin at the bottom of the page, by which (though nothing is clearly expressed) it appears they either had such a manuscript, or *wished to have it thought they had such*. However, the note is curious, and shows us how this disputed passage was read in the most approved manuscripts of the Vulgate extant in the thirteenth century, when *St. Thomas Aquinas* wrote, from whom this note is taken. The following is the whole note *literatim*:—

"Sanctus Thomas in oppositione secunde Decretalis de suma Trinitate et fide Catholica, tractans istum passum contra Abbatem Joachim, ut tres sunt qui testimonium dant in celo, Pater, Verbum, et Spiritus Sanctus; dicet ad literam verba sequentia. Et ad insinuandam unitatem trium personarum subditur. Et hii tres unum sunt. Quodquidem dicitur propter essentie Unitatem. Sed hoc Joachim perverse trahere volens ad unitatem charitatis et consensus, inducebat consequentem auctoritatem. Nam subditur ibidem: et tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, S. Spiritus: Aqua; et sanguis. Et in quibusdam libris additur: et hii tres unum sunt. Sed hoc in veris exemplaribus non habetur: sed dicitur esse appositum ab hereticis arrianis ad pervertendum intellectem sanum auctoritatis premisse de unitate essentie trium personarum. Hec beatus Thomas ubi supra."

If the Complutensian editors *translated* the passage into Greek from the *Vulgate*, it is strange they made no mention of it in this place, where they had so fair an opportunity while speaking so very pointedly on the doctrine in question and forming a note for the occasion, which is indeed the only *theological* note in the whole volume. It is again worthy of note that, when these editors found an important various reading in any of their Greek manuscripts, they noted it in the margin: an example occurs #1Co 13:3, and another, *ibid.* xvi.; why was it then that they took no notice of so important an *omission* as the text of the three witnesses, if they really had no manuscript in which it was contained? Did they intend to *deceive* the reader, and could they possibly imagine that the knavery could never be detected? If they designed to deceive, they took the most effectual way to conceal the fraud, as it is supposed they destroyed the manuscripts from which they printed their text; for the story of their being sold in 1749 to a *rocket-maker* (see *Michaelis*, vol. ii., page 440) is every way so exceptionable and unlike the truth, that I really wonder there should be found any person who would seriously give it credit. The substance of this story, as given by *Michaelis*, is as follows: "*Professor Moldenhawer*, who was in Spain in 1784, went to Alcala on purpose to discover these MSS., but was informed that a very illiterate librarian, about thirty-five years before, who *wanted room for some new books*, sold the ancient vellum MSS. as *useless parchments*, to one *Toryo* who dealt in fireworks, as materials for making rockets." It is farther added that "*Martinez*, a man of learning, *heard of it soon after they were sold*, and *hastened* to save these treasures from destruction; but it was too late, for they were already destroyed, except a few scattered leaves which are now in the library." On the whole of this account, it is natural to ask the following questions: Is it likely that the management of so important a trust should be in the hands of a person so ignorant that he could not know a *Hebrew* or *Greek* MS. from a piece of *useless parchment*? Could such a person be intrusted to make a purchase of *new books* for the library, for which he wanted room? or if they were purchased by the *trustees* of the library, is it likely they would leave the classification and arrangement of these to such a *Goth* as this librarian is said to be? Would such a librarian, or indeed any other, be *permitted* to dispose of any part of the library which he might deem useless? If Mr. *Martinez* heard of it *soon after they were sold*, and *hastened to rescue them*, is it likely that almost the whole should have been converted into rockets before he got to the place, when we are informed they were so many as to cost originally 4,000 aurei; and that even the price which the librarian sold them for was so considerable, that it had to be paid at *two different installments*? Was it possible that in so short a time the rocket-maker could have already consumed the whole? The whole account is so improbable that I cannot help saying, *Credat Judæus Apella; non ego.*

It is more likely the manuscripts were destroyed at first, or that they are still *kept secret*, to prevent the forgery (if it be one) of the text of the three witnesses from being detected; or the librarian

already mentioned may have converted them to *his own use*. If they were not destroyed by the Complutensian editors, I should not be surprised if the same manuscripts should come to light in some other part of the world, if not in the Alcala library itself.

It is worthy of remark that *Luther* never admitted the text of the three witnesses into any of the editions of his translation; it is true it was afterwards added, but never during his lifetime. On this Professor Michaelis makes the following observation: "It is uncandid in the extreme for one Protestant to condemn another for rejecting #1Jo 5:7, since it was rejected by the author of our Reformation." Any conscientious Trinitarian may *innocently hesitate* to receive the feebly supporting evidence of this disputed text, in confirmation of a doctrine which he finds it his duty and interest to receive on the unequivocal testimony of various other passages in the book of Gad.

Professor Griesbach, who does not appear to be an enemy to the doctrine, and who has carefully and critically examined all the evidences and arguments, pro and con, has given up the text as utterly defenceless, and thinks that to plead for its authenticity is dangerous. "For if," says he, "a few dubious, suspicious, and modern evidences, with such weak arguments as are usually adduced, are sufficient to demonstrate the authenticity of a *reading*, then there remains no longer any criterion by which the *spurious* may be distinguished from the *genuine*; and consequently the whole text of the New Testament is unascertained and dubious."

Much stress has been laid on *Bengel's* defence of this text: Michaelis has considered the strength of his arguments in a candid and satisfactory manner.

"The ancient writers which *Bengel* has produced in favour of #1Jo 5:7, are all *Latin writers*, for he acknowledges that no *Greek father* has ever quoted it. Now, if no objection could be made to *Bengel's* witnesses, and the most ancient Latin fathers had quoted in express terms the whole of the controverted passage, their quotations would prove nothing more than that the passage stood in their manuscripts of the Latin version, and therefore that the Latin version contained it in a very early age. But it will appear upon examination that their evidence is very unsatisfactory. The evidence of Tertullian, the oldest Latin writer who has been quoted in favour of #1Jo 5:7, is contained in the following passage of his treatise against Praxeas, book 1:, chap. 25: *Ita connexus Patris in Filio et Filii in Paracleto, tres efficit cohaerentes, alterum ex altero; qui tres unum sunt, non unus; quomodo dictum est: Ego et Pater unum sumus*. Hence it is inferred, that because *tres unum sunt* stand at present in the Latin version, #1Jo 5:7, these words stood there likewise in the time of Tertullian, and that Tertullian borrowed them from the Latin version. But this inference is wholly without foundation; for Tertullian does not produce these words as a quotation, and the bare circumstance of his using the expression *tres unum sunt* will not prove that he found that expression in the Bible. On the contrary, it is evident, from what immediately follows, that #1Jo 5:7 was *not* contained in the Latin version when Tertullian wrote. For, in proof of this assertion, *qui tres unum sunt*, he immediately adds, *quomodo dictum est: Ego et Pater unum sumus*, which is a quotation from St. John's gospel, #Joh 10:30. Now as this quotation relates only to the Father and the Son, and not to the Holy Ghost, surely Tertullian would not have proved the unity of the Trinity from this passage, if #1Jo 5:7, which is much more to the purpose, had then been contained in any Latin manuscript with which he was acquainted. At any rate, the mere use of the words *tres unum sunt* affords no argument in favour of the controverted passage; and if any inference is to be deduced from their

agreement with our present copies of the Latin version in **#1Jo 5:7**; it is this: that the person who afterwards fabricated this passage retained an expression which had been sanctioned by the authority of Tertullian. So much for the evidence of this Latin father, the only writer of the *second* century to whom appeal has been made.

"Of the Latin fathers who lived in the *third* century, Cyprian alone has been produced as evidence in favour of **#1Jo 5:7**. From the writings of Cyprian two passages have been quoted as proofs that **#1Jo 5:7** was contained in his manuscript of the Latin version. The one is from his epistle to Jubaianus; where Cyprian writes thus: *Si baptizari quis apud hæreticum potuit, utique et remissam consecutus est, et sanctificatus est, et templum Dei factus est; quæro cujus Dei? Si Creatoris; non potuit; qui in eum non credidit: si Christi, non hujus potest fieri templum, qui negat, Deum Christum: si Spiritus Sancti, cum tres unum sint, quomodo Spiritus Sanctus placatus esse ei potest, qui aut Patris aut Filii inimicus est?* Here it must be observed, that the words *cum tres unum sint*, though inserted in the later editions of Cyprian's works, are *not* contained in that edition which was published by Erasmus; and even if they were genuine, they will prove nothing more than the same words just quoted from Tertullian. The other passage, which is much more to the purpose; is in Cyprian's treatise, *De Ecclesiæ Unitate*, where Cyprian writes thus: *Dicit Dominus: Ego et Pater unum sumus; et iterum de Patre et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, scriptum est: Et tres unum sunt.* Now, admitting that the words *et tres unum sunt* were quoted by Cyprian from **#1Jo 5:7**, I seriously ask every impartial judge whether a passage found in no ancient Greek manuscript, quoted by no Greek father, and contained in no other ancient version than the Latin, (and not in all copies of this,) is therefore to be pronounced genuine; merely because one Latin father of the three first centuries, who was bishop of Carthage, where the Latin version only was used, and where Greek was unknown, has quoted it? Under these circumstances, should we conclude that the passage stood originally in the Greek autograph of St. John? Certainly not; for the only inference which could be deduced from Cyprian's quotation would be this, that the passage had been introduced into the Latin version so early as the third century.

"The preceding answer is sufficient to invalidate Cyprian's authority in establishing the authenticity of **#1Jo 5:7**, on the supposition that Cyprian really quoted it; but that he did so is more than any man can prove. The words *tres unum sunt* are contained not only in the seventh, but also in the eighth verse, which is a part of the ancient and genuine text of St. John; and therefore it is at least possible that Cyprian took them not from the seventh, but from the eighth verse. It is true that he says these words are written of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; whereas *tres unum sunt*, in the eighth verse, relates only to the spirit, the water, and the blood. But it must be observed that the Latin fathers interpreted *spiritus, aquas et sanguis*, not literally, but mystically; and some of them really understood by these words, *Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*, taking *aqua* in the sense of *Pater*, *sanguis* in the sense of *Filius*, and *spiritus* in the sense of *Spiritus Sanctus*.

"This is expressly asserted by Eucherius in his *Questiones N. T. difficiliore*s; for after having quoted **#1Jo 5:8**, thus: *Tria sunt, quæ testimonium perhibent, aqua, sanguis, et spiritus*, he adds, soon after, *plures tamen hic ipsam interpretatione mystica intelligere Trinitatem; aqua Patrem, sanguine Christum, spiritu Spiritum Sanctum manifestante.* But if Cyprian really thought that *aqua, sanguis, et spiritus*, **#1Jo 5:8**, denoted *Pater, Filius, et Spiritus Sanctus*, he might say of *tres unum sunt*, **#1Jo 5:8**, that it was written, *de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto*. And that he actually did so,

that he quoted not #1Jo 5:7, but understood #1Jo 5:8, mystically, appears from the following passage of Facundus, who lived in the neighbourhood of Carthage, and consequently used the same Latin version as Cyprian. *Johannes Apostolus in epistola sua de Patre, et Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, sic dicit: Tres sunt qui testimonium dant in terra, spiritus, aqua, et sanguis, et hi tres unum sunt: in spiritu significans Patrem, &c. Quod Johannis Apostoli testimonium beatus Cyprianus, in epistola, sive libro, quem de Trinitate scripsit, de Patre, Filio, et Spiritu Sancto, dictum intelligit.*" Facundus then quotes the words of Cyprian, which are the subject of our present inquiry. From the preceding passage it is manifest that #1Jo 5:7 was unknown to Facundus; for he proves the doctrine of the Trinity by a mystical interpretation of #1Jo 5:8, and appeals to the authority of Cyprian, who, he says, gave the same interpretation. But if #1Jo 5:7 was unknown to Facundus, who lived in the same country as Cyprian, used the same Latin version, and wrote almost three centuries later, it is incredible that #1Jo 5:7 was already introduced in the Latin manuscripts which Cyprian used. Consequently we must conclude that the assertion of Facundus is true, and that the words of Cyprian contain, not a quotation from #1Jo 5:7, but a mystical application of #1Jo 5:8. This is farther confirmed by Augustine, who was likewise an African bishop, who lived a hundred years later than Cyprian, and still knew nothing of #1Jo 5:7, for he has never quoted this passage, not even where he speaks of the Trinity, but he has mystically applied the eighth verse."-MICHAELIS, vol. vi. p. 420.

The Greek writers who have not quoted this verse, though several of them wrote professedly on the Deity of Christ, and on the Trinity, are the following:—

Irenæus.	Cyril of Alexandria.
Clemens Alexandrinus.	The Exposition of Faith in Justin Martyr's works.
Dionysius Alexandrinus (or the writer against Paul of Samosata under his name.)	Cæsarius.
Athanasius.	Proclus.
The Synopsis of Scripture.	The Council of Nice, as it is represented by Gelasius Cyzicenus.
The Synod of Sardica.	Hippolytus.
Epiphanius.	Andreas.
Basil.	Six catenæ, quoted by Simon.
Alexander of Alexandria.	The marginal scholia of three MSS.
Gregory Nyssen.	Hesychius.
Gregory Nazianzen, with his two commentators, Elias Cretensis and Nicetas.	John Damascenus.
Didysus <i>de Spiritu Sancto</i> .	Germanus of Constantinople.
Chrysostom.	Œcumenius.
An author under his name, <i>de sancta et consubstantiali Trinitate</i> .	Euthymius Zigabenus

LATIN AUTHORS.

Novatian.	Facundus.
Hilary.	Junilius.
Lucifer Calaritanus.	Cerealis.
Jerome.	Rusticus.
Augustine.	Bede.
Ambrose.	Gregogy.
Faustinus.	Philastrius.
Leo Magnus.	Paschasius.
The author <i>de Promissis</i> .	Arnobius, junior
Eucherius.	Pope Eusebius.

The writers that have quoted it are comparatively recent or spurious, for those of any note which have been supposed, from certain expressions in their works, to have had reference to this verse, have been proved by learned men to have had no such text in view. A great and good man has said that "the seventh verse, in conjunction with the sixth and eighth, has been quoted by Tertullian, Cyprian, and an uninterrupted train of fathers." But a more incautious assertion was never made, as the preceding list will prove; and the evidence on the subject I have most carefully examined. *Bengel*, who was an excellent critic and a good man, endeavoured to defend it, but without success; and *Michaelis* demonstrated its spuriousness from *Bengel's five* concessions. *Knittel* has defended its authenticity with much critical acumen; *Hezelius* with great sagacity; *David Martin*, of Utrecht, with much honest simplicity; and Dean *Travis* with abundance of zeal, without much knowledge of the critical bearings of the subject. *Socinians* need not glory that it is indefensible, and that honest Trinitarians give it up; for the sacred *doctrine* which it appears to express is diffused through every part of the Scriptures, and is as inexpungable as a rock of adamant, and will live and prevail in the Church of Christ while sun and moon endure, and till time shall be swallowed up in eternity.

SUMMARY of the whole evidence relative to the THREE HEAVENLY WITNESSES, #1Jo 5:7.

1. ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN *Greek MSS.* are extant, containing the First Epistle of John, and the text in question is wanting in 112. It only exists in the *Codex Montfortii*, (a comparatively recent MS.,) already described. The *Codex Ravianus*, in the Royal Library at Berlin, is a *transcript* taken from the *Complutensian Polyglot*.

2. All the *GREEK fathers* omit the verse, though many of them quote both #1Jo 5:6 and #1Jo 5:8, applying them to the Trinity, and Divinity of Christ and the Holy Spirit; yea, and endeavour to prove the doctrine of the *Trinity* from #1Jo 5:6 and #1Jo 5:8, without referring to any such verse as #1Jo 5:7, which, had it existed, would have been a more positive proof, and one that could not have been overlooked.

3. The *first place* in which the verse appears in *Greek* is the Greek translation of the Acts of the *Council of Lateran*, held A. D. 1215.

4. Though it is found in many *Latin* copies, yet it does not appear that any written previously to the TENTH CENTURY contains it.

5. The *LATIN fathers* do not quote it, even where it would have greatly strengthened their arguments; and where, had it existed, it might have been most naturally expected.

6. *Virilius*, bishop of *Tapsum*, at the conclusion of the fifth century, is the first who seems to have referred expressly to the three heavenly witnesses; but his quotation does not agree with the present text either in *words* or in *sense*; and besides, he is a writer of very little credit, nor does the place alleged appear to learned men to be genuine.

7. The *Latin writers* who do refer to the three heavenly witnesses vary greatly in their quotations, the more *ancient* placing the *eighth verse* before the *seventh*, and very many omitting, after the earthly witnesses, the clause *these three are one*. Others who insert *these three are one* add *in Christ Jesus*; others use different terms.

8. It is wanting in all the ancient *VERSIONS*, the *Vulgate* excepted; but the more ancient copies of this have it not; and those which have it vary greatly among themselves, as may be seen in the specimens already produced.

9. It is wanting in the *first edition* of Erasmus, A. D. 1516, which is properly the *editio princeps* of the Greek text.

It is wanting also in his *second* edition 1519, but he added it in the *third* from the *Codex Montfortii*.

It is wanting in the editions of *Aldus*, *Gerbelius*, *Cephalæus*, &c.

It is wanting in the *German* translation of LUTHER, and in *all the editions* of it published *during his lifetime*.

It is inserted in our early *English* translations, but with marks of *doubtfulness*, as has already been shown.

10. In short, it stands on no authority sufficient to authenticate any part of a revelation professing to have come from God.

See *Griesbach's* Dissertation on this verse at the end of the second volume of his Greek text. Halæ et Londini, 1806.

In defence of this verse see "*Archdeacon Travis' Letters to Gibbon*;" and on the other side, "*Professor Porson's Answer to Travis*." The latter has left nothing farther to be said on the subject either in vindication or reply.

*Finished the correction for a reimpression, Jan. 3, 1832.-A. C.*

**PREFACE  
TO  
THE SECOND EPISTLE  
OF  
JOHN.**

THE authority of the *First* Epistle of John being established, little need be said concerning either the *second* or *third*, if we regard the *language* and the *sentiment* only, for these so fully accord with the *first*, that there can be no doubt that he who wrote *one*, wrote all the *three*. But it must not be concealed that there were doubts entertained in the primitive Church as to the two latter being *canonical*. And so late as the days of *Eusebius*, who lived in the fourth century, they were ranked among those writings which were then termed *αντιλεγόμενα*, not received by all, or contradicted, because not believed to be the genuine productions of the Apostle John.

It is very likely that, being letters to *private* persons, they had for a considerable time been kept in the possession of the families to which they were originally sent; and only came to light perhaps long after the death of the apostle, and the death of the *elect lady* or *Kyria*, and *Gaius* or *Caius*, to whom they were addressed. When first discovered, all the immediate vouchers were gone; and the Church of Christ, that was always on its guard against imposture, and especially in relation to writings professing to be the work of apostles, hesitated to receive them into the number of canonical Scriptures, till it was fully satisfied that they were Divinely inspired. This extreme caution was of the utmost consequence to the Christian faith; for had it been otherwise, had any measure of what is called credulity prevailed, the Church would have been inundated with spurious writings, and the genuine faith greatly corrupted, if not totally destroyed.

The number of apocryphal *gospels*, *acts of apostles*, and *epistles*, which were offered to the Church in the earliest ages of Christianity, is truly astonishing. We have the names of at least *seventy-five* gospels which were offered to, and rejected by, the Church; besides *Acts of Peter*, *Acts of Paul and Thecla*, *Third Epistle to the Corinthians*, *Epistle to the Laodiceans*, *Book of Enoch*, &c., some of which are come down to the present time, but are convicted of *forgery* by the sentiment, the style, and the *doctrine*.

The suspicion, however, of forgery, in reference to the Second Epistle of Peter, second and third of John, Jude, and the Apocalypse, was so strong, that in the third century, when the *Peshito Syriac* version was made, these books were omitted, and have not since been received into that version to the present day, which is the version still in use in the Syrian Churches. But the *later Syriac* version, which was made A. D. 508, and is called the *Philoxenian*, from *Philoxenus*, bishop of Hierapolis, under whose direction it was formed from the Greek by his rural Bishop *Polycarp*, and was afterwards corrected and published by *Thomas of Charkel*, in 616, contains these, as well as all the other canonical books of the New Testament.

From the time that the language, sentiments, and doctrines of these two epistles were *critically* examined, no doubts were entertained of their authenticity; and at present they are received by the

whole Christian Church throughout the world; for although they are not in the ancient Syriac version, they are in the Philoxenian; and concerning their authenticity I believe the Syrian Churches have at present no doubts.

Dr. Lardner observes that the first epistle was received and quoted by Polycarp, bishop of Smyrna, contemporary with the apostle; by Papias, who himself had been a disciple of St. John; by Irenæus; Clement of Alexandria; Origen, and many others. The *second* epistle is quoted by Irenæus, was received by Clement of Alexandria, mentioned by Origen and Dionysius of Alexandria, is quoted by Alexander, bishop of Alexandria. All the three epistles were received by Athanasius, by Cyril, of Jerusalem; by the council of Laodicea; by Epiphanius; by Jerome; by Ruffinus; by the third council of *Carthage*; by Augustine, and by all those authors who received the same canon of the New Testament that we do. All the epistles are in the Codex Alexandrinus, in the catalogues of Gregory of Nazianzen, &c., &c.

Thus we find they were known and quoted at a very early period; and have been received as genuine by the most respectable fathers, Greek and Latin, of the Christian Church. Their being apparently of a *private* nature might have prevented their more general circulation at the beginning, kept them for a considerable time unknown, and prevented them from being reckoned canonical. But such a circumstance as this cannot operate in the present times.

As to the *time* in which this epistle was written, it is very uncertain. It is generally supposed to have been written at Ephesus between A. D. 80 and 90, but of this there is no proof; nor are there any *data* in the epistle itself to lead to any probable conjecture relative to this point. I have placed it at A. D. 85, but could not wish to pledge myself to the correctness of that date.

## THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5593.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5587.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5577.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4089.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4311.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3845.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4444.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2433.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3187.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1025.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 834.
- Year of the CCXVIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 832.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 836.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 837.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 838.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 397.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 133.
- Year of the Julian era, 130.
- Year of the Spanish era, 123.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 89.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.
- Year of Artabanus IV., king of the Parthians, 4.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 86.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 7; or the year before the third embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 10.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-seventh of March, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the third of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 9.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 17.

- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 17, 19, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 24, 25, 27, 27.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 6.
- Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Cæsar, the last of those usually styled the Twelve Cæsars, 5.
- Roman Consuls, Domitianus Augustus Cæsar, the eleventh time, and T. Aurelius Fulvus or Fulvius.
- The years in which Domitian had been consul before were, A. D. 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, and 84.

It should be observed that the date of this epistle is very uncertain. The above is only upon the supposition that it was written about A. D. 85. See the *preface*.

## II JOHN.

*The apostle's address to a Christian matron and her children, 1-3. He rejoices to find that certain of her family had received, and continued to adorn, the truth; and he exhorts them to continue to love one another according to the commandment of Christ, 4-6, And particularly cautions them against deceivers, and to so watch, that they might not lose the benefit of what they had received, 7, 8. The necessity of abiding in the doctrine of Christ, 9. He cautions them against receiving, or in any way forwarding, those who did not bring the true doctrine of Christ, 10, 11. Excuses himself from writing more largely, and purposes to pay her and family a visit shortly, 12, 13.*

### NOTES ON II. JOHN.

Verse 1. **The elder]** John the apostle, who was now a very old man, generally supposed to be about ninety, and therefore he uses the term ο πρεσβυτερος, presbyter or elder, not as the name of an office, but as designating his advanced age. He is allowed to have been the oldest of all the apostles, and to have been the only one who died a natural death.

This title led some of the ancients to attribute this epistle to a person called *John the Presbyter*, a member of the Church at Ephesus; and not to John the apostle. But this is a groundless supposition.

**The elect lady]** εκλεκτη κυρια: As κυρια, kuria, may be the feminine of κυριος, kurios, lord, therefore it may signify lady; and so several, both ancients and moderns, have understood it. But others have considered it the proper name of a woman, Kyria; and that this is a very ancient opinion is evident from the *Peshito Syriac*, the oldest version we have, which uses it as a proper name [Syriac] koureea, as does also the Arabic [Arabic] kooreea.

Some have thought that *Electa* was the name of this matron, from the word εκλεκτη, which we translate *elect*, and which here signifies the same as *excellent*, *eminent*, *honourable*, or the like. Others think that a particular Church is intended, which some suppose to be the Church at Jerusalem, and that the *elect sister*, #2Jo 1:13, means the Church at Ephesus; but these are conjectures which appear to me to have no good ground. I am satisfied that no metaphor is here intended; that the epistle was sent to some eminent Christian matron, not far from Ephesus, who was probably *deaconess* of the Church, who, it is likely, had a Church at her house, or at whose house the apostles and travelling evangelists frequently preached, and were entertained. This will appear more probable in the course of the notes.

**Whom I love in the truth]** Whom I love as the Christian religion requires us to love one another.

**And not I only]** She was well known in the Churches; many had witnessed or heard of her fidelity, and partook of her hospitality; so that she had a good report of all Christians in that quarter.

Verse 2. **For the truth's sake]** On account of the Gospel.

**Which dwelleth in us]** By the grace which it has proclaimed.

**And shall be with us]** For God will preserve not only the Christian religion but its truth, all its essential doctrines for ever. And they that *abide in the truth* shall go whither that truth leads, *i.e.* to glory. The *Armenian* has a strange reading here: "For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, *because it is also with you; and ye shall be with us for ever.*" But this is supported by no other version, nor by any MS.

Verse 3. **Grace be with you]** This is addressed to *her*, her *household*, and probably that part of the *Church* which was more immediately under her care.

**The Son of the Father]** The apostle still keeps in view the *miraculous conception* of Christ; a thing which the *Gnostics* absolutely denied; a doctrine which is at the ground work of our salvation.

Verse 4. **That I found of thy children walking in truth]** I have already supposed this Christian matron to be *mother of a family*, probably a *widow*, for no mention is made of her husband; and that she was also a *deaconess* in the church, and one in those house the travelling evangelists preached, and there they were entertained. The *children* mentioned here may either be *her own children*, or those *members of the Church* which were under her care, or some of *both*. The apostle was glad to *find*, probably by an epistle sent from herself to him, or from the information of some of the itinerant evangelists, that the work of God was prospering in the place where she lived, and also in her own household. He does not say that all were walking in the truth, but *ἐκ τῶν τέκνων*, *some of her children*; there was a growing and spreading work, and there were many adversaries who strove to pervert them who had already believed, and perhaps were successful in drawing several away from their simplicity.

Verse 5. **That which we had from the beginning]** The commandment *to love one another* was what they had heard from the first publication of Christianity, and what he wishes this excellent woman to inculcate on all those under her care. The mode of address here shows that it was a *person*, not a *Church*, to which the apostle wrote.

Verse 6. **And this is love]** That is, our love is shown and proved by our walking according to the commandments of God; for love is the principle of obedience.

Verse 7. **For many deceivers, &c.]** Of these he had spoken before, see #1Jo 4:1, &c. And these appear to have been *Gnostics*, for they denied that *Jesus was come in the flesh*. And this doctrine, so essential to salvation, none could deny but a *deceiver* and an *antichrist*. Instead of *εἰσηλθόν* *are entered in*, many excellent MSS. and versions have *ἐξηλθόν*, *are gone out*. The sense is nearly the same.

Verse 8. **Look to yourselves]** Be on your guard against these seducers; watch, pray, love God and each other, and walk in newness of life.

**That we lose not those things which we have wrought]** That we apostles, who have been the means of your conversion, may not be deprived of you as our crown of rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus.

Instead of the *first person plural*, *απολεσωμεν*, &c., *WE lose*, &c., many MSS., *versions*, and *fathers*, read the whole clause in the *second person plural*, *απολεσητε*, *YE lose*, &c. *Take heed to yourselves that YE lose not the things which YE have wrought, but that YE receive a full reward.* This reading is more consistent and likely, and is supported by at least as good evidence as the other. We find that if these persons did not *keep on their guard* they might lose their salvation, and the apostles their rejoicing in the day of the Lord Jesus. Even this intimation might put them on their guard. Had the apostle said *ye cannot finally fall*, what a different effect would it have produced! Griesbach has placed these readings in the margin as being very probable.

Verse 9. **Whosoever transgresseth]** *παραβαινων*. He who *passes* over the sacred enclosure, or *goes beyond* the prescribed limits; and *abideth not in the doctrine*-does not remain *within* these *holy limits*, but indulges himself either in excesses of *action* or *passion*; *hath not God* for his Father, nor the love of God in his heart.

**Hath both the father and the Son.]** He who abideth in the doctrine of Christ, his body is a temple of the Holy Trinity, and he has communion with the Father as his Father, and *with the Son* as his Saviour and *Redeemer*.

Verse 10. **If there come any unto you]** Under the character of an apostle or evangelist, to preach in your house; and *bring not this doctrine*, that Jesus is come in the flesh, and has died for the redemption of the world.

**Receive him not unto your house]** Give him no entertainment as an evangelical teacher. Let him not preach under your roof.

**Neither bid him God speed.]** *και χαιρειν αυτω μη λεγερε*. *And do not say, Health to him*-do not salute him with *Peace be to thee!* The usual salutation among *friends* and those of the same religion in the east is, [Arabic] *Salam aleekum*, "Peace be to you;" which those of the same religion will use among themselves, but never to strangers, except in very rare cases. This is the case to the present day; and, from what John says here, it was a very ancient custom. We have often seen that peace among the Hebrews comprehended every spiritual and temporal blessing. The words mean, according to the eastern use of them, "Have no religious connection with him, nor act towards him so as to induce others to believe you acknowledge him as a brother."

Verse 11. **Is partaker of his evil deeds.]** He that acts towards him as if he considered him a Christian brother, and sound in the faith, puts it in his power to deceive others, by thus apparently accrediting his ministry. No sound Christian should countenance any man as a *Gospel minister*, who holds and preaches erroneous doctrines; especially concerning the *Lord Jesus*. Nor can any Christian *attend the ministry of such teachers without being criminal in the sight of God*. He who attends their ministry is, in effect, bidding them *God speed*; no matter whether such belong to an *established Church*, or to any congregation of *dissenters* from it. But what St. John says here does not mean that

we should deny such the common offices of humanity, charity, and mercy. No. In these offices we are equally bound to all men; far less does it intimate that we should *persecute* such on account of their heretical or heterodox sentiments. No. This right has God given to no man, to no Church, to no state. They who persecute others, even for the worst heretical opinions, may expect the heaviest judgments of Almighty God.

There is a remarkable *addition* here in several MSS. Of the *Vulgate*, and in some printed editions. *Ecce prædixi vobis, ut in diem Domini nostri Jesu Christi non confundamini.* "Behold, I have foretold this to you, that ye may not be confounded in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ."

This addition is found in the edition of *Pope Sixtus* the Fifth, and in the *Complutensian Polyglot*; but it is not acknowledged by any of the *versions*, nor by any *Greek* MSS.

Verse 12. **Having many things to write]** That is, I have many things that I might write to thee, but I think it best not to commit them to paper, because I hope to visit thee shortly, and speak fully of those matters, which will be a means of increasing the comfort both of thee and thy family, as well as my own. There is more comfort in mutual *interviews* among friends than in epistolary correspondence.

Verse 13. **The children of thy elect sister]** Probably her *own sister*, who lived at Ephesus; and, being acquainted with the apostle's writing, desired to be thus remembered to her. *Elect*, both in this and the first verse, signifies *excellent, eminent, or honourable*. **See Clarke on "2Jo 1"**.

*Amen* is wanting in the most ancient MSS., and in most of the *versions*; but *η χάρις μετα σου* and *μεθ' υμων*, *Grace be with thee, or with you*, is found in several MSS. and *versions*.

#### Subscriptions in the VERSIONS:—

The end of the Second Epistle.-SYRIAC.

The Second Epistle of John is ended.-*Philox.* SYRIAC.

Praise be to God for ever, Amen!-ARABIC.

#### In the MANUSCRIPTS:—

The Second of John.-Codex Alexandrinus and Codex Vaticanus.

The Second of John to the Parthians.-One of *Colbert's* MSS.

The Second catholic Epistle of St. John the apostle and divine.

There are other subscriptions, but, like the above, they are worthy of little regard.

THIS epistle is more remarkable for the spirit of Christian love which it breathes than for any thing else. It contains scarcely any thing that is not found in the preceding; and out of the thirteen verses there are at least *eight* which are found, either in so many words or in sentiment, precisely the same with those of the first epistle. The most remarkable part of it is the *tenth* and *eleventh* verses, {#2**Jo 1:10, 11**} relative to the orders concerning the *heretical teacher*; and from them we see how such teachers were treated in the apostolic Church. They held no communion with them, afforded them no support, as *teachers*; but *did not persecute* them.

On this model the conduct of all Christians should be formed, relative to the teachers of false doctrine in general. To go *thus far*, we have apostolical authority, to go *farther*, we have none. And let us still remember, in all cases it is our duty to love even our enemies, and consequently to do them any act of humanity and mercy.

## **THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.**

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5593.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5587.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5577.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4089.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4311.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3845.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4444.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2433.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3187.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1025.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 834.
- Year of the CCXVIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 832.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 836.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 837.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 838.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 397.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 133.
- Year of the Julian era, 130.
- Year of the Spanish era, 123.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 89.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.
- Year of Artabanus IV., king of the Parthians, 4.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 86.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 10; or the year before the fourth embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 7; or the year before the third embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 10.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, B.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-seventh of March, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the third of April.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 9.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 17.

- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 17, 19, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 24, 25, 27, 27.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 6.
- Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Cæsar, the last of those usually styled the Twelve Cæsars, 5.
- Roman Consuls, Domitianus Augustus Cæsar, the eleventh time, and T. Aurelius Fulvus or Fulvius.
- The years in which Domitian had been consul before were, A. D. 71, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 80, 82, 83, and 84.

It should be observed that the date of this epistle is very uncertain. The above is only upon the supposition that it was written about A. D. 85.

### III JOHN.

*The apostle's address to Caius, and his good wishes for his prosperity in body and soul, 1, 2. He commends him for his steadiness in the truth, and his general hospitality, especially to the itinerant evangelists, 3-8. Speaks of the bad conduct of Diotrephes; his abuse of his power in the Church; and his slander of the apostles, 9, 10. Exhorts Caius to avoid his example, and to follow what is good, 11. Commends Demetrius, 12. Excuses himself from writing more fully, and proposes to pay him a visit shortly, 13, 14.*

This epistle being of nearly the same complexion with the former, and evidently written about the same time, and incontestably by the same person, it is not necessary to give it any particular preface; as the subject of the authenticity of all the three epistles has been treated already so much at large, not only in the introduction to them, but in the notes in general.

This and the preceding epistle are, by Dr. Lardner, supposed to have been written between A. D. 80 and 90. There are no *notes of time* in the epistles themselves to help us to fix any date, therefore all is conjecture concerning the time in which they were written: but to me it appears as likely that they were written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem as *after*; for it is scarcely to be supposed that so signal a display of the justice of God, and such a powerful argument in favour of Christianity and of the truth of Christ's predictions, could be passed unnoticed and unappealed to by any of the inspired persons who wrote after that event. However, where there is no positive evidence, conjecture is useless.

### NOTES ON III. JOHN.

Verse 1. **The elder]** See on the first verse of the preceding epistle, and also the *preface*.

**The well-beloved Gaius]** γαίος *Gaius*, is the Greek mode of writing the Roman name *Caius*; and thus it should be rendered in European languages.

Several persons of the name of *Caius* occur in the New Testament.

1. In the Epistle to the Romans, **#Ro 16:23**, St. Paul mentions a *Caius* who lived at Corinth, whom he calls his *host*, and *the host of the whole Church*.

2. In **#1Co 1:14**, St. Paul mentions a *Caius* who lived at Corinth, whom he had baptized; but this is probably the same with the above.

3. In **#Ac 19:29**, mention is made of a *Caius* who was a native of Macedonia, who accompanied St. Paul, and spent some time with him at Ephesus. This is probably a different person from the preceding; for the description given of the *Caius* who lived at Corinth, and was the *host of the whole Church* there, does not accord with the description of the *Macedonian Caius*, who, in the very same year, travelled with St. Paul, and was with him at Ephesus.

4. In #Ac 20:4, we meet a *Caius of Derbe*, who was likewise a fellow traveller of St. Paul. This person cannot be the *Corinthian Caius*, for the host of the Church at Corinth would hardly leave that city to travel into Asia: and he is clearly distinguishable from the *Macedonian Caius* by the epithet *δερβαλος*, of *Derbe*.

5. And lastly, there is the *Caius* who is mentioned here, and who is thought by some critics to be different from all the above; for, in writing to him, St. John ranks him among *his children*, which seems, according to them, to intimate that he was converted by this apostle.

Now, whether this *Caius* was one of the persons just mentioned, or whether he was different from them all, is difficult to determine; because *Caius* was a very common name. Yet if we may judge from the similarity of character, it is not improbable that he was the *Caius* who lived at Corinth, and who is styled by St. Paul *the host of the whole Church*; for hospitality to his Christian brethren was the leading feature in the character of this *Caius* to whom St. John wrote, and it is on this very account that he is commended by the apostle. Besides, St. John's friend lived in a place where this apostle had in Diotrophes a very ambitious and tyrannical adversary; and that there were men of this description at Corinth is evident enough from the two epistles to the Corinthians, though St. Paul has not mentioned *their* names. See *Michaelis*.

The probability of this *Caius* being the same with the *Corinthian Caius* has suggested the thought that this epistle was sent to *Corinth*; and consequently that the second epistle was sent to some place in the neighbourhood of that city. But I think the distance between Ephesus, where St. John resided, and Corinth, was too considerable for such an aged man as St. John is represented to be to travel, whether by *land* or *water*. If he went by *land*, he must traverse a great part of Asia, go through Thrace, Macedonia, Thessaly, and down through Greece, to the Morea, a most tedious and difficult journey. If he went by *water*, he must cross the *Ægean Sea*, and navigate among the *Cyclades Islands*, which was always a dangerous voyage. Now as the apostle promises, both in the second and in this epistle, to see the persons shortly to whom he wrote, I take it for granted that they could not have lived at Corinth, or anywhere in the vicinity of that city. That St. John took such a voyage *Michaelis* thinks probable; "for since Corinth lay almost opposite to Ephesus, and St. John, from his former occupation, before he became an apostle, was accustomed to the sea, it is not improbable that the journey or voyage which he proposed to make was from Ephesus to Corinth."

In answer to this I would just observe, 1. That the voyage was too long and dangerous for a man at John's advanced age to think of taking. 2. That John had never been accustomed to any such sea as the *Ægean*, for the *sea of Galilee*, or *sea of Tiberias*, on which, as a fisherman, he got his bread, was only an inconsiderable fresh water lake; and his acquaintance with it could give him very few advantages for the navigation of the *Ægean Sea*, and the danger of coasting the numerous islands dispersed through it.

Verse 2. **I wish above all things]** *περι παντων ευχομαι*. *Above all things I pray that thou mayest prosper, and be in health*, *και υγιαινειν*· to which one MS. adds *εν αληθεια*, which gives it a different meaning, viz., *that thou mayest be sound in the truth*. The prayer of St. John for *Caius* includes *three* particulars: 1. Health of body; 2. Health of soul; and 3. Prosperity in secular affairs. *That thou mayest PROSPER and be in HEALTH, as thy SOUL PROSPERETH*. These *three* things, so

necessary to the comfort of life, every Christian may in a certain measure expect, and for them every Christian is authorized to pray; and we should have more of all three if we devoutly prayed for them.

It appears from the last *clause* that the soul of Caius was in a very prosperous state.

Verse 3. **When the brethren came]** Probably the same of whom he speaks in the fifth {#3Jo 1:5} and following verses, and who appear to have been itinerant evangelists.

**The truth that is in thee]** The soundness of thy faith and the depth of thy religion.

Verse 4. **To hear that my children]** From this it has been inferred that Caius was one of St. John's converts, and consequently not the Corinthian Caius, who was converted, most probably, by St. Paul. But the apostle might use the term *children* here as implying those who were immediately under his pastoral care, and, being an *old* man, he had a right to use such terms in addressing his juniors both in age and grace; and there is much both of propriety and dignity in the appellation coming from such a person.

Verse 5. **Thou doest faithfully]** ΠΙΣΤΟΤΟΥ ΠΟΙΕΙΣ. *Kypke* thinks that ΠΙΣΤΟΤΟΥ is put here for ΠΙΣΤΙΝ, and that the phrase signifies *to keep or preserve the faith, or to be bound by the faith, or to keep one's engagements. Thou hast acted as the faith-the Christian religion, required thee to act, in all that thou hast done, both to the brethren at home, and to the strangers-the itinerant evangelists, who, in the course of their travels, have called at thy house. There is not a word here about the pilgrims and penitential journeys which the papists contrive to bring out of this text.*

Verse 6. **Which have borne witness of thy charity]** Of thy love and benevolence.

**Before the Church]** The believers at Ephesus; for to this Church the apostle seems to refer.

**Whom if thou bring forward]** If thou continue to assist such, as thou hast done, *thou shalt do well.*

The *brethren* of whom St. John speaks might have been *apostles*; the *strangers*, assistants to these apostles, as John Mark was to Barnabas. Both were *itinerant evangelists*.

**After a godly sort]** ΑΞΙΩΣ ΤΟΥ ΘΕΟΥ. *Worthy of God*; and in such a way as he can approve. Let all Churches, all congregations of Christians, from whom their ministers and preachers can claim nothing by law, and for whom the state makes no provision, lay this to heart; let them ask themselves, Do we deal with these in a manner *worthy of God*, and worthy of the profession we make? Do we suffer them to lack the bread that perisheth, while they minister to us with no sparing hand the bread of life? Let a certain class of religious people, who will find themselves out when they read this note, consider whether, when their preachers have ministered to them their certain or stated time, and are called to go and serve other Churches, *they send them forth* in a manner *worthy of God*, making a reasonable provision for the journey which they are obliged to take. In the itinerant ministry of the apostles it appears that each Church bore the expenses of the apostle to the next

Church or district to which he was going to preach the word of life. So it should be still in the mission and itinerant ministry.

Verse 7. **For his name's sake they went forth]** For the sake of preaching the Gospel of the grace of God, and making known JESUS to the heathen.

**Taking nothing of the Gentiles.]** Receiving no emolument for their labour, but in every respect showing themselves to be truly disinterested. Sometimes, and on some special occasions, this may be necessary; but *the labourer is worthy of his hire* is the maxim of the author of Christianity. And those congregations of Christians are ever found to prize the Gospel most, and profit most by it, who *bear all expenses incident to it, and vice versa.*

But some construe ἐξήλθον, *they went out*, with ἀπο τῶν ἐθνῶν, *from the Gentiles*, or rather by *the Gentiles*, and give the passage this sense: *They went out*, i.e., were *driven out by the Gentiles, taking nothing with them*, i.e., leaving all their property behind, so that they were in a state of great destitution. A curious reading here, ἐθνικῶν, *heathenish men*, for ἐθνῶν, *Gentiles*, which latter might imply those who were converted from among the Gentiles, while the sense of the other term seems to be restrained to those who were still *unconverted*, may seem to strengthen the above interpretation; and although the construction seems rather harsh, yet it is not, on the whole, unlikely. The reading above referred to is that of the most ancient and reputable MSS. That *to be driven out or expelled* is one scriptural meaning of the verb ἐξέρχομαι, see #Mt 8:32: *And when they were come out, οἱ δὲ ἐξελθόντες*, and when they were *DRIVEN OUT*. #Mt 12:43: *When the unclean spirit is gone out, ἐξέλθη*, is *DRIVEN OUT*. See #Mr 5:13; 7:29: *The devil is gone out of thy daughter, ἐξελήλυθε*, is *EXPULSED*. #Mr 9:29: *This kind can come forth by nothing ἐν οὐδενὶ δύναται ἐξελθεῖν*, can be *DRIVEN OUT* by nothing, but by prayer and fasting. #Lu 8:2: *Mary Magdalene; out of whom went, ἀφ' ἧς δαίμονια ἑπτα ἐξελήλυθει*, out of whom were *CAST*, seven demons. See also #1Jo 2:19; #Re 3:12; and Schleusner, in voc. ἐξέρχομαι.

Verse 8. **We therefore ought to receive such]** Those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, and have professed the truth at the hazard of their lives, and the loss of all their worldly substance. Instead of ἀπολαμβάνειν, *to receive*, the most ancient and reputable MSS. have υπολαμβάνειν, *to take up, undertake for, or kindly receive.*

**Fellow helpers to the truth]** And thus encourage the persecuted, and contribute to the spread and maintenance of the Gospel.

Verse 9. **I wrote unto the Church.]** The Church where Caius was; *but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence, φιλοπρωτεύων, who loves the presidency, or chief place* in the Church. He was doubtless an officer in the Church, at least a deacon, probably a bishop; and, being one, he magnified himself in his office; he loved such eminence, and behaved himself haughtily in it.

**Receiveth us not.]** Does not acknowledge the apostolical authority. As some MSS. supply αὐ after ἐγράψα, and several judicious critics believe it is implied, the translation will run thus: *I would have written to the Church to receive these men kindly, but Diotrephes, who affects the presidency; and into whose hands, if I wrote to the Church, my letter must come, receiveth us not-would not*

acknowledge my authority to interfere with any of the matters of his Church; and therefore I have written unto thee, whose love to the brethren and general hospitality are well known, that thou wouldst receive those strangers and persecuted followers of our common Lord.

Verse 10. **If I come, I will remember]** I will show him the authority which, as an apostle of Jesus Christ, I possess.

**Prating against us]** Diotrefes might have been a *converted Jew*, who was unwilling that the Gentiles should be received into the Church; or a *Judaizing Christian*, who wished to incorporate the *law* with the *Gospel*, and calumniated the apostles who taught otherwise. This haughty and unfeeling man would give no countenance to the converted Gentiles; so far from it, that he would not receive any of them himself, forbade others to do it, and excommunicated those who had been received into the Church by the apostles. This appears to be the meaning of *neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the Church*. He had the complete *dog in the manger* principle: he would neither do, nor let do; and when good was done that he did not approve, he endeavoured to undo it.

Verse 11. **Follow not that which is evil]** μη μιμου το κακον *Do not imitate that wicked man*, i.e., the conduct of Diotrefes; be merciful, loving, and kind. For whatever profession any man may make, it will ever appear that *he who doeth good is of God*-he alone is the person who uses rightly the grace received from God, and he alone shall enjoy the Divine approbation;

While **he that doeth evil]** He who is unfeeling, unmerciful, unkind, *hath not seen God*-has no proper knowledge of that God whose NAME is *mercy*, and whose NATURE is *love*.

Verse 12. **Demetrius hath good report]** Perhaps another member of the Church where Caius was; or he might have been one of those whom the apostle recommends to Caius; or, possibly, the *bearer of this letter* from John to Caius. He seems to have been an excellent person: *all testified of his righteousness*; the *truth-Christianity, itself bore testimony* to him; and the *apostles* themselves added theirs also.

Verse 13. **I had many things to write]** That is, I have many things that I might write; but having the hope of seeing thee shortly, I will not commit them to paper. *Ink* and *pen* are here mentioned; *paper* and *ink* in the preceding epistle.

Verse 14. **Peace be to thee.]** Mayest thou possess every requisite good, both of a spiritual and temporal kind.

**Our friends salute thee.]** Desire to be affectionately remembered to thee. *Greet the friends by name*-remember me to all those with whom I am acquainted, as if I had specified them by *name*. This is a proof to me that this epistle was not sent to Corinth, where it is not likely John ever was; and where it is not likely he had any particular acquaintances, unless we could suppose he had seen some of them when he was an exile in Patmos, an island in the Ægean Sea.

For other particulars concerning John, the reader is requested to refer to the preface to his gospel.

Instead of φίλοι and φίλους, *friends*, the Codex Alexandrinus and several others read ἀδελφοί and ἀδελφούς, *brethren*. The former (*friends*) is a very singular appellation, and nowhere else found in Scripture; the latter is of frequent occurrence.

#### Subscriptions in the VERSIONS:—

In the ancient SYRIAC.-Nothing.

The Third Epistle of John the apostle is ended.-SYRIAC *Philoxenian*.

ÆTHIOPIC.-Nothing.

VULGATE.-Nothing.

The end of the epistles of the pure Apostle and Evangelist John.-ARABIC.

The Third Epistle of St. John the apostle is ended.-*Latin text* of the COMPLUTENSIAN.

The end of the Third catholic Epistle of St John.-DITTO, *Greek text*.

#### Subscriptions in the Manuscripts:-

The third of John.-CODD. ALEX. and VATICAN.

The Third catholic Epistle of John the evangelist and divine.

The third of John to Caius concerning Demetrius, of whom he witnesses the most excellent things.

I have already shown in the *preface* to those epistles termed *catholic*, that the word καθολικός is not to be taken here, and elsewhere in these epistles, as signifying universal, but *canonical*; for it would be absurd to call an epistle *universal* that was written to a private individual.

We seldom hear this epistle quoted but in the reproof of lordly tyrants, or prating troublesome fellows in the Church. And yet the epistle contains many excellent sentiments, which, if judiciously handled, might be very useful to the Church of God. But it has been the lot both of the *minor prophets* and the *minor epistles* to be generally neglected; for with many readers *bulk* is every thing; and, no *magnitude* no goodness.

*This and the preceding epistle both read over in reference to a new edition, Jan. 3rd, 1832.-A. C.*

**PREFACE  
TO  
THE GENERAL EPISTLE  
OF  
JUDE.**

IN the preface to the Epistle of James several things have been said relative to Jude the brother of James, the supposed author of this epistle; and to that preface the reader is requested to refer. What is farther necessary to be said on the author and the authenticity of this epistle, I shall take the liberty to borrow principally from *Michaelis*.

"If James and Jude, whom the evangelists call brothers of Jesus, were in fact only cousins or relations as some suppose, and were sons, not of Joseph, but of Alpheus, these two persons were the same as the two brothers James and Jude, who were apostles. And in this case Jude, the author of this epistle, was the same as the Apostle Jude, the brother of James who was son of Alpheus. On the other hand, if the James and the Jude, whom the evangelists call brothers of Jesus, were not the two brothers of this name who were apostles, but were the sons of Joseph, the reputed father of Jesus, we have then two different persons of the name of Jude, either of which might have written this epistle. And in this case we have to examine whether the epistle was written by an apostle of the name of Jude, or by Jude the brother-in-law of Christ.

"The author of the epistle himself has assumed neither the title of apostle of Jesus Christ, nor of brother of Jesus Christ, but calls himself only 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.' Now, as the author distinguishes himself by the title 'brother of James,' and this was a common name among the Jews, he undoubtedly meant some eminent person of this name, who was well known at the time when he wrote, or the title 'brother of James' would have been no mark of distinction. We may infer, therefore, that the author of this epistle was the brother, either of the Apostle James the son of Alpheus, or of James, named the brother of Jesus, or of both, if they were one and the same person.

"The first question, therefore, to be asked is, Was the author of this epistle the Apostle Jude? or was he brother of James, the son of Alpheus? Now, I have already observed, that this question must be answered in the affirmative if James and Jude who were called brothers of Jesus, were the same as the two brothers James and Jude who were apostles. And it may be answered in the affirmative, even if they were different persons, for Jude, the author of this epistle, had in either case a brother of the name of James, and therefore might in either case call himself Jude the brother of James. I say the question *may* be answered in the affirmative, even if the Apostle Jude was a different person from Jude, called the brother of James. But whether it ought in this case to be answered in the affirmative, is another matter; and I really believe that it ought not: for if the Jude who wrote this epistle had been himself an apostle, and brother of an apostle, he would hardly have called himself, in an epistle written to Christians, simply 'Jude, the brother of James' without adding the title apostle. It is true that the Apostle Jude, who was brother of James, is called by St. Luke *ιουδας ιακωβου*; but St. Luke gives him this title merely to distinguish him from another apostle of this name, who was

called Iscariot. Now the author of this epistle could have no motive for distinguishing himself from Judas Iscariot, who had hanged himself many years before this epistle was written. The name of Jude was very common among the Jews; and therefore the author of this epistle wished to distinguish himself from other persons who were so called. But James was likewise a very common name, and therefore if the author had been an apostle he surely would have preferred an appellation which would have removed all doubts to an appellation which left it at least uncertain whether he was an apostle or not; I grant that the omission of this title does not necessarily prove that the author of this epistle was not an apostle, for Paul has omitted it in four of his epistles: in the Epistle to the Philippians, in both Epistles to the Thessalonians, and in that to Philemon. But St. Paul was sufficiently known without this title, whereas the author of the epistle in question felt the necessity of a distinguishing appellation, as appears from the very title which he has given himself of 'brother of James.' Besides, at the time when this epistle was written, only one apostle of the name of James was then alive; for the elder James, the son of Zebedee, had been beheaded many years before. If then the author of this epistle had only given to his brother James the title of apostle, he would thus likewise have clearly ascertained who he himself was. But since he has no more given to his brother than to himself the title of apostle, I think it highly probable that neither of them were apostles.

"The next question to be asked, therefore, is, Was the Jude, who wrote this epistle, the same person as the Jude whom the evangelists call brother of Jesus? and who, according to the opinion which I think the most defensible, was in this sense brother of Jesus, that he was son of Joseph by a former wife, and therefore not his own brother, but only brother-in-law of Jesus. Now, that this epistle was written by a person of this description, appears to me highly probable; and on this supposition we may assign the reason why the author called himself 'brother of James;' for, if he was the brother-in-law of Jesus, his brother James was the person who, during so many years, had presided over the Church at Jerusalem, was well known both to Jews and Christians, and appears to have been more celebrated than either of the apostles called James. It will be objected, perhaps, that the very same reasons which I have alleged, to show that an apostle of the name of Jude would have assumed his proper title, will likewise show that a person who was called brother of Jesus would have done the same, and styled himself brother of Jesus. To this I answer, that if he was the son of Joseph, not by Mary but by a former wife, and Jude believed in the immaculate conception, he must have been sensible that though to all outward appearance he was brother-in-law to Jesus, since his own father was the husband of Jesus' mother, yet in reality he was no relation of Jesus. On the other hand, if Jude, called the brother of Jesus, was the son of Joseph, not by a former wife but by Mary, as Herder asserts, I do not see how the preceding objection can be answered; for if Jesus and Jude had the same mother, Jude might without the least impropriety, have styled himself 'brother of Jesus,' or 'brother of the Lord;' and this would have been a much more remarkable and distinguishing title than that of brother of James. A third question still remains to be asked on this subject. The apostle whom St. Luke calls Jude is called Thaddæus by St. Matthew and St. Mark, as I have already observed. But the apostle of the Syrians, who first preached the Gospel at Edessa, and founded a Church there, was named Thaddæus or Adæus. It may be asked, therefore, whether the author of this epistle was Thaddæus, the apostle of the Syrians? But the answer is decisive: the old Syriac version does not contain this epistle; consequently it is highly probable that Adai or Adæus was not the author, for an epistle written by the great apostle of the Syrians would surely have been received into the canon of the Syrian Church."

The most accurate critics have been unable to determine the time *when*, and the persons to whom, this epistle was written; so that much concerning these points, as well as the author of the epistle, must remain undecided.

"I am really unable to determine," says Michaelis, "who the persons were to whom this epistle was sent; for no traces are to be discovered in it which enable us to form the least judgment on this subject; and the address with which this epistle commences is so indeterminate, that there is hardly any Christian community where Greek was spoken, which might not be denoted by it. Though this epistle has a very great similarity to the Second Epistle of Peter, it cannot have been sent to the same persons, namely, the Christians who resided in Pontus, &c., because no mention is made of them in this epistle. Nor can it have been sent to the Christians of Syria and Assyria, where Jude preached the Gospel, if he be the same person as the apostle of the Syrians; for in this case the epistle would not have been written in Greek, but in Syriac or Chaldee, and would certainly have been received into the old Syriac version.

"With respect to the date of this epistle, all that I am able to assert is, that it was written after the Second Epistle of Peter; but how many years after, whether between 64 and 66, as Lardner supposes, or between 70 and 75, as Beausobre and L'Enfant believe; or, according to Dodwell and Cave, in 71 or 72, or so late as the year 90, as is the opinion of Mill, I confess I am unable to determine, at least from any certain data. The expression, 'in the last time,' which occurs **#Jude 1:18**, as well as in **#2Pe 3:3**, is too indeterminate to warrant any conclusion respecting the date of this epistle; for though, on the one hand, it may refer to the approaching destruction of Jerusalem, it may, on the other hand, refer to a later period, and denote the close of the apostolic age; for in the First Epistle of St. John a similar expression occurs, which must be taken in this latter sense. The inference, therefore, that the Epistle of St. Jude was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, which some commentators have deduced from the above-mentioned expression, on the supposition that it alluded to that event then approaching, is very precarious, because it is drawn from premises which are themselves uncertain. However, there is some reason to believe, on other grounds, that this epistle was not written after the destruction of Jerusalem; for, as the author has mentioned, **#Jude 1:5-8**, several well known instances of God's justice in punishing sinners, which Peter had already quoted in his second epistle to the same purpose, he would probably, if Jerusalem had been already destroyed at the time he wrote, have not neglected to add to his other examples this most remarkable instance of Divine vengeance, especially as Christ himself had foretold it.

"Lardner, indeed, though he admits the similarity of the two epistles, still thinks it a matter of doubt whether St. Jude had ever seen the Second Epistle of St. Peter; his reason is, that 'if St. Jude had formed a design of writing, and had met with an epistle of one of the apostles very suitable to his own thoughts and intentions, he would have forborne to write.'

"To this argument I answer:—

"1. If the Epistle of St. Jude was inspired by the Holy Ghost, as Lardner admits, the Holy Ghost certainly knew, while he was dictating the epistle to St. Jude, that an epistle of St. Peter, of a like import, already existed. And if the Holy Ghost, notwithstanding this knowledge, still thought that

an epistle of St. Jude was not unnecessary; why shall we suppose that St. Jude himself would have been prevented writing by the same knowledge?

"2. The Second Epistle of St. Peter was addressed to the inhabitants of some particular countries; but the address of St. Jude's is general: St. Jude therefore might think it necessary to repeat for general use what St. Peter had written only to certain communities.

"3. The Epistle of St. Jude is not a bare copy of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, for in the former, not only several thoughts are more completely unravelled than in the latter, but several additions are made to what St. Peter had said; for instance **#Jude 1:4, 5, 9, 16**.

"Eusebius, in his catalogue of the books of the New Testament, places the Epistle of St. Jude among the *αντιλεγόμενα*, contradicted or apocryphal books, in company with the Epistle of St. James, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, and the Second and Third of John.

"But Origen, who lived in the third century, though he speaks in dubious terms of the Second Epistle of St. Peter, has several times quoted the Epistle of St. Jude, and has spoken of it as an epistle on which he entertained no doubt. In his commentary on St. Matthew, when he comes to **#Mt 13:55**, where James, Joses, Simon, and Jude are mentioned; he says Jude wrote an epistle of few lines indeed, but full of the powerful words of the heavenly grace, who at the beginning says, 'Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ, and brother of James.' This is a very clear and unequivocal declaration of Origen's opinion; and it is the more remarkable because he says nothing of the Epistle of St. James, though the passage, **#Mt 13:55**, afforded him as good an opportunity of speaking of this epistle, as it did of the Epistle of St. Jude. Nay, Origen carries his veneration for the Epistle of Jude so far that, in his treatise *De Principiis*, lib. iii. cap. 2, he quotes an apocryphal book, called the Assumption of Moses, as a work of authority; because a passage from this book had been quoted by St. Jude. In one instance, however, in his commentary on St. Matthew, Origen speaks in less positive terms, for there he says, 'If any one receive the Epistle of St. Jude,' &c. Tertullian, in whose works Lardner could discover no quotation from the Second Epistle of St. Peter, describes the Epistle of St. Jude as the work of an apostle; for in his treatise *De cultu fœminarum*, chap. 3, he says, 'Hence it is that Enoch is quoted by the Apostle Jude.'

"Clement of Alexandria, in whose works likewise Lardner could find no quotation from the Second Epistle of St. Peter, has three times quoted the Epistle of St. Jude without expressing any doubt whatever. It appears, then, that the three ancient fathers, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and Origen, as far as we may judge from their writings which are now extant, preferred the Epistle of St. Jude to the Second Epistle of St. Peter. However, I think it not impossible that if all the writings of these authors were now extant, passages might be found in them which would turn the scale in favour of the latter; and it may be owing to mere accident that in those parts of their works which have descended to us, more passages in which they speak decidedly of St. Jude are to be found, than such as are favourable to the Second Epistle of St. Peter. For I really cannot comprehend how any impartial man who has to choose between these two epistles, which are very similar to each other, can prefer the former to the latter, or receive the Epistle of St. Jude, the contents of which labour under great difficulties, and at the same time reject, or even consider as dubious, the Second Epistle of St. Peter, the contents of which labour under no such difficulties.

"But it is much more difficult to explain #Jude 1:9, in which the Archangel Michael is said to have disputed with the devil about the body of Moses. The history of this dispute, which has the appearance of a Jewish fable, it is not at present very easy to discover; because the book from which it is supposed to have been taken by the author of this epistle is no longer extant; but I will here put together such scattered accounts of it as I have been able to collect.

"Origen found in a Jewish Greek book called the Assumption of Moses, which was extant in his time, this very story related concerning the dispute of the Archangel Michael with the devil about the body of Moses. And from a comparison of the relation in his book with St. Jude's quotation, he was thoroughly persuaded that it was the book from which St. Jude quoted. This he asserts without the least hesitation; and in consequence of this persuasion he himself has quoted the *Assumption of Moses* as a work of authority, in proof of the temptation of Adam and Eve by the devil. But as he quoted it merely for this purpose, he has given us only an imperfect account of what this book contained, relative to the dispute about the body of Moses. One circumstance, however, he has mentioned, which is not found in the Epistle of St. Jude, viz., that Michael reproached the devil with having possessed the serpent that seduced Eve. In what manner this circumstance is connected with the dispute about the body of Moses, will appear from the following consideration:—

"The Jews imagined the person of Moses was so holy that God could find no reason for permitting him to die; and that nothing but the sin committed by Adam and Eve in paradise, which brought death into the world, was the cause why Moses did not live for ever. The same notions they entertained of some other very holy persons; for instance, of Isaiah, who they say was delivered to the angel of death merely on account of the sins of our first parents, though he himself did not deserve to die. Now, in the dispute between Michael and the devil about Moses, the devil was the accuser, and demanded the death of Moses. Michael therefore replied to him that he himself was the cause of that sin, which alone could occasion the death of Moses. How very little such notions as these agree, either with the Christian theology, or with Moses' own writings, it is unnecessary for me to declare. Besides the account given by Origen, there is a passage in the works of Œcumenius, which likewise contains a part of the story related in the Assumption of Moses, and which explains the reason of the dispute which St. Jude has mentioned concerning Moses' body. According to this passage, Michael was employed in burying Moses; but the devil endeavoured to prevent it by saying that he had murdered an Egyptian, and was therefore unworthy an honourable burial. Hence it appears that some modern writers are mistaken, who have imagined that in the ancient narrative the dispute was said to have arisen from an attempt of the devil to reveal to the Jews the burial place of Moses, and to incite them to an idolatrous worship of his body.

"There is still extant a Jewish book, written in Hebrew, and intitled פְּתִירַת מֹשֶׁה that is, 'The Death of Moses,' which some critics, especially De La Rue, supposed to be the same work as that which Origen saw in Greek. Now if it were this Hebrew book, intitled 'Phetirath Mosheh,' it would throw a great light on our present inquiry; but I have carefully examined it, and can assert that it is a modern work, and that its contents are not the same as those of the Greek book quoted by Origen. Of the Phetirath Mosheh we have two editions, which contain very different texts; the one was printed at Constantinople in 1518, and reprinted at Venice in 1544 and 1605, the other was published from a manuscript by Gilbert Gaulmyn, who added a translation of both texts, with notes."

To show that neither St. Jude, nor any inspired writer, nor indeed any person in his sober senses, could quote or in any way accredit such stuff and nonsense, I shall give the substance of this most ridiculous legend as extracted by Michaelis; for as to the Phetirath Mosheh, I have never seen it.

"Moses requests of God, under various pretences, either that he may not die at all, or at least that he may not die before he comes into Palestine. This request he makes in so froward and petulant a manner as is highly unbecoming, not only a great prophet, but even any man who has expectations of a better life after this. In short, Moses is here represented in the light of a despicable Jew begging for a continuance of life, and devoid both of Christian faith and heathen courage; and it is therefore not improbable that the inventor of this fable made himself the model after which he formed the character of Moses. God argues on the contrary with great patience and forbearance, and replies to what Moses had alleged relative to the merit of his own good works. Farther, it is God who says to Moses that he must die on account of the sin of Adam; to which Moses answers, that he ought to be excepted, because he was superior in merit to Adam, Abraham, Isaac, &c. In the meantime Samael, that is, the angel of death, whom the Jews describe as the chief of the devils rejoices at the approaching death of Moses: this is observed by Michael, who says to him, 'Thou wicked wretch, I grieve, and thou laughest.' Moses, after his request had been repeatedly refused, invokes heaven and earth, and all creatures around him to intercede in his behalf. Joshua attempts to pray for him, but the devil stops Joshua's mouth, and represents to him, really in scriptural style, the impropriety of such a prayer. The elders of the people, and with them all the children of Israel, then offered to intercede for Moses; but their mouths are likewise stopped by a million eight hundred and forty thousand devils, which, on a moderate calculation, make three devils to one man. After this, God commands the angel Gabriel to fetch the soul of Moses; but Gabriel excuses himself, saying, that Moses was too strong for him: Michael receives the same order, and excuses himself in the same manner, or, as other accounts say, under pretence that he had been the instructor of Moses, and therefore could not bear to see him die. But this latter excuse, according to the Phetirath Mosheh, was made by Zinghiel, the third angel who received this command. Samael, that is, the devil, then offers his services; but God asks him how he would take hold of Moses, whether by his mouth, or by his hands, or by his feet, saying, that every part of Moses was too holy for him to touch. The devil, however, insists on bringing the soul of Moses; yet he does not accuse him, for, on the contrary, he prizes him higher than Abraham, Isaac, or Jacob. The devil then approaches towards Moses, to execute this voluntary commission; but as soon as he sees the shining countenance of Moses, he is seized with a violent pain, like that of a woman in labour: Moses, instead of using the oriental salutation, 'Peace be with thee,' says to him, in the words of Isaiah, (for in this work Moses frequently quotes Isaiah and the Psalms,) 'There is no peace to the wicked.' The devil replies that he was come, by the order of God, to fetch his soul; but Moses deters him from the attempt by representing his own strength and holiness; and saying, 'Go, thou wicked wretch, I will not give thee my soul,' he affrights the devil in such a manner that he immediately retires. The devil then returns to God, and relates what had passed, and receives an order to go a second time; the devil answers that he would go everywhere God commanded him, even into hell, and into fire, but not to Moses. This remonstrance is, however, of no avail, and he is obliged to go back again; but Moses, who sees him coming with a drawn sword, meets him with his miraculous rod, and gives him such a blow with it that the devil is glad to escape. Lastly, God himself comes; and Moses, having then no farther hopes, requests only that his soul may not be taken out of his body by the devil. This request is granted him; Zinghiel, Gabriel, and Michael then lay him on a bed, and the soul of Moses begins to

dispute with God, and objects to its being taken out of a body which was so pure and holy that no fly dared to settle on it; but God kisses Moses, and with that kiss extracts his soul from his body. Upon this God utters a heavy lamentation; and thus the story in the Phetirath ends, without any mention of a dispute about the burial of Moses' body. This last scene, therefore, which was contained in the Greek book seen by Origen, is wanting in the Hebrew. But in both of these works Michael, as well as the devil, expresses the same sentiments in respect to Moses: in both works the same spirit prevails; and the concluding scene, which was contained in the Greek book, is nothing more than a continuation of the same story which is contained in the Hebrew."

Had Jude quoted a work like the above, it would have argued no inspiration, and little common sense; and the man who could have quoted it must have done it with approbation, and in that case his own composition would have been of a similar stamp. But nothing can be more dissimilar than the Epistle of Jude and the Phetirath Mosheh: the former contains nothing but manly sense, expressed in pure, energetic, and often sublime language, and accompanied, most evidently, with the deepest reverence for God; while the latter is despicable in every point of view, even considered as the work of a *filthy dreamer*, or as the most *superannuated of old wives' fables*.

"Lastly," says Michaelis, "besides the quotation which St. Jude has made in the 9th verse relative to the dispute between Michael and the devil, he has another quotation, **#Jude 1:14, 15**, likewise from an apocryphal book called the 'Prophecies of Enoch;' or, if not from any written book, from oral tradition. Now, should it be granted that Enoch was a prophet, though it is not certain that he was, yet as none of his prophecies are recorded in the Old Testament no one could possibly know what they were. It is manifest, therefore, that the book called the 'Prophecies of Enoch' was a mere Jewish forgery, and that too a very unfortunate one, since in all human probability the use of letters was unknown in the time of Enoch, and consequently he could not have left behind him any written prophecies. It is true that an inspired writer might have known, through the medium of Divine information, what Enoch had prophesied, without having recourse to any written work on this subject. But St. Jude, in the place where he speaks of Enoch's prophecies, does not speak of them as prophecies which had been made known to him by a particular revelation; on the contrary, he speaks of them in such a manner as implies that his readers were already acquainted with them."

From all the evidence before him, Michaelis concludes that the canonical authority of this epistle is extremely dubious; that its author is either unknown, or very uncertain; and he has even doubts that it is a forgery in the name of the Apostle Jude. Others have spoken of it in strains of unqualified commendation and praise, and think that its genuineness is established by the matters contained in it, which in every respect are suitable to the character of an inspired apostle of Christ. What has led to its discredit with many is the hasty conclusion that St. Jude quotes such a work as the Phetirath Mosheh; than which nothing can be more improbable, and perhaps nothing more false.

In almost all ages of the Church it has been assailed and defended; but it is at present generally received over the whole Christian world. It contains some very *sublime* and *nervous* passages, from the 10th to the 13th verse **{#Jude 1:10-13}** inclusive; the *description* of the false teachers is bold, happy, and energetic; the *exhortation* in verses 20 and 21 **{#Jude 1:20, 21}**, is both forcible and affectionate; and the *doxology*, in verses 24 and 25 **{#Jude 1:24, 25}**, is well adapted to the subject, and is peculiarly dignified and sublime.

I have done what I could, time and circumstances considered, to present the whole epistle to the reader in the clearest point of view; and now must commend him to God and the word of his grace, which is able to build him up, and give him an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith in Jesus.

## **THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JUDE.**

### *Chronological Notes relative to this Epistle.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5573.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5567.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5557.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4069.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4291.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3825.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4424.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2413.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3167.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1005.
- Year of the era of Nahonassar, king of Babylon, 814.
- Year of the CCXIth Olympiad, 1.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 812.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 816.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 817.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 818.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 377.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 113.
- Year of the Julian era, 110.
- Year of the Spanish era, 103.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 69.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 85.
- Year of Gessius Florus, governor of the Jews, 1.
- Year of Domitius Corbulo, governor of Syria, 5.
- Year of Matthias, high priest of the Jews, 2.
- Year of Vologesus, king of the Parthians, 16.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 66.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 9; or the year after the third embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 6; or the second embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 18.
- Dominical Letter, it being the first year after the Bissextile, or Leap Year, F.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the seventh of April, which happened in this year on the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the fourteenth of April.

- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 28.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 6.
- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 6, 8, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 13, 13, 14, 16, 16.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 17.
- Year of the Emperor Caius Tiberius Claudius Nero Cæsar, 12.
- Roman Consuls, A. Licinius Nerva Silanus, and M. Vestinius Atticus. Vestinius was succeeded by Anicius Cerealis on the first of July.

## JUDE.

*The address and apostolical benediction, 1, 2. The reasons which induced Jude to write this epistle, to excite the Christians to contend for the true faith, and to beware of false teachers, lest, falling from their steadfastness, they should be destroyed after the example of backsliding Israel, the apostate angels, and the inhabitants of Sodom and Gomorrha, 3-7. Of the false teachers, 8. Of Michael disputing about the body of Moses, 9. The false teachers particularly described: they are like brute beasts, going the way of Cain, run after the error of Balaam, and shall perish, as did Korah in his gainsaying, 10, 11. Are impure, unsteady, fierce, shameless, &c., 12, 13. How Enoch prophesied of such, 14, 15. They are farther described as murmurers and complainers, 16. We should remember the cautions given unto us by the apostles who foretold of these men, 17-19. We should build up ourselves on our most holy faith, 20, 21. How the Church of Christ should treat such, 22, 23. The apostle's farewell, and his doxology to God, 24, 25.*

## NOTES ON THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

**Verse 1. Jude, the servant of Jesus Christ]** Probably Jude the apostle, who was surnamed *Thaddeus* and *Lebbeus*, was son to *Alpheus*, and brother to *James the less*, *Joses*, and *Simon*. See #Mt 10:3, and collate with #Lu 6:16; #Mt 13:55. See the *preface*.

**Brother of James]** Supposed to be *James the less*, bishop of Jerusalem, mentioned here, because he was an eminent person in the Church. See the *preface* to St. James.

**To them that are sanctified by God]** Instead of *ἡγιασμένοις*, *to the sanctified*, AB, several others, both the *Syriac*, Erpen's *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Sahidic*, *Armenian*, *Æthiopic*, and *Vulgate*, with several of the *fathers*, have *ἠγαπημένοις*, *to them that are beloved*; and before *ἐν τῷ θεῷ*, *in God*, some MSS., with the *Syriac* and *Armenian*, have *ἐθνέσιν*, *to the Gentiles, in God the Father*: but although the first is only a *probable* reading, this is much less so. St. Jude writes to *all believers* everywhere, and not to any particular Church; hence this epistle has been called a *general* epistle.

*Sanctified* signifies here *consecrated to God* through faith in Christ.

**Preserved in (or by) Jesus Christ]** Signifies those who continued unshaken in the Christian faith; and implies also, that none can be preserved in the faith that do not continue in union with Christ, by whose grace alone they can be *preserved* and *called*. This should be read consecutively with the other epithets, and should be rather, in a translation, read first than last, *to the saints in God the Father, called and preserved by Christ Jesus*. *Saints* is the same as *Christians*; to become such they were *called* to believe in Christ by the preaching of the Gospel, and having believed, were *preserved* by the grace of Christ in the life and practice of piety.

Verse 2. **Mercy unto you]** For even the *best* have no *merit*, and must receive every blessing and grace in the way of *mercy*.

**Peace]** With God and your consciences, *love* both to God and man, *be multiplied*-be unboundedly increased.

Verse 3. **When I gave all diligence]** This phrase, *πασαν σπουδην ποιουμενος*, is a Grecism for being *exceedingly intent* upon a subject; *taking it up seriously with determination to bring it to good effect*. The meaning of the apostle seems to be this: "Beloved brethren, when I saw it necessary to write to you concerning the common salvation, my mind being deeply affected with the dangers to which the Church is exposed from the false teachers that are gone out into the world, I found it extremely necessary to write and exhort you to hold fast the truth which you had received, and strenuously to contend for that only faith which, by our Lord and his apostles, has been delivered to the Christians."

Some think that St. Jude intimates that he had at *first* purposed to write to the Church at large, on the nature and design of the Gospel; but seeing the dangers to which the Churches were exposed, because of the false teachers, he changed his mind, and wrote pointedly against those false doctrines, exhorting them strenuously to contend for the faith.

**The common salvation]** The Christian religion, and the salvation which it brings. This is called *common* because it equally belongs to Jews and Gentiles; it is the saving grace of God which has appeared to every man, and equally offers to every human being that redemption which is provided for the whole world.

Verse 4. **For there are certain men crept in unawares]** *παρεισεδυσαν*. They had got into the Church under *specious pretences*; and, when in, began to sow their bad seed.

**Before of old ordained]** *οι παλαι προγεγραμμενοι* Such as were *long ago proscribed, and condemned in the most public manner*; this is the import of the word *προγραφειν* in this place, and there are many examples of this use of it in the Greek writers. See *Kypke*.

**To this condemnation]** To a similar punishment to that immediately about to be mentioned.

In the sacred writings all such persons, false doctrines, and impure practices, have been *most openly proscribed and condemned*; and the apostle immediately produces several examples, viz., the disobedient *Israelites*, the unfaithful *angels*, and the impure inhabitants of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*.

This is most obviously the apostle's meaning, and it is as ridiculous as it is absurd to look into such words for a decree of eternal reprobation, &c., such a doctrine being as far from the apostle's mind as from that of *Him* in whose name he wrote.

**Turning the grace of our God into lasciviousness]** Making the grace and mercy of God a covering for crimes; intimating that men might sin safely who believe the Gospel, because in that Gospel *grace abounds*. But perhaps the *goodness* of God is here meant, for I cannot see how they could believe the Gospel in any way who denied the Lord Jesus Christ; unless, which is likely, their denial refers to this, that while they acknowledged Jesus as the promised Messiah, they denied him to be the only Lord, Sovereign, and Ruler of the Church and of the world. There are many in the present day who hold the same opinion.

**The only Lord God, and our Lord Jesus Christ.]** μονον δεσποτην θεον και κυριον ημων ιησουν χριστον αρνουμενοι. These words may be translated, Denying the only sovereign God, even our Lord Jesus Christ. But θεον GOD, is omitted by ABC, sixteen others, with Erpen's *Arabic*, the *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, and *Vulgate*, and by many of the *fathers*. It is very likely that it was originally inserted as a gloss, to ascertain to whom the title of τον μονον δεσποτην, *the only Sovereign*, belonged; and thus make *two* persons where only *one* seems to be intended. The passage I believe belongs solely to Jesus Christ, and may be read thus: *Denying the only sovereign Ruler, even our Lord Jesus Christ*. The text is differently arranged in the *Complutensian Polyglot*, which contains the *first edition* of the Greek Testament: και τον μονον θεον και δεσποτην, τον κυριον ημων ιησουν χριστον αρνουμενοι. *Denying the only God and Sovereign, our Lord Jesus Christ*. This is a very remarkable position of the words, and doubtless existed in some of the MSS. from which these editors copied. The *Simonians*, *Nicolaitans*, and *Gnostics*, denied God to be the creator of the world; and Simon is said to have proclaimed *himself* as FATHER to the *Samaritans*, as SON to the *Jews*, and as the HOLY GHOST to all other *nations*. All such most obviously denied both *Father*, *Son*, and *Spirit*.

Verse 5. **I will therefore put you in remembrance]** That is, how such persons were *proscribed*, and *condemned* to bear the punishment due to such crimes.

**Though ye once knew this]** The word απαξ, here translated *once*, has greatly puzzled many interpreters. It has *two* meanings in the sacred writings, and indeed in the Greek writers also. 1. It signifies *once, one time*, as opposed to *twice*, or *several times*. 2. *Altogether, entirely, perfectly*, interpreted by Suidas αντι του διολου, ολοσχερωσ and of this meaning he produces a proof from Josephus; This appears to be the sense of the word in #Heb 6:4: τους απαξ φωτισθεντας *those who were FULLY enlightened*. #Heb 10:2: απαξ κεκαθαρμενουσ THOROUGHLY *cleansed*. See also #Heb 10:3 of this epistle. #Ps 62:11: απαξ ελαλησεν ο θεος *God spoke FULLY, completely*, on the subject. St. Jude is to be understood as saying, *I will therefore put you in remembrance, though ye are THOROUGHLY instructed in this*.

**Saved the people]** Delivered them from the Egyptian bondage.

**Afterward destroyed them]** Because they neither believed his word, nor were obedient to his commands. This is the first example of what was mentioned #Jude 1:4.

Verse 6. **The angels which kept not their first estate]** *την εαυτων αρχην* *Their own principality.* The words may be understood of their having invaded the office or dignity of some others, or of their having by some means forfeited their own. This is spoken of those generally termed the *fallen angels*; but *from what they fell*, or *from what cause* or *for what crime*, we know not. It is generally thought to have been pride; but this is mere conjecture. One thing is certain; the angels who fell must have been in a state of probation, capable of either standing or falling, as Adam was in paradise. They did not continue faithful, though they *knew the law* on which they stood; they are therefore produced as the *second* example.

**But left their own habitation]** This seems to intimate that they had *invaded the office and prerogatives of others*, and attempted to seize on their place of residence and felicity.

**He hath reserved in everlasting chains]** That is, in a state of confinement from which they *cannot escape*.

**Under darkness]** Alluding probably to those *dungeons* or *dark cells* in prisons where the most flagitious culprits were confined.

**The judgment of the great day,]** The final judgment, when both angels and men shall receive their eternal doom. See Clarke on "2Pe 2:4". In *Sohar Exod.*, fol. 8, c. 32: "Rabbi Isaac asked: Suppose God should punish any of his heavenly family, how would he act? R. Abba answered: He would send them into the flaming river, take away their dominion, and put others in their place." Some suppose that the *saints* are to occupy the places from which these angels, by transgression, fell.

Verse 7. **Even as Sodom and Gomorrhah]** What their sin and punishment were may be seen in Gen. 19, and the notes there. This is the *third* example to illustrate what is laid down #Jude 1:4.

**Are set forth for an example]** Both of what God will do to such transgressors, and of the position laid down in #Jude 1:4, viz., that God has in the most *open and positive manner declared* that such and such sinners shall meet with the punishment due to their crimes.

**Suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.]** Subjected to such a punishment as an endless fire can inflict. Some apply this to the utter subversion of these cities, so that by the action of that fire which descended from heaven they were *totally* and *eternally destroyed*; for as to their being *rebuilt*, that is impossible, seeing the very *ground* on which they stood is burned up, and the whole *plain* is now the immense *lake Asphaltites*. See my notes on Gen. 19.

The *first* sense applies to the *inhabitants* of those wicked cities; the *second*, to the cities themselves: in either case the word *πυρ αιωνιον* signifies an *eternally destructive fire*; it has no end in the punishment of the wicked Sodomites, &c.; it has no end in the destruction of the cities; they were totally burnt up, and never were and never can be rebuilt. In either of these senses the word *αιωνιος*, *eternal*, has its grammatical and proper meaning.

Verse 8. **Likewise also these filthy dreamers]** He means to say that these false teachers and their followers were as *unbelieving* and *disobedient* as the *Israelites* in the wilderness, as *rebellious*

against the authority of God as the *fallen angels*, and as *impure* and *unholy* as the *Sodomites*; and that consequently they must expect *similar punishment*.

Our translators, by rendering *εὐπνίαζομενοι* *filthy dreamers*, seem to have understood St. Jude to mean *les pollutions nocturnes et volontaires de ces hommes impurs, qui se livrent sans scrupule a toutes sortes des pensees; et salissant leur imagination pas la vue de toutes sortes d' objets, tombent ensuite dans les corruptions honteuses et criminelles*. See *Calmet*. In plain English, self-pollution, with all its train of curses and cursed effects on body, soul, and spirit. The *idea* of our translators seems to be confirmed by the words *σαρκα μεν μαινουσι*, *they indeed pollute the flesh*. See what is said at the conclusion of the thirty-eighth chapter of Genesis.

**Despise dominion]** *κυριοτητα δε αθετουσι*. *They set all government at nought—they will come under no restraints; they despise all law, and wish to live as they list.*

**Speak evil of dignities.]** *δοξας δε βλασφημουσιν*. *They blaspheme or speak injuriously of supreme authority*. (See #2Pe 2:10, 11.) They treat *governors* and *government* with contempt, and calumniate and misrepresent all Divine and civil institutions.

Verse 9. **Yet Michael the archangel]** Of this personage many things are spoken in the Jewish writings "Rabbi Judah Hakkodesh says: Wherever *Michael* is said to appear, the glory of the Divine Majesty is always to be understood." *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. ii., fol. 104, 3. So that it seems as if they considered Michael in some sort as we do the Messiah manifested in the flesh.

Let it be observed that the word *archangel* is never found in the *plural* number in the sacred writings. There can be properly only one *archangel*, one chief or head of all the angelic host. Nor is the word *devil*, as applied to the great enemy of mankind, ever found in the *plural*; there can be but one monarch of all fallen spirits. *Michael* is this *archangel*, and head of all the *angelic orders*; the *devil*, *great dragon*, or *Satan*, is head of all the *diabolic orders*. When these two hosts are opposed to each other they are said to act under these two chiefs, as leaders; hence in #Re 12:7, it is said: *MICHAEL and his angels fought against the DRAGON and his angels*. The word *Michael* מִיכָאֵל, seems to be compounded of מִי *mi*, who, כֵּי *ke*, like, and אֵל *El*, God; *he who is like God*; hence by this personage, in the Apocalypse, many understand the Lord Jesus.

**Disputed about the body of Moses]** What this means I cannot tell; or from what source St. Jude drew it, unless from some tradition among his countrymen. There is something very like it in *Debarim Rabba*, sec. ii., fol. 263, 1: "Samael, that wicked one, the prince of the satans, carefully kept the soul of Moses, saying: When the time comes in which Michael shall lament, I shall have my mouth filled with laughter. Michael said to him: Wretch, I weep, and thou laughest. *Rejoice not against me, O mine enemy, because I have fallen; for I shall rise again: when I sit in darkness, the Lord is my light; #Mic 7:8*. By the words, *because I have fallen*, we must understand the *death of Moses*; by the words, *I shall rise again*, the government of Joshua, &c." See the *preface*.

Another *contention* of Michael with Satan is mentioned in *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 43, 3: "At the time in which Isaac was bound there was a contention between Michael and Satan. Michael brought a

ram, that Isaac might be liberated; but Satan endeavoured to carry off the ram, that Isaac might be slain."

The *contention* mentioned by Jude is not about the sacrifice of Isaac, nor the *soul* of Moses, but about the *BODY* of Moses; but why or wherefore we know not. Some think the devil wished to show the Israelites *where* Moses was buried, knowing that they would then *adore* his *body*; and that Michael was sent to resist this discovery.

**Durst not bring against him a railing accusation]** It was a Jewish maxim, as may be seen in *Synopsis Sohar*, page 92, note 6: "It is not lawful for man to prefer ignominious reproaches, even against wicked spirits." See *Schoettgen*.

Dr. Macknight says: "In #Da 10:13, 21; 12:1, Michael is spoken of as one of the chief angels who took care of the Israelites as a nation; he may therefore have been *the angel of the Lord* before whom Joshua the high priest is said, #Zec 3:1, to have stood, *Satan being at his right hand to resist him*, namely, in his design of restoring the *Jewish Church and state*, called by Jude the *body of Moses*, just as the Christian Church is called by Paul *the body of Christ*. Zechariah adds, *And the Lord*, that is, *the angel of the Lord*, as is plain from #Zec 3:1, 2, *said unto Satan, The Lord rebuke thee, O Satan! even the Lord that hath chosen Jerusalem, rebuke thee!*" This is the most likely interpretation which I have seen; and it will appear the more probable when it is considered that, among the Hebrews, גוף *guph*, BODY, is often used for *a thing itself*. So, in #Ro 7:24, σωμα της αμαρτιας, *the body of sin*, signifies *sin* itself; so the *body of Moses*, גוף של משה *guph shel Mosheh*, may signify Moses himself; or that in which he was particularly concerned, viz., his institutes, religion, &c.

It may be added, that the Jews consider *Michael* and *Samael*, one as the *friend*, the other as the *enemy*, of Israel. *Samael* is their *accuser*, *Michael* their *advocate*. "Michael and *Samael* stand before the Lord; Satan accuses, but *Michael* shows the merits of Israel. Satan endeavours to speak, but *Michael* silences him: Hold thy tongue, says he, and let us hear what the Judge determines; for it is written, *He will speak peace to his people, and to his saints; #Ps 85:8.*" *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. xviii. fol. 117, 3.

Verse 10. **Speak evil of those things which they know not]** They do not understand the origin and utility of civil government; they revile that which ever protects their own persons and their property. This is true in most insurrections and seditions.

**But what they know naturally]** They are destitute of reflection; their minds are uncultivated; they follow *mere natural instinct*, and are slaves to their animal propensities.

**As brute beasts]** ως τα αλογα ζωα· Like the irrational animals; but, in the indulgence of their animal propensities, *they corrupt themselves*, beyond the example of the brute beasts. A fearful description; and true of many in the present day.

Verse 11. **They have gone in the way of Cain]** They are *haters of their brethren*, and they that are such are *murderers*; and by their false doctrine they corrupt and destroy the souls of the people.

**The error of Balaam]** For the sake of gain they corrupt the word of God and refine away its meaning, and let it down so as to suit the *passions* of the profligate. This was literally true of the *Nicolaitans*, who taught most impure doctrines, and followed the most lascivious practices.

**Gainsaying of Core.]** See the account of the rebellion of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, and their company, in Num. 22. It appears that these persons *opposed the authority of the apostles* of our Lord, as Korah and his associates did that of *Moses and Aaron*; and St. Jude predicts them a similar punishment. In this verse he accuses them of murder, covetousness, and rebellion against the authority of God.

Verse 12. **Spots in your feasts of charity]** It appears that these persons, unholy and impure as they were, still continued to have outward fellowship with the Church! This is strange: but it is very likely that their power and influence in that place had swallowed up, or set aside, the power and authority of the real ministers of Christ; a very common case when worldly, time-serving men get into the Church.

The *feasts of charity*, the *αγαπαι* or *love feasts*, of which the apostle speaks, were in use in the primitive Church till the middle of the *fourth* century, when, by the council of Laodicea, they were prohibited to be held in the Churches; and, having been abused, fell into disuse. In later days they have been revived, in all the purity and simplicity of the primitive institution, among the *Moravians* or *Unitas Fratrum*, and the people called *Methodists*.

Among the ancients, the richer members of the Church made an occasional general feast, at which all the members attended, and the poor and the rich ate together. The fatherless, the widows, and the strangers were invited to these feasts, and their eating together was a proof of their love to each other; whence such entertainments were called *love feasts*. The love feasts were at first celebrated *before* the Lord's Supper; in process of time they appear to have been celebrated *after* it. But they were never considered as the Lord's Supper, nor any substitute for it. See, for farther information, *Suicer*, in his *Thesaurus*, under the word *αγαπη*.

**Feeding themselves without fear]** Eating, not to suffice nature, but to pamper appetite. It seems the provision was abundant, and they ate to gluttony and riot. It was this which brought the love feasts into disrepute in the Church, and was the means of their being at last wholly laid aside. This abuse is never likely to take place among the Methodists, as they only use *bread* and *water*; and of this the provision is not sufficient to afford the tenth part of a meal.

Instead of *αγαπαις*, *love feasts*, *απαταις*, *deceits*, is the reading of the *Codex Alexandrinus*, and the *Codex Ephrem*, two MSS. of the highest antiquity; as also of those MSS. collated by *Laurentius Valla*, and of some of those in the *Medicean* library. This reading appears to have been introduced in order to avoid the conclusion that some might be led to draw concerning the state of the Church; it must be very corrupt, to have in its communion such corrupt men.

**Clouds-without water]** The *doctrine* of God is compared to the *rain*, #De 32:2, and *clouds* are the instruments by which the rain is distilled upon the earth. In arid or parched countries the very appearance of a cloud is delightful, because it is a token of refreshing showers; but when sudden

winds arise, and disperse these clouds, the hope of the husbandman and shepherd is cut off. These false teachers are represented as *clouds*; they have the *form* and *office* of the teachers of righteousness, and from such *appearances* pure doctrine may be naturally expected: but these are *clouds without water*-they distil no refreshing showers, because they have none; they are *carried away* and *about* by their *passions*, as those *light fleecy clouds* are carried by the winds. See Clarke's notes on "2Pe 2:17".

**Trees whose fruit withereth]** δένδρα φθινοπωρινα· *Galled or diseased trees*; for φθινοπωρον is, according to Phavorinus, νοσος φθινοουσα απωρας, a disease (in trees) which causes their fruit to wither; for although there are blossoms, and the fruit shapes or is set, the galls in the trees prevent the proper circulation of the sap, and therefore the fruit never comes to perfection. Hence the apostle immediately adds, *without fruit*; i.e. the fruit never comes to maturity. This metaphor expresses the same thing as the preceding. They have the appearance of ministers of the Gospel, but they have no fruit.

**Twice dead]** First, naturally and practically dead in sin, from which they had been revived by the preaching and grace of the Gospel. Secondly, dead by *backsliding* or *apostasy* from the true faith, by which they lost the grace they had before received; and now likely to continue in that death, because *plucked up from the roots*, their roots of faith and love being no longer fixed in Christ Jesus. Perhaps the *aorist* is taken here for the *future*: They SHALL BE *plucked up from the roots*-God will exterminate them from the earth.

Verse 13. **Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame]** The same metaphor as in #Isa 57:20: *The wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*. These are like the sea in a storm, where the *swells* are like mountains; the *breakers* lash the shore, and sound like thunder; and the great deep, stirred up from its very bottom, rolls its muddy, putrid sediment, and deposits it upon the *beach*. Such were those proud and arrogant boasters, those headstrong, unruly, and ferocious men, who swept into their own vortex the souls of the simple, and left nothing behind them that was not indicative of their folly, their turbulence, and their impurity.

**Wandering stars]** αστερες πλανηται· Not what we call *planets*; for although these differ from what are called the *fixed stars*, which never change their place, while the *planets* have their revolution round the sun; yet, properly speaking, there is no *irregularity* in their motions: for their appearance of *advancing*, *stationary*, and *retrograde*, are only in reference to an observer on the earth, viewing them in different parts of their orbits; for as to themselves, they ever continue a steady course through all their revolutions. But these are uncertain, anomalous meteors, *ignes fatui*, *wills-o'-the-wisp*; dancing about in the *darkness* which themselves have formed, and leading simple souls astray, who have ceased to walk in the *light*, and have no other guides but those oscillating and devious meteors which, if you run *after* them, will flee before you, and if you run *from* them will follow you.

**The blackness of darkness]** They are such as are going headlong into that *outer* darkness where there is wailing, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth. The whole of this description appears to have been borrowed from 2Pet. 2, where the reader is requested to see the notes.

Verse 14. **Enoch also, the seventh from Adam]** He was the *seventh* patriarch, and is distinguished thus from *Enoch, son of Cain*, who was but the *third* from Adam; this appears plainly from the genealogy, #1Ch 1:1: Adams Seth, Enosh, Kenan, Mahalaleel, Jered, Henoch or *Enoch*, &c. Of the *book of Enoch*, from which this prophecy is thought to have been taken, much has been said; but as the work is *apocryphal*, and of no authority, I shall not burden my page with *extracts*. See the *preface*.

Perhaps the word προεφητευσσε, *prophesied*, means no more than *preached, spoke, made declarations, &c.*, concerning these things and persons; for doubtless he reprobated the ungodliness of his own times. It is certain that a *book of Enoch* was known in the earliest ages of the primitive Church, and is quoted by *Origen* and *Tertullian*; and is mentioned by *St. Jerome* in the *Apostolical Constitutions*, by *Nicephorus, Athanasius*, and probably by *St. Augustine*. See *Suicer's Thesaurus*, vol. i., col. 1131. Such a work is still extant among the *Abyssinians*.

**Ten thousand of his saints]** This seems to be taken from #Da 7:10.

Verse 15. **To execute judgment]** This was originally spoken to the antediluvians; and the coming of the Lord to destroy that world was the thing spoken of in this prophecy or declaration. But as God had threatened this, it required no direct inspiration to foretell it. *To execute judgment, &c.* This is a very strange verse as to its composition, and is loaded with various readings; the MSS. and *versions* being at little agreement among themselves on its phraseology. αυτων, which we translate *among them*, is omitted by the best MSS. and *versions*, and is, in all probability, spurious. Many also omit ασεβειας after ργων, *ungodly deeds*. Many insert λογων, *words or speeches*, after σκληρων, *hard*; and this word our translators have supplied. And instead of αμαρτωλοι, *sinners*, the *Sahidic* has ανθρωποι, *men*. There are others of less note; but the frequent recurrence of ALL and UNGODLY makes the construction of the sentence very harsh.

*Dr. Macknight* supposes that *Enoch's* prophecy was common among the Jews; for the first words in Hebrew are *Maranatha*, and these were used by them in that form of excommunication or cursing which they pronounced against irreclaimable offenders. The doctor forgets himself here; the words *Maranatha* are not *Hebrew*, but *Syriac*. In Hebrew the form of execration begins with אָרַר אֶתְּךָ arur attah, "cursed art thou;" or מְחַרְמֵי אֶתְּךָ mochoram attah: but the *Syriac* [*Syriac*] maran atha, is literally, *our Lord is coming*; see on #1Co 16:22; but here, in the *Syriac*, the words are [*Syriac*] atha moria, "the Lord cometh." So it is doubtful whether this fancied analogy exists.

Verse 16. **These are murmurers]** Grudging and grumbling at all men, and at all things; *complainers, μεμψιμοιροι, complainers of their fate or destiny*-finding fault with God and all his providential dispensations, making and governing worlds in their own way; persons whom neither God nor man can please.

**Walking after their own lusts]** Taking their wild, disorderly, and impure passions for the rule of their conduct, and not the writings of the prophets and apostles.

**Great swelling words]** ὑπερογκα. See the explanation of this term in #2Pe 2:18.

**Having men's persons in admiration]** Time-servers and flatterers; persons who pretend to be *astonished* at the *greatness, goodness, sagacity, learning, wisdom*; &c., of *rich* and *great* men, hoping thereby to acquire money, influence, power, friends, and the like.

**Because of advantage.]** *ωφελειας χαριν*· *For the sake of lucre*. All the flatterers of the rich are of this kind; and especially those who profess to be *ministers* of the Gospel, and who, for the sake of a more advantageous *settlement* or *living*, will soothe the rich even in their sins. With such persons a *rich man* is *every thing*; and if he have but a *grain* of grace, his *piety* is extolled to the skies! I have known several ministers of this character, and wish them all to read the *sixteenth verse of Jude*.

Verse 17. **Remember-the words]** Instead of following those teachers and their corrupt doctrine, remember what Christ and his apostles have said; for they foretold the coming of such false teachers and impostors.

Verse 18. **Mockers in the last time]** See the notes on **#1Ti 4:1**; **#2Ti 3:1**, &c.; and particularly **#2Pe 3:2, 3**, &c., to which Jude seems to refer.

*The last time.*-The conclusion of the Jewish polity.

Verse 19. **Who separate themselves]** From the true Church, which they leave from an affectation of *superior wisdom*.

**Sensual]** *ψυχικοι*· *Animal*-living as brute beasts, guided simply by their *own lusts* and *passions*, their Bible being the manifold devices and covetousness of their own hearts; for they *have not the Spirit*-they are not spiritually minded; and have no Holy Ghost, no inspiration from God.

Verse 20. **Building up yourselves]** Having the most *holy faith-the Gospel of our Lord Jesus*, and the *writings* of his *apostles*, for your foundation; founding all your expectations on these, and seeking from the Christ who is their sum and substance; all the grace and glory ye need.

**Praying in the Holy Ghost]** Holding fast the Divine influence which ye have received, and under that influence making prayer and supplication to God. The prayer that is not sent up through the influence of the Holy Ghost is never likely to reach heaven.

Verse 21. **Keep yourselves in the love of God]** By building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost; for without this we shall soon lose the love of God.

**Looking for the mercy of our Lord]** For although they were to build *themselves* up, and to *pray* in the Holy Ghost, and keep *themselves* in the love of God, yet this *building, praying, and keeping*, cannot *merit* heaven; for, after all their diligence, earnestness, self-denial, watching, obedience, &c., they must look for the *MERCY of the Lord Jesus Christ, to bring them to ETERNAL LIFE*.

Verse 22. **And of some have compassion, making a difference]** The general meaning of this exhortation is supposed to be, "Ye are not to deal alike with all those who have been seduced by

false teachers; ye are to make a difference between those who have been led away by weakness and imprudence, and those who, in the pride and arrogance of their hearts, and their unwillingness to submit to wholesome *discipline*, have separated themselves from the Church, and become its inveterate enemies."

Instead of *και ους μεν ελεειτε διακρινομενοι*, and of some have compassion, making a difference, many MSS., versions, and fathers have *και ους μεν ελεγχετε διακρινομενους*, and some rebuke, after having judged them; or, rebuke those that differ; or, some that are wavering convince; or whatever else the reader pleases: for this and the following verse are all confusion, both in the MSS. and versions; and it is extremely difficult to know what was the original text. Our own is as likely as any.

Verse 23. **And others save with fear]** "Some of them snatch from the fire: but when they repent, have mercy upon them in fear."-Syriac. "And some of them rebuke for their sins; and on others have mercy when they are convicted; and others save from the fire and deliver them."-Erpen's *Arabic*. Mr. Wesley's note has probably hit the sense. "Meantime watch over *others* as well as *yourselves*; and give them such help as their various needs require. For instance, 1. *Some that are wavering* in judgment, staggered by others' or by their own evil reasoning, endeavour more deeply to *convince* of the truth as it is in Jesus. 2. *Some snatch* with a swift and strong hand *out of the fire* of sin and temptation. 3. *On others* show *compassion*, in a milder and gentler way; though still *with a jealous fear*, lest you yourselves be infected with the disease you endeavour to cure. See therefore that, while ye love the sinners, ye retain the utmost abhorrence of their sins, and of any, the least degree of or approach to them."

**Having even the garment spotted by the flesh.]** Fleeing from all *appearance of evil*. *Dictum sumptum, ut apparet, a mulieribus sanguine menstruo pollutis, quarum vestes etiam polluta censebantur*: or there may be an allusion to a case of *leprosy*, for that infected the garments of the afflicted person, and these garments were capable of conveying the contagion to others.

Verse 24. **Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling]** Who alone can preserve you from the contagion of sin, and preserve you from falling into any kind of error that might be prejudicial to the interests of your souls; and thus to *present you faultless*, or, as many others read, *ασπιλους*, *without spot*, alluding to the *spotted garment* mentioned above.

**Before the presence of his glory]** Where nothing can stand that does not resemble himself, *with exceeding great joy*, in finding yourselves eternally out of the reach of the possibility of falling, and for having now arrived at an eternity of happiness.

Verse 25. **To the only wise God]** Who alone can *teach*, who alone has declared the *truth*; that truth in which ye now stand. **See Clarke on "Ro 16:27"**.

**Our Saviour]** Who has by his blood washed us from our sins, and made us kings and priests unto God the Father.

**Be glory]** Be ascribed all light, excellence, and splendour.

**Majesty]** All power, authority, and pre-eminence.

**Dominion]** All rule and government in the world and in the Church, in earth and in heaven.

**And power]** All energy and operation to every thing that is wise, great, good, holy, and excellent.

**Both now]** In the present state of life and things.

**And ever.]** εἰς πάντας τοὺς αἰῶνας· To the end of all states, places, dispensations, and worlds; and to a state which knows no *termination*, being that ETERNITY in which this *glory, majesty, dominion, and power* ineffably and incomprehensibly dwell.

**Amen.]** So let it be, so ought it to be, and so it shall be.

After *to the only wise God our Saviour*, many excellent MSS. versions, &c., add *διὰ ἰησοῦ χριστοῦ τοῦ κυρίου ἡμῶν*, by *Jesus Christ our Lord*; and after *dominion and power* they add *πρὸ παντός τοῦ αἰῶνος*, before all time; and both these readings Griesbach has received into the text. The text, therefore, may be read thus: *To the only wise God our Saviour, by Christ Jesus our Lord, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, before all time; and now, and through all futurity. Amen.* Let the whole creation join in one chorus, issuing in one eternal *Amen!*

Subscriptions to this epistle in the VERSIONS:—

The Epistle of Jude the apostle, whose intercession be ever with us, Amen. The end.-SYRIAC.

The Epistle of Jude, the brother of James is finished: and glory be to God for ever and ever, Amen.-ÆTHIOPIC.

Nothing in the VULGATE.

Nothing in the ARABIC.

"This epistle was written A. D. 64, by the Apostle Jude, the brother of James; who is also called Lebbeus and Thaddeus; and who preached (the Gospel) to the Armenians and to the Persians."-This is found at the end of the ARMENIAN Bible, printed in 1698.

The Epistle of Jude the son of Joseph, and brother of James, is ended-A MS. copy of the SYRIAC.

The end of the catholic Epistle of St. Jude.-COMPLUTENSIAN.

The Epistle of Jude the apostle is ended.-IBID. Latin text.

In the MANUSCRIPTS:-

Jude.-*Codex Vaticanus*, B.

The Epistle of Jude.-*Codex Alexandrinus*.

The catholic Epistle of Jude.-*Codex Ephrem*.

The Epistle of the holy Apostle Jude.-*Codex G*, in Griesbach.

Of how little authority such subscriptions are, we have already had occasion to observe in various cases. Very few of them are ancient; and none of them coeval with the works to which they are appended. They are, in general, the opinions of the scribes who wrote the copies; or of the Churches for whose use they were written. No stress therefore should be laid on them, as if proceeding from Divine authority.

With the Epistle of Jude end all the apostolical epistles, and with it the canon of the New Testament, as to *gospels* and *epistles*; for the *Apocalypse* is a work *sui generis*, and can rank with neither. It is in general a collection of symbolic prophecies, which do not appear to be yet fully understood by the Christian world, and which can only be known when they are fulfilled.

*Finished for a new impression, January 4th, 1832.-A. C.*

**INTRODUCTION  
TO  
THE REVELATION  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

AS there has been much controversy concerning the authenticity of this book; and as it was rejected by many for a considerable time, and, when generally acknowledged, was received cautiously by the Church; it will be well to examine the testimony by which its authenticity is supported, and the arguments by which its claim to a place in the sacred canon is vindicated. Before, therefore, I produce my own sentiments, I shall beg leave to lay before the reader those of Dr. *Lardner*, who has treated the subject with much judgment.

"We are now come to the last book of the New Testament, the *Revelation*; about which there have been different sentiments among Christians; many receiving it as the writing of John the apostle and evangelist, others ascribing it to John a presbyter, others to Cerinthus, and some rejecting it, without knowing to whom it should be ascribed. I shall therefore here rehearse the testimony of ancient Christians, as it arises in several ages.

"It is probable that Hermas read the book of the Revelation, and imitated it; he has many things resembling it. It is referred to by the martyrs at Lyons. There is reason to think it was received by Papias. Justin Martyr, about the year 140, was acquainted with this book, and received it as written by the Apostle John; for, in his dialogue with Trypho, he expressly says: 'A man from among us, by name John, one of the apostles of Christ, in the revelation made to him, has prophesied that the believers in our Christ shall live a thousand years in Jerusalem; and after that shall be the general, and, in a word, the eternal resurrection and judgment of all together.' To this passage we suppose Eusebius to refer in his ecclesiastical history, when giving an account of Justin's works, he observes to this purpose. He also mentions the Revelation of John, expressly calling it the apostle's. Among the works of Melito, Bishop of Sardis, one of the seven Churches of Asia, about the year 177, Eusebius mentions one entitled, 'Of the Revelation of John.' It is very probable that Melito ascribed this book to the apostle of that name, and esteemed it of canonical authority. Irenæus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul, about A.D. 178, who in his younger days was acquainted with Polycarp, often quotes this book as the Revelation of John, the apostle of the Lord. And in one place he says: 'It was seen not long ago, but almost in our age, at the end of the reign of Domitian.'

"Theophilus was bishop of Antioch about 181. Eusebius, speaking of a work of his against the heresy of Hermogenes, says: 'He therein made use of testimonies, or quoted passages, from John's Apocalypse.' The book of the Revelation is several times quoted by Clement of Alexandria, who flourished about 194; and once in this manner: 'Such a one, though here on earth he is not honoured with the first seat, shall sit upon the four and twenty thrones judging the people, as John says in the Revelation.' Tertullian, about the year 200, often quotes the Revelation, and supposes it to have been written by St. John, the same who wrote the First Epistle of John, universally received: 'Again, the Apostle John describes, in the Apocalypse, *a sharp two-edged sword coming out of the mouth of*

*God.*' He also says: 'We have Churches that are the disciples of John. For though Marcion rejects the Revelation, the succession of bishops, traced to the original, will assure us that John is the author:' by John undoubtedly meaning the apostle.

"From Eusebius we learn that Apollonius, who wrote against the Montanists about 211, quoted the Revelation. By Caius, about 212, it was ascribed to Cerinthus: it was received by Hippolytus about 220, and by Origen about 230. It is often quoted by him. He seems not to have had any doubt about its genuineness. In his Commentary upon St. John's gospel, he speaks of it in this manner: 'Therefore John, the son of Zebedee, says in the Revelation.' Dionysius, bishop of Alexandria, about 247, or somewhat later, wrote a book against the Millenarians, in which he allows the Revelation to be written by John, a holy and divinely inspired man. But he says, 'He cannot easily grant him to be the apostle, the son of Zebedee, whose is the gospel according to John, and the catholic epistle.' He rather thinks it may be the work of John an elder, who also lived at Ephesus in Asia, as well as the apostle. It also appears, from a conference which Dionysius had with some Millenarians, that the Revelation was, about 240 and before, received by Nepus, an Egyptian bishop, and by many others in that country; and that it was in great reputation. It was received by Cyprian, bishop of Carthage, about 248, and by the Church of Rome in his time, and by many Latin authors. The Revelation was received by Novatus and his followers, and by various other authors. It is also probable that it was received by the Manichees. It was received by Lactantius, and by the Donatists; by the latter Arnobius about 460, and by the Arians.

"In the time of Eusebius, in the former part of the fourth century, it was by some not received at all; and therefore it is reckoned by him among contradicted books. Nevertheless, it was generally received. Eusebius himself seems to have hesitated about it, for he says: 'It is likely the Revelation was seen by John the elder, if not by John the apostle.' It may be reckoned probable that the critical argument of Dionysius of Alexandria was of great weight with him and others of that time. The Revelation was received by Athanasius, and by Epiphanius; but we also learn from him that it was not received by all in his time. It is not in the catalogue of Cyril of Jerusalem, and seems not to have been received by him. It is also wanting in the catalogue of the Council of Laodicea, about 363.

"The Revelation is not in Gregory Nazianzen's catalogue; however, it seems to have been received by him. It is in the catalogue of Amphilochius; but he says it was not received by all. It is also omitted in Ebedjesus' catalogue of the books of Scripture received by the Syrians; nor is it in the ancient Syriac version.

"It was received by Jerome; but he says it was rejected by the Greek Christians. It was received by Rufin, by the third Council of Carthage, and by Augustine, but it was not received by all in his time. It is never quoted by Chrysostom, and probably was not received by him. It is in the catalogue of Dionysius, called the Areopagite, about 490. It is in the Alexandrian MS. It was received by Sulpicius Severus about 401; and by J. Damascenus, and by Œcumenius, and by many other authors. Andrew, bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, at the end of the fifth century, and Arethas, bishop of the same place, in the sixth century, wrote commentaries upon it. But it was not received by Severian, bishop of Gabala; nor, as it seems, by Theodoret. Upon the whole, it appears that this book has been generally received in all ages, though some have doubted of it, and rejected it; particularly the Syrians, and some other Christians in the east.

"Having thus represented the external evidence of the genuineness of the Book of the Revelation, or of its being written by St. John, I should proceed to consider the internal evidence. But I need not enlarge here, but merely take notice of a few things of principal note, which learned men insist upon as arguments that the Revelation has the same author with the gospel and epistles that go under the name of the Evangelist and Apostle John. **#Re 1:1**: 'The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to show unto his servant things which must shortly come to pass. And he sent and signified it by his angel unto his servant John.'

"Hence it is argued, that John styles himself the *servant of Christ*, in a sense not common to all believers, but peculiarly to those who are especially employed by him. So Paul and other apostles call themselves *servants of God and of Christ*. Particularly **#Ro 1:1**: 'Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ.' **#Jas 1:1**: 'James, a servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ.' **#2Pe 1:1**: 'Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ.' **#Jude 1:1**: 'Jude, a servant of Jesus Christ.' So Moses is called 'the servant of God,' **#Nu 12:7**; and **#Heb 3:2**; and in like manner many of the prophets. And in this very book, **#Re 10:7**, is the expression, 'as he has declared unto his servants, the prophets.'

"This observation may be of some weight for showing that the writer is an apostle, but it is not decisive; and in the same verse, whence this argument is taken, the phrase is used in its general sense: 'Which God gave unto him, to show unto his servants.' **#Re 1:2**: 'Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.'

"Some suppose the writer here refers to the written gospel of St. John, and should be understood to say that he had already *borne testimony concerning the word of God, and of Jesus Christ*. But these words may be understood of this very book, the Revelation, and the things contained in it. The writer says here, very properly at the beginning, and by way of preface, that he had performed his office in this book, having faithfully recorded in it the word of God which he had received from Jesus Christ. Certainly, if these words did clearly refer to a written gospel, they would be decisive; but they are allowed to be ambiguous, and other senses have been given of them. By some they have been understood to contain a declaration that the writer had already borne witness to Jesus Christ before magistrates. Moreover, I think that, if St. John had intended to manifest himself in this introduction, he would more plainly have characterized himself in several parts of this book than he has done. This observation therefore appears to me to be of small moment for determining who the writer is.

"Farther, it is argued, in favor of the genuineness of this book, that there are in it many instances of conformity, both of sentiment and expression, between the Revelation and the uncontested writings of St. John. Our Saviour says to his disciples, **#Joh 16:33**: 'Be of good cheer, I have overcome the world.' Christian firmness under trials is several times represented by *overcoming, overcoming the world, or overcoming the wicked one*, in St. John's First Epistle, **#1Jo 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:4, 5**. And it is language peculiar to St. John, being in no other books of the New Testament. And our Lord says, **#Re 3:21**: 'To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with the in my throne; even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.'" Compare **#Re 2:7, 11, 17, 26; 3:5, 12, 21; 21:7**.

"Concerning the time of writing this book, I need not now say much. It is the general testimony of ancient authors that St. John was banished into Patmos in the time of Domitian, in the latter part of his reign, and restored by his successor Nerva. But the book could not be published till after John's release and return to Ephesus in Asia. As Domitian died in 96, and his persecution did not commence till near the end of his reign, the Revelation seems to be fitly dated in the year 95 or 96. Mill places the Revelation in the year of Christ 96, and the last year of the Emperor Domitian. At first he supposed that the Revelation was written at Patmos; but afterwards he altered his mind, and thought it was not written till after his return to Ephesus. He builds his opinion upon the words of **#Re 1:9**. If so, I apprehend it might not be published before the year 97; or, at the soonest, near the end of 96. Basnage places the Revelation in 96. Le Clerc, likewise, who readily admits the genuineness of this book, speaks of it in the same year. Mr. Lowman supposes St. John to have had his visions in the Isle of Patmos, in 95; but Mr. Wetstein favours the opinion of those who have argued that the Revelation was written before the Jewish war. He also says that, if the Revelation was written before that war, it is likely that the events of that time should be foretold in it; to which I answer, that though some interpreters have applied some things in this book to those times, I cannot say whether they have done it rightly or not, because I do not understand the Revelation. But, to me, it seems that though this book was written before the destruction of Jerusalem, there was no necessity that it should be foretold here; because our blessed Lord had, in his own preaching, frequently spoken very plainly and intelligibly concerning the calamities coming upon the Jewish people in general, and the city and temple of Jerusalem in particular; and his plain predictions and symbolical prefigurations of those events were recorded by no less than three historians and evangelists before the war in Judea broke out.

"Grotius, who places this book in the reign of Claudius, was of opinion that the visions of this book were seen at different times, and afterwards joined together in one book, in the same way as the visions and prophecies of some of the prophets of the Old Testament.

"Concerning this opinion it is not proper for me to dispute: though there appears not any foundation for it in the book itself, as Vitringa has observed. But that the Book of the Revelation in its present form, sent as an epistle to the seven Churches of Asia, **#Re 1:4**, was not composed and published before the reign of Domitian, appears to me very probable, from the general and almost universally concurring testimony of the ancients, and from some things in the book itself.

"I shall now transcribe a part of L'Enfant's and Beausobre's Preface to the Revelation, at the same time referring to Vitringa, who has many like thoughts:—

"Having quoted Irenæus, Origen, Eusebius, and various other writers, placing St. John's banishment at Patmos in the latter part of the reign of Domitian, and saying, that he there saw the Revelation, they say: 'To these incontestable witnesses it is needless to add a long list of others of all ages, and of the same sentiment, to whom the authority of Epiphanius is by no means comparable.' And they go on: 'We must add to so constant a tradition other reasons which farther show that the Revelation was not written till after Claudius and Nero. It appears from the book itself that there had been already Churches for a considerable space of time in Asia; forasmuch as St. John, in the name of Christ, reproves faults that happen not but after a while. The Church of Ephesus *had left her first love*. That of Sardis *had a name to live, but was dead*. The Church of Laodicea was

fallen into lukewarmness and indifference. But the Church of Ephesus, for instance, was not founded by St. Paul before the last years of Claudius. When in 61 or 62, St. Paul wrote to them from Rome, instead of reproving their want of love, he commends their love and faith, #**Eph 1:15**. It appears from the Revelation that the Nicolaitans made a sect when this book was written, since they are expressly named; whereas they were only foretold and described in general terms by St. Peter, in his second epistle, written after the year 60, and in St. Jude, about the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by Vespasian. It is evident from many places of the Revelation that there had been an open persecution in the provinces; St. John himself had been banished to the Isle of Patmos for the testimony of Jesus. The Church of Ephesus, or its bishops, is commended for their labour and patience, which seems to imply persecution. This is still more clear in the words directed to the Church of Smyrna, #**Re 2:9**: *I know thy works and tribulation*. For the original word always denotes persecution in the scriptures of the New Testament, as it is also explained in the following verse. In the thirteenth verse of the same chapter mention is made of a martyr named Antipas, put to death at Pergamus. Though ancient ecclesiastical history gives us no information concerning this Antipas, it is nevertheless certain that, according to all the rules of language, what is here said must be understood literally. All that has been now observed concerning the persecution, of which mention is made in the first chapters of the Revelation, cannot relate to the time of Claudius, who did not persecute the Christians; nor to the time of Nero, whose persecution did not reach the provinces; and therefore it must relate to Domitian, according to ecclesiastical tradition.'

"The visions therefore here recorded, and the publication of them in this book, must be assigned, as far as I can see, to the years of Christ 95, and 96, or 97."

The reasoning of Dr. Lardner, relative to the *date* of this book, is by no means satisfactory to many other critics, who consider it to have been written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem; and in this opinion they are supported by the most respectable testimonies among the ancients, though the contrary was the more general opinion. *Epiphanius* says, that John was banished to Patmos by *Claudius Cæsar*; this would bring back the date to about A.D. 50. *Andreas*, (bishop of Cæsarea, in Cappadocia, about A.D. 500,) in his comment on this book, chap. vi. 16, says: "John received this Revelation under the reign of *Vespasian*." This date also might place it *before* the final overthrow of the Jewish state; though *Vespasian* reigned to A.D. 79. The *inscription* to this book, in the *Syrian version*, first published by *De Dieu*, in 1627, and, afterwards in the London Polyglot, is the following: "The Revelation which God made to John the evangelist, in the island of Patmos, to which he was banished by Nero Cæsar." This places it before the year of our Lord 69, and consequently *before* the destruction of Jerusalem. Of this opinion are many eminent writers, and among them *Hentenius*, *Harduin*, *Grotius*, *Lightfoot*, *Hammond*, *Sir Isaac Newton*, *Bishop Newton*, *Wetstein*, and others.

If the *date* could be settled, it would be of the utmost consequence to the right interpretation of the book; but, amidst so many conflicting opinions, this is almost hopeless.

Dr. Lardner has given several proofs, from *internal* evidence, that the Revelation is the work of St. John; as there are found in it the same forms of expression which are found in his gospel and epistles, and which are peculiar to this apostle. *Wetstein* gives a collection, which the reader may examine at his leisure. E. g. compare:—

#Re 1:1.	with	#Joh 12:33; 18:37; 21:19.
#Re 1:5.		#1Jo 1:7.
#Re 1:7.		#Joh 19:37.
#Re 1:9.		#1Jo 5:10.
#Re 2:10.		#Joh 20:27.
#Re 2:17.		#Joh 6:32.
#Re 3:4.		#Joh 6:66.
#Re 3:7, 9.		#Joh 15:20; 17:8; #1Jo 2:5.
#Re 3:9.		#Joh 11:27.
#Re 3:10.		#Joh 12:27.
#Re 3:21.		#1Jo 2:13, 14; 4:4; 5:5.
#Re 6:12.		#Joh 1:29.
#Re 9:5.		#Joh 18:26; 3:17.
#Re 12:9.		#Joh 12:31.
#Re 19:13.		#Joh 1:1.
#Re 21:6.		#Joh 7:37.
#Re 22:8, 10.		#Joh 7:51-53; 14:23, 24.

Dr. Lardner has considered several of these, with the addition of other *resemblances*, in his account of *Dionysius*, bishop of Alexandria, in A.D. 247, in the third volume of his works, pages 121-126. This mode of proof, as it applies to most of the above references, is not entirely satisfactory.

*Dionysius* argues that the *style* of the Revelation is totally different from that of John in his acknowledged writings; and it seems strange to me that this should be contested by any man of learning. Nothing more *simple* and *unadorned* than the *narrative* of St. John in his GOSPEL; nothing more *plain* and *natural* than his EPISTLES; but the REVELATION, on the contrary, is *figurative*, *rhetorical*, *laboured*, and *elevated* to the highest degree. All that can be said here on this subject is, that if the Spirit of God choose to inspire the *words* and *style*, as well as the *matter*, of his communications, he may choose what *variety* he pleases; and speak at different times, and *in divers manners*, to the same person. This, however, is not his usual way.

For other matters relative to this subject I must refer to the following *preface*, and to the writers quoted above.

**PREFACE  
TO  
THE REVELATION  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

AMONG the interpreters of the *Apocalypse*, both in ancient and modern times, we find a vast diversity of opinions, but they may be all reduced to *four* principal hypotheses, or modes of interpretation:—

1. The *Apocalypse* contains a prophetic description of the destruction of Jerusalem, of the Jewish war, and the civil wars of the Romans.

2. It contains predictions of the persecutions of the Christians under the heathen emperors of Rome, and of the happy days of the Church under the Christian emperors, from Constantine downwards.

3. It contains prophecies concerning the tyrannical and oppressive conduct of the Roman pontiffs, the true antichrist; and foretells the final destruction of popery.

4. It is a prophetic declaration of the schism and heresies of Martin Luther, those called Reformers, and their successors; and the final destruction of the Protestant religion.

The first opinion has been defended by Professor Wetstein, and other learned men on the continent.

The second is the opinion of the primitive fathers in general, both Greek and Latin.

The third was first broached by the Abbé *Joachim*, who flourished in the thirteenth century, was espoused by most of the Franciscans; and has been and still is the general opinion of the Protestants.

The fourth seems to have been invented by popish writers, merely by way of retaliation; and has been illustrated and defended at large by a Mr. *Walmsley*, (I believe,) titular dean of Wells, in a work called the *History of the Church*, under the feigned name of *Signior Pastorini*.

In this work he endeavours to turn every thing against Luther and the Protestants, which they interpreted of the pope and popery; and attempts to show, from a computation of the Apocryphical numbers, that the total destruction of Protestantism in the world will take place in 1825! But this is not the first prophecy that has been invented for the sake of an event, the accomplishment of which was earnestly desired; and as a stimulus to excite general attention, and promote united exertion, when the time of the pretended prophecy was fulfilled. But 1825 is past by, and 1832 is come, and the Protestant Church is still in full vigour, while the Romish Church is fast declining.

The full title of the book which I quote is the following:—

"The General History of the Christian Church, from her birth to her final triumphant state in Heaven, chiefly deduced from the Apocalypse of St. John the Apostle. By SIG. PASTORINI.

'Blessed is he that readeth and heareth the words of this prophecy.'-APOCALYPSE, #Re 1:3.

Printed in the year M.DCC.LXXI." 8vo. No *place* nor *printer's* name mentioned.

The place where he foretells the final destruction of Protestantism is in pp. 249 and 262.

The Catholic college of *Maynooth*, in Ireland, have lately published a new edition of this work! in which the author kindly predicts the approaching overthrow of the whole Protestant system, both in Church and state; and in the meantime gives them, most condescendingly, *Abaddon* or the *devil* for their king!

Who the writer of the Apocalypse was, learned men are not agreed. This was a *question*, as well in ancient as in modern times. We have already seen that many have attributed it to the *Apostle John*; others, to a person called *John the presbyter*, who they say was an Ephesian, and totally different from John the apostle. And lastly, some have attributed it to *Cerinthus*, a contemporary of John the apostle. This hypothesis, however, seems utterly unsupportable; as there is no probability that the Christian Church would have so generally received a work which came from the hands of a man at all times reputed a very dangerous heretic; nor can the doctrines it contains ever comport with a Cerinthian creed.

Whether it was written by *John the apostle*, *John the presbyter*, or some *other* person, is of little importance if the question of its *inspiration* be fully established. If written by an *apostle* it is *canonical*; and should be received, without hesitation, as a work Divinely inspired. Every apostle acted under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. John was an apostle, and consequently inspired; therefore, whatever he wrote was written by Divine inspiration. If, therefore, the *authenticity* of the work be established, i.e., that it was written by John the apostle, all the rest necessarily follow.

As I have scarcely any opinion to give concerning this book on which I could wish any of my readers to rely, I shall not enter into any discussion relative to the author, or the meaning of his several visions and prophecies; but for general information refer to Dr. Lardner, Michaelis, and others.

Various attempts have been made by learned men to fix the *plan* of this work; but even in this few agree. I shall produce some of the chief of these: and first, that of *Wetstein*, which is the most singular of the whole.

He supposes the book of the Apocalypse to have been written a considerable time before the destruction of Jerusalem. The events described from the fourth chapter to the end he supposes to refer to the Jewish war, and to the civil commotions which took place in Italy while Otho, Vitellius, and Vespasian were contending for the empire. These contentions and destructive wars occupied the space of about three years and a half, during which Professor Wetstein thinks the principal events took place which are recorded in this book. On these subjects he speaks particularly in his notes, at

the end of which he subjoins what he calls his *ανακεφαλαιωσις*, or synopsis of the whole work, which I proceed now to lay before the reader.

"This prophecy, which predicts the calamities which God should send on the enemies of the Gospel, is divided into two parts. The first is contained in the *closed book*; the second, in the *open book*.

I. The first concerns the *earth and the third part*, i.e., Judea and the Jewish nation,

II. The second concerns *many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings*, **#Re 10:11**, i.e., the Roman empire.

1. The *book written within and without, and sealed with seven seals*, **#Re 5:1**, is the bill of divorce sent from God to the Jewish nation.

2. The *crowned conqueror on the white horse armed with a bow*, **#Re 6:2**, is Artabanus, king of the Parthians, who slaughtered multitudes of the Jews in Babylon.

3. The *red horse*, **#Re 6:4**. The Sicarii and robbers in Judea, in the time of the Proconsuls Felix and Festus.

4. The *black horse*, **#Re 6:5**. The famine under Claudius.

5. The *pale horse*, **#Re 6:8**. The plague which followed the robberies and the famine.

6. The *souls of those who were slain*, **#Re 6:9**. The Christians in Judea, who were persecuted, and were now about to be avenged.

7. The *great earthquake*, **#Re 6:12**. The commotions which preceded the Jewish rebellion.

8. The *servants of God from every tribe, sealed in their foreheads*, **#Re 7:3**. The Christians taken under the protection of God, and warned by the prophets to flee immediately from the land.

9. The *silence for half an hour*, **#Re 8:1**. The short truce granted at the solicitation of King Agrippa.

Then follows the rebellion itself.

1. The *trees are burnt*, **#Re 8:7**. The fields and villages, and unfortified places of Judea, which first felt the bad effects of the sedition.

2. The *burning mountain cast into the sea which in consequence became blood*, **#Re 8:8**; and,

3. The *burning star falling into the rivers, and making the waters bitter*, **#Re 8:10, 11**. The slaughter of the Jews at Cæsarea and Scythopolis.

4. The *eclipsing of the sun, moon, and stars*, **#Re 8:12**. The anarchy of the Jewish commonwealth.
5. The *locusts like scorpions hurting men*, **#Re 9:3**. The expedition of Cestius Gallus, prefect of Syria.
6. The *army with arms of divers colours*, **#Re 9:16, 17**. The armies under Vespasian in Judea. About this time Nero and Galba died; after which followed the civil war, signified by *the sounding of the seventh trumpet*, **#Re 10:7, 11; 11:15**.
1. The *two prophetic witnesses, two olive trees, two candlesticks*, **#Re 11:3, 4**. Teachers in the Church, predicting the destruction of the Jewish temple and commonwealth.
2. The *death of the witnesses*, **#Re 11:7**. Their flight, and the flight of the Church of Jerusalem, to Pella, in Arabia.
3. The *resurrection of the witnesses, after three days and a half*, **#Re 11:11**. The predictions began to be fulfilled at a time in which their accomplishment was deemed impossible; and the doctrine of Christ begins to prevail over Judea, and over the whole earth.
4. The *tenth part of the city fell in the same hour, and seven thousand names of men slain*, **#Re 11:13**. Jerusalem seized by the Idumeans; and many of the priests and nobles, with Annas, the high priest, signified by *names of men*, i.e. *men of name*, slain by the Zealots.
5. The *woman clothed with the sun, the moon under her feet, and a crown of twelve stars on her head*, **#Re 12:1**. The Christian Church.
6. The *great red dragon seen in heaven, with seven heads, seven diadems, and ten horns*, **#Re 12:3**. The six first Cæsars, who were all made princes at Rome, governing the armies and the Roman people with great authority; especially Nero, the last of them, who, having killed his mother, cruelly vexed the Christians, and afterwards turned his wrath against the rebellious Jews.
7. The *seven-headed beast from the sea, having ten horns surrounded with diadems*, **#Re 13:1**. Galba, Otho, and Vitellius, who were shortly to reign, and who were proclaimed emperors by the army.
8. This *beast, having a mouth like a lion, the body like a leopard, the feet like a bear*, **#Re 13:2**. Avaricious Galba; rash, unchaste, and inconstant Otho; Vitellius, cruel and sluggish, with the German any.
9. *One head, i.e., the seventh, cut off*, **#Re 13:3**. Galba.
10. *He who leadeth into captivity shall be led into captivity; he who killeth with the sword shall be killed with the sword*, **#Re 13:10**. Otho, who subdued the murderers of Galba, and slew himself with a dagger, Vitellius, who bound Sabinus with chains and was himself afterwards bound.

11. *Another beast rising out of the earth, with two horns, #Re 13:11.* Vespasian and his two and, Titus and Domitian, elected emperors at the same time in Judea.

12. *The number of the wild beast, 666, the number of a man, TEITAN, Titan or Titus: T, 300. E, 5. I, 10. T, 300. A, 1. N. 50, making in the whole 666. [But some very respectable MSS. have 616 for the number; if the N be taken away from Teitan, then the letters in Teita make exactly the sum 616.]*

13. *A man sitting upon a cloud, unity a crown of gold upon his head, and a sickle in his hand, #Re 14:14.* Otho and his army, about to prevent supplies for the army of Vitellius.

14. *An angel of fire commanding another angel to gather the vintage; the winepress trodden whence the blood flows out 1600 furlongs.* The followers of Vitellius laying all waste with fire; and the Bebriaci conquering the followers of Otho with great slaughter.

Then follow the seven plagues:—

1. *The grievous sore, #Re 16:2.* The diseases of the soldiers of Vitellius through intemperance.

2. *The sea turned into blood, #Re 16:3.* The fleet of Vitellius beaten, and the maritime towns taken from them by the Flavii.

3. *The rivers turned into blood, #Re 16:4.* The slaughter of the adherents of Vitellius, at Cremona and elsewhere, near rivers.

4. *The scorching of the sun, #Re 16:8.* The diseases of the Vitellii increasing, and their exhausted bodies impatient of the heat.

5. *The seat of the beast darkened, #Re 16:10.* All Rome in commotion through the torpor of Vitellius.

6. *Euphrates dried up, and a way made for the kings of the east; and the three unclean spirits like frogs.* The Flavii besieging Rome with a treble army; one part of which was by the bank of the Tiber.

*The shame of him who is found asleep and naked.* Vitellius, #Re 16:15. Armageddon, #Re 16:16. The prætorian camps.

7. *The fall of Babylon, #Re 16:19.* The sacking of Rome.

1. *The whore, #Re 17:1.* Rome.

2. *The seven kings, #Re 17:10.* CÆSAR, AUGUSTUS, TIBERIUS, CALIGULA, CLAUDIUS, NERO, and GALBA.

3. The *eighth, which is of the seven*, #Re 17:11. Otho, destined by adoption to be the son and successor of Galba.

4. The *ten horns*, #Re 17:12-16. The leaders of the Flavian factions.

5. The *merchants of the earth*, #Re 18:11; i.e., of Rome, which was then the emporium of the whole world.

6. The *beast and the false prophet*, #Re 19:20. Vespasian and his family, contrary to all expectation, becoming extinct in Domitian, as the first family of the Cæsars, and of the three princes, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius.

7. The *millennium, or a thousand years*, #Re 20:2. Taken from #Ps 90:4, a time appointed by God, including the space of *forty* years, from the death of Domitian to the Jewish war under Adrian.

8. *Gog and Magog, going out over the earth*, #Re 20:8. Barchochebas, the false Messiah, with an immense army of the Jews, coming forth suddenly from their caves and dens, tormenting the Christians, and carrying on a destructive war with the Romans.

9. The *New Jerusalem*, #Re 21:1, 2. The Jews being brought so low as to be capable of injuring no longer; the whole world resting after being expiated by wars; and the doctrine of Christ propagated and prevailing everywhere with incredible celerity.

Wetstein contends (and he is supported by very great men among the ancients and moderns) that "the book of the Revelation was written before the Jewish war, and the civil wars in Italy; that the important events which took place at that time, the greatest that ever happened since the foundation of the world, were worth enough of the Divine notice, as the affairs of his Church were so intimately connected with them; that his method of exposition proves the whole book to be a well-connected, certain series of events; but the common method of interpretation, founded on the hypothesis that the book was written *after* the destruction of Jerusalem, is utterly destitute of certainty, and leaves every commentator to the luxuriance of his own fancy, as is sufficiently evident from what has been done already on this book; some interpreters leading the reader now to *Thebes*, now to *Athens*, and finding in the words of the sacred penman *Constantine the Great*; *Arius*, *Luther*, *Calvin*; the *Jesuits*; the *Albigenses*; the *Bohemians*; *Chemnitius*; *Elizabeth*, queen of England; *Cecil*, her treasurer; and who not?"-See *Wetstein's Gr. Test.*, vol. ii. p. 889.

Those who consider the Apocalypse as a *prophecy* and *scenical* exhibition of what shall happen to the Christian Church to the end of the world, lay this down as a proposition, which comprises the subject of the whole book: *The contest of Christ with his enemies; and his final victory and triumph over them*. See #1Co 15:25; #Mt 24:1-51; #Mr 13:1-37; #Lu 21:5-38. But what is but briefly hinted in the above scriptures, is detailed at large in the Apocalypse, and represented by various images nearly in the following order:—

1. The *decrees* of the Divine providence, concerning what is to come, are declared to John.

2. The *manner* in which these decrees shall be executed is painted in the most vivid colours.

3. Then follow *thanksgivings* to God, the ruler and governor of all things, for these manifestations of his power, wisdom and goodness.

After the *exordium*, and the *seven epistles* to the seven Churches of Asia Minor, to whose angels or bishops the book seems to be dedicated, (**#Re 1:1-3:22**.) the scene of the visions is opened in heaven, full of majesty; and John receives a promise of a *revelation* relative to the future state of the Church, **#Re 4:1-5:14**.

The enemies of the Church of Christ which the Christians had then most to fear were the *Jews*, the *heathens*, and the *false teachers*. All these are overcome by Christ, and over them he triumphs gloriously. First of all, punishments are threatened to the enemies of the kingdom of Christ, and the preservation of his own followers in their greatest trials determined; and these determinations are accompanied with the praises and thanksgivings of all the heavenly inhabitants, and of all good men, **#Re 6:1-10:11**.

The transactions of the Christian religion are next recorded, **#Re 11:1-14:5**. The Christians are persecuted:—

1. By the *Jews*; but they were not only preserved, but they increase and prosper.

2. By the *heathens*; but in vain do these strive to overthrow the kingdom of Christ, which is no longer confined within the limits of Judea, but spreads among the Gentiles, and diffuses itself over the whole Roman empire, destroying idolatry, and rooting out superstition, in every quarter, **#Re 12:1-13:10**.

3. *False teachers* and *impostors* of various kinds, under the name of Christians, but enemies of the cross of Christ, more intent on promoting the interests of idolatry or false worship than the cause of true religion, **#Re 13:11-18**, exert their influence to corrupt and destroy the Church; but, notwithstanding, Christianity becomes more extended, and true believers more confirmed in their holy faith, **#Re 14:1-5**. Then new punishments are decreed against the enemies of Christ, both Jews and heathens: the calamities coming upon the Jewish nation before its final overthrow are pointed out, **#Re 14:1-15:8**. Next follows a prediction of the calamities which shall take place during the Jewish war; and the civil wars of the Romans during the contentions of Otho and Vitellius, **#Re 16:1-16**, who are to suffer most grievous punishments for their cruelties against the Christians, **#Re 17:1-18**. The Jewish state being now finally overthrown, **#Re 18:1-24**, the heavenly inhabitants give praise to God for his justice and goodness; Christ is congratulated for his victory over his enemies, and the more extensive progress of his religion, **#Re 19:1-10**.

Opposition is, however, not yet totally ended: idolatry again lifts up its head, and new errors are propagated; but over these also Christ shows himself to be conqueror, **#Re 19:11-21**. Finally, Satan, who had long reigned by the worship of false gods, errors, superstitions, and wickedness, is deprived of all power and influence; and the concerns of Christianity go on gloriously, **#Re 20:1-6**. But towards the end of the world new enemies arise, and threaten destruction to the followers of Christ;

but in vain is their rage, God appears in behalf of his servants, and inflicts the most grievous punishments upon their adversaries, **#Re 20:6-10**. The last judgment ensues, **#Re 20:11-15**, all the wicked are punished, and the enemies of the truth are chained, so as to be able to injure the godly no more; the genuine Christians, who had persevered unto death, are brought to eternal glory; and, freed from all adversities, spend a life that shall never end, in blessedness that knows no bounds, **#Re 21:1-22:21**. See *Rosenmuller*.

*Eichhorn* takes a different view of the *plan* of this book; though in substance not differing much from that above. According to this writer the whole is represented in the form of a *drama*, the parts of which are the following: I. The *title*, **#Re 1:1-3**. II. The *prologue*, **#Re 1:4-3:22**; in which it is stated that the argument of the drama refers to the Christians; epistles being sent to the Churches, which, in the symbolic style, are represented by the number *seven*. Next follows the *drama* itself, the parts of which are:—

The *prolusio*, or *prelude*, **#Re 4:1-8:5**; in which the scenery is prepared and adorned.

*Act the first*, **#Re 8:6-12:17**. Jerusalem is taken, and Judaism vanquished by Christianity.

*Act the second*, **#Re 13:1-20:10**. Rome is conquered, and heathenism destroyed by the Christian religion.

*Act the third*, **#Re 20:11-22:5**. The New Jerusalem descends from heaven; or the happiness of the life to come, and which is to endure for ever, is particularly described, **#Re 22:6-11**. Taken in this sense, *Eichhorn* supposes the work to be most exquisitely finished, and its author to have had a truly poetic mind, polished by the highest cultivation; to have been accurately acquainted with the history of all times and nations, and to have enriched himself with their choicest spoils.

My readers will naturally expect that I should either give a decided preference to some one of the opinions stated above, or produce one of my own; I can do neither, nor can I pretend to explain the book: I do not understand it; and in the things which concern so sublime and awful a subject, I dare not, as my predecessors, indulge in *conjectures*. I have read elaborate works on the subject, and each seemed right till another was examined. I am satisfied that no *certain* mode of interpreting the prophecies of this book has yet been found out, and I will not add another monument to the littleness or folly of the human mind by endeavouring to strike out a new course. I repeat it, I do not understand the book; and I am satisfied that not one who has written on the subject knows any thing more of it than myself. I should, perhaps, except *J. E. Clarke*, who has written on the *number of the beast*. His interpretation amounts nearly to demonstration; but that is but a small part of the difficulties of the Apocalypse: that interpretation, as the most probable ever yet offered to the public, shall be inserted in its proper place; as also his illustration of the xiith, xiiiith, and xviiith chapters. As to other matters, I must leave them to God, or to those events which shall point out the prophecy; and *then*, and probably *not till then*, will the sense of these visions be explained.

A conjecture concerning the *design* of the book may be safely indulged; thus then it has struck me, that *the book of the Apocalypse may be considered as a PROPHET continued in the Church of God, uttering predictions relative to all times, which have their successive fulfilment as ages roll on;*

and thus it stands in the Christian Church in the place of the SUCCESSION of PROPHETS in the Jewish Church; and by this especial economy PROPHECY is STILL CONTINUED, is ALWAYS SPEAKING; and yet a succession of prophets rendered unnecessary. If this be so, we cannot too much admire the wisdom of the contrivance which still continues the voice and testimony of prophecy, by means of a very short book, without the assistance of any extraordinary messenger, or any succession of such messengers, whose testimony would at all times be liable to suspicion, and be the subject of infidel and malevolent criticism, howsoever unexceptionable to ingenuous minds the credentials of such might appear.

On this ground it is reasonable to suppose that several prophecies contained in this book have been already fulfilled, and that therefore it is the business of the commentator to point such out. It may be so; but as it is impossible for me to *prove* that my *conjecture* is right, I dare not enter into proceedings upon it, and must refer to Bishop Newton, and such writers as have made this their particular study.

After having lived in one of the most eventful eras of the world; after having seen a number of able pens employed in the illustration of this and other prophecies; after having carefully attended to those facts which were supposed to be the incontestable proofs of the fulfilment of such and such *visions, seals, trumpets, thunders, and vials* of the Apocalypse; after seeing the issue of that most terrible struggle which the French *nation*, the French *republic*, the French *consulate*, and the French *empire*, have made to regain and preserve their liberties, which, like arguing in a circle, have terminated where they began, without one political or religious advantage to them or to mankind; and after viewing how the prophecies of this book were supposed to apply almost exclusively to these events, the writers and explainers of these prophecies keeping pace in their publications with the rapid succession of military operations, and confidently promising the most glorious issue, in the final destruction of superstition, despotism, arbitrary power, and tyranny of all kinds, nothing of which has been realized; I say, viewing all these things, I feel myself at perfect liberty to state that, to my apprehension, all these prophecies have been misapplied and misapprehended; and that the *KEY* to them is not yet intrusted to the sons of men. My readers will therefore excuse me from any exposure of my ignorance or folly by attempting to do what many, with much more wisdom and learning, have attempted, and what every man to the present day has failed in, who has preceded me in expositions of this book. I have no other *mountain* to heap on those already piled up; and if I had, I have not strength to lift it: those who have courage may again make the trial; already we have had a sufficiency of vain efforts.

Ter sunt conati imponere Pelio Ossam  
Scilicet, atque Ossæ frondosum involvere Olympum:  
Ter Pater extractos disjecit fulmine montes.  
VIRG., G. i. 281.

With mountains piled on mountains thrice they strove  
To scale the steepy battlements of Jove;  
And thrice his lightning and red thunder play'd,  
And their demolish'd works in ruin laid.

DRYDEN

I had resolved, for a considerable time, not to meddle with this book, because I foresaw that I could produce nothing satisfactory on it: but when I reflected that the *literal sense* and *phraseology* might be made much plainer by the addition of *philological* and *critical* notes; and that, as the diction appeared in many places to be purely *rabbinical*, (a circumstance to which few of its expositors have attended,) it might be rendered plainer by examples from the ancient Jewish writers; and that several parts of it spoke *directly* of the work of God in the soul of man, and of the conflicts and consolations of the followers of Christ, particularly in the beginning of the book, I changed my resolution, and have added short notes, principally *philological*, where I thought I understood the meaning.

I had once thought of giving a *catalogue* of the writers and commentators on this book, and had begun a collection of this kind; but the question of *Cui bono? What good end is this likely to serve?* not meeting with a satisfactory answer in my own mind, caused me to throw this collection aside. I shall notice *two* only.

1. The curious and learned work entitled, "A plaine Discovery of the whole Revelation of St. John," written by Sir *John Napier*, inventor of the logarithms, I have particularly described in the general preface to the Holy Scriptures, prefixed to the Book of Genesis, to which the reader is requested to refer.

2. Another work, not less singular, and very rare, entitled, "The Image of both Churches, after the most wonderful and heavenly Revelation of Sainct John the Evangelist, containing a very fruitfull exposition or *paraphrase* upon the same: wherein it is conferred with the other scriptures, and most auctorised histories Compyled by John Bale, an exyle also in thys lyfe for the faithful testimony of Jesu." Printed at London by *Thomas East*, 18mo., *without date*.

The author was at first a Carmelite, but was afterwards converted to the Protestant religion. He has turned the whole of the Apocalypse against the Romish Church; and it is truly astonishing to see with what address he directs every image, metaphor, and description, contained in this book, against the corruptions of this Church. He was made bishop of Ossory, in Ireland; but was so persecuted by the papists that he narrowly escaped with his life, five of his domestics being murdered by them. On the accession of Mary he was obliged to take refuge in the Low Countries, where it appears he compiled this work. As he was bred up a *papist*, and was also a *priest*, he possessed many advantages in attacking the strongest holds of his adversaries. He knew all their secrets, and he uncovered the whole; he was acquainted with all their rites, ceremonies, and superstitions, and finds all distinctly marked in the Apocalypse, which he believes was written to point out the abominations, and to foretell the final destruction of this corrupt and intolerant Church. I shall make a few references to his work in the course of the following notes. In **#Re 17:1**, the author shows his opinion, and speaks something of himself: *Come hither, I will show thee the judgment of the great whore, &c.* "Come hither, friende John, I will show thee in secretnesse the tirrible judgement of the great whore, or counterfaite Church of hypocrites. Needs must this whore be Rome, for that she is the great citie which reigneth over the kings of the earth. Evident it is both by Scriptures and Cronicles that in John's dayes Rome had dominion over all the whole world: and being infected with the abominations of all landes, rightly is shee called Babylon. or Citie of Confusion. And like as in the Scriptures ofte tymes under the name of Jerusalem is ment the whole kingdom of Juda, so under

the name of Rome here may be understood the unyversall worlde, with all their abominations and divillesshnesses, their idolatryes, witchcraftes, sectes, superstitions, papacyes, priesthoodes, relygions, shavings, anointings, blessings, sensings, processions, and the divil of all such beggeryes. For all the people since Christes assencion, hath this Rome infected with hir pestilent poisons gathered from all idolatrous nations, such time as she held over them the monarchial suppremit. At the wryting of this prophecy felt John of their cruiltie, being exiled into Pathmos for the faithfull testimony of Jesu. And so did I, poore creature, with my poore wife and children, at the gatheringe of this present commentary, flying into Germanye for the same," &c.

Shall I have the reader's pardon if I say that it is my firm opinion that the expositions of this book have done great disservice to religion: almost every commentator has become a *prophet*; for as soon as he began to explain he began also to prophesy. And what has been the issue? *Disappointment laughed at hope's career*, and superficial thinkers have been led to despise and reject prophecy itself. I shall sum up all that I wish to say farther in the words of GRASERUS: *Mihi tota Apocalypsis valde obscura videtur; et talis, cujus explicatio citra periculum vix queat tentari. Fateor me hactenus in nullius Scripti Biblici lectione minus vproficere, quam in hoc obscurissimo Vaticinio.*

**THE REVELATION  
OF  
ST. JOHN THE DIVINE**

*Chronological Notes relative to this Book.*

- Year of the Constantinopolitan era of the world, or that used by the Byzantine historians, and other eastern writers, 5604.
- Year of the Alexandrian era of the world, 5598.
- Year of the Antiochian era of the world, 5588.
- Year of the world, according to Archbishop Usher, 4100.
- Year of the world, according to Eusebius, in his Chronicon, 4322.
- Year of the minor Jewish era of the world, or that in common use, 3856.
- Year of the Greater Rabbinical era of the world, 4455.
- Year from the Flood, according to Archbishop Usher, and the English Bible, 2444.
- Year of the Cali yuga, or Indian era of the Deluge, 3198.
- Year of the era of Iphitus, or since the first commencement of the Olympic games, 1036.
- Year of the era of Nabonassar, king of Babylon, 845.
- Year of the CCXVIIIth Olympiad, 4.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Fabius Pictor, 843.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Frontinus, 847.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to the Fasti Capitolini, 848.
- Year from the building of Rome, according to Varro, which was that most generally used, 849.
- Year of the era of the Seleucidæ, 408.
- Year of the Cæsarean era of Antioch, 144.
- Year of the Julian era, 141.
- Year of the Spanish era, 134.
- Year from the birth of Jesus Christ, according to Archbishop Usher, 100.
- Year of the vulgar era of Christ's nativity, 96.
- Year of Pacorus II, king of the Parthians, 6.
- Year of the Dionysian period, or Easter Cycle, 97.
- Year of the Grecian Cycle of nineteen years, or Common Golden Number, 2; or the first embolismic.
- Year of the Jewish Cycle of nineteen years, 18; or the year before the seventh embolismic.
- Year of the Solar Cycle, 21.
- Dominical Letters, it being the Bissextile, or Leap Year, CB.
- Day of the Jewish Passover, the twenty-fifth of March, which happened in this year on the day before the Jewish Sabbath.
- Easter Sunday, the twenty seventh of March.
- Epact, or age of the moon on the 22d of March, (the day of the earliest Easter Sunday possible,) 11.
- Epact, according to the present mode of computation, or the moon's age on New Year's day, or the Calends of January, 19.

- Monthly Epacts, or age of the moon on the Calends of each month respectively, (beginning with January,) 19, 21, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 26, 27, 29, 29.
- Number of Direction, or the number of days from the twenty-first of March to the Jewish Passover, 4.
- Year of the Emperor Flavius Domitianus Cæsar, the last of those usually styled The Twelve Cæsars, 15: Nerva began his reign in this year.
- Roman Consuls, C. Antistius Vetus, and C. Maulius Valens.

## CHAPTER I.

*The preface to this book, and the promise to them who read it, 1-3. John's address to the seven Churches of Asia, whose high calling he particularly mentions; and shows the speedy coming of Christ, 4-8. Mentions his exile to Patmos, and the appearance of the Lord Jesus to him, 9-11. Of whom he gives a most glorious description, 12-18. The command to write what he saw, and the explanation of the seven stars and seven golden candlesticks, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. I.

*The Revelation of St. John the divine.* To this book the *inscriptions* are various. "The Revelation.-The Revelation of John.-Of John the divine.-Of John the divine and evangelist.-The Revelation of John the apostle and evangelist.-The Revelation of the holy and glorious apostle and evangelist, the beloved virgin John the divine, which he saw in the island of Patmos.-The Revelation of Jesus Christ, given to John the divine." These several inscriptions are worthy of little regard; the first verse contains the *title* of the book.

Verse 1. **The Revelation of Jesus Christ]** The word *αποκαλυψις*, from which we have our word *Apocalypse*, signifies literally, a *revelation*, or *discovery* of what was *concealed* or *hidden*. It is here said that this *revelation*, or *discovery* of hidden things, was given by GOD to *Jesus Christ*; that Christ gave it to his *angel*; that this angel showed it to JOHN; and that John sent it to the CHURCHES. Thus we find it came from God to Christ, from Christ to the angel, from the angel to John, and from John to the Church. It is properly, therefore, *the Revelation of God*, sent by these various agents *to his servants* at large; and this is the proper title of the book.

**Things which must shortly come to pass]** On the mode of interpretation devised by *Wetstein*, this is plain; for if the book were written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, and the prophecies in it relate to that destruction, and the civil wars among the Romans, which lasted but *three* or *four years*, then it might be said the *Revelation* is of things which *must shortly come to pass*. But if we consider the book as referring to the state of the Church in all ages, the words here, and those in **#Re 1:3**, must be understood of the *commencement* of the events predicted; as if he had said: In a short time the train of these visions will be put in motion:—

———*et incipient magni procedere menses.*

"And those times, pregnant with the most stupendous events, will begin to roll on."

Verse 2. **Who bare record of the word of God]** Is there a reference here to the first chapter of John's *gospel*, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, &c.*? Of this *Word* John did bear record. Or, does the writer mean the *fidelity* with which he noted and related the *word*-doctrines or prophecies, which he received at this time by revelation from God? This seems more consistent with the latter part of the verse.

Verse 3. **Blessed is he that readeth]** This is to be understood of the happiness or security of the persons who, reading and hearing the prophecies of those things which were to come to pass shortly, took proper measures to escape from the impending evils.

**The time is at hand.]** Either in which they shall be all fulfilled, or *begin* to be fulfilled. See Clarke's note on "Re 1:1".

These three verses contain the *introduction*; now the *dedication* to the seven Churches commences.

Verse 4. **John to the seven Churches]** The apostle begins this much in the manner of the Jewish prophets. They often name themselves in the messages which they receive from God to deliver to the people; e.g. "The vision of ISAIAH, the son of Amoz, which he saw concerning Judah and Jerusalem." "The words of JEREMIAH, the son of Hilkiyah; to whom the word of the Lord came." "The word of the Lord came expressly unto EZEKIEL, the priest." "The word of the Lord that came unto HOSEA, the son of Beerī." "The word of the Lord that came to JOEL." "The words of AMOS, who was among the herdsmen of Tekoa." "The vision of OBADIAH; thus saith the Lord." "The word of the Lord came unto JONAH." So, "The revelation of Jesus Christ, which he sent and signified to his servant JOHN." "JOHN to the seven Churches," &c.

The *Asia* here mentioned was what is called *Asia Minor*, or the *Lydian* or *Proconsular Asia*; the *seven Churches* were those of *Ephesus*, *Smyrna*, *Pergamos*, *Thyatira*, *Sardis*, *Philadelphia*, and *Laodicea*. Of these as they occur. We are not to suppose that they were the only Christian Churches then in *Asia Minor*; there were several others then in *Phrygia*, *Pamphylia*, *Galatia*, *Pontus*, *Cappadocia*, &c., &c. But these seven were those which lay nearest to the apostle, and were more particularly under his care; though the message was sent to the Churches in general, and perhaps it concerns the whole Christian world. But the number *seven* may be used here as the *number of perfection*; as the Hebrews use the *seven* names of the *heavens*, the *seven* names of the *earth*, the *seven patriarchs*, *seven suns*, *seven kinds*, *seven years*, *seven months*, *seven days*, &c., &c.; in which the rabbins find a great variety of mysteries.

**Grace be unto you]** This form of apostolical benediction we have often seen in the preceding epistles.

**From him which is, and which was, and which is to come]** This phraseology is purely Jewish, and probably taken from the Tetragrammaton, יהוה YEHOWAH; which is supposed to include in itself all time, *past*, *present*, and *future*. But they often use the phrase of which the ο ων, και ο ην, και ο ερχομενος, of the apostle, is a literal translation. So, in *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 7, 1: "Rabbi Jose

said, By the name Tetragrammaton, (i.e. יהוה Yehovah,) the higher and lower regions, the heavens, the earth, and all they contain, were perfected; and they are all before him reputed as nothing:— יהוה יהיה והוא יהיה והוא היה והוא יהיה vehu hayah, vehu hoveh, vehu yihyeh; and HE WAS, and HE IS, and HE WILL BE. So, in *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 3, fol. 105, 2: "The holy blessed God said to Moses, tell them:— אני שהייתי ואני הוא לעתיד לבוא ani shehayithi, veani hu achshaiu, veani hu laathid labo; I WAS, I NOW AM, and I WILL BE IN FUTURE."

In *Chasad Shimuel*, Rab. Samuel ben David asks: "Why are we commanded to use *three hours of prayer*? Answer: These hours point out the holy blessed God:- שהוה היה הוה ויהיה shehu hayah, hoveh, veyihyeh; he who WAS, who IS, and who SHALL BE. The MORNING prayer points out him who WAS before the foundation of the world; the NOONDAY prayer points out him who IS; and the EVENING prayer points out him who IS TO COME." This phraseology is exceedingly appropriate, and strongly expresses the *eternity* of God; for we have no other idea of *time* than as *past*, or *now existing*, or *yet to exist*; nor have we any idea of *eternity* but as that duration called by some *aeternitas a parte ante*, the eternity that was before time, and *aeternitas a parte post*, the endless duration that shall be when time is no more. That which WAS, is the eternity *before time*; that which IS, is *time itself*; and that which IS TO COME, is the eternity which shall be when *time is no more*.

**The seven Spirits-before his throne]** The ancient Jews, who represented the throne of God as the *throne of an eastern monarch*, supposed that there were *seven ministering angels* before this throne, as there were *seven ministers* attendant on the throne of a Persian monarch. We have an ample proof of this, **Tobit 12:15**: *I am Raphael, one of the SEVEN HOLY ANGELS which present the prayers of the saints, and which go in and out before the glory of the Holy One*. And in *Jonathan ben Uzziel's Targum*, on **#Ge 11:7**: *God said to the SEVEN ANGELS which stand before him, Come now, &c.*

In *Pirkey Eliezer*, iv. and vii: "The angels which were first created minister before him without the veil." Sometimes they represent them as *seven cohorts* or *troops of angels*, under whom are *thirty* inferior orders.

That *seven ANGELS* are here meant, and not the *Holy Spirit*, is most evident from the *place*, the *number*, and the *tradition*. Those who imagine the *Holy Ghost* to be intended suppose the number *seven* is used to denote his manifold *gifts* and *graces*. That these *seven spirits* are *angels*, see **#Re 3:1; 4:5**; and particularly **#Re 5:6**, where they are called *the seven spirits of God SENT FORTH INTO ALL THE EARTH*.

Verse 5. **The faithful witness]** The true teacher, whose testimony is infallible, and whose sayings must all come to pass.

**The first-begotten of the dead]** See Clarke's note on "Col 1:18".

**The prince of the kings]** ὁ ἀρχων, The *chief* or *head*, of all earthly potentates; who has them all under his dominion and control, and can dispose of them as he will.

**Unto him that loved us]** This should begin a new verse, as it is the commencement of a new subject. Our salvation is attributed to the love of God, who gave his Son; and to the love of Christ, who died for us. See #Joh 3:16.

**Washed us from our sins]** The redemption of the soul, with the remission of sins, and purification from unrighteousness, is here, as in all the New Testament, attributed to the *blood of Christ shed on the cross for man*.

Verse 6. **Kings and priests]** See on #1Pe 2:5, 9. But instead of βασιλεις και ιερεις, *kings and priests* the most reputable MSS., versions, and fathers have βασιλειαν ιερεις, *a kingdom and priests*; i.e. a kingdom of priests, or a royal priesthood. The *regal* and *sacerdotal dignities* are the two highest that can possibly exist among men; and these two are here mentioned to show the glorious prerogatives and state of the children of God.

**To him be glory]** That is, to Christ; for it is of him that the prophet speaks, and of none other.

**For ever and ever]** εις τους αιωνας των αιωνων. *To ages of ages*; or rather, *through all indefinite periods; through all time, and through eternity*.

**Amen.]** A word of *affirmation* and *approbation*; so it *shall* be, and so it *ought* to be.

Verse 7. **Behold, he cometh with clouds]** This relates to his coming to execute judgment on the enemies of his religion; perhaps to his coming to destroy Jerusalem, as he was to be particularly manifested to them that *pierced him*, which must mean the incredulous and rebellious Jews.

**And all kindreds of the earth]** πασαι αι φυλαι της γης. *All the tribes of the land*. By this the *Jewish people* are most evidently intended, and therefore the whole verse may be understood as predicting the destruction of the Jews; and is a presumptive proof that the Apocalypse was written *before* the final overthrow of the Jewish state.

**Even so, Amen.]** ναι αμην. *Yea, Amen. It is true, so be it*. Our Lord will come and execute judgment on the Jews and Gentiles. This the Jews and Romans particularly felt.

Verse 8. **I am Alpha and Omega]** I am from eternity to eternity. This mode of speech is borrowed from the Jews, who express the *whole compass of things* by א aleph and ט tau, the *first* and *last* letters of the *Hebrew* alphabet; but as St. John was writing in *Greek*, he accommodates the whole to the *Greek* alphabet, of which α alpha and ω omega are the first and last letters. With the rabbins ט רעד א מ meeleph vead tau, "from aleph to tau," expressed the whole of a matter, *from the beginning to the end*. So in *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 17, 4: *Adam transgressed the whole law from aleph to tau*; i.e., from the beginning to the end.

*Ibid.*, fol. 48, 4: *Abraham observed the law, from aleph to tau*; i.e., he kept it *entirely*, from *beginning to end*.

*Ibid.*, fol. 128, 3: *When the holy blessed God pronounced a blessing on the Israelites, he did it from aleph to tau; i.e., he did it perfectly.*

**The beginning and the ending]** That is, as *aleph* or *alpha* is the beginning of the alphabet, so am I the author and cause of all things; as *tau* or *omega* is the *end* or last letter of the alphabet, so am I the end of all things, the destroyer as well as the establisher of all things. This clause is wanting in almost every MS. and version of importance. It appears to have been added first as an explanatory note, and in process of time crept into the text. Griesbach has left it out of the text. It is worthy of remark, that as the union of א *aleph* and ט *tau* in Hebrew make אט *eth*, which the rabbins interpret of the *first matter* out of which all things were formed, (see Clarke on "Ge 1:1"); so the union of α *alpha* and ω *omega*, in Greek, makes the verb αω, *I breathe*, and may very properly, in such a symbolical book, point out Him in whom we *live*, and *move*, and have our *being*; for, having formed man out of the dust of the earth, he *breathed* into his nostrils the *breath* of *life*, and he became a *living soul*; and it is by the *inspiration* or *inbreathing* of his Spirit that the souls of men are quickened, made alive from the dead, and fitted for life eternal. He adds also that he is the *Almighty*, the *all-powerful framer of the universe*, and the *inspirer of men*.

Verse 9. **Your brother]** A Christian, begotten of God, and incorporated in the heavenly *family*.

**Companion in tribulation]** Suffering under the persecution in which you also suffer.

**In the kingdom]** For we are a kingdom of priests unto God.

**And patience of Jesus]** Meekly bearing all indignities, privations, and sufferings, for the sake and after the example of our Lord and Master.

**The isle that is called Patmos]** This island is one of the *Sporades*, and lies in the *Ægean Sea*, between the island of *Icaria*, and the promontory of *Miletus*. It is now called *Pactino*, *Patmol*, or *Palmosa*. It has derived all its celebrity from being the place to which St. John was banished by one of the Roman emperors; whether *Domitian*, *Claudius*, or *Nero*, is not agreed on, but it was most probably the latter. The island has a convent on a well fortified hill, dedicated to John the apostle; the inhabitants are said to amount to about three hundred men, and about twenty women to one man. It is very barren, producing very little grain, but abounding in partridges, quails, turtles, pigeons, snipes, and rabbits. It has many good harbours, and is much infested by pirates. *Patmos*, its capital and chief harbour, lies in *east* LONG. 26° 24', *north* LAT. 37° 24'. The whole island is about thirty miles in circumference.

**For the testimony of Jesus Christ.]** For preaching Christianity, and converting heathens to the Lord Jesus.

Verse 10. **I was in the Spirit]** That is, I received the Spirit of prophecy, and was under its influence when the first vision was exhibited.

**The Lord's day]** The first day of the week, observed as the Christian Sabbath, because on it Jesus Christ rose from the dead; therefore it was called *the Lord's day*, and has taken place of the Jewish Sabbath throughout the Christian world.

**And heard behind me a great voice]** This voice came *unexpectedly* and *suddenly*. He felt himself under the Divine afflatus; but did not know what scenes were to be represented.

**As of a trumpet]** This was calculated to call in every wandering thought, to fix his attention, and solemnize his whole frame. Thus God prepared Moses to receive the law. See #Ex 19:16, 19, &c.

Verse 11. **I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and]** This whole clause is wanting in ABC, thirty-one others; some editions; the *Syriac, Coptic, Æthiopic, Armenian, Slavonic, Vulgate, Arethas, Andreas, and Primasius*. Griesbach has left it out of the text.

**Saying-What thou seest, write in a book]** Carefully note down every thing that is represented to thee. John had the visions from heaven; but he described them in his own language and manner.

**Send it unto the seven Churches]** The names of which immediately follow. *In Asia*. This is wanting in the principal MSS. and *versions*. *Griesbach* has left it out of the text.

**Ephesus]** This was a city of Ionia, in Asia Minor, situated at the mouth of the river *Cayster*, on the shore of the *Ægean Sea*, about fifty miles south of *Smyrna*. See *preface* to the Epistle to the *Ephesians*.

**Smyrna]** Now called also *Ismir*, is the largest and richest city of Asia Minor. It is situated about one hundred and eighty-three miles west by south of *Constantinople*, on the shore of the *Ægean Sea*. It is supposed to contain about one hundred and forty thousand inhabitants, of whom there are from fifteen to twenty thousand Greeks, six thousand Armenians, five thousand Roman Catholics, one hundred and forty Protestants, eleven thousand Jews, and fifteen thousand Turks. It is a beautiful city, but often ravaged by the plague, and seldom two years together free from earthquakes. In 1758 the city was nearly desolated by the plague; scarcely a sufficient number of the inhabitants survived to gather in the fruits of the earth. In 1688 there was a terrible earthquake here, which overthrew a great number of houses; in one of the shocks, the rock on which the castle stood opened, swallowed up the castle and five thousand persons! On these accounts, nothing but the *love of gain*, so natural to man, could induce any person to make it his residence; though, in other respects, it can boast of many advantages. In this city the *Turks* have nineteen mosques; the *Greeks*, two churches; the *Armenians*, one; and the *Jews*, eight synagogues; and the *English* and *Dutch* factories have each a chaplain. Smyrna is one hundred miles north of the island of Rhodes, long. 27° 25' E., lat. 38° 28' N.

**Pergamos]** A town of Mysia, situated on the river *Caicus*. It was the royal residence of *Eumenes*, and the kings of the race of the *Attali*. It was anciently famous for its library, which contained, according to Plutarch, two hundred thousand volumes. It was here that the *membranæ Pergamenia*, Pergamenian skins, were invented; from which we derive our word *parchment*. Pergamos was the

birthplace of *Galen*; and in it *P. Scipio* died. It is now called *Pergamo* and *Bergamo*, and is situated in long. 27° 0' E., lat. 39° 13' N.

**Thyatira]** Now called *Akissat* and *Ak-kissar*, a city of Natolia, in Asia Minor, seated on the river *Hermus*, in a plain eighteen miles broad, and is about fifty miles from *Pergamos*; long. 27° 49' E., lat. 38° 16' N. The houses are chiefly built of earth, but the mosques are all of marble. Many remarkable ancient inscriptions have been discovered in this place.

**Sardis]** Now called *Sardo* and *Sart*, a town of Asia, in Natolia, about forty miles east from Smyrna. It is seated on the side of mount *Tmolus*, and was once the capital of the *Lydian kings*, and here *Cræsus* reigned. It is now a poor, inconsiderable village. Long. 28° 5' E., lat. 37° 51' N.

**Philadelphia]** A city of Natolia, seated at the foot of mount *Tmolus*, by the river *Cogamus*. It was founded by *Attalus Philadelphus*, brother of *Eumenes*, from whom it derived its name. It is now called *Alah-sheker*, and is about forty miles ESE. of Smyrna. Long. 28° 15' E., lat. 38° 28' N.

**Laodicea]** A town of Phrygia, on the river *Lycus*; first called *Diospolis*, or the city of Jupiter. It was built by Antiochus Theos, and named after his consort *Laodice*. See **Clarke's note on "Col 2:1"**. And, for a very recent account of these seven Churches, see a letter from the Rev. **Henry Lindsay**, inserted at the end of see **Clarke "Re 3:22"**.

Verse 12. And I turned For he had heard the voice behind him. *To see the voice*; i.e., the person from whom the voice came.

**Seven golden candlesticks]** ἑπτα λυχνίας χρυσαῖς *Seven golden lamps*. It is absurd to say, a golden silver, or brazen candlestick. These seven lamps represented the *seven Churches*, in which the *light* of God was continually *shining*, and the *love* of God continually *burning*. And they are here represented as *golden*, to show how precious they were in the sight of God. This is a reference to the temple at Jerusalem, where there was a *candlestick* or *chandelier* of *seven branches*; or rather six branches; three springing out on either side, and *one* in the centre. See **#Ex 25:31-37**. This reference to the temple seems to intimate that the temple of Jerusalem was a type of the whole Christian Church.

Verse 13. **Like unto the Son of man]** This seems a reference to **#Da 7:13**. This was our blessed Lord himself, **#Re 1:18**.

**Clothed with a garment down to the foot]** This is a description of the *high priest*, in his sacerdotal robes. See these described at large in the notes on **#Ex 28:4**, &c., Jesus is our high priest, even in heaven. He is still discharging the sacerdotal functions before the throne of God.

**Golden girdle.]** The emblem both of *regal* and *sacerdotal* dignity.

Verse 14. **His head and his hairs were white like wool]** This was not only an emblem of his *antiquity*, but it was the evidence of his *glory*; for the *whiteness* or splendour of his head and hair doubtless proceeded from the *rays of light* and *glory* which encircled his head, and darted from it in

all directions. The *splendour* around the head was termed by the Romans *nimbus*, and by us a *glory*; and was represented round the heads of gods, deified persons, and saints. It is used in the same way through almost all the nations of the earth.

**His eyes were as a flame of fire]** To denote his omniscience, and the all-penetrating nature of the Divine knowledge.

Verse 15. **His feet like unto fine brass]** An emblem of his *stability* and *permanence*, *brass* being considered the most durable of all metallic substances or compounds.

The original word, *χαλκολιβανον*, means the famous *aurichalcum*, or factitious metal, which, according to *Suidas*, was *ειδος ηλεκτρου, τιμωτερον χρυσου*, "a kind of amber, more precious than gold." It seems to have been a composition of gold, silver, and brass, and the same with the *Corinthian brass*, so highly famed and valued; for when Lucius Mummius took and burnt the city of Corinth, many statues of these three metals, being melted, had run together, and formed the composition already mentioned, and which was held in as high estimation as gold. See *Pliny*, *Hist. Nat.*, lib. 34, c. 2; *Florus*, lib. 2, c. 16. It may however mean no more than *copper* melted with *lapis calaminaris*, which converts it into *brass*; and the flame that proceeds from the metal during this operation is one of the most intensely and unsufferably *vivid* that can be imagined. I have often seen several furnaces employed in this operation, and the flames bursting up through the earth (for these furnaces are under ground) always called to remembrance this description given by St. John: His feet of fine brass, *as if they burned in a furnace*; the propriety and accuracy of which none could doubt, and every one must feel who has viewed this most dazzling operation.

**His voice as the sound of many waters.]** The same description we find in **#Eze 43:2**: *The glory of the God of Israel came from the way of the east*; and his voice was like the noise of many waters: *and the earth shined with his glory*.

Verse 16. **In his right hand seven stars]** The *stars* are afterwards interpreted as representing the *seven angels*, messengers, or bishops of the *seven Churches*. Their being in the *right hand* of Christ shows that they are under his special care and most powerful protection. See below.

**Out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword]** This is no doubt intended to point out the *judgments* about to be *pronounced* by Christ against the rebellious *Jews* and persecuting *Romans*; God's judgments were just now going to fall upon *both*. The *sharp two-edged sword* may represent the *word of God* in general, according to that saying of the apostle, **#Heb 4:12**: *The word of God is quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, &c.* And the *word of God* is termed *the sword of the Spirit*, **#Eph 6:17**.

**And his countenance was as the sun shineth in his strength.]** His face was like the disk of the sun in the brightest summer's day, when there were no clouds to abate the splendour of his rays. A similar form of expression is found in **#Jud 5:31**: *Let them that love him be as the sun when he GOETH FORTH IN HIS MIGHT*. And a similar description may be found, *Midrash in Yalcut Simeoni*, part I., fol. 55, 4: "When Moses and Aaron came and stood before Pharaoh, they appeared like the *ministering angels*; and their stature, like the cedars of Lebanon:—

וגלגלי עיניהם דומים לגלגלי חמה vegalgilley eyneyhem domim legalgilley chammah, and the pupils of their eyes were like the wheels of the sun; and their beards were as the grape of the palm trees:— וזיו פניהם כזיו חמה veziv peneyhem keziv chammah, and the SPLENDOUR of THEIR FACES was as the SPLENDOUR of the SUN."

Verse 17. **I fell at his feet as dead.**] The appearance of the *glory* of the Lord had then same effect upon Ezekiel, #Eze 1:28: and the appearance of Gabriel had the same effect on Daniel, #Da 8:17. The terrible splendour of such majesty was more than the apostle could bear, and he fell down deprived of his senses, but was soon enabled to behold the vision by a communication of strength from our Lord's right hand.

Verse 18. I am **he that liveth, and was dead**] I am Jesus the Saviour, who, though the fountain of life, have died for mankind; and being raised from the dead I shall die no more, the great sacrifice being consummated. *And have the keys of death and the grave*, so that I can destroy the living and raise the dead. The *key* here signifies the *power* and authority over life, death, and the grave. This is also a rabbinical form of speech. In the Jerusalem *Targum*, on #Ge 30:22, are these words: "There are four KEYS in the hand of God which he never trusts to angel or seraph. 1. The *key* of the *rain*; 2. The *key* of *provision*; 3. The *key* of the *grave*; and 4. The *key* of the *barren womb*."

In *Sanhedrin*, fol. 113, 1, it is said: "When the son of the woman of Sarepta died, Elijah requested that to him might be given the *key* of the *resurrection of the dead*. They said to him, there are *three* KEYS which are not given into the hand of the apostle, the *key* of *life*, the *key* of the *rain*, and the *key* of the *resurrection of the dead*." From these examples it is evident that we should understand *αδης*, *hades*, here, not as *hell*, nor the place of *separate spirits*, but merely as the *grave*; and the *key* we *find* to be merely the emblem of *power* and *authority*. Christ can both *save* and *destroy*, can *kill* and make *alive*. Death is still under his dominion, and he can recall the dead whensoever he pleases. He is the resurrection and the life.

Verse 19. **Write the things which thou hast seen**] These visions and prophecies are for general instruction, and therefore every circumstance must be faithfully recorded. What he *had seen* was to be written; what he *was about to see*, relative to the seven Churches, must be also written; and what he was *to see afterwards*, concerning other Churches and states, to be recorded likewise.

Verse 20. **The mystery**] That is, the *allegorical* explanation of the *seven stars* is the *seven angels* or ministers of the Churches; and the allegorical meaning of the *seven golden lamps* is the *seven Churches* themselves.

1. IN the *seven stars* there may be an allusion to the *seals* of different offices under potentates, each of which had its *own particular seal*, which verified all instruments from that office; and as these seals were frequently set in *rings* which were worn on the fingers, there may be an allusion to those *brilliants* set in rings, and worn *επι της δεξιας*, UPON the right hand. In #Jer 22:24, Coniah is represented as a *signet* on the right hand of the Lord; and that such signets were in *rings* see #Ge 38:18, 25; #Ex 18:11; #Da 6:17, #Hag 2:23. On close examination we shall find that all the *symbols* in this book have their foundation either in *nature*, *fact*, *custom*, or *general opinion*. One of the cutchery seals of the late *Tippoo Saib*, with which he stamped all the commissions of that office, lies

now before me; it is cut on *silver*, in the *Taaleck* character, and the piece of silver is set in a large *gold ring*, heavy, but roughly manufactured.

2. The *Churches* are represented by these lamps; they hold the *oil* and the *fire*, and dispense the *light*. A lamp is not *light in itself*, it is only the *instrument* of dispensing light, and it must receive both *oil* and *fire* before it can dispense any; so no Church has in itself either *grace* or *glory*, it must receive all from Christ its head, else it can dispense neither light nor life.

3. The ministers of the Gospel are *signets* or *seals* of Jesus Christ; he uses them to *stamp* his truth, to *accredit* it, and give it *currency*. But as a seal can mark nothing of itself unless applied by a proper hand, so the ministers of Christ can do no good, *seal no truth, impress no soul*, unless the great owner condescend to use them.

4. How careful should the Church be that it have the *oil* and the *light*, that it continue to *burn* and send forth Divine knowledge! In vain does any Church pretend to be a Church of Christ if it dispense no light; if souls are not enlightened, quickened, and converted in it. If Jesus walk in it, its light will shine both *clearly* and *strongly*, and sinners will be converted unto him; and the members of that Church will be children of the light, and walk as children of the light and of the day, and there will be no occasion of stumbling in them.

5. How careful should the ministers of Christ be that they *proclaim* nothing as truth, and *accredit* nothing as truth, but what comes from their master!

They should also take heed lest, after having preached to others, themselves should be cast-aways; lest God should say unto them as he said of Coniah, *As I live, saith the Lord, though Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim, were the SIGNET UPON MY RIGHT HAND, yet would I pluck thee thence.*

On the other hand, if they be faithful, their labour shall not be in vain, and their safety shall be great. He that toucheth them toucheth the apple of God's eye, and none shall be able to pluck them out of his hand. they are the angels and ambassadors of the Lord; their persons are sacred; they are the messengers of the Churches, and the glory of Christ. Should they lose their lives in the work, it will be only a speedier entrance into an eternal glory.

The *rougher* the way, the *shorter* their stay,  
The troubles that rise  
Shall gloriously *hurry* their souls to the skies.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER II.

*The epistle to the Church of Ephesus, commending their labour and patience, 1-3. And, reprehending their having left their first love, exhorting them to repent, with the promise of the tree of life, 4-7. The epistle to the Church of Smyrna, commending their piety, and promising them support in their tribulation, 8-11. The epistle to the Church of Pergamos, commending their steadfastness in the heavenly doctrine, 12, 13. And reprehending their laxity in ecclesiastical discipline, in tolerating heretical teachers in the Church, 14, 15. The apostle exhorts them to repent, with the promise of the white stone and a new name, 16, 17. The epistle to the Church of Thyatira, with a commendation of their charity, faith, and patience, 18, 19. Reprehending their toleration of Jezebel, the false prophetess, who is threatened with grievous punishment, 20-23. Particular exhortations and promises to this Church, 24-29.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. II.

I must here advertise my readers, 1. That I do not perceive any metaphorical or allegorical meaning in the epistles to these Churches. 2. I consider the Churches as real; and that their spiritual state is here really and literally pointed out; and that they have no reference to the state of the Church of Christ in all ages of the world, as has been imagined; and that the notion of what has been termed the Ephesian state, the Smyrnian state, the Pergamenian state, the Thyatirian state, &c., &c., is unfounded, absurd, and dangerous; and such expositions should not be entertained by any who wish to arrive at a sober and rational knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. 3. I consider the angel of the Church as signifying the messenger, the pastor, sent by Christ and his apostles to teach and edify that Church. 4. I consider what is spoken to this angel as spoken to the whole Church; and that it is not *his* particular state that is described, but the states of the *people* in general under his care.

#### *The epistle to the Church at Ephesus.*

Verse 1. **Unto the angel of the Church of Ephesus]** By *αγγελος*, *angel*, we are to understand the *messenger* or person sent by God to preside over this Church; and to him the epistle is directed, not as pointing out his state, but the state of the Church under his care. *Angel of the Church* here answers exactly to that officer of the synagogue among the Jews called *שליח ציבור* *sheliach tsibbur*, the messenger of the Church, whose business it was to *read*, *pray*, and *teach* in the synagogue. The Church at Ephesus is *first* addressed, as being the place where John chiefly resided; and the city itself was the metropolis of that part of Asia. The angel or bishop at this time was most probably *Timothy*, who presided over that Church before St. John took up his residence there, and who is supposed to have continued in that office till A.D. 97, and to have been martyred a short time before St. John's return from Patmos.

**Holdeth the seven stars]** Who particularly preserves, and guides, and upholds, not only the ministers of those seven Churches, but all the genuine ministers of his Gospel, in all ages and places.

**Walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks]** Is the supreme Bishop and Head, not only of those Churches, but of all the Churches or congregations of his people throughout the world.

Verse 2. **I know thy works]** For the eyes of the Lord are throughout the earth, beholding the evil and the good; and, being omnipresent, all things are continually open and naked before him. It is worthy of remark, that whatsoever is *praiseworthy* in any of these Churches is *first* mentioned; thereby intimating that God is more intent on finding out the good than the evil in any person or Church; and that those who wish to reform such as have fallen or are not making sufficient advances in the Divine life, should take occasion, from the good which yet remains, to encourage them to set out afresh for the kingdom of heaven. The fallen or backsliding who have any tenderness of conscience left are easily discouraged, and are apt to think that there is no seed left from which any harvest can be reasonably expected. Let such be told that there is still a seed of godliness remaining, and that it requires only watching and strengthening the things which *remain*, by prompt application to God through Christ, in order to bring them back to the full enjoyment of all they have lost, and to renew them in the spirit of their mind. Ministers continually harping on *Ye are dead, ye are dead; there is little or no Christianity among you, &c., &c.*, are a contagion in a Church, and spread desolation and death wheresoever they go. It is far better to say, in such cases, "Ye have *lost ground*, but ye have not lost *all your ground*; ye might have been much farther advanced, but through mercy ye are still in the *way*. The Spirit of God is grieved by you, but it is evident he has not forsaken you. Ye have not walked in the light as ye should, but your candlestick is not yet removed, and still the light shines. Ye have not *much zeal*, but ye have a *little*. In short, God still strives with you, still loves you, still waits to be gracious to you; take courage, set out afresh, come to God through Christ; believe, love, obey, and you will soon find days more blessed than you have ever yet experienced." Exhortations and encouragements of this kind are sure to produce the most blessed effects; and under such the work of God infallibly revives.

**And thy labour]** He knew their *works* in general. Though they had left their *first love*, yet still they had so much love as excited them to *labour*, and enabled them to *bear persecution patiently*, and to keep the faith; for they could not tolerate *evil men*, and they had put fictitious *apostles* to the *test*, and had found them to be *liars*, pretending a Divine commission while they had none, and teaching false doctrines as if they were the truths of God.

Verse 3. **And hast borne]** The same things mentioned in the preceding verse, but in an *inverted* order, the particular reason of which does not appear; perhaps it was intended to show more *forcibly* to this Church that there was no good which they had done, nor evil which they had suffered, that was forgotten before God.

**And hast not fainted.]** They must therefore have had a considerable portion of this love remaining, else they could not have thus acted.

Verse 4. **Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee]** The clause should be read, according to the Greek, thus: *But I have against thee that thou hast left thy first love*. They did not retain that strong and ardent affection for God and sacred things which they had when first brought to the knowledge of the truth, and justified by faith in Christ.

Verse 5. **Remember]** Consider the state of grace in which you once stood; the happiness, love, and joy which you felt when ye received remission of sins; the zeal ye had for God's glory and the salvation of mankind; your willing, obedient spirit, your cheerful self-denial, your fervour in private prayer, your detachment from the world, and your heavenly-mindedness. *Remember*-consider, all these.

**Whence thou art fallen]** Fallen from all those blessed dispositions and gracious feelings already mentioned. Or, *remember what a loss you have sustained*; for so [εκπιπτελυ](#) is frequently used by the best Greek writers.

**Repent]** Be deeply humbled before God for having so carelessly guarded the Divine treasure.

**Do the first works]** Resume your former zeal and diligence; watch, fast, pray, reprove sin, carefully attend all the ordinances of God, walk as in his sight, and rest not till you have recovered all your lost ground, and got back the evidence of your acceptance with your Maker.

**I will come unto thee quickly]** In the way of judgment.

**And will remove thy candlestick]** Take away my ordinances, remove your ministers, and send you a famine of the word. As there is here an allusion to the candlestick in the tabernacle and temple, which could not be removed without suspending the whole Levitical service, so the threatening here intimates that, if they did not repent, &c., he would *unchurch* them; they should no longer have a pastor, no longer have the word and sacraments, and no longer have the presence of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 6. **The deeds of the Nicolaitanes]** These were, as is commonly supposed, a sect of the *Gnostics*, who taught the most impure doctrines, and followed the most impure practices. They are also supposed to have derived their origin from Nicolas, one of the seven deacons mentioned [#Ac 6:5](#), where see the note. The *Nicolaitanes* taught the community of wives, that adultery and fornication were things indifferent, that eating meats offered to idols was quite lawful; and mixed several pagan rites with the Christian ceremonies. Augustine, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, and Tertullian, have spoken largely concerning them. See more in my preface to 2d Peter, where are several particulars concerning these heretics.

Verse 7. **He that hath an ear]** Let every intelligent person, and every Christian man, attend carefully to what the Holy Spirit, in this and the following epistles, says to the Churches. **See Clarke's note on "Mt 11:15"**, where the same form of speech occurs.

**To him that overcometh]** To him who continues steadfast in the faith, and uncorrupt in his life; who faithfully confesses Jesus, and neither imbibes the doctrines nor is led away by the error of the wicked; *will I give to eat of the tree of life*. As he who conquered his enemies had, generally, not only great *honour*, but also a *reward*; so here a great reward is promised [τω ζικωντι](#), *to the conqueror*: and as in the Grecian games, to which there may be an allusion, the conqueror was crowned with the leaves of some *tree*; here it is promised that they should *eat of the fruit of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God*; that is, that they should have a happy and glorious immortality. There is also here an allusion to [#Ge 2:9](#), where it is said, *God made the tree of life to grow out of*

*the midst of the garden*; and it is very likely that by eating the fruit of this tree the immortality of Adam was secured, and on this it was made dependent. When Adam transgressed, he was expelled from this garden, and no more permitted to eat of the tree of life; hence he became necessarily mortal. This tree, in all its sacramental effects, is secured and restored to man by the incarnation, death, and resurrection of Christ. The *tree of life* is frequently spoken of by the rabbins; and by it they generally mean the immortality of the soul, and a final state of blessedness. See many examples in *Schoettgen*. They talk also of a *celestial* and *terrestrial paradise*. The former, they say, "is for the reception of the souls of the *just perfect*; and differs as much from the earthly paradise as light from darkness."

*The Epistle to the Church at Smyrna.*

Verse 8. **Unto the angel]** This was probably the famous Polycarp. See below.

**These things saith the first and the last]** He who is *eternal*; from whom all things come, and to whom all things must return. *Which was dead*, for the redemption of the world; *and is alive* to die no more for ever, his glorified humanity being enthroned at the Father's right hand.

Verse 9. **I know thy works]** As he had spoken to the preceding Church, so he speaks to this: I know all that ye have *done*, and all that ye have *suffered*. The *tribulation* here mentioned must mean persecution, either from the Jews, the heathens, or from the heretics, who, because of their flesh-pampering doctrines might have had many partisans at Smyrna.

**And poverty]** Stripped probably of all their temporal possessions, because of their attachment to the Gospel.

**But thou art rich]** Rich in faith, and heir of the kingdom of Christ.

**The blasphemy of them which say they are Jews]** There were persons there who professed *Judaism*, and had a synagogue in the place, and professed to worship the true God; but they had no genuine religion, and they served the devil rather than God. They applied a sacred name to an unholy thing: and this is one meaning of the word *blasphemy* in this book.

Verse 10. **Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer]** This may be addressed particularly to *Polycarp*, if he was at that time the bishop of this Church. He had much to suffer; and was at last burnt alive at Smyrna, about the year of our Lord 166. We have a very ancient account of his martyrdom, which has been translated by *Cave*, and is worthy of the reader's perusal. That account states that the *Jews* were particularly active in this martyrdom, and brought the fagots, &c., by which he was consumed. Such persons must indeed have been of *the synagogue of Satan*.

**Ten days]** As the *days* in this book are what is commonly called *prophetic days*, each answering to a *year*, the *ten years* of tribulation may denote *ten years of persecution*; and this was precisely the duration of the persecution under *Diocletian*, during which all the Asiatic Churches were grievously afflicted. Others understand the expression as implying *frequency* and *abundance*, as it does in other parts of Scripture. #Ge 31:7, 41: *Thou hast changed my wages TEN TIMES*; i.e. thou hast *frequently*

changed my wages #Nu 14:22: *Those men have tempted me now these TEN TIMES*; i.e. they have frequently and grievously tempted and sinned against me. #Ne 4:12: *The Jews that dwelt by them came and said unto us TEN TIMES*, i.e. they were frequently coming and informing us, that our adversaries intended to attack us, #Job 19:3; *These TEN TIMES have ye reproached me*; i.e. ye have loaded me with continual reproaches. #Da 1:20: *In all matters of wisdom, he found them TEN TIMES better than all the magicians*; i.e. the king frequently consulted Daniel and his companions, and found them more abundantly informed and wise than all his counsellors.

Some think the *shortness* of the affliction is here intended, and that the ten days are to be understood as in Terence, *Heaut.*, Act v., scen. 1, ver. 36, *Decem dierum vis mi est familia*. "I have enjoyed my family but a *short* time."

**Be thou faithful unto death]** Be firm, hold fast the faith, confess Christ to the last, and at all hazards, and thou shalt have a *crown of life*-thou shalt be crowned with life, have an eternal happy existence, though thou suffer a temporal death. It is said of *Polycarp* that when brought before the judge, and commanded to abjure and blaspheme Christ, he firmly answered, "Eighty and six years have I served him, and he never did me wrong, how then can I blaspheme my king who hath saved me?" He was then adjudged to the flames, and suffered cheerfully for Christ his Lord and Master.

Verse 11. **He that overcometh]** The *conqueror* who has stood firm in every trial, and vanquished all his adversaries.

**Shall not be hurt of the second death.]** That is, an eternal separation from God and the glory of his power; as what we commonly mean by *final perdition*. This is another rabbinical mode of speech in very frequent use, and by it they understand the punishment of hell in a future life.

#### *The Epistle to the Church at Pergamos.*

Verse 12. **The angel of the Church in Pergamos]** See the description of this place, #Re 1:11.

**Which hath the sharp sword]** See Clarke on "Re 1:16". The *sword of the Spirit*, which is the *word of God*, cuts every way; it convinces of sin, righteousness, and judgment; pierces between the joints and the marrow, divides between the soul and spirit, dissects the whole mind, and exhibits a regular anatomy of the soul. It not only reproves and exposes sin, but it slays the ungodly, pointing out and determining the punishment they shall endure. Jesus has the sword with the two edges, because he is the Saviour of sinners, and the Judge of quick and dead.

Verse 13. **Where Satan's seat is]** ὅπου ο θρονος του σατανα· *Where Satan has his throne*-where he *reigns* as king, and is universally obeyed. It was a maxim among the Jews, that where the law of God was *not* studied, there Satan dwelt; but he was obliged to leave the place where a synagogue or academy was established.

**Thou holdest fast my name]** Notwithstanding that the profession of *Christianity* exposed this Church to the bitterest persecution, they held fast the name of *Christian*, which they had received

from Jesus Christ, and *did not deny his faith*; for when brought to the trial they openly professed themselves disciples and followers of their Lord and Master.

**Antipas was my faithful martyr]** Who this *Antipas* was we cannot tell. We only know that he was a *Christian*, and probably bore some office in the Church, and became illustrious by his martyrdom in the cause of Christ. There is a work extant called *The Acts of Antipas*, which makes him bishop of Pergamos, and states that he was put to death by being enclosed in a burning brazen bull. But this story confutes itself, as the Romans, under whose government Pergamos then was, never put any person to death in this way. It is supposed that he was murdered by some mob, who chose this way to vindicate the honour of their god *Æsculapius*, in opposition to the claims of our Lord Jesus.

Verse 14. **I have a few things against thee]** Their *good deeds* are first carefully sought out and commended; what was *wrong* in them is touched with a gentle but effectual hand.

The followers of Balaam, the Nicolaitanes, and the Gnostics, were probably all the same kind of persons; but see **Clarke on "Re 2:6"**. What the doctrine of Balaam was, see the notes on **#Nu 24:1-25:18; 31:1-54**. It appears that there were some then in the Church at Pergamos who held eating things offered to idols in honour of those idols, and fornication, indifferent things. They associated with idolaters in the heathen temples, and partook with them in their religious festivals.

Verse 15. **The doctrine of the Nicolaitanes]** See **Clarke on "Re 2:6"**.

Verse 16. **Will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.]** See **Clarke on "Re 2:12"**. He now speaks for their edification and salvation; but if they do not repent, he will shortly declare those judgments which shall unavoidably fall upon them.

Verse 17. **The hidden manna]** It was a constant tradition of the Jews that the ark of the covenant, the tables of stone, Aaron's rod, the holy anointing oil, and the pot of manna, were *hidden* by King Josiah when Jerusalem was taken by the Chaldeans; and that these shall all be restored in the days of the Messiah. This *manna* was *hidden*, but Christ promises to give it to him that is conqueror. Jesus is the ark, the oil, the rod, the testimony, and the manna. He who is partaker of his grace has all those things in their spiritual meaning and perfection.

**And will give him a white stone]** I. It is supposed that by the white stone is meant *pardon* or *acquittance*, and the evidence of it; and that there is an allusion here to the custom observed by judges in ancient times, who were accustomed to give their suffrages by *white* and *black* pebbles; those who gave the former were for *absolving* the culprit, those who gave the latter were for his *condemnation*. This is mentioned by Ovid, *Metam. lib. xv., ver. 41*:

Mos erat antiquus, niveis atrisque lapillis,  
His damnare reos, illis absolvere culpa.  
Nunc quoque sic lata est sententia tristis.

"A custom was of old, and still remains,  
Which life or death by suffrages ordains:  
*White stones* and *black* within an *urn* are cast,  
The *first absolve*, but *fate* is in the *last*."  
DRYDEN.

II. Others suppose there is an allusion here to conquerors in the public games, who were not only conducted with great pomp into the city to which they belonged, but had a *white stone* given to them, with *their name inscribed on it*; which badge entitled them, during their whole life, to be maintained at the public expense. See *Pind.*, *Olymp.* vii. 159, and the *Scholia* there; and see the collections in *Wetstein*, and *Rosenmuller's* note. These were called *tesseræ* among the Romans, and of these there were several kinds.

1. *Tesseræ conviviales*, which answered exactly to our *cards of invitation*, or tickets of admission to a public feast or banquet; when the person invited produced his *tessera* he was admitted. The mention of the *hidden manna* here may seem to intimate that there is a reference to these *convivial tesseraæ*, whether given to the victor in the public games, entitling him to be fed at the public expense, or to a particular friend, inviting him to a family meal or to a public banquet.

2. There were *tesseræ* inscribed with different kinds of things, such as provisions, garments, gold or silver vessels, horses, mares, slaves, &c. These were sometimes thrown by the Roman emperors among the crowd in the theatres, and he that could snatch one; and on producing it he received that, the name of which was inscribed on it. But from *Dio Cassius* it appears that those *tesseræ* were small wooden balls, whereas the *tesseræ* in general were *square*, whence they had their name, as having *four sides, angles, or corners*. Illi τεσσαρην, vel τεσσαραν, vocabant figuram quamvis quadratam, quæ quatuor angulos haberet; and these were made of *stone, marble, bone, or ivory, lead, brass, or other metal*. See *Pitiscus*.

3. *Tesseræ frumentariæ*, or tickets to receive grain in the public distributions of corn; the *name* of the person who was to receive, and the *quantum* of grain; being both *inscribed* on this badge or ticket. Those who did not need this public provision for themselves were permitted to sell their ticket, and the *bearer* was entitled to the quantum of grain mentioned on it.

4. But the most remarkable of these instruments were the *tesseræ hospitales*, which were given as badges of *friendship* and *alliance*, and on which some device was engraved, as a testimony that a contract of friendship had been made between the parties. A small oblong square piece of wood, bone, stone, or ivory, was taken and divided into two equal parts, on which each of the parties wrote his own name, and then interchanged it with the other. This was carefully preserved, and handed down even to posterity in the same family; and by producing this when they travelled, it gave a mutual claim to the bearers of kind reception and hospitable entertainment at each other's houses.

It is to this custom that *Plautus* refers in his *POENULUS*, act. v., scen. 2, ver. 80, in the interview between *Agorastocles*, and his unknown uncle *Hanno*.

HANNO.—O mi popularis, salve!

AGORASTOCLES.—Et tu edepol, quisquis es.

Et si quid opus est, quæso, die atque impera,  
Popularitatis caussa.

HAN.—Habeo gratiam.

Verum ego hic hospitium habeo: Antidamæ filium

Quæro; commonstra, si novisti, Agorastoclem.

Ecquem adolescentem tu hic novisti Agorastoclem?

AGOR.—Siquidem tu Antidamarchi quæris adoptatitium,

Ego sum ipsus, quem tu quæris.

HAN.—Hem! quid ego audio?

AGOR.—Antidamæ gnatum me esse.

HAN.—si ita est, *tesseram*

Conferre si vis *hospitalem*, eccam adtuli.

AGOR.—Agedum huc ostende; est par probe: nam habeo domi.

HAN.—O mi hospes, salve multum! nam mihi tuus pater,

Pater tuus ergo, hospes Antidamas fuit.

Hæc mihi *hospitalis tessera* cum illo fuit.

AGOR.—Ergo hic apud me hospitium tibi præbebitur.

Nam haud repudio hospitium, neque Carthaginem:

Inde sum oriundus.

HAN.—Di dent tibi omnes quæ velis.

HANNO.-Hail, my countryman!

AGORASTOCLES.-I hail thee also, in the name of Pollux, whosoever thou art. And if thou have need of any thing, speak, I beseech thee; and thou shalt obtain what thou askest, for civility's sake.

HANNO.-I thank thee, but I have a lodging here; I seek the son of Antidamas. Tell me if thou knowest Agorastocles. Dost thou know in this place the young Agorastocles?

AGORASTOCLES.-If thou seek the adopted son of Antidamarchus, I am the person whom thou seekest.

HANNO.-Ha! What do I hear?

AGORASTOCLES.-Thou hearest that *I am* the son of Antidamas.

HANNO.-If it be so, compare, if thou pleasest, the *hospitable tessera*; here it is, I have brought it with me.

AGORASTOCLES.-Come then, reach it hither: it is the exact counterpart; I have the other at home.

HANNO.-O my friend, I am very glad to see thee, for thy father was my friend; therefore Antidamas thy father was my guest. I divided *this hospitable tessera* with him.

AGORASTOCLES.-Therefore, a lodging shall be provided for thee with me; I reverence hospitality, and I love Carthage, where I was born.

HANNO.-May all the gods grant thee whatsoever thou wishest!

The *tessera* taken in this sense, seems to have been a kind of *tally*; and the two parts were compared together to ascertain the truth. Now it is very probable that St. John may allude to this; for on this mode of interpretation every part of the verse is consistent. 1. The word ψηφος does not necessarily signify a *stone* of any kind, but a suffrage, sentence, decisive vote; and in this place seems answerable to the *tessera*. The *tessera* which Hanno had, he tells us in his *Punic* language, was inscribed with the image or name of his god. "*Sigillum hospitii mei est tabula sculpta, conjus sculptura est Deus meus*. This is the interpretation of the Punic words at the beginning of the above 5th act of the *Pænulus*, as given by *Bochart*. 2. The person who held it had a right to entertainment in the house of him who originally gave it; for it was in reference to this that the *friendly contract* was made. 3. The *names* of the contracting persons, or some *device*, were written on the *tessera*, which commemorated the friendly contract; and as the *parts* were *interchanged*, *none could know* that *name* or *device*, or the *reason* of the contract, *but he who received it*. 4. This, when produced, gave the bearer a right to the offices of hospitality; he was accommodated with food, lodging, &c., as far as these were necessary; and to this the *eating of the hidden manna* may refer.

But what does this mean in the language of Christ? 1. That the person is taken into an intimate state of friendship with him. 2. That this contract is witnessed to the party by some especial token, sign, or seal, to which he may have recourse to support his claim, and identify his person. This is probably what is elsewhere called the *earnest of the Spirit*; see **Clarke's note on "Eph 1:14"**, and the places there referred to. He then who has received and retains the witness of the Spirit that he is *adopted* into the *heavenly family*, may humbly claim, in virtue of it, his support of the bread and water of life; the *hidden manna*-every grace of the Spirit of God; and the *tree of life-immortality*, or the final glorification of his body and soul throughout eternity. 3. By this state of grace into which he is brought he acquires a *new name*, the name of *child of God*; the earnest of the Spirit, the *tessera*, which he has received, shows him this new name. 4. And this name of child of God *no man can know* or understand, but he who has received the *tessera* or Divine witness. 5. As his Friend and Redeemer may be found everywhere, because he fills the heavens and the earth, everywhere he may, on retaining this *tessera*, claim direction, succour, support, grace, and glory; and therefore the privileges of him who overcometh are the greatest and most glorious that can be imagined.

For a farther account of the *tessera* of the ancients, as well as for engravings of several, see *Grævii Thesaur.*; *Pitisci Lexic.*; and *Poleni Supplement*; and the authors to whom these writers refer.

### *The Epistle to the Church at Thyatira.*

Verse 18. **These things saith the Son of God]** See the notes on **#Re 1:14, 15**.

Verse 19. **I know thy works]** And of these he first sets forth their *charity*, την αγαπην, their *love* to God and each other; and particularly to the *poor* and *distressed*: and hence followed their *faith*,

την πιστιν, their *fidelity*, to the grace they had received; and *service*, την διακονιαν, and ministrations; properly pious and benevolent service to widows, orphans, and the poor in general.

**And thy patience]** την υπομονην σου· Thy *perseverance* under *afflictions* and *persecutions*, and thy *continuance* in well-doing. I put *faith* before *service* according to the general consent of the best MSS. and versions.

**Thy works]** The continued labour of love, and thorough obedience.

**The last to be more than the first.]** They not only *retained* what they had received at first, but *grew* in *grace*, and in the knowledge and love of Jesus Christ. This is a rare thing in most Christian Churches: they generally lose the power of religion, and rest in the forms of worship; and it requires a powerful *revival* to bring them to such a state that their last works shall be more than their first.

Verse 20. **That woman Jezebel]** There is an allusion here to the history of Ahab and Jezebel, as given in #2Ki 9:1-10:36; and although we do not know who this Jezebel was, yet from the allusion we may take it for granted she was a woman of power and influence in Thyatira, who corrupted the true religion, and harassed the followers of God in that city, as Jezebel did in Israel. Instead of *that woman Jezebel*, την γυναικα ιεζαβηλ, many excellent MSS., and almost all the ancient versions, read την γυναικα σου ιεζαβηλ, THY WIFE *Jezebel*; which intimates, indeed asserts, that this bad woman was the wife of the bishop of the Church, and his criminality in suffering her was therefore the greater. This reading Griesbach has received into the text. She called herself a prophetess, i.e., set up for a teacher; taught the Christians that fornication, and eating things offered to idols, were matters of indifference, and thus they were seduced from the truth. But it is probable that by *fornication* here is meant *idolatry* merely, which is often its meaning in the Scriptures. It is too gross to suppose that the wife of the bishop of this Church could teach fornication literally. The messenger or bishop of this Church, probably her *husband*, *suffered* this: he had power to have cast her and her party out of the Church, or, as his *wife*, to have restrained her; but he did not do it, and thus she had every opportunity of seducing the faithful. This is what Christ had *against* the messenger of this Church.

Verse 21. **I gave her space to repent]** "This alludes to the history of Jezebel. God first sent Elijah to Ahab to pronounce a severe judgment upon him; upon which Ahab showed tokens of repentance, and so God put off his punishment. By these means the like punishment pronounced against Jezebel was also put off. Thus God gave *her* time to repent, which she did not, but instead of that seduced *her sons* to the same sins. See #1Ki 21:1-29. According to the Mosaic law, the punishment of idolatrous seducers was not to be delayed at all, but God sometimes showed mercy; and now much more under the Christian dispensation, though that mercy is often abused, and thus produces the contrary effect, as in the case of this Jezebel. See #Ec 8:11.

Verse 22. **Behold, I will cast her into a bed]** "This again alludes to the same history. Ahaziah, son of Ahab and Jezebel, by his mother's ill instruction and example, followed her ways. God punished him by making him fall down, as is supposed, from the top of the terrace over his house, and so to be bedridden for a long time under great anguish, designing thereby to give him time to repent; but when, instead of that, he sent to consult Baalzebub, Elijah was sent to pronounce a final

doom against his impenitence. Thus the *son of Jezebel*, who had committed idolatry with and by her advice, was long *cast into the bed of affliction*, and not repenting, died: in the same manner his brother Jehoram succeeded likewise. All this while Jezebel had *time* and warning enough to *repent*; and though she did not prevail with Jehoram to continue in the idolatrous worship of Baal, yet she persisted in her own way, notwithstanding God's warnings. The sacred writer, therefore, here threatens the *Gnostic Jezebel* to make that wherein she delighteth, as adulterers in the bed of lust, to be the very place, occasion, and instrument, of her greatest torment. So in Isaiah, the *bed* is made a symbol of *tribulation*, and *anguish* of body and mind. See **#Isa 28:20**; **#Job 33:19**.

Verse 23. **And I will kill her children with death**] "That is, I will certainly destroy her offspring and memory, and thereby ruin her designs. Jezebel's two sons, being both kings were both slain; and after that, all the seventy sons of Ahab; (**#2Ki 10:1**;) in all which the hand of God was very visible. In the same manner God predicts the destruction of the heretics and heresies referred to; see **#Re 2:16**. It should seem by the expression, *I am he which searcheth the reins and the hearts*, that these heretics lurked about, and sowed their pernicious doctrines *secretly*. But our Saviour tells them that it was in vain, for he had power to bring their deeds to light, having that Divine power of searching into the Evilly and affections of men; and hereby he would show both them and us that he is, according to his title, *The Son of God*; and hath such eyes to pry into their actions, that, like a *fire*, they will search into every thing, and burn up the chaff which cannot stand his trial; so that the *depths of Satan*, mentioned in the next verse, to which this alludes, (Christ assuming here this title purposely) shall avail nothing to those who think by their secret craft to undermine the Christian religion; he will not only bring to light, but baffle all their evil intentions. See **#Re 17:9**.

Verse 24. **But unto you I say, and unto the rest**] "But unto the rest, &c. This is the reading of the Complutensian, and seems preferable to the common one, as it evidently shows that the rest of the epistle wholly concerns the faithful, who have not received the former doctrine of error. *I will put upon you none other burden* is a commendation of the sound part of the Church, that they have no need of any new exhortation or charge to be given them, no new advice but to persevere as usual. See **#Ro 15:14, 15**. The expression of *burden* is taken from the history of Ahab, **#2Ki 9:25**: *The Lord laid this burden on him*; a word often used by the prophets to signify a prophecy threatening heavy things to be suffered. See Clarke on "**Isa 13:1**", and "**Nu 4:19**". See Dodd's Notes.

It is worthy of remark that the Gnostics called their doctrine *the depths of God*, and *the depths of Bythos*, intimating that they contained the most *profound secrets* of Divine wisdom. Christ here calls them the *depths of Satan*, being master pieces of his *subtlety*. Perhaps they thought them to be of God, while all the time they were deceived by the devil.

Verse 25. **That which ye have**] That is, the pure doctrine of the Gospel, *hold fast till I come*-till I come to execute the judgments which I have threatened.

Verse 26. **Power over the nations**] Every witness of Christ has power to confute and confound all the false doctrines and maxims of the nations of the world, for Christianity shall at last rule over all; the kingdom of Christ will come, and the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our God and of his Christ.

Verse 27. **He shall rule them with a rod of iron]** He shall restrain vice by the *strictest administration of justice*; and those who finally despise the word and rebel shall be *broken* and destroyed, so as never more to be able to make head against the truth. This seems to refer to the *heathen* world; and perhaps Constantine the Great may be intended, who, when he overcame Licinius, became the instrument in God's hand of destroying *idolatry* over the whole Roman empire; and it was so effectually *broken* as to be ever after like the fragments of an *earthen vessel*, of no use in themselves, and incapable of being ever united to any good purpose.

Verse 28. **And I will give him the morning star.]** He shall have the brightest and most glorious empire, next to that of Christ himself. And it is certain that the Roman empire under Constantine the Great was the brightest emblem of the latter day glory which has ever yet been exhibited to the world. It is well known that *sun*, *moon*, and *stars* are emblems, in prophetic language, of *empires*, *kingdoms*, and *states*. And as the *morning star* is that which immediately precedes the rising of the sun, it probably here intends an empire which should usher in the universal sway of the kingdom of Christ.

Ever since the time of Constantine the light of true religion has been increasingly diffused, and is shining more and more unto the perfect day.

Verse 29. **He that hath an ear]** Let every Christian pay the strictest regard to these predictions of Christ; and let them have a suitable influence on his heart and life.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER III.

*The epistle to the Church of Sardis, 1-6. The epistle to the Church of Philadelphia, 7-13. The epistle to the Church of Laodicea, 14-22.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. III.

#### *Epistle to the Church at Sardis.*

Verse 1. **The seven Spirits, of God]** See the note on #Re 1:4, 16, &c.

**Thou hast a name that thou livest]** Ye have the reputation of Christians, and consequently of being alive to God, through the quickening influence of the Divine Spirit; but ye *are dead*-ye have not the life of God in your souls, ye have not walked consistently and steadily before God, and his Spirit has been grieved with you, and he has withdrawn much of his light and power.

Verse 2. **Be watchful]** Ye have lost ground by carelessness and inattention. Awake, and keep awake!

**Strengthen the things which remain]** The convictions and good desires, with any measure of the fear of God and of a tender conscience, which, although still subsisting, are about to perish, because the Holy Spirit, who is the author of them, being repeatedly grieved, is about finally to depart.

**Thy works perfect]** *πεπληρωμενα*: *Filled up*. They performed duties of all kinds, but no duty *completely*. They were constantly beginning, but never brought any thing to a proper end. Their resolutions were languid, their strength feeble, and their light dim. They probably maintained their reputation *before men*, but their works were not perfect *before God*.

Verse 3. **Remember]** Enter into a serious consideration of your state.

**How thou hast received]** With what joy, zeal, and gladness ye heard the Gospel of Christ when first preached to you.

**Hold fast]** Those good desires and heavenly influences which still remain.

**And repent.]** Be humbled before God, because ye have not been workers together with him, but have received much of his grace in vain.

**If therefore thou shalt not watch]** If you do not consider your ways, watching against sin, and for opportunities to receive and do good.

**I will come on thee as a thief]** As the thief comes when he is not expected, so will I come upon you if ye be not watchful, and cut you off from life and hope.

Verse 4. **Thou hast a few names even in Sardis]** A few *persons, names* being put for those who bore them. And as the members of the Church were all *enrolled*, or their names entered in a book, when admitted into the Church or when baptized, *names* are here put for the *people* themselves. See #Re 3:5.

**Have not defiled their garments]** Their *souls*. The Hebrews considered holiness as the *garb* of the soul, and evil actions as *stains* or *spots* on this garb. So in *Shabbath*, fol. 152, 2: "A certain king gave royal garments to his servants: those who were prudent folded them up, and laid them by in a chest; those who were foolish put them on, and performed their daily labour in them. After some time the king asked for those royal robes; the wise brought theirs white and clean, the foolish brought theirs spotted with dirt. With the former the king was well pleased; with the latter he was angry. Concerning the former he said: Let those garments be laid up in my wardrobe, and let the persons go home in peace. Of the latter he said: Let the garments be put into the hands of the fuller, and cast those who wore them into prison." This parable is spoken on these words of Ecclesiastes, #Ec 12:7: *The spirit shall return to God who gave it.*

**They shall walk with me in white]** They shall be raised to a state of eternal glory, and shall be for ever with their Lord.

Verse 5. **I will not blot out his name]** This may be an allusion to the custom of registering the names of those who were admitted into the Church in a book kept for that purpose, from which custom our *baptismal registers* in Churches are derived. These are properly *books of life*, as there those who were born unto God were registered; as in the latter those who were born in that parish were enrolled. Or there may be allusions to the *white raiment* worn by the priests, and the erasing of the name of any priest out of the sacerdotal list who had either sinned, or was found not to be of the seed of Aaron. In *Middoth*, fol. 37, 2: "The great council of Israel sat and judged the priests. If in a priest any vice was found they stripped of his white garments and clothed him in *black*, in which he wrapped himself, went out, and departed. Him in whom no vice was found they clothed in *white*, and he went and took his part in the ministry among his brother priests."

**I will confess his name]** I will acknowledge that this person is my true disciple, and a member of my mystical body. In all this there may also be an allusion to the custom of registering citizens. Their names were entered into books, according to their condition, tribes, family, &c.; and when they were dead, or had by unconstitutional acts forfeited their right of citizenship, the name was *blotted out*, or erased from the registers. See Clarke's note on "Ex 32:32".

Verse 6. **He that hath an ear]** The usual caution and counsel carefully to attend to the things spoken to the members of that Church, in which every reader is more or less interested.

*Epistle to the Church at Philadelphia.*

Verse 7. **He that is holy**] In whom holiness essentially dwells, and from whom all holiness is derived.

**He that is true**] He who is the fountain of truth; who cannot lie nor be imposed on; from whom all truth proceeds; and whose veracity in his *Revelation* is unimpeachable.

**He that hath the key of David**] See this metaphor explained, #Mt 16:19. *Key* is the emblem of authority and knowledge; *the key of David* is the regal right or authority of David. David could *shut* or *open* the kingdom of Israel to whom he pleased. He was not bound to leave the kingdom even to his eldest son. He could choose whom he pleased to succeed him. The kingdom of the Gospel, and the kingdom of heaven, are at the disposal of Christ. He can *shut* against whom he will; he can *open* to whom he pleases. If he *shuts*, no man can *open*; if he *opens*, no man can *shut*. His determinations all stand fast, and none can reverse them. This expression is an allusion to #Isa 22:22, where the prophet promises to Eliakim, under the symbol of the key of the house of David, the government of the whole nation; i.e., all the power of the king, to be executed by him as his deputy; but the words, as here applied to Christ, show that *He* is absolute.

Verse 8. **I have set before thee an open door**] I have opened to thee a door to proclaim and diffuse my word; and, notwithstanding there are many adversaries to the spread of my Gospel, yet none of them shall be able to prevent it.

**Thou hast a little strength**] Very little political authority or influence; yet thou *hast kept my word*-hast kept the true *doctrine*; and *hast not denied my name*, by taking shelter in heathenism when Christianity was persecuted. The *little strength* may refer either to the smallness of the numbers, or to the littleness of their grace.

Verse 9. **I will make them**] Show them to be, *of the synagogue of Satan, who say they are Jews*, pretending thereby to be of the synagogue of GOD, and consequently his true and peculiar children.

**I will make them to come and worship**] I will so dispose of matters in the course of my providence, that the Jews shall be obliged to seek unto the Christians for toleration, support, and protection, which they shall be obliged to sue for in the most *humble* and *abject* manner.

**To know that I have loved thee.**] That the love which was formerly fixed on the Jews is now removed, and transferred to the Gentiles.

Verse 10. **The word of my patience**] The doctrine which has exposed you to so much trouble and persecution, and required so much patience and magnanimity to bear up under its attendant trials.

**The hour of temptation**] A *time* of sore and peculiar trial which might have proved too much for their strength. He who is faithful to the grace of God is often hidden from trials and difficulties which fall without mitigation on those who have been unfaithful in his covenant. Many understand

by the *hour of temptation* the persecution under *Trajan*, which was greater and more extensive than the preceding ones under *Nero* and *Domitian*.

**To try them]** That is, such persecutions will be the means of trying and proving those who profess Christianity, and showing who were sound and thorough Christians and who were not.

Verse 11. **Behold, I come quickly]** These things will shortly take place; and I am coming with *consolations* and *rewards* to my faithful followers, and with *judgments* to my adversaries.

**Take thy crown.]** God has provided mansions for you; let none through your fall occupy those seats of blessedness.

Verse 12. **A pillar in the temple]** There is probably all allusion here to the *two pillars* in the temple of Jerusalem, called *Jachin* and *Boaz*, stability and strength. The *Church* is the *temple*; CHRIST is the *foundation* on which it is built; and his *ministers* are the *PILLARS* by which, under him, it is adorned and supported. St. Paul has the same allusions, **#Ga 2:9**.

**I will write upon him the name of my God]** That is, I will make him a *priest* unto myself. The priest had written on his forehead **קודש ליהוה** *kodesh laihovah*, "Holiness to the Lord."

**And the name of the city of my God]** As the high priest had on his breastplate the names of the twelve tribes engraved, and these constituted the *city* or *Church of God*; Christ here promises that in place of them the twelve apostles, representing the *Christian Church*, shall be written, which is called the *New Jerusalem*, and which God has adopted in place of the *twelve Jewish tribes*.

**My new name.]** The *Saviour* of ALL; the *light* that *lightens* the GENTILES; the CHRIST; the Anointed One; the only GOVERNOR of his Church; and the *Redeemer* of ALL mankind.

There is here an intimation that the *Christian Church* is to endure for ever; and the *Christian ministry* to last as long as time endures: *He shall go no more out* for ever.

#### *Epistle to the Church of the Laodiceans.*

Verse 14. **These things saith the Amen]** That is, He who is true or faithful; from **אמן** *aman*, he was tree; immediately interpreted, *The faithful and true witness*. See **#Re 1:5**.

**The beginning of the creation of God]** That is, the head and governor of all creatures: the king of the creation. See on **#Col 1:15**. By his *titles*, here, he prepares them for the humiliating and awful truths which he was about to declare, and the *authority* on which the declaration was founded.

Verse 15. **Thou art neither cold nor hot]** Ye are neither heathens nor Christians-neither good nor evil-neither led away by false doctrine, nor thoroughly addicted to that which is true. In a word, they were listless and indifferent, and seemed to care little whether heathenism or Christianity prevailed. Though they felt little zeal either for the salvation of their own souls or that of others, yet

they had such a general conviction of the truth and importance of Christianity, that they could not readily give it up.

**I would thou wert cold or hot]** That is, ye should be decided; adopt some part or other, and be in earnest in your attachment to it. If ever the words of Mr. Erskine, in his Gospel Sonnets, were true, they were true of this Church:—

"To good and evil equal bent,  
I'm both a devil and a saint."

They were too *good* to go to *hell*, too *bad* to go to *heaven*. Like Ephraim and Judah, #**Ho 6:4**: *O Ephraim, what shall I do unto thee? O Judah, what shall I do unto thee? for your goodness is as a morning cloud, and as the early dew it passeth away.* They had *good* dispositions which were captivated by evil ones, and they had *evil* dispositions which in their turn yielded to those that were good; and the Divine justice and mercy seem puzzled to know what to do *to* or *with* them. This was the state of the Laodicean Church; and our Lord expresses here in this apparent *wish*, the same that is expressed by *Epictetus*, Ench., chap. 36. *ἕνα σε δεῖ ἀνθρώπου, ἢ ἀγαθόν, ἢ κακόν, εἶναι.* "Thou oughtest to be one kind of man, either a good man or a bad man."

Verse 16. **Because thou art lukewarm]** Irresolute and undecided.

**I will spue thee out of my mouth.]** He alludes here to the known effect of *tepid water* upon the *stomach*; it generally produces a *nausea*. I wilt cast thee off. Thou shalt have no interest in me. Though thou hast been near to my heart, yet now I must pluck thee thence, because slothful, careless, and indolent; thou art not in earnest for thy soul.

Verse 17. **I am rich]** Thou supposest thyself to be in a safe state, perfectly sure of final salvation, because thou hast begun well, and laid the right foundation. It was this most deceitful conviction that cut the nerves of their spiritual diligence; they rested in what they had already received, and seemed to think that *once in grace* must be *still in grace*.

**Thou art wretched]** *ταλαιπώρος*. *Most wretched.* "The word signifies," according to Mintert, "being worn out and fatigued with grievous labours, as they who labour in a *stone quarry*, or are condemned to the *mines*." So, instead of being children of God, as they supposed, and infallible heirs of the kingdom, they were, in the sight of God, in the condition of the most abject *slaves*.

**And miserable]** *ὁ ἐλεεινός*. Most deplorable, to be pitied by all men.

**And poor]** Having no *spiritual riches*, no *holiness* of heart. *Rich* and *poor* are sometimes used by the rabbins to express the *righteous* and the *wicked*.

**And blind]** The eyes of thy understanding being darkened, so that thou dost not see thy state.

**And naked]** Without the image of God, not clothed with holiness and purity. A more deplorable state in spiritual things can scarcely be imagined than that of this Church. And it is the true picture of many *Churches*, and of innumerable individuals.

Verse 18. **I counsel thee]** O fallen and deceived soul, hear Jesus! Thy case is not *hopeless*. *Buy of me*.

**Gold tried in the fire]** Come and receive from me, without money and without price, *faith* that shall stand in every trial: so *gold tried in the fire* is here understood. But it may mean pure and undefiled *religion*, or that *grace* or *Divine influence* which produces it, which is more valuable to the soul than the purest gold to the body. They had before *imaginary riches*; this alone can make them *truly* rich.

**White raiment]** Holiness of heart and life.

**Anoint thine eyes]** Pray for, that ye may receive, the enlightening influences of my Spirit, that ye may be convinced of your true state, and see where your help lies.

Verse 19. **As many as I love]** So it was the love he still had to them that induced him thus to reprehend and thus to counsel them.

**Be zealous]** Be in *earnest*, to get your souls saved, They had no zeal; this was their bane. He now stirs them up to diligence in the use of the means of grace and repentance for their past sins and remissness.

Verse 20. **Behold, I stand at the door and knock]** There are many sayings of this kind among the ancient rabbins; thus in *Shir Hashirim Rabba*, fol. 25, 1: "God said to the Israelites, My children, open to me one *door* of repentance, even so wide as the eye of a needle, and I will open to you *doors* through which calves and horned cattle may pass."

In *Sohar Levit*, fol. 8, col. 32, it is said: "If a man *conceal* his sin, and do not open it before the holy King, although he ask mercy, yet the *door* of repentance shall not be *opened* to him. But if he *open* it before the holy blessed God, God spares him, and mercy prevails over wrath; and when he laments, although *all the doors* were *shut*, yet they shall be *opened* to him, and his prayer shall be heard."

Christ *stands-waits* long, at the *door* of the sinner's heart; he *knocks*-uses judgments, mercies, reproofs, exhortations, &c., to induce sinners to repent and turn to him; he lifts up his *voice*-calls loudly by his word, ministers, and Spirit.

**If any man hear]** If the sinner will seriously consider his state, and attend to the voice of his Lord.

**And open the door]** This must be his *own act*, receiving power for this purpose from his offended Lord, who will not *break open* the door; he will make no *forcible entry*.

**I will come in to him]** I will manifest myself to him, heal all his backslidings, pardon all his iniquities, and love him freely.

**Will sup with him]** Hold communion with him, feed him with the bread of life.

**And he with me.]** I will bring him at last to dwell with me in everlasting glory.

Verse 21. **To sit with me in my throne]** In every case it is to him that *overcometh*, to the *conqueror*, that the final promise is made. He that *conquers* not is not *crowned*, therefore every promise is here made to him that is *faithful unto death*. Here is a most remarkable expression: Jesus has conquered, and is set down with the FATHER upon the Father's *throne*; he who conquers through Christ sits down with Christ upon his *throne*: but Christ's throne and the throne of the Father is the same; and it is on this *same throne* that those who are faithful unto death are finally to sit! How astonishing is this state of exaltation! The dignity and grandeur of it who can conceive?

This is the worst of the seven Churches, and yet the most eminent of all the promises are made to it, showing that the worst may repent, finally conquer, and attain even to the highest state of glory.

Verse 22. **He that hath an ear, let him hear]** Mr. Wesley has a very judicious note on the conclusion of this chapter, and particularly on this last verse, *He that hath an ear, &c.* "This (counsel) stands in *three* former letters *before* the promise, in the *four* latter *after* it; clearly dividing the seven into *two parts*, the first containing *three*, the last *four* letters. The titles given our Lord in the *three former* letters peculiarly respect his power after his resurrection and ascension, particularly over his Church; those in the *four latter*, his Divine glory and unity with the Father and the Holy Spirit. Again, this word being placed *before the promises* in the *three former letters* excludes the false apostles at Ephesus, the false Jews at Smyrna, and the partakers with the heathens at Pergamos, from having any share therein. In the *four latter*, being placed *after* them, it leaves the promises immediately joined with Christ's address to the angel of the Church, to show that the fulfilling of these was near; whereas the others reach beyond the end of the world. It should be observed that the *overcoming* or *victory* (to which alone these *peculiar* promises are annexed) is not the ordinary victory obtained by *every believer*, but a special victory obtained over great and peculiar temptations, by those that are strong in faith."

The latest account we have of the state of the *seven Asiatic Churches* is in a letter from the Rev. Henry Lindsay, chaplain to the British embassy at Constantinople, to a member of the *British and Foreign Bible Society*, by which society Mr. Lindsay had been solicited to distribute some copies of the New Testament in modern Greek among the Christians in Asia Minor. The following is his communication, dated:—

*"Constantinople, January 10, 1816.*

"When I last wrote to you, I was on the point of setting out on a short excursion into Asia Minor. Travelling hastily, as I was constrained to do from the circumstances of my situation, the information I could procure was necessarily superficial and unsatisfactory. As, however, I distributed the few books of the society which I was able to carry with me, I think it necessary to give some account of the course I took:

"1. The regular intercourse of England with SMYRNA will enable you to procure as accurate intelligence of its present state as any I can pretend to offer. From the conversations I had with the Greek bishop and his clergy, as well as various well-informed individuals, I am led to suppose that, if the population of Smyrna be estimated at *one hundred and forty thousand* inhabitants, there are from *fifteen to twenty thousand* Greeks, *six thousand* Armenians, *five thousand* Catholics, *one hundred and forty* Protestants, and *eleven thousand* Jews.

"2. After Smyrna, the first place I visited was EPHEBUS, or rather (as the site is not quite the same) Aiasalick, which consists of about fifteen poor cottages. I found there but *three* Christians, two brothers who keep a small shop, and a gardener. They are all three Greeks, and their ignorance is lamentable indeed. In that place, which was blessed so long with an apostle's labours, and those of his zealous assistants are Christians who have not so much as heard of that apostle, or seem only to recognize the name of Paul as one in the calendar of their saints. One of them I found able to read a little, and left with him the New Testament, in ancient and modern Greek, which he expressed a strong desire to read, and promised me he would not only study it himself, but lend it to his friends in the neighbouring villages.

"3. My next object was to see LAODICEA; in the road to this is Guzel-hisar, a large town, with one church, and about *seven hundred* Christians. In conversing with the priests here, I found them so little acquainted with the Bible, or even the New Testament in an entire form, that they had no distinct knowledge of the books it contained beyond the four gospels, but mentioned them indiscriminately with various idle legends and lives of saints. I have sent thither three copies of the modern Greek Testament since my return. About three miles from Laodicea is Denizli, which has been styled (but I am inclined to think erroneously) the ancient Colosse; it is a considerable town, with about *four hundred* Christians, Greeks, and Armenians, each of whom has a church. I regret however to say that here also the most extravagant tales of miracles, and fabulous accounts of angels, saints, and relics, had so usurped the place of the Scriptures as to render it very difficult to separate in their minds Divine truths from human inventions. I felt that here that unhappy time was come when men should 'turn away their ears from the truth, and be turned unto fables.' I had with me some copies of the gospels in ancient Greek which I distributed here, as in some other places through which I had passed. Eski-hisar, close to which are the remains of ancient Laodicea, contains about fifty poor inhabitants, in which number are but two Christians, who live together in a small mill; unhappily neither could read at all; the copy therefore of the New Testament, which I intended for this Church, I left with that of Denizli, the offspring and poor remains of Laodicea and Colosse. The prayers of the mosque are the only prayers which are heard near the ruins of Laodicea, on which the threat seems to have been fully executed in its utter rejection as a Church.

"4. I left it for PHILADELPHIA, now Alah-shehr. It was gratifying to find at last some surviving fruits of early zeal; and here, at least, whatever may be the loss of the *spirit* of Christianity, there is still the *form* of a Christian Church; this has been kept from the 'hour of temptation,' which came upon all the Christian world. There are here about *one thousand* Christians, chiefly Greeks, who for the most part speak only Turkish; there are twenty-five places of public worship, five of which are large regular churches; to these there is a resident bishop, with twenty inferior clergy. A copy of the modern Greek Testament was received by the bishop with great thankfulness.

"5. I quitted Alah-shehr, deeply disappointed at the statement I received there of the Church of SARDIS. I trusted that in its utmost trials it would not have been suffered to perish utterly, and I heard with surprise that not a vestige of it remained. With what satisfaction then did I find on the plains of Sardis a small Church establishment; the few Christians who dwell around modern Sart were anxious to settle there and erect a church, as they were in the habit of meeting at each other's houses for the exercise of religion. From this design they were prohibited by Kar Osman Oglu, the Turkish governor of the district; and in consequence, about five years ago they built a church upon the plain, within view of ancient Sardis, and there they maintain a priest. The place has gradually risen into a little village, now called Tatar-keny; thither the few Christians of Sart, who amount to *seven*, and those in its immediate vicinity, resort for public worship, and form together a congregation of about forty. There appears then still a remnant, 'a few names even in Sardis,' which have been preserved. I cannot repeat the expressions of gratitude with which they received a copy of the New Testament in a language with which they were familiar. Several crowded about the priest to hear it on the spot, and I left them thus engaged.

"6. Ak-hisar, the ancient THYATIRA, is said to contain about *thirty thousand* inhabitants, of whom *three thousand* are Christians, all Greeks except about *two hundred* Armenians. There is, however, but one Greek church and one Armenian. The superior of the Greek Church to whom I presented the Romaic Testament esteemed it so great a treasure that he earnestly pressed me, if possible, to spare another, that one might be secured to the Church and free from accidents, while the other went round among the people for their private reading. I have, therefore, since my return hither, sent him four copies.

"7. The Church of PERGAMOS, in respect to numbers, may be said to flourish still in Bergamo. The town is less than Ak-hisar, but the number of Christians is about as great, the proportion of Armenians to Greeks nearly the same, and each nation also has one church. The bishop of the district, who occasionally resides there, was at that time absent, and I experienced with deep regret that the resident clergy were totally incapable of estimating the gift I intended them; I therefore delivered the Testament to the lay vicar of the bishop at his urgent request, he having assured me that the bishop would highly prize so valuable an acquisition to the Church. He seemed much pleased that the benighted state of his nation had excited the attention of strangers.

"Thus, sir, I have left at least one copy of the unadulterated word of God at each of the seven Asiatic Churches of the Apocalypse, and I trust they are not utterly thrown away; but whoever may plant, it is God only who can give the increase, and from his goodness we may hope they will in due time bring forth fruit, 'some thirty, some sixty, and some a hundred fold.'

"HENRY LINDSAY."

In my note on **#Ac 19:24**, I have given an account of the celebrated temple of Diana at *Ephesus*, to which building, called one of the *seven wonders* of the world, St. Paul is supposed to allude in his epistle to this Church, particularly at **#Eph 3:18**, where I have again given the measurement of this temple.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER IV.

*John sees the throne of God in heaven surrounded by twenty-four elders; and four living creatures, full of eyes; which all join in giving glory to the Almighty, 1-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IV.

Verse 1. **A door was opened in heaven]** This appears to have been a visible aperture in the sky over his head.

Verse 2. **I was in the Spirit]** Rapt up in an ecstasy.

Verse 3. **And he that sat]** There is here no description of the Divine Being, so as to point out any *similitude, shape, or dimensions*. The description rather aims to point out the surrounding glory and *effulgence* than the *person* of the almighty King. See a similar description #Ex 24:10, &c., and the notes there.

Verse 4. **Four and twenty elders]** Perhaps this is in reference to the smaller *Sanhedrin* at Jerusalem, which was composed of twenty-three elders; or to the *princes of the twenty-four courses* of the Jewish priests which ministered at the tabernacle and the temple, at first appointed by David.

**Clothed in white raiment]** The garments of the priests.

**On their heads crowns of gold.]** An emblem of their *dignity*. The Jewish writers represent human souls as being created first; and before they enter the body, each is taken by an angel into paradise, where it sees the righteous sitting in glory with crowns upon their heads. *Rab. Tanchum*, fol. 39, 4.

Verse 5. **Seven lamps of fire]** Seven angels, the attendants and ministers of the supreme King. See #Re 1:4, and the note there.

Verse 6. **Four beasts]** τεσσαρα ζωα: *Four living creatures or four animals*. The word *beast* is very improperly used here and elsewhere in this description. *Wiclif* first used it, and translators in general have followed him in this uncouth rendering. A *beast* before the throne of God in heaven sounds oddly.

Verse 7. **The first beast was like a lion]** It is supposed that there is a reference here to the *four standards or ensigns* of the *four divisions* of the tribes in the Israelitish camp, as they are described by Jewish writers.

The first living creature was like a *lion*; this was, say the rabbins, the standard of JUDAH on the *east*, with the two tribes of *Issachar* and *Zabulon*. The second, like a *calves* or *ox*, which was the emblem of EPHRAIM who pitched on the *west*, with the two tribes of *Manasseh* and *Benjamin*. The

third, with the *face of a man*, which, according to the rabbins, was the standard of REUBEN who pitched on the *south*, with the two tribes of *Simeon* and *Gad*. The fourth which was like a *flying* (spread) *eagle*, was, according to the same writers, the emblem on the ensign of DAN who pitched on the *north*, with the two tribes of *Asher* and *Naphtali*. This traditionary description agrees with the *four faces* of the cherub in Ezekiel's vision. See my *notes* and *diagrams* on Num. ii.

*Christian tradition* has given these creatures as emblems of the *four evangelists*. To *John* is attributed the EAGLE; to *Luke* the OX, to *Mark* the LION, and to *Matthew* the MAN, or *angel* in *human* form. As the former represented the *whole Jewish Church* or *congregation*, so the latter is intended to represent the *whole Christian Church*.

Verse 8. **The four beasts had each of them six wings**] I have already observed, in the *preface* to this book, that the *phraseology* is *rabbinical*; I might have added, and the *imagery* also. We have almost a counterpart of this description in *Pirkey Elieser*. chap. 4. I shall give the substance of this from *Schoettgen*. "Four troops of ministering angels praise the holy blessed God: the first is *Michael*, at the right hand; the next is *Gabriel*, at the left; the third is *Uriel*, before; and the fourth is *Raphael*, behind him. The *shechinah* of the holy, blessed God is *in the midst*, and he himself *sits upon a throne* high and elevated, hanging in the air; and his magnificence is as *amber* ח ש מ ל, (chashmal,) *in the midst of the fire*, #Eze 1:4, On his head is placed a *crown* and a *diadem*, with the incommunicable name (יהוה *Yehovah*) inscribed on the front of it. His *eyes* go throughout the whole earth; a part of them is *fire*, and a part of them *hail*. At his right hand stands *Life*, and at his left hand *Death*; and he has a fiery sceptre in his hand. Before him is the *veil* spread, that *veil* which is between the *temple* and the *holy of holies*; and *seven angels* minister before him within that *veil*: the veil and his footstool are like *fire* and *lightning*; and *under the throne of glory* there is a shining like *fire* and *sapphire*, and *about his throne* are *justice* and *judgment*.

"The place of the throne are the *seven clouds of glory*; and the *chariot wheels*, and the *cherub*, and the *living creatures* which *give glory* before his face. The throne is in similitude like *sapphire*; and at the four feet of it are *four living creatures*, each of which has *four faces* and *four wings*. When God speaks from the *east*, then it is from between the two cherubim with the *face of a MAN*; when he speaks from the *south*, then it is from between the two cherubim with the *face of a LION*; when from the *west*, then it is from between the two cherubim with the *face of an OX*; and when from the *north*, then it is from between the two cherubim with the *face of an EAGLE*.

"And the *living creatures stand before the throne of glory*; and they stand in fear, in trembling, in horror, and in great agitation; and from this agitation a *stream of fire* flows before them. Of the two *seraphim* one stands at the right hand of the holy blessed God, and one stands at the left; and each has *six wings*: with *two they cover their face* lest they should see the face of the *shechina*; with *two they cover their feet* lest they should find out the footstool of the *shechinah*; and with *two they fly*, and sanctify his great name. And they answer each other, saying *Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts*; the whole earth is full of his glory. And the *living creatures* stand near his glory, yet they do not know the place of his glory; but wheresoever his glory is, they cry out and say, *Blessed be the glory of the Lord in his place*."

In *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 23, fol. 122, 4, Rabbi Abin says: "There are *four* which have principality in this world: among *intellectual creatures*, MAN; among *birds*, the EAGLE; among *cattle*, the OX; and among *wild beasts*, the LION: each of these has a kingdom and a certain magnificence, and they are placed *under the throne of glory*, #Eze 1:10, to show that no creature is to exalt itself in this world, and that the kingdom of God is over all." These creatures may be considered the representatives of the whole creation.

Verse 10. **Cast their crowns before the throne]** Acknowledge the infinite supremacy of God, and that they have derived their being and their blessings from him alone. This is an allusion to the custom of prostrations in the east, and to the homage of petty kings acknowledging the supremacy of the emperor.

Verse 11. **Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive]** Thus all creation acknowledges the supremacy of God; and we learn from this song that he *made all things for his pleasure*; and through the same motive he *preserves*. Hence it is most evident, that he hateth nothing that he has made, and could have made no intelligent creature with the design to make it eternally miserable. It is strange that a contrary supposition has ever entered into the heart of man; and it is high time that the benevolent nature of the Supreme God should be fully vindicated from aspersions of this kind.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER V.

*The book sealed with seven seals, which no being in heaven or earth could open, 1-3. Is at last opened by the Lion of the tribe of Judah, 4-8. He receives the praises of the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders, 9, 10. And afterwards of an innumerable multitude, who acknowledge that they were redeemed to God by his blood, 11, 12. And then, of the whole creation, who ascribe blessing, honour, glory, and power to God and the Lamb for ever, 13, 14.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. V.

Verse 1. **A book written within and on the back side]** That is, the book was full of solemn contents *within*, but it was *sealed*; and on the *back side* was a *superscription* indicating its contents. It was a *labelled* book, or one written on each side of the skin, which was not usual.

**Sealed with seven seals.]** As seven is a number of *perfection*, it may mean that the book was so sealed that the seals could neither be *counterfeited* nor *broken*; i.e., the matter of the book was so *obscure* and *enigmatical* and the work it enjoined and the facts it predicted so difficult and stupendous, that they could neither be known nor performed by human wisdom or power.

Verse 2. **A strong angel]** One of the *chief* of the angelic host.

**Proclaiming]** As the *herald* of God.

**To open the book, and to loose the seals]** To loose the seals that he may open the book. Who can tell what this book contains? Who can open its mysteries? The book may mean the purposes and designs of God relative to his government of the world and the Church; but we, whose habitation is in the dust, know nothing of such things. We are, however, determined to *guess*.

Verse 3. **And no man]** οὐδεὶς· No *person* or *being*.

**In heaven]** Among all the angels of God.

**Nor in the earth]** No *human* being.

**Neither under the earth]** No *disembodied spirit*, nor any *demon*. Neither *angels*, *men*, nor *devils*, can fathom the decrees of God.

**Neither to look thereon.]** None can *look* into it unless it be opened, and none can *open* it unless the *seals* be unloosed.

Verse 4. **I wept much]** Because the world and the Church were likely to be deprived of the knowledge of the contents of the book.

Verse 5. **The Lion of the tribe of Juda]** Jesus Christ, who sprang from this tribe, as his genealogy proves; see on #Mt 1:2, 3 and #Lu 3:33. There is an allusion here to #Ge 49:9, *Judah is a lion's whelp*; the *lion* was the emblem of this tribe, and was supposed to have been embroidered on its ensigns.

**The Root of David]** See #Isa 11:1. Christ was the *root* of David as to his *Divine nature*; he was a *branch out of the stem of Jesse* as to his *human nature*.

**Hath prevailed]** By the merit of his incarnation, passion, and death.

**To open the book]** To *explain* and *execute* all the purposes and decrees of God, in relation to the government of the world and the Church.

Verse 6. **Stood a Lamb]** Christ, so called because he was a sacrificial offering; *αρνιον* signifies a *little or delicate* lamb.

**As it had been slain]** As if now *in the act of being offered*. This is very remarkable; so important is the sacrificial offering of Christ in the sight of God that he is still represented as being in the very act of pouring out his blood for the offences of man. This gives great advantage to faith: when any soul comes to the throne of grace, he finds a sacrifice there provided for him to offer to God. Thus all succeeding generations find they have the *continual* sacrifice ready, and the newly-shed blood to offer.

**Seven horns]** As *horn* is the emblem of *power*, and *seven* the number of *perfection*, the *seven horns* may denote the all-prevailing and infinite *might* of Jesus Christ. He *can* support all his *friends*; he *can* destroy all his *enemies*; and he *can* save to the uttermost all that come unto God through him.

**Seven eyes]** To denote his infinite knowledge and wisdom: but as these *seven eyes* are said to be the *seven Spirits of God*, they seem to denote rather his *providence*, in which he often employs the ministry of *angels*; therefore, these are said to be *sent forth into all the earth*. See Clarke on "Re 1:4".

Verse 7. **He came and took the book]** This verse may be properly explained by John, #Joh 1:18. *No man hath seen God at any time; the only-begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath DECLARED him*. With Jesus alone are all the counsels and mysteries of God.

Verse 8. **The four beasts-fell down before the Lamb]** The whole Church of God, and all his children in heaven and earth, acknowledge that Jesus Christ is alone worthy and able to unfold and execute all the mysteries and counsels of God. See Clarke on "Re 5:9".

**Having every one of them harps]** There were *harps* and *vials*; and each of the *elders* and *living creatures* had *one*.

**Odours, which are the prayers of saints.]** The frankincense and odours offered at the tabernacle were emblems of the prayers and praises of the Lord. That *prayers* are compared to *incense*, see #Ps

**141:2:** *Let my PRAYER be set forth before thee as INCENSE.* Hence that saying in *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 44, n. 37: "The odour of the prayers of the Israelites is equal to *myrrh* and *frankincense*; but on the Sabbath it is preferred to the scent of all kinds of perfumes." The words *which are the prayers of saints* are to be understood as *this is my body*, this signifies or *represents* my body; these odours *represent* the prayers of the saints.

Verse 9. **A new song]** Composed on the matters and blessings of the Gospel, which was just now opened on earth. But *new song* may signify a *most excellent song*; and by this the Gospel and its blessings are probably signified. The Gospel is called a *new song*, **#Ps 96:1**. And perhaps there is an allusion in the *harps* here to **#Ps 144:9**: *I will sing a NEW SONG unto thee, O God: upon a PSALTERY, and an INSTRUMENT of TEN STRINGS, &c.* The same form of speech is found, **#Isa 42:10**: *Sing unto the Lord a NEW SONG, &c.*; and there the prophet seems to have the *Gospel dispensation* particularly in view.

**Thou-hast redeemed us to God-out of every-nation]** It appears, therefore, that the *living creatures* and the *elders* represent the *aggregate* of the followers of God; or the *Christian Church* in all nations, and among all kinds of people, and perhaps through the whole compass of time: and all these are said to be redeemed by Christ's *blood*, plainly showing that his *life* was a *sacrificial offering* for the sins of mankind.

Verse 10. **Kings and priests]** See **#Ex 19:6**; **#1Pe 2:5, 9**, and the notes there.

Verse 11. **The voice of many angels]** These also are represented as joining in the chorus with *redeemed mortals*.

**Ten thousand times ten thousand]** "Myriads of myriads and chiliads of chiliads;" that is, an infinite or innumerable multitude. This is in reference to **#Da 7:10**.

Verse 12. **To receive power]** That is, Jesus Christ is worthy *to take*, λαβειν, to have ascribed to him, *power-omnipotence*; *riches-beneficence*; *wisdom-omniscience*; *strength-power* in prevalent exercise; *honour*-the highest reputation for what he has done; *glory*-the praise due to such actions; and *blessing*-the thankful acknowledgments of the whole creation. Here are seven different species of praise; and this is exactly agreeable to the rabbinical forms, which the author of this book keeps constantly in view. See *Sepher Rasiel*, fol. 39, 2: "To thee belongs כבוד cabod, *glory*; גדולה gedulah, *magnitude*; גבורה geburah, *might*; הממלכה hammamlakah, *the kingdom*; התפארה hattiphereth, *the honour*; הניצח hannetsach, *the victory*; וההוד vehahod, and *the praise*."

Verse 13. **Every creature]** All parts of the creation, animate and inanimate, are represented here, by that figure of speech called *prosopopœia* or *personification*, as giving praise to the Lord Jesus, because by him *all things were created*. We find the whole creation gives precisely the *same praise*, and in the *same terms*, to Jesus Christ, who is undoubtedly meant here by the *Lamb just slain* as they give to GOD who *sits upon the throne*. Now if Jesus Christ were not properly GOD this would be *idolatry*, as it would be giving to the *creature* what belongs to the *Creator*.

Verse 14. **The four beasts said, Amen.**] Acknowledged that what was attributed to Christ was his due.

**The four and twenty elders]** The word *εικοσιτεσσαρες*, *twenty-four*, is wanting in the most eminent MSS. and versions.

**Fell down and worshipped]** *επεσαν και προσεκυησαν*. *Fell down* on their knees, and then *prostrated themselves* before the throne. This is the eastern method of *adoration*: first, the person worshiping fell down on his knees; and then, bowing down touched the earth with his forehead. This latter act was *prostration*.

**Him that liveth for ever]** This clause is wanting in ABC, thirty-seven others, *Syriac*, *Arabic*, *Coptic*, *Æthiopic*, some copies of the *Slavonic*, *Itala*, and *Vulgate*; and in *Andreas*, and *Arethas*, ancient commentators on this book. It is also wanting in some editions, and is undoubtedly spurious. Griesbach has left this and the above *twenty-four* out of the text.

Now follow the least intelligible parts of this mysterious book, on which so much has been written, and so much in vain. It is natural for man to desire to be wise; and the more difficult the subject the more it is studied, and the hope of finding out something by which the world and the Church might be profited, has caused the most eminently learned men to employ their talents and consume their time on these abstruse prophecies. But of what use has all this learned and well-meant labour been to mankind? Can *hypothesis* explain *prophecy*, and *conjecture* find a *basis* on which *faith* can rest? And what have we better in all attempts hitherto made to explain the mysteries of this book?

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER VI.

*What followed on the opening of the seven seals. The opening of the first seal; the white horse, 1, 2. The opening of the second seal; the red horse, 3, 4. The opening of the third seal; the black horse and the famine, 5, 6. The opening of the fourth seal; the pale horse, 7, 8. The opening of the fifth seal; the souls of men under the altar, 9-11. The opening of the sixth seal; the earthquake, the darkening of the sun and moon, and falling of the stars, 12-14. The terrible consternation of the kings and great men of the earth, 15-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VI.

Verse 1. **When the Lamb opened one of the seals]** It is worthy of remark that the opening of the seals is not merely a declaration of what God will do, but is the exhibition of a purpose then accomplished; for whenever the seal is opened, the sentence appears to be *executed*. It is supposed that, from **#Re 6:1-11:19**, the calamities which should fall on the enemies of Christianity, and particularly the Jews, are pointed out under various images, as well as the preservation of the Christians under those calamities.

**One of the four beasts]** Probably that with the face of a *lion*. See **#Re 4:7**.

**Come and see.]** Attend to what is about to be exhibited. It is very likely that all was exhibited before his eyes as in a *scene*, and he saw every *act* represented which was to take place, and all the *persons* and *things* which were to be the chief *actors*.

Verse 2. **A white horse]** Supposed to represent the *Gospel system*, and pointing out its excellence, swiftness, and purity.

**He that sat on him]** Supposed to represent *Jesus Christ*.

**A bow]** The *preaching of the Gospel*, darting *conviction* into the hearts of sinners.

**A crown]** The emblem of the *kingdom* which Christ is to establish on earth.

**Conquering, and to conquer.]** Overcoming and confounding the *Jews* first, and then the *Gentiles*; spreading more and more the doctrine and influence of the cross over the face of the earth.

Verse 3. **The second beast]** That which had the face of an *ox*.

Verse 4. **Another horse-red]** The emblem of *war*; perhaps also of *severe persecution*, and the *martyrdom* of the saints.

**Him that sat thereon]** Some say, *Christ*; others, *Vespasian*; others, the *Roman armies*; others, *Artabanus*, king of the Parthians, &c., &c.

**Take peace from the earth]** To deprive Judea of all tranquillity.

**They should kill one another]** This was literally the case with the *Jews*, while besieged by the Romans.

**A great sword.]** Great influence and success, producing terrible carnage.

Verse 5. **The third beast]** That which had the face of a *man*.

**A black horse]** The emblem of *famine*. Some think that which took place under *Claudius*. See #Mt 24:7; the same which was predicted by *Agabus*, #Ac 11:28.

**A pair of balances]** To show that the *scarcity* would be such, that every person must be put under an *allowance*.

Verse 6. **A measure of wheat for a penny]** The *chaenix* here mentioned was a measure of *dry* things; and although the *capacity* is not exactly known, yet it is generally agreed that it contained as much as one man could consume in a day; and a *penny*, the Roman *denarius*, was the ordinary pay of a labourer. So it appears that in this scarcity each might be able to obtain a bare subsistence by his daily labour; but a man could not, in such cases, provide for a *family*.

**Three measures of barley]** This seems to have been the *proportion of value* between the wheat and the barley. Barley was allowed to afford a poor aliment, and was given to the Roman soldiers instead of wheat, by way of *punishment*.

**Hurt not the oil and the wine.]** Be sparing of these: use them not as *delicacies*, but for *necessity*; because neither the *vines* nor the *olives* will be productive.

Verse 7. **The fourth beast]** That which had the face of an *eagle*.

Verse 8. **A pale horse]** The symbol of *death*. *Pallida mors, pale death*, was a very usual poetic epithet; of this symbol there can be no doubt, because it is immediately said, *His name that sat on him was DEATH*.

**And hell followed with him]** The *grave*, or *state of the dead*, received the *slain*. This is a very elegant *prosopœia*, or personification.

**Over the fourth part of the earth]** One fourth of mankind was to feel the desolating effects of this seal.

**To kill with sword]** WAR; *with hunger-FAMINE*; *with death-PESTILENCE*; *and with the beasts of the earth*-lions, tigers, hyænas, &c., which would multiply in consequence of the devastations occasioned by *war, famine, and pestilence*.

Verse 9. **The fifth seal]** There is no *animal* nor any other *being* to introduce this seal, nor does there appear to be any new event predicted; but the whole is intended to comfort the followers of God under their persecutions, and to encourage them to bear up under their distresses.

**I saw under the altar]** A symbolical vision was exhibited, in which he saw an *altar*; and under it the *souls of those who had been slain for the word of God*-martyred for their attachment to Christianity, are represented as being newly slain as victims to idolatry and superstition. The altar is upon earth, not in heaven.

Verse 10. **And they cried with a loud voice]** That is, their *blood*, like that of Abel, cried for vengeance; for we are not to suppose that there was any thing like a vindictive spirit in those happy and holy souls who had shed their blood for the testimony of Jesus. We sometimes say *Blood cries for blood*; that is, in the order of Divine justice, every murderer, and every murdering persecutor, shall be punished.

**O Lord]** ὁ δεσποτης· Sovereign Lord, supreme Ruler; one having and exercising unlimited and uncontrolled authority.

**Holy]** In thy own nature, hating iniquity;

**And true]** In all thy promises and threatenings;

**Dost thou not judge]** The persecutors;

**And avenge our blood]** Inflict signal punishment;

**On them that dwell on the earth?]** Probably meaning the persecuting *Jews*; they dwelt ἐπι της γης, upon that land, a form of speech by which *Judea* is often signified in the New Testament.

Verse 11. **White robes]** The emblems of purity, innocence, and triumph.

**They should rest yet for a little season]** This is a declaration that, when the cup of the iniquity of the Jews should be full, they should then be punished in a mass. They were determined to proceed farther, and God permits them so to do; reserving the fulness of their punishment till they had filled up the measure of their iniquity. If this book was written *before* the destruction of Jerusalem, as is most likely, then this destruction is that which was to fall upon the *Jews*; and the *little time* or *season* was that which elapsed between their martyrdom, or the date of this book, and the final destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, under Vespasian and his son Titus, about A.D. 70. What follows may refer to the destruction of the heathen Roman empire.

Verse 12. **The sixth seal]** This seal also is opened and introduced by Jesus Christ alone.

**A great earthquake]** A most stupendous change in the civil and religious constitution of the world. If it refer to Constantine the Great, the change that was made by his conversion to Christianity

might be very properly represented under the emblem of an *earthquake*, and the other symbols mentioned in this and the following verses.

The *sun*-the ancient *pagan government* of the Roman empire, was totally darkened; and, like a *black hair sackcloth*, was degraded and humbled to the dust.

The *moon*-the *ecclesiastical* state of the same empire, became as *blood*-was totally ruined, their sacred rites abrogated, their priests and religious institutions desecrated, their altars cast down, their temples destroyed, or turned into places for Christian worship.

Verse 13. **The stars of heaven]** The gods and goddesses, demi-gods, and deified heroes, of their poetical and mythological *heaven*, were prostrated indiscriminately, and lay as useless as the figs or fruit of a tree shaken down before ripe by a *tempestuous wind*.

Verse 14. **And the heaven departed as a scroll]** The whole system of pagan and idolatrous worship, with all its spiritual, secular, and superstitious influence, was blasted, shrivelled up, and rendered null and void, as a parchment scroll when exposed to the action of a strong fire.

**And every mountain]** All the props, supports, and dependencies of the empire, whether *regal allies*, *tributary kings*, *dependent colonies*, or *mercenary troops*, were all moved out of their places, so as to stand no longer in the same relation to that empire, and its worship, support, and maintenance, as they formerly did.

**And island]** The heathen temples, with their *precincts* and *enclosures*, cut off from the common people, and into which none could come but the *privileged*, may be here represented by *islands*, for the same reasons.

Verse 15. **The kings of the earth, &c.]** All the secular powers who had endeavoured to support the pagan worship by authority, influence, riches, political wisdom, and military skill; with *every bondman*-all *slaves*, who were in life and limb addicted to their masters or owners.

**And every freeman]** Those who had been *manumitted*, commonly called *freedmen*, and who were attached, through gratitude, to the families of their liberators. All *hid themselves*-were astonished at the total overthrow of the heathen empire, and the revolution which had then taken place.

Verse 16. **Said to the mountains and rocks]** Expressions which denote the strongest perturbation and alarm. They preferred any kind of death to that which they apprehended from this most awful revolution.

**From the face of him that sitteth on the throne]** They now saw that all these terrible judgments came from the *Almighty*; and that *Christ*, the author of Christianity, was now judging, condemning, and destroying them for their cruel persecutions of his followers.

Verse 17. **For the great day of his wrath]** The decisive and manifest time in which he will execute judgment on the oppressors of his people.

**Who shall be able to stand?]** No might can prevail against the might of God. All these things may literally apply to the final destruction of Jerusalem, and to the revolution which took place in the Roman empire under Constantine the Great. Some apply them to the *day of judgment*; but they do not seem to have that awful event in view. These two events were the greatest that have ever taken place in the world, from the *flood* to the eighteenth century of the Christian era; and may well justify the strong figurative language used above.

Through I do not pretend to say that my remarks on this chapter point out its true signification, yet I find others have applied it in the same way. Dr. *Dodd* observes that the fall of Babylon, Idumea, Judah, Egypt, and Jerusalem, has been described by the prophets in language equally pompous, figurative, and strong. See **#Isa 13:10; 34:4**, concerning *Babylon* and *Idumea*; **#Jer 4:23, 24**, concerning *Judah*; **#Eze 32:7**, concerning *Egypt*; **#Joe 2:10, 31**, concerning *Jerusalem*; and our Lord himself, **#Mt 24:29**, concerning the same city. "Now," says he, "it is certain that the fall of any of these cities or kingdoms was not of greater concern or consequence to the world, nor more deserving to be described in pompous figures, than the fall of the *pagan Roman empire*, when the great lights of the heathen world, *the sun, moon, and stars*, the powers civil and ecclesiastical, were all eclipsed and obscured, the heathen emperors and Cæsars were slain, the heathen priests and augurs were extirpated, the heathen officers and magistrates were removed, the temples were demolished, and their revenues were devoted to better uses. It is customary with the prophets, after they have described a thing in the most symbolical and figurative manner, to represent the same again in plainer language; and the same method is observed here, **#Re 6:15-17**: *And the kings of the earth, &c.* That is, Maximin, Galerius, Maxentius, Licinius, &c., with all their adherents and followers, were so routed and dispersed that *they hid themselves in dens, &c.*; expressions used to denote the utmost terror and confusion. This is, therefore, a triumph of Christ over his heathen enemies, and a triumph after a severe persecution; so that the time and all the circumstances, as well as the series and order of the prophecy, agree perfectly with this interpretation. *Galerius, Maximin, and Licinius*, made even a public confession of their guilt, recalled their decrees and edicts against the Christians, and acknowledged the just judgments of God and of Christ in their own destruction." See *Newton, Lowman, &c.*, and Dr. *Dodd* on this chapter, with the works of several more recent authors.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER VII.

*The four angels holding the four winds of heaven, 1. The angel with the seal of the living God, and sealing the servants of God out of the twelve tribes, whose number amounted to one hundred and forty-four thousand, 2-8. Besides these, there was an innumerable multitude from all nations, who gave glory to God and the Lamb, 9-12. One of the elders shows who these are, and describes their most happy state, 13-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. VII.

Verse 1. **And after these things]** Immediately after the preceding vision.

**I saw four angels]** Instruments which God employs in the dispensation of his providence; we know not what.

**On the four corners of the earth]** On the extreme parts of the land of *Judea*, called *η γη*, the *land*, or *earth*, by way of eminence.

**Holding the four winds]** Preventing evil from every quarter. *Earth-sea, nor on any tree*; keeping the whole of the land free from evil, till the Church of Christ should wax strong, and each of his followers have time to prepare for his flight from Jerusalem, previously to its total destruction by the Romans.

Verse 2. **The seal of the living God]** This angel is represented as the chancellor of the supreme King, and as *ascending from the east*, *απο ανατολης ηλιου*, *from the rising of the sun*. Some understand this of Christ, who is called *ανατολη*, the *east*, #**Lu 1:78**.

**Four angels, to whom it was given to hurt]** Particular *agents* employed by Divine providence in the management of the affairs of the earth; but whether *spiritual* or *material* we know not.

Verse 3. **Till we have sealed the servants of our God]** There is manifestly an allusion to #**Eze 9:4** here. By *sealing* we are to understand *consecrating* the persons in a more especial manner to God, and showing, by this mark of God upon them, that they were under his more immediate protection, and that nothing should hurt them. It was a custom in the *east*, and indeed in the *west* too, to stamp with a hot iron the name of the owner upon the *forehead* or *shoulder* of his slave.

It is worthy of remark that not one Christian perished in the siege of Jerusalem; all had left the city, and escaped to Pella. This I have often had occasion to notice.

Verse 4. **I heard the number of them which were sealed]** In the number of 144,000 are included all the *Jews* converted to Christianity; 12,000 out of each of the twelve tribes: but this must be only a certain for an uncertain number; for it is not to be supposed that *just* 12,000 were converted out of *each* of the *twelve tribes*.

Verses 5. - 8. **Of the tribe of Juda, &c.]** *First*, we are to observe that the tribe of *Levi* is here mentioned, though that tribe had no inheritance in Israel; but they now belonged to the spiritual priesthood. *Secondly*, That the tribe of *Dan*, which had an inheritance, is here *omitted*; as also the tribe of *Ephraim*. *Thirdly*, That the tribe of *Joseph* is here *added* in the place of *Ephraim*. *Ephraim* and *Dan*, being the principal promoters of idolatry, are left out in this enumeration.

Verse 9. **A great multitude]** This appears to mean the Church of Christ among the *Gentiles*, for it was different from that collected from the *twelve tribes*; and it is here said to be of all *nations, kindreds, people, and tongues*.

**Clothed with white robes]** As emblems of *innocence* and *purity*. With *palms in their hands*, in token of victory gained over the world, the devil, and the flesh.

Verse 10. **Salvation to our God]** That is, God alone is the author of the salvation of man; and this salvation is procured for and given to them through the *Lamb*, as their propitiatory sacrifice.

Verse 11. **All the angels, &c.]** As there is joy in the presence of God among these holy spirits when one sinner repents, no wonder that they take such an interest in the gathering together of such innumerable multitudes who are fully saved from their sins.

Verse 12. **Saying, Amen]** Giving their most cordial and grateful *assent* to the praises attributed to God and the Lamb.

**Blessing, and glory, &c.]** There are here *seven* different species of praise attributed to God, as in **#Re 5:12**, where see the note.

Verse 13. **One of the elders answered]** A Hebraism for *spoke*. The question is here asked, that the proposer may have the opportunity of answering it.

Verse 14. **Sir, thou knowest]** That is, I do not know, but thou canst inform me.

**Came out of great tribulation]** Persecutions of every kind.

**And have washed their robes]** Have obtained their *pardon* and *purity*, through the *blood of the Lamb*.

Their *white robes* cannot mean the *righteousness of Christ*, for this cannot be washed and made white in his own blood. This *white linen* is said to be *the righteousness of the saints*, **#Re 19:8**, and this is the righteousness in which they stand *before the throne*; therefore it is not Christ's righteousness, but it is a righteousness wrought in them by the merit of his blood, and the power of his Spirit.

Verse 15. **Therefore]** Because they are washed in the blood of the Lamb, *are they before the throne*-admitted to the immediate presence, *of God*.

**And serve him day and night]** Without ceasing; being filled with the spirit of prayer, faith, love, and obedience.

**Shall dwell among them.]** He lives in his own Church, and in the heart of every true believer.

Verse 16. **They shall hunger no more]** They shall no longer be deprived of their religious ordinances, and the blessings attendant on them, as they were when in a state of persecution.

**Neither shall the sun light on them]** Their *secular rulers*, being converted to God, became nursing fathers to the Church.

**Nor any heat.]** Neither persecution nor affliction of any kind. These the Hebrews express by the term *heat, scorching, &c.*

Verse 17. **The Lamb]** The Lord Jesus, enthroned with his Father in ineffable glory.

**Shall feed them]** Shall communicate to them every thing calculated to secure, continue, and increase their happiness.

**Living fountains of water]** A *spring* in the Hebrew phraseology is termed *living water*, because constantly boiling up and running on. By these *perpetual fountains* we are to understand *endless sources* of comfort and happiness, which Jesus Christ will open out of his own infinite plenitude to all glorified souls. These eternal living fountains will make an infinite *variety* in the enjoyments of the blessed. There will be no *sameness*, and consequently no *cloying* with the perpetual enjoyment of the same things; every moment will open a *new source* of pleasure, instruction, and improvement; they shall make an eternal progression into the fulness of God. And as God is infinite, so his attributes are infinite; and throughout infinity more and more of those attributes will be discovered; and the discovery of each will be a *new fountain* or *source* of pleasure and enjoyment. These sources must be *opening* through all eternity, and yet, through all eternity, there will still remain, in the absolute perfections of the Godhead, an infinity of them to be opened! This is one of the finest images in the Bible.

**God shall wipe away]** In the most affectionate and fatherly manner, *all tears from their eyes*-all causes of distress and grief. They shall have pure, unmixed happiness. Reader, this is the happiness of those who are washed from their sins. Art thou washed? O, rest not till thou art prepared to appear before God and the Lamb.

If these saints had not met with troubles and distresses, in all likelihood they had not excelled so much in righteousness and true holiness. When all avenues of worldly comfort are shut up, we are obliged to seek our all in God; and there is nothing sought from him that is not found in him.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER VIII.

*The opening of the seventh seal, 1. The seven angels with the seven trumpets, 2-6. The first sounds, and there is a shower of hail, fire, and blood, 7. The second sounds, and the burning mountain is cast into the sea, 8, 9. The third sounds, and the great star Wormwood falls from heaven, 10, 11. The fourth sounds, and the sun, moon, and stars are smitten; and a threefold wo is denounced against the inhabitants of the earth, because of the three angels who are yet to sound, 12, 13.*

### NOTES ON CHAP VIII.

Verse 1. **The seventh seal]** This is ushered in and opened only by the Lamb.

**Silence in heaven]** This must be a mere *metaphor*, *silence* being put here for the deep and solemn *expectation* of the stupendous things about to take place, which the opening of this seal had produced. When any thing prodigious or surprising is expected, all is *silence*, and even the breath is scarcely heard to be drawn.

**Half an hour.]** As *heaven* may signify the *place* in which all these representations were made to St. John, the *half hour* may be considered as the time during which no representation was made to him, the time in which God was preparing the august exhibition which follows.

There is here, and in the following verses, a strong allusion to different parts of the *temple worship*; a presumption that the temple was still standing, and the regular service of God carried on. The *silence* here refers to this fact-while the priest went in to burn incense in the holy place, all the people continued in silent mental prayer without till the priest returned. See #**Lu 1:10**. The angel mentioned here appears to execute the office of priest, as we shall by and by see.

Verse 2. **The seven angels which stood before God]** Probably the same as those called the *seven Spirits which are before his throne*, #**Re 1:4**, where see the note. There is still an allusion here to the seven ministers of the Persian monarchs. See **Tobit 12:15**.

Verse 3. **Another angel]** About to perform the office of *priest*.

**Having a golden censer]** This was a preparation peculiar to the *day of expiation*. "On other days it was the custom of the priest to *take fire* from the *great altar* in a *silver censer*, but on the *day of expiation* the high priest took the fire from the *great altar* in a *golden censer*; and when he was come down from the great altar, he took incense from one of the priests, who brought it to him, and went with it to the *golden altar*; and while he offered the incense the people prayed without in silence, which is the *silence in heaven for half an hour*." See Sir Isaac Newton.

**Much incense, that he should offer it]** Judgments of God are now about to be executed; the *saints*-the genuine Christians, *pray* much to God for protection. The angelic priest comes with *much*

*incense*, standing between the living and those consigned to death, and offers his incense to God *WITH the prayers of the saints*.

Verse 4. **The smoke of the incense-with the prayers]** Though incense itself be an emblem of the prayers of the saints, #Ps 141:2; yet here *they* are said to *ascend before God*, as well as the *incense*. It is not said that the angel presents these prayers. He presents the incense, and the *prayers ascend WITH it*. The *ascending* of the *incense* shows that the prayers and offering were accepted.

Verse 5. **Cast it into the earth]** That is, upon the land of Judea; intimating the judgments and desolations which were now coming upon it, and which appear to be farther opened in the sounding of the seven trumpets.

**There were voices]** All these seem to point out the confusion, commotions, distresses, and miseries, which were coming upon these people in the *wars* which were at hand.

Verse 6. **Prepared themselves to sound.]** Each took up his trumpet, and stood prepared to blow his blast. *Wars* are here indicated; the *trumpet* was the emblem of *war*.

Verse 7. **Hail and fire mingled with blood]** This was something like the *ninth* plague of Egypt. See #Ex 9:18-24: "The Lord sent thunder and hail-and fire mingled with the hail-and the fire ran along upon the ground." In the *hail and fire mingled with blood*, some fruitful imaginations might find *gunpowder* and *cannon balls*, and *canister shot* and *bombs*.

**They were cast upon the earth]** εἰς τὴν γῆν· *Into that land*; viz., *Judea*, thus often designated.

**And the third part of trees]** Before this clause the *Codex Alexandrinus*, thirty-five others, the *Syriac*, *Arabic*, *Æthiopic*, *Armenian*, *Slavonic*, *Vulgate*, *Andreas*, *Arethas*, and some others, have καὶ το τρίτον τῆς γῆς κατέκαη· *And the third part of the land was burnt up*. This reading, which is undoubtedly genuine, is found also in the *Complutensian Polyglot*. Griesbach has received it into the text.

The *land* was wasted; the *trees*-the chiefs of the nation, were destroyed; and the *grass*-the *common people*, slain, or carried into captivity. High and low, rich and poor, were overwhelmed with one general destruction. This seems to be the meaning of these figures.

Many eminent men suppose that the irruption of the barbarous nations on the Roman empire is here intended. It is easy to find coincidences when fancy runs riot. Later writers might find here the irruption of the *Austrians* and *British*, and *Prussians*, *Russians*, and *Cossacks*, on the French empire!

Verse 8. **A great mountain burning with fire]** Supposed to signify the powerful nations which invaded the Roman empire. *Mountain*, in prophetic language, signifies a *kingdom*; #Jer 51:25, 27, 30, 58. Great disorders, especially when kingdoms are moved by hostile invasions, are represented by *mountains* being *cast into the midst of the sea*, #Ps 46:2. *Seas* and *collections of waters* mean *peoples*, as is shown in this book, #Re 17:15. Therefore, great commotions in kingdoms and among

their inhabitants may be here intended, but to *whom*, *where*, and *when* these happened, or are to happen, we know not.

**The third part of the sea became blood]** Another allusion to the Egyptian plagues, #Ex 7:20, 21. *Third part* is a rabbinism, expressing a considerable number. "When Rabbi Akiba prayed, wept, rent his garments, put off his shoes, and sat in the dust, the world was struck with a curse; and then the *third part* of the olives, the *third part* of the wheat, and the *third part* of the barley, was smitten" Rab. Mardocheus, in Notitia Karæorum, p. 102.

Verse 9. **The third part of the ships were destroyed.]** These judgments seem to be poured out upon some maritime nation, destroying much of its population, and much of its traffic.

Verse 10. **There fell a great star from heaven]** This has given rise to various conjectures. Some say the star means *Attila* and his Huns, others, *Genseric* with his Vandals falling on the city of Rome; others, *Eleazer*, the son of *Annus*, spurning the emperor's victims, and exciting the fury of the Zealots; others, *Arius*; infecting the pure Christian doctrine with his heresy, &c., &c. It certainly cannot mean *all these*; and probably *none* of them. Let the reader judge.

Verse 11. **The star is called Wormwood]** So called from the *bitter* or *distressing effects* produced by its influence.

Verse 12. **The third part of the sun-moon-stars, was smitten]** Supposed to mean *Rome*, with her *senates*, *consuls*, &c., eclipsed by *Odoacer*, king of the Heruli, and *Theodoric*, king of the Ostrogoths, in the fifth century. But all this is uncertain.

Verse 13. **I-heard an angel flying]** Instead of *αγγελου πετωμενου*, *an angel flying*, almost every MS. and version of note has *αετου πετωμενου*, *an eagle flying*. The *eagle* was the symbol of the Romans, and was always on their ensigns. The *three woes* which are here expressed were probably to be executed by this people, and upon the Jews and their commonwealth. Taken in this sense the symbols appear consistent and appropriate; and the reading *eagle* instead of *angel* is undoubtedly genuine, and Griesbach has received it into the text.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER IX.

*The fifth angel sounds, and a star falls from heaven to earth, 1. The bottomless pit is opened, and locusts come out upon the earth, 2, 3. Their commission, 4-6. Their form, 7-10. Their government, 11, 12. The sixth angel sounds, and the four angels bound in the Euphrates are loosed, 13-15. The army of horsemen, and their description, 16-19. Though much evil is inflicted upon men for their idolatry, &c., they do not repent, 20, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. IX.

Verse 1. **A star fall from heaven]** An angel encompassed with light suddenly descended, and seemed like a *star* falling from heaven.

**The key of the bottomless pit.]** Power to inundate the earth with a flood of temporal calamities and moral evils.

Verse 2. **He opened the bottomless pit]** το φρεαρ της αβυσσου· *The pit of the bottomless deep.* Some think the angel means *Satan*, and the bottomless pit *hell*. Some suppose *Mohammed* is meant; and Signior *Pastorini* professes to believe that *Luther* is intended!

**There arose a smoke]** False doctrine, obscuring the true light of heaven.

Verse 3. **Locusts]** Vast hordes of military troops: the description which follows certainly agrees better with the *Saracens* than with any other people or nation, but may also apply to the Romans.

**As the scorpions of the earth have power.]** Namely, to hurt men by *stinging* them. Scorpions may signify *archers*; and hence the description has been applied to *Cestius Gallus*, the Roman general, who had many *archers* in his army.

Verse 4. **They should not hurt the grass]** Neither the common people, the men of middling condition, nor the nobles. However, this appears rather to refer to the prudent counsels of a military chief, not to destroy the *crops* and *herbage* of which they might have need in their campaigns.

**Which have not the seal of God]** All false, hypocritical, and heterodox Christians.

Verse 5. **To them it was given]** That is, they were *permitted*.

**That they should be tormented five months]** Some take these months *literally*, and apply them to the conduct of the Zealots who, from *May* to *September*, in the year of the siege, produced dreadful contests among the people; or to the afflictions brought upon the Jews by *Cestius Gallus*, when he came against Jerusalem, before which he lay one whole summer, or nearly five months.-See *Joseph.*, Bell. Jud., l. ii. c. 19.

Others consider the *months* as being *prophetical* months, each *day* being reckoned for a *year*; therefore this period must amount to one hundred and fifty years, counting thirty days to each month, as was the general custom of the Asiatics.

**Their torment was as the torment of a scorpion]** The phraseology here is peculiar, and probably refers to the warlike weapon called a *scorpion*, several of which, or men armed with them, Cestius Gallus brought with him in his army.

*Isidore* describes this *scorpion* thus: *Scorpio est sagitta venenata arcu vel tormentis excussa, quæ, dum ad hominem venerit, virus qua figit infundit; unde et scorpio nomen accepit.* "The scorpion is a poisoned arrow shot from a bow or other instrument, which, when it wounds a man, deposits the poison with which it is covered in the wound; whence it has the name of scorpion." *Seneca*, in his *Hercules Œtæus*, act iv., ver. 1218, describes the torment which is occasioned by this species of poisoned arrow:—

Heu qualis intus *scorpius*, quis fervida  
Plaga revulsus cancer infixus meas  
Urit medullas?

Verse 6. **In those days shall men seek death]** So distressing shall be their sufferings and torment that they shall long for death in *any form*, to be rescued from the evils of life. There is a sentiment much like this in *Maximianus*, Eleg. i., ver. 111, commonly attributed to *Cornelius Gallus*:—

Nunc quia longa mihi gravis est et inutilis ætas,  
Vivere cum nequeam, sit mihi posse mori?  
O quam dura premit miseros conditio vitæ!  
Nec mors humano subjacet arbitrio.  
*Dulce mori miseris; sed mors optata recedit:*  
At cum tristis erit, præcipitata venit.

"Seeing that long life is both useless and burdensome  
When we can no longer live comfortably, shall we be permitted to die?  
O how hard is the condition on which we hold life!  
For death is not subjected to the will of man.  
*To die is sweet to the wretched; but wished-for death flees away.*  
Yet when it is not desired, it comes with the hastiest strides."

Job expresses the same sentiment, in the most plaintive manner:—

Why is light given to the miserable,  
And life to the bitter of soul?  
Who wait for death, but it is not;  
And dig for it more than hid treasures.  
They rejoice for it, and are glad,  
And exult when they find the grave.  
**#Job 3:20-22.**

Verse 7. **The locusts were like unto horses]** This description of the locusts appears to be taken from **#Joe 2:4**. The whole of this symbolical description of an overwhelming military force agrees very well with the troops of Mohammed. The Arabs are the most expert horsemen in the world: they live so much on horseback that the horse and his rider seem to make but one animal. The *Romans* also were eminent for their cavalry.

**Crowns like gold]** Not only alluding to their costly *tiaras* or *turbans*, but to the extent of their conquests and the multitude of powers which they subdued.

**Their faces were as the faces of men.]** That is, though locusts symbolically, they are really men.

Verse 8. **Hair as the hair of women]** No razor passes upon their flesh. Their *hair long*, and their *beards unshaven*.

**Their teeth were as the teeth of lions.]** They are ferocious and cruel.

Verse 9. **They had breastplates-of iron]** They seemed to be invulnerable, for no force availed against them.

**The sound of their wings]** Their hanging weapons and military trappings, with the clang of their shields and swords when they make their fierce onsets. This simile is borrowed from **#Joe 2:5-7**.

Verse 10. **They had tails like unto scorpions]** This may refer to the consequences of their victories. They infected the conquered with their pernicious doctrines.

**Their power was to hurt men five months.]** The locusts make their principal ravages during the *five summer months*. But probably these may be *prophetic months*, as above, in **#Re 9:5-150** years.

Verse 11. **A king over them]** A supreme head; some think Mohammed, some think Vespasian.

**The angel of the bottomless pit]** The chief envoy of Satan.

**Abaddon]** From אבדן *abad*, he destroyed.

**Apollyon.**] From *απο*, *intensive*, and *ολλυω*, *to destroy*. The meaning is the same both in the Hebrew and Greek.

Verse 12. **One wo is past**] That is, the wo or desolation by the symbolical scorpions.

**There came two woes more**] In the trumpets of the sixth and seventh angels.

Verse 13. **The four horns of the golden altar**] This is another not very obscure indication that the Jewish temple was yet standing.

Verse 14. **Loose the four angels**] These four angels *bound*-hitherto restrained, in the Euphrates, are by some supposed to be the Arabs, the Saracens, the Tartars, or the Turks; by others, Vespasian's four generals, one in Arabia, one in Africa, one in Alexandria, and one in Palestine.

Verse 15. **For an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year**] We have in this place a year resolved into its component parts. Twenty-four *hours* constitute a *day*, seven *days* make a *week*, four *weeks* make a *month*, and twelve *months* make a *year*. Probably no more is meant than that these four angels were at *all times* prepared and permitted to inflict evil on the people against whom they had received their commission. There are some who understand these divisions of time as prophetic periods, and to these I must refer, not professing to discuss such uncertainties.

Verse 16. **Two hundred thousand thousand**] *δυο μυριαδες μυριαδων*. *Two myriads of myriads*; that is, *two hundred millions*; an army that was never yet got together from the foundation of the world, and could not find *forage* in any part of the earth. Perhaps it only means *vast numbers, multitudes without number*. Such a number might be literally true of the *locusts*. Those who will have their particular system supported by the images in this most obscure book, tell us that the number here means all the soldiers that were employed in this war, from its commencement to its end! Those who can receive this saying let them receive it.

Verse 17. **Breastplates of fire-jacinth, and brimstone**] That is, *red, blue, and yellow*; the first is the colour of *fire*, the second of *jacinth*, and the third of *sulphur*.

**And the heads of the horses**] Is this an allegorical description of great *ordnance*? Cannons, on the mouths of which horses' heads were formed, or the mouth of the cannon cast in that form? *Fire, smoke, and brimstone*, is a good allegorical representation of *gunpowder*. The Ottomans made great use of heavy artillery in their wars with the Greeks of the lower empire.

Verse 18. **By these three was the third part of men killed**] That is, By these was great carnage made.

Verse 19. **Their power is in their mouth**] From these the destructive *balls* are projected; *and in their tails*, the *breech* where the *charge* of *gunpowder* is lodged.

**Their tails were like unto serpents, and had heads]** If cannons are intended, the description, though allegorical, is plain enough; for *brass ordnance* especially are frequently thus ornamented, both at their *muzzles* and at their *breech*.

Verse 20. **Yet repented not]** The commission which these horsemen had was against idolaters; and though multitudes of them were destroyed, yet the residue continued their senseless attachment to dumb idols, and therefore heavier judgments might be expected. These things are supposed to refer to the desolation brought upon the Greek Church by the *Ottomans*, who entirely ruined that Church and the Greek empire. The Church which was then remaining was the *Latin* or western Church, which was not at all corrected by the judgments which fell upon the eastern Church, but continued its senseless adoration of angels, saints, relics, &c., and does so to the present day. If, therefore, God's wrath be kindled against such, this Church has much to fear.

Verse 21. **Neither repented they of their murders]** Their cruelties towards the genuine followers of God, the Albigenses, and Waldenses, and others, against whom they published crusades, and hunted them down, and butchered them in the most shocking manner. The innumerable murders by the horrible *inquisition* need not be mentioned.

**Their sorceries]** Those who apply this also to the Romish Church understand by it the various *tricks, sleights of hand, or legerdemain*, by which they impose on the common people in causing images of Christ to bleed, and the various pretended *miracles* wrought at the tombs, &c., of pretended saints, holy wells, and such like.

**Fornication]** Giving that honour to various creatures which is due only to the Creator.

**Their thefts.]** Their exactions and impositions on men for *indulgences, pardons, &c.* These things *may* be intended, but it is going too far to say that this is the true interpretation. And yet to express any doubt on this subject is with some little else than heresy. If such men can see these things so clearly in such obscure prophecies, let them be thankful for their sight, and indulgent to those who still sit in darkness.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER X.

*The description of a mighty angel with a little book in his hand, 1, 2. The seven thunders, 3, 4. The angel swears that there shall be time no longer, 5-7. John is commanded to take the little book and eat it; he does so, and receives a commission to prophesy to many peoples, 8-11.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. X.

Verse 1. **Another mighty angel]** Either Christ or his representative; *clothed with a cloud*; a symbol of the Divine majesty.

**A rainbow was upon his head]** The token of God's merciful covenant with mankind.

**His face was as it were the sun]** So intensely glorious that it could not be looked on.

**His feet as pillars of fire]** To denote the rapidity and energy of his motions, and the stability of his counsels.

Verse 2. **A little book open]** Meaning probably some *design* of God long concealed, but now about to be made manifest. But who knows what it means?

**His right foot upon the sea, and his left-on the earth]** To show that he had the command of each, and that his power was universal, all things being under his feet.

Verse 3. **Seven thunders]** Seven being a number of perfection, it may here mean many, great, loud, and strong peals of thunder, accompanied with distinct voices; but what was said, St. John was not permitted to reveal, **#Re 10:4**.

Verse 5. **Lifted up his hand to heaven]** As one making an appeal to the supreme Being.

Verse 6. **By him that liveth for ever and ever]** The eternal, self-existent Jehovah, the Maker of all things.

**That there should be time no longer]** That the great counsels relative to the events already predicted should be immediately fulfilled, and that there should be no longer *delay*. This has no reference to the day of judgment.

Verse 7. **The mystery of God should be finished]** What this mystery refers to who knows? Nor have we more knowledge concerning the sounding of the seventh angel. On these points there is little agreement among learned men. Whether it mean the destruction of Jerusalem, or the destruction of the papal power, or something else, we know not. And yet with what confidence do men speak of the meaning of these hidden things!

**Declared to his servants the prophets.]** It is most likely, therefore, that this trumpet belongs to the *Jewish* state.

Verse 8. **Take the little book which is open]** Learn from this angel what should be published to the world.

Verse 9. **Take it, and eat it up]** Fully comprehend its meaning; study it thoroughly.

Verse 10. **It was in my mouth sweet as honey]** There was in it some pleasing, some unpleasing, intelligence. I read of the consolations and protection of the true worshippers of God, and did *rejoice*; I read of the persecutions of the Church, and was *distressed*.

Verse 11. **Thou must prophesy again]** Thou must write, not only for the instruction of the Jews in Palestine, but of those in the different provinces, as well as the heathens and heathen emperors and potentates in general.

THE reader will find, on comparing this chapter with **#Da 8:1-27; 12:1-13**, and **#Eze 2:1-3:27**, that there are several things similar in both; and the writer of the Apocalypse appears to keep these two prophets continually in view. I must once more say that I do not understand these prophecies, therefore I do not take upon me to explain them. I see with regret how many learned men have mistaken their way here. Commentators, and even some of the *most modern*, have strangely trifled in these solemn things; all trumpets, vials, woes, &c., are perfectly easy to *them*; yet from their descriptions, none get wise either to common sense or to the things that make for their peace.

On the same ground I cannot admit the interpretation that is given of the word *χρονος*, translated *time* in **#Re 10:6**, which some have construed into an artificial period of 1,111 years, which they term *chronos*; hence we have the *chronos*, *half-chronos*, and *non-chronos*. Bengel has said much on these points, but to very little purpose; the word in the above place seems to signify *delay* simply, and probably refers to the long-suffering of God being ended in reference to Jerusalem; for I all along take for probable that this book was written *previously* to the destruction of that city.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XI.

*The command to measure the temple, 1, 2. The two witnesses which should prophesy twelve hundred and sixty days, 3. The description, power, and influence of these witnesses, 4-6. They shall be slain by the beast which shall arise out of the bottomless pit, and shall arise again after three days and a half, and ascend to heaven, 7-12. After which shall be a great earthquake, 13. The introduction to the third wo, 14. The sounding of the seventh angel, and the four and twenty elders give glory to God, 15-19.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XI.

Verse 1. **And there was given me a reed]** See #Eze 40:3, &c.

**Measure the temple of God]** This must refer to the temple of Jerusalem; and this is another presumptive evidence that it was yet standing.

Verse 2. **But the court-is given unto the Gentiles]** The measuring of the temple probably refers to its approaching *destruction*, and the *termination* of the whole *Levitical service*; and this we find was to be done by the Gentiles, (Romans,) who were to tread it down forty-two months; i.e., just *three years and a half*, or *twelve hundred and sixty days*. This must be a symbolical period.

Verse 3. **My two witnesses]** This is extremely obscure; the conjectures of interpreters are as unsatisfactory as they are endless on this point. *Conjecturas conjecturis superstruunt, parum verosimiles*, says Rosenmuller: *quorum sententias enarrare, meum non est*. I say the same. Those who wish to be amused or bewildered, may have recourse both to ancients and moderns on this subject.

Verse 4. **These are the two olive trees]** Mentioned #Zec 4:14, which there represent *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* the high priest. The whole account seems taken from #Zec 4:1-14. Whether the prophet and the apostle mean the same things by these emblems, we know not.

Verse 5. **Fire proceedeth out of their mouth]** That is, they are commissioned to denounce the judgments of God against all who would attempt to prevent them from proceeding in their ministry.

Verse 6. **These have power to shut heaven]** As *Elijah* did, #1Ki 17:1-18:46.

**To turn them to blood]** As *Moses* did, #Ex 7:19-25. They shall have power to afflict the land with plagues, similar to those which were inflicted on the Egyptians.

Verse 7. **The beast that ascended out of the bottomless pit]** This may be what is called *antichrist*; some power that is opposed to genuine Christianity. But *what* or *whence*, except *from the bottomless pit*, i.e., under the influence and appointment of the devil, we cannot tell; nor do we know by what name this power or being should be called. The conjectures concerning the *two witnesses*

and the *beast* have been sufficiently multiplied. If the whole passage, as some think, refer to the persecution raised by the *Jews* against the *Christians*, then some *Jewish power* or *person* is the *beast* from the bottomless pit. If it refer to the early ages of Christianity, then the *beast* may be one of the persecuting *heathen emperors*. If it refer to a later age of Christianity, then the *beast* may be the *papal power*, and the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses* the *two witnesses*, which were nearly extinguished by the horrible persecutions raised up against them by the Church of Rome. Whatever may be *here* intended, the earth has not yet covered *their* blood.

Verse 8. **The great city]** Some say *Rome*, which may be spiritually called *Sodom* for its *abominations*, *Egypt* for its *tyrannous cruelty*, and the *place where our Lord was crucified*, because of its persecution of the members of Christ; but *Jerusalem* itself may be intended. All these things I must leave to others.

Verse 9. **Shall not suffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.]** They shall be treated with the greatest *barbarity*. Refusal of burial to the dead was allowed to be the sum of brutality and cruelty. In popish lands they will not suffer a Protestant to have *Christian burial*, or to have a grave in a churchyard! Contemptible wretches!

Verse 10. **Shall send gifts]** This was a custom in days of public rejoicing. They sent gifts to each other, and gave portions to the poor. See **#Es 9:19, 22**.

Verse 11. **They stood upon their feet]** Were restored to their primitive state.

Verse 12. **They ascended up to heaven]** Enjoyed a state of great peace and happiness.

Verse 13. **A great earthquake]** Violent commotions among the persecutors, and revolutions of states.

**Slain of men seven thousand]** Many perished in these popular commotions.

**The remnant were affrighted]** Seeing the hand of God's judgments so remarkably stretched out.

**Gave glory]** Received the pure doctrines of the Gospel, and glorified God for *his* judgments and *their* conversion.

Verse 14. **The seconds wo is past]** That which took place under the *sixth trumpet*, and has been already described.

**The third wo cometh]** Is about to be described under the *seventh trumpet*, which the angel is now prepared to sound.

Of the *three woes* which were denounced, **#Re 8:13**, the first is described, **#Re 9:1-12**; the second, **#Re 9:13-21**. These woes are supposed by many learned men to refer to the destruction of Jerusalem. *The first wo*-the seditions among the Jews themselves. *The second wo*-the besieging of the city by the Romans. *The third wo*-the taking and sacking of the city, and burning the temple. This

was the greatest of all the woes, as in it the city and temple were destroyed, and nearly a million of men lost their lives.

Verse 15. **There were great voices in heaven]** All the heavenly host-angels and redeemed human spirits, joined together to magnify God; that he had utterly discomfited his enemies and rendered his friends glorious. This will be truly the case when the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of God and of his Christ, But *when* shall this be? Some say, that is meant by these words has already taken place in the destruction of the Jewish state, and sending the Gospel throughout the Gentile world. Others say that it refers to the millennium, and to the consummation of all things.

Verse 16. **The four and twenty elders]** The representatives of the universal Church of Christ. See on **#Re 5:8-10**.

Verse 17. **O Lord God Almighty, which art]** This gives a proper view of God in his eternity; all *times* are here comprehended, the *present*, the *past*, and the *future*. This is the infinitude of God.

**Hast taken to thee]** Thou hast *exercised* that power which thou ever hast; and thou hast broken the power of thy enemies, and exalted thy Church.

Verse 18. **The nations were angry]** Were enraged against thy Gospel, and determined to destroy it.

**Thy wrath is come]** The time to avenge thy servants and to destroy all thy enemies.

**The time of the dead, that they should be judged]** The word κρινειν, *to judge*, is often used in the sense of *to avenge*. The dead, here, may mean those who were *slain for the testimony of Jesus*, and the *judging* is the *avenging* of their blood.

**Give reward unto thy servants]** Who have been faithful unto death.

**The prophets]** The faithful *teachers* in the Church, *the saints*-the Christians.

**And them that fear thy name]** All thy sincere followers.

**Destroy them which destroy the earth.]** All the authors, fomenters, and encouragers of bloody wars.

Verse 19. **The temple of God was opened in heaven]** The true worship of God was established and performed in the Christian Church; this is the true temple, that at Jerusalem being destroyed.

**And there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.]** These great commotions were intended to introduce the following vision; for the 12th chapter is properly a continuation of the 11th, and should be read in strict connection with it.

I NOW come to a part of this book that is deemed of the greatest importance by the Protestant Church, but is peculiarly difficult and obscure. I have often acknowledged my own incapacity to illustrate these prophecies. I might have availed myself of the labours of others, but I know not who is right; or whether any of the writers on this book have hit the sense is more than I can assert, and more than I think. The illustration of the xiith, xiiiith, and xviith chapters, which I have referred to in the *preface*, drawn up and displayed with great industry and learning, I shall insert in its place, as by far the most probable I have yet seen; but I leave the learned author responsible for his own particular views of the subject.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XII.

*The woman clothed with the sun, and in travail, 1, 2. The great red dragon waiting to devour the child as soon as born, 3, 4. The woman is delivered of a son, who is caught up unto God; and she flees to the wilderness, 5, 6. The war in heaven between Michael and the dragon, 7, 8. The dragon and his angels are overcome and cast down to the earth; whereupon the whole heavenly host give glory to God, 9-11. The dragon, full of wrath at his defeat, persecutes the woman, 12, 13. She flees to the wilderness, whither he attempts to pursue her; and he makes war with her seed, 14-17.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XII.

Before I introduce the comment mentioned at the close of the preceding chapter, I think it necessary to state that the *phraseology* of the whole chapter is peculiarly *rabbinical*, and shall insert a few selections which may serve to illustrate some of the principal *figures*.

In *Sohar Exod.*, fol. 47, col. 187, we find a mystical interpretation of #Ex 21:22: *If men strive, and hurt a woman with child, so that her fruit depart—he shall be surely punished, as the woman's husband will lay upon him.* "If men strive, i.e. *Michael* and *Samael*, and hurt a woman with child, i.e. *the Israelitish Church*, so that her fruit depart, *hoc fit in exilio*, he shall surely be punished, i.e., *Samael*. As the woman's husband, that is, the holy and blessed God."

### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 1. **There appeared a great wonder in heaven; a woman clothed with the sun]** That the woman here represents the true Church of Christ most commentators are agreed. In other parts of the Apocalypse, the pure Church of Christ is evidently portrayed by a woman. In #Re 19:7, a great multitude are represented as saying, "Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him; for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his WIFE hath made herself ready." In #Re 21:9, an angel talks with St. John, saying, "Come hither, I will show thee the BRIDE, the Lamb's wife." That the Christian Church is meant will appear also from her being *clothed with the sun*, a striking emblem of Jesus Christ, the Sun of righteousness, the light and glory of the Church; for the countenance of the Son of God is *as the sun shineth in his strength*. The woman has:—

**The moon under her feet.]** Bishop Newton understands this of the Jewish typical worship and indeed the Mosaic system of rites and ceremonies could not have been better represented, for it was the *shadow of good things to come*. The moon is the less light, ruling over the night, and deriving all its illumination from the sun; in like manner the Jewish dispensation was the bright moonlight night of the world, and possessed a portion of the glorious light of the Gospel. At the rising of the sun the night is ended, and the lunar light no longer necessary, as the sun which enlightens her shines full upon the earth; exactly in the same way has the whole Jewish system of types and shadows has been superseded by the birth, life, crucifixion, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Jesus Christ. Upon the head of the woman is:—

**A crown of twelve stars.]** A very significant representation of the *twelve apostles*, who were the first founders of the Christian Church, and by whom the Gospel was preached in great part of the Roman empire with astonishing success. "They that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness, as the STARS for ever and ever." #Da 12:3.

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Verse 2. **And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, &c.]** This, when taken in connection with the following verses, is a striking figure of the great persecution which the Church of Christ should suffer under the heathen Roman emperors, but more especially of that long and most dreadful one under Diocletian. The woman is represented as BEING *with child*, to show that the time would speedily arrive when God's patient forbearance with the heathen would be terminated, and that a *deliverer* should arise in the Christian world who would execute the Divine vengeance upon paganism.

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Verse 3. **There appeared another wonder-a great red dragon]** The dragon here is a symbol, not of the *Roman empire* in general, but of the HEATHEN *Roman empire*. This great pagan power must have, therefore, been thus represented from the religion which it supported. But what is a dragon? An entirely fabulous beast of antiquity, consequently, in this respect, a most proper emblem of the heathen worship, which consisted in paying adoration to numerous imaginary beings, termed gods, goddesses, &c. The very foundation of the heathen religious system is mostly built upon fable; and it is very difficult to trace many of their superstitions to any authentic original; and even those which appear to derive their origin from the sacred writings are so disguised in fable as literally to bear no more resemblance to the truth than the dragon of the ancients does to any animal with which we are acquainted. But it may be asked why the Spirit of God should represent the heathen Roman empire as a *dragon*, rather than by any other of the fabulous animals with which the mythology of the ancient Romans abounded. The answer is as follows; In the eighth chapter of the Prophet Daniel, God has represented the kingdom of the Greeks by a *he-goat*, for no other apparent reason than this, that it was the national military standard of the Grecian monarchy; we may therefore expect that the pagan Roman empire is called a DRAGON on a similar account. In confirmation of this point it is very remarkable that the *dragon* was the principal standard of the Romans next to the eagle, in the *second, third, fourth, and fifth* centuries of the Christian era. Of this we have abundant evidence in the writings of both heathens and Christians. Arrian is the earliest writer who has mentioned that dragons were used as military standards among the Romans. See his *Tactics*, c. 51. Hence Schwebelius supposes that this standard was introduced after Trajan's conquest of the Daci. See *Vegetius de Re Militari* a Schwebelio, p. 191, Argentorati, 1806; and *Grævii Thesaur., Antiq. Roman.*, tom. x., col. 1529. Vegetius, who flourished about A.D. 386, says, lib. ii. c. 13: *Primum signum totius legionis est aquila, quam aquilifer portat. DRACONES etiam per singulas cohortes a draconariis feruntur ad prælium.* "The first standard of the whole legion is the eagle, which the aquilifer carries. DRAGONS are also borne to battle by the Draconarii." As a legion consisted of ten cohorts, there were therefore *ten* draconarii to *one* aquilifer; hence, from the great number of draconarii in an army, the word *signarii* or *signiferi*, standard-bearers, came at last to mean the carriers of the dragon standards only, the others retaining the name of *aquiliferi*.-See *Veget.*, lib. ii. c. 7, and his commentators. The heathen Roman empire is called a RED *dragon*; and accordingly we find from the testimony of ancient writers that the dragon standards of the Romans were painted *red*.

We read in Ammianus Marcellinus, lib. xvi., c. 12, of PURPUREUM *signum draconis*, "the purple standard of the dragon." See also *Claudianus* in Rufinum, lib. ii., l. 177, 178. *Pitiscus*, in his *Lexicon Antiq. Rom.*, and *Ducange*, in his *Glossarium Mediæ et Infimæ Latinitatis*, sub voc. *Draco*, have considered this subject at great length, especially the latter writer, who has made several quotations from *Claudianus*, *Sidonius*, *Prudentius*, and others, in which not only the standard, but also the image of the dragon itself, is stated to be of a *red* or *purple* colour. Of what has been said above respecting the dragon, this is then the sum: a *huge fabulous* beast is shown to St. John, by which some *GREAT PAGAN power* is symbolically represented; and *the RED dragon* is selected from among the numerous imaginary animals which the fancies of mankind have created to show that this great pagan power is the *heathen ROMAN empire*.

**Having seven heads]** As the dragon is an emblem of the heathen Roman power, its *heads* must denote *heathen forms of government*.—See **Clarke's note on "Re 17:10"**, where the heads of the beast are explained in a similar way. These were exactly *seven*, and are enumerated by Tacitus (*Annal.*, lib. i., in *principio*) in words to the following effect: "The city of Rome was originally governed by *kings*. L. Brutus instituted liberty and the *consulate*. The *dictatorship* was only occasionally appointed; neither did the *decemviral power* last above two years; and the *consular power of the military tribunes* was not of long continuance. Neither had Cinna nor Sylla a long domination: the power of Pompey and Crassus was also soon absorbed in that of Cæsar; and the arms of Lepidus and Antony finally yielded to those of Augustus." From this passage it is evident to every person well acquainted with the Roman history, that the seven forms of government in the heathen Roman world were, 1. The regal power; 2. The consulate; 3. The dictatorship; 4. The decemvirate; 5. The consular power of the military tribunes; 6. The triumvirate; and, 7. The imperial government.

It is singular that commentators in general, in their citation of this passage, have taken no notice of *the triumvirate*, a form of government evidently as distinct from any of the others as *kings* are from *consuls*, or *consuls* from *emperors*. For the triumvirate consisted in the division of the Roman republic into three parts, each governed by an officer possessed with consular authority in his own province; and all three united together in the regulation of the whole Roman state. Consequently, it differed entirely from *the imperial power*, which was the entire conversion of the Roman state from a republic to a monarchy.

**And ten horns]** That these ten horns signify as many kingdoms is evident from the seventh chapter of Daniel, where the angel, speaking of the fourth beast, says, that "the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise;" and in this view of the passage many commentators are agreed, who also admit that the ten kingdoms are to be met with "amid the broken pieces of the Roman empire." And it is evident that nothing less than the dismemberment of the Roman empire, and its division into ten independent kingdoms, can be intended by the angel's interpretation just quoted. If, therefore, the ten horns of Daniel's fourth beast point out as many kingdoms, for the very same reason must the horns of the dragon have a similar meaning. But the Roman empire was not divided into several independent kingdoms till a considerable time after it became Christian. In what sense then can it be said that the different kingdoms into which the Roman empire was divided by the barbarous nations are horns of the dragon? They were so because it was the Roman monarchy, *in its seventh DRACONIC form of government*, which was dismembered by the barbarians. For though

the Roman empire was not completely dismembered till the fifth century, it is well known that the depression of the heathen idolatry, and the advancement of Christianity to the throne, elected not the least change in the *form* of government: the Romans continued still to be under subjection to the imperial power; and, consequently, when the heathen barbarous nations divided the Roman empire among themselves, they might very properly be denominated *horns of the dragon*, as it was by means of their incursions that the *imperial power*, FOUNDED by the heathen Cæsars, was abolished. Machiavel and Bishop Lloyd enumerate the horns of the dragon thus: 1. The kingdom of the Huns; 9. The kingdom of the Ostrogoths; 3 The kingdom of the Visigoths; 4. The kingdom of the Franks; 5. The kingdom of the Vandals; 6. The kingdom of the Sueves and Alans; 7. The kingdom of the Burgundians; 8. The kingdom of the Heruli, Rugii, Scyrri, and other tribes which composed the Italian kingdom of Odoacer; 9. The kingdom of the Saxons; and 10. The kingdom of the Lombards.

**And seven crowns upon his head.]** In the seven Roman forms of government already enumerated, heathenism has been the *crowning* or *dominant religion*.

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Verse 4. **And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven]** It is not unusual in Scripture, as Dr. Mitchell observes, to call the hindmost of an enemy the *tail*, as in #Jos 10:19: *Ye shall cut off the hindmost of them*, which is literally in Hebrew, **וַיִּכַּחֲסוּ אֹרְהֵם** "Ye shall cut off their *tail*." See also #De 25:18. It is also observable that the word **ουρα**, in this verse, has been used by the Greeks in the same sense with the Hebrew word **זָנַב** already referred to. Thus **ουρα στρατου**, which we would translate the *rear of an army*, is literally the *tail* of an army. See the Thesaurus of Stephens, in loc. The *tail* of the dragon is therefore the heathen Roman power in its *seventh* or *last* form of government, viz., *the imperial power*; and is not, as Dr. Mitchell supposes, to be restricted to the *last* heathen Roman emperors. The heathen imperial power is said to draw *the third part of the stars of heaven*, by which has generally been understood that the Roman empire subjected the third part of the princes and potentates of the earth. But that this is not a correct statement of the fact is evident from the testimony of ancient history. The Roman empire was always considered and called *the empire of the world* by ancient writers. See *Dionys. Halicar.*, Antiq. Rom. lib. i., prope principium; *Pitisci Lexicon Antiq. Roman.*, sub voc. imperium; *Ovidii Fast.*, lib. ii. l. 683; *Vegetius de Re Militari*, lib. i. c. 1., &c., &c. And it is even so named in Scripture, for St. Luke, in the second chapter of his gospel, informs us that *there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus that THE WHOLE WORLD should be taxed*, by which is evidently meant *the Roman empire*. The whole mystery of this passage consists in the misapprehension of its symbolical language. In order therefore to understand it, the symbols here used must be examined. By *heaven* is meant the *most eminent* or *ruling part* of any nation. This is evident from the very nature of the symbol, for "*heaven* is God's throne;" they therefore who are advanced to the supreme authority in any state are very properly said to be *taken up into heaven*, because they are raised to this eminence by the favour of the Lord, and are *ministers of his to do his pleasure*. And the calamity which fell upon Nebuchadnezzar was to instruct him in this important truth, that *the heavens do rule*; that is, that all monarchs possess their kingdoms by Divine appointment, and that no man is raised to power by what is usually termed the chances of war, but that "the Most High ruleth in the kingdom of men, and giveth it to whomsoever he will, and setteth up over it the basest of men." The meaning of *heaven* being thus ascertained, it cannot be difficult to comprehend the meaning of *earth*, this being evidently its opposite, that is, every thing in subjection to the *heaven* or *ruling part*. *Stars* have already been shown to denote *ministers of*

*religion*; and this is more fully evident from **#Re 1:16** of this book, where *the seven stars* which the Son of God holds in his right hand are explained to signify *the seven angels* (or messengers) *of the seven Churches*, by whom must be meant the *seven pastors* or *ministers* of these Churches. The resemblance of ministers to stars is very striking; for as the stars give light upon the earth, so are ministers the lights of the cause they advocate; and their position in *heaven*, the symbol of domination, very fitly betokens the spiritual authority of priests or ministers over their flocks. Hence, as the woman, or Christian Church, has upon her head a *crown* of twelve stars, which signifies that she is under the *guidance* of the twelve apostles, who are the twelve principal lights of the Christian world, so has the dragon also his *stars* or *ministers*. The stars therefore which the dragon draws with his tail must represent the whole body of pagan priests, who were the *stars* or *lights* of the heathen world. But in what sense can it be said that the heathen Roman empire, which ruled over the whole known world, only draws a *third part* of the stars of heaven? The answer is: The religious world in the time of St. John was divided into three grand branches, viz., the Christian world, the Jewish world, and the heathen and pagan world: consequently, as a *dragon*, a fabulous animal, is an emblem of a civil power supporting a *religion founded in fable*; it necessarily follows that the *stars* or *ministers* of the Jews and Christians cannot be numbered among those which he draws with his tail, as they were not the advocates of his idolatry, but were ministers of a religion founded by the God of heaven, and consequently formed no part of the pagan world, though they were in subjection in secular matters to the pagan Roman empire. The tail of the dragon therefore draweth after him *the whole heathen world*.

**And did cast then to the earth]** That is, reduced all the pagan priests under the Roman yoke. The words of the prophecy are very remarkable. It is said the tail of the dragon *draweth*, (for so *συπελ* should be translated,) but it is added, *and HATH CAST then upon the earth*, to show that at the time the Apocalypse was written the world was divided into the three grand religious divisions already referred to; but that the tail of the dragon, or the pagan Roman power under its *last* form of government, had brought the whole heathen world (which was a third part of the religious world in the apostolic age) into subjection previously to the communication of the Revelation to St. John. It is the dragon's *tail* that draws the third part of the stars of heaven, therefore it was during the dominion of his *last* form of government that Christianity was introduced into the world; for in the time of the six preceding draconic forms of government, the world was divided religiously into only two grand branches, Jews and Gentiles. That the sense in which the *third part* is here taken is the one intended in the prophecy is put beyond all controversy, when it is considered that this very division is made in the first and third verses, in which mention is made of the *woman clothed with the sun*—the Christian Church, *the moon under her feet*, or Jewish Church, and the *dragon*, or heathen power. Thus the *heathen IMPERIAL government* is doubly represented, first, by *one* of the seven draconic heads, to show that it was one of those seven heathen forms of government which have been successively at the *head* of the Roman state; and secondly, by the dragon's *tail*, because it was the *last* of those seven. For a justification of this method of interpretation, see on the angel's double explanation of the heads of the beast, **#Re 17:9, 10, 16**.

**And the dragon stood before the woman, &c.]** Constantius Chlorus, the father of Constantine, abandoned the absurdities of paganism, and treated the Christians with great respect. This alarmed the pagan priests, whose interests were so closely connected with the continuance of the ancient superstitions, and who apprehended that to their great detriment the Christian religion would become

daily more universal and triumphant throughout the empire. Under these anxious fears they moved Diocletian to persecute the Christians. Hence began what is termed the *tenth* and last general persecution, which was the most severe of all, and continued nearly ten years; (see *Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History of the Third Century*;) and as it was the Divine pleasure that, at this time, a great deliverer should be raised up in behalf of his suffering people, the *woman*, or Christian Church, is very appropriately represented as overtaken with the pangs of labour, *and ready to be delivered*. Before the death of Constantius, the heathen party, aware that Constantine would follow the example of his father, who so much favoured the Christians, beheld him with a watchful and malignant eye. Many were the snares that, according to Eusebius, were laid for him by Maximin and Galerius: he relates the frequent and dangerous enterprises to which they urged him, with the design that he might lose his life. When Galerius heard of the death of Constantius, and that he had appointed Constantine his successor, he was filled with the most ungovernable rage and indignation, notwithstanding he did not dare to take any steps contrary to the interest of Constantine. The dread of the armies of the west, which were mostly composed of Christians, was a sufficient check to all attempts of that kind. Thus the dragon, or heathen power, stood before the woman, or Christian Church, to devour her son, or deliverer, as soon as he was born. See Dr. *Mitchell's Exposition of the Revelation*, in loc.

Verse 5. **And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**] In *Yalcut Rubeni* are these words: "Rachael, the niece of Methusala, was pregnant, and ready to be delivered in Egypt. They trod upon her, and the child came out of her bowels, and lay under the bed; *Michael descended, and took him up to the throne of glory*. On that same night the first born of Egypt were destroyed."

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Ver. 5. **And she brought forth a man child**] The Christian Church, when her full time came, obtained a *deliverer*, who, in the course of the Divine providence, was destined:-

**To rule all nations**] The heathen Roman empire,

**With a rod of iron**] A strong figure to denote the *very great restraint* that should be put upon paganism, so that it should not be able longer to persecute the Christian Church. The *man child* mentioned in this verse is *the dynasty of Christians emperors*, beginning with Constantine's public acknowledgment of his belief in the divinity of the Christian religion, which happened in the latter part of A.D. 312, after the defeat of the Emperor Maxentius.

**And her child was caught up unto God, and to his throne.**] A succession of Christian emperors was raised up to the Church; for the Roman throne, as Bishop Newton observes, is here called the throne of God, because there is no power but of God: *the powers that be are ordained of God*.

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Verse 6. **And the woman fled into the wilderness**] The account of the woman's flying into the wilderness immediately follows that of her child being caught up to the throne of God, to denote the great and *rapid* increase of heresies in the Christian Church after the time that Christianity was made the religion of the empire.

**Where she hath a place prepared of God**] See Clarke on "Re 12:14".

Verse 7. **There was war in heaven]** In the same treatise, fol. 87, 2, on #Ex 14:7, *Pharaoh took six hundred chariots*, we have these words: "There was war among those *above* and among those *below*, והמלחמה היתה הזקה בשמים vehammilchamah, hayethah chazakah bashshamayim, *and there was great war in heaven.*"

Of *Michael* the rabbins are full. See much in *Schoettgen*, and see the note on Jude, #Jude 1:9.

**The dragon-and his angels]** The same as *Rab. Sam. ben David*, in *Chasad Shimuel*, calls סמאל וחילוהיו Samael vechayilothaiv, "*Samael and his troops;*" fol. 28, 2.

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Ver. 7. **And there was war in heaven]** As *heaven* means here the *throne* of the Roman empire, the war in heaven consequently alludes to the breaking out of civil commotions among the governors of this empire.

**Michael and his angels fought against the dragon]** Michael was the man child which the woman brought forth, as is evident from the context, and therefore signifies, as has been shown already, the dynasty of Christian Roman emperors. This dynasty is represented by Michael, because he is "the great prince which standeth for the children of God's people." #Da 12:1.

**And the dragon fought and his angels]** Or ministers.

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Verse 8. **And prevailed not]** Against the cause of Christianity.

**Neither was their place found any more in heaven.]** The advocates of the heathen idolatry were prevented from having any farther share in the government of the empire. The wonderful success of Constantine over all his enemies, and his final triumph over Licinius, correspond exactly to the symbolical language in this verse.

Verse 9. **That old serpent]** The rabbins speak much of this *being*, sometimes under the notion of יצר הרע yetser hara, *the evil principle*, and sometimes *Samael*.

**He was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.]** This is very like a saying in the book *Bahir*, in *Sohar Gen.*, fol. 27, col. 107: "*And God cast out Samael and his troops from the place of their holiness.*"

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Ver. 9. **And the great dragon was cast out, &c.]** By the terms *Devil* and *Satan* mentioned in this verse, Pareus, Faber, and many other commentators, understand literally the great spiritual enemy of mankind. But this view of the passage cannot be correct, from the circumstance that it is the *dragon* which is thus called. Now, if by the *dragon* be meant the *devil*, then use are necessarily led to this conclusion, that the great apostate spirit is a monster, having seven heads and ten horns; and also that he has a *tail*, with which he drags after him the third part of the stars of heaven. The appellations, *old serpent*, *devil*, and *Satan*, must, therefore, be understood figuratively. The heathen

power is called *that old serpent which deceived the whole world*, from its subtlety against the Christians, and its causing the whole Roman world, as far as it was in its power, to embrace the absurdities of paganism. It is called the *devil*, from its continual false accusations and slanders against the true worshippers of God, for the devil is *a liar from the beginning*; and it is also called *Satan*, שָׂטָן, which is a Hebrew word signifying *an adversary*, from its frequent persecutions of the Christian Church. The dragon and his angels are said to be *cast out*, which is more than was said in the preceding verse. There mention is made of his being found no longer in *heaven*, or on the throne of the Roman empire, here he is entirely cast out from all offices of trust in the empire; his religion is first only tolerated, and then totally abolished, by the imperial power. This great event was not the work of a reign; it took up many years, for it had to contend with the deep-rooted prejudices of the heathen, who to the very last endeavoured to uphold their declining superstition. Paganism received several mortal strokes in the time of Constantine and his sons Constans and Constantius. It was farther reduced by the great zeal of Jovian, Valentinian, and Valens; and was finally suppressed by the edicts of Gratian, Theodosius I., and his successors. It was not till A.D. 388 that Rome itself, the residence of the emperor, was generally reformed from the absurdities of paganism; but the total suppression of paganism soon followed the conversion of the metropolitan city, and about A.D. 395 the dragon may be considered, in an eminent sense, to have been *cast into the earth*, that is, into a state of utter subjection to the ruling dynasty of Christian emperors.

Verse 10. **The accuser of our brethren]** There is scarcely any thing more common in the rabbinical writings than *Satan as the accuser of the Israelites*. And the very same word κατηγορος, *accuser*, or, as it is in the *Codex Alexandrinus*, κατηγοωρ, is used by them in Hebrew letters, קטִיגור, katigor; e. gr., *Pirkey Eliezer*, c. 46, speaking of the day of expiation; "And the holy blessed God hears their testimony *from their accuser*, מִן הַקִּטִּיגוֹר min hakkatigor; and expiates the altar, the priests, and the whole multitude, from the greatest to the least."

In *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 31, fol. 129, 2, are these words; "If a man observes the precepts, and is a son of the law, and lives a holy life, then *Satan stands and accuses him*."

"Every day, except the day of expiation *Satan is the accuser of men*."-*Vayikra Rabba*, sec. 21, fol. 164.

"The holy blessed God said to the seventy princes of the world, Have ye seen him *who always accuses my children*?"-*Yalcut Chadash*, fol. 101, 3.

"The devil *stands always as an accuser* before the King of Israel."-*Sohar Levit.*, fol. 43, col. 171. See much more in *Schoettgen*.

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Ver. 10. **And I heard a loud voice, saying, Now is come salvation, &c.]** This is a song of triumph of the Christian Church over the heathen idolatry, and is very expressive of the great joy of the Christians upon this most stupendous event. The loud voice of triumph is said to be heard in *heaven*, to show that the Christian religion was now exalted to the *heaven* or *throne* of the Roman empire. "It is very remarkable," as Bishop Newton observes, "that Constantine himself, and the Christians of his time, describe his conquests under the image of a *dragon*, as if they had understood

that this prophecy had received its accomplishment in him. Constantine himself, in his epistle to Eusebius and other bishops concerning the re-edifying and repairing of the churches, saith that 'liberty being now restored, and that the *dragon* being removed from the administration of public affairs, by the providence of the great God and by my ministry, I esteem the great power of God to have been made manifest to all.' Moreover, a picture of Constantine was set up over the palace gate, with the cross over his head, and under his feet the great enemy of mankind, who persecuted the Church by means of impious tyrants, *in the form of a dragon*, transfixed with a dart through the midst of his body, and falling headlong into the depth of the sea." See *Eusebius de Vita Constantini*, lib. ii. c. 46; and lib. iii. c. 3, and *Socratis Hist. Eccles.*, lib. i. c. 9. Constantine added to the other Roman ensigns the *labarum*, or standard of the cross, and constituted it the principal standard of the Christian Roman empire. To this *labarum* Prudentius refers, when speaking of the Christian soldiers, in his first hymn [περι στεφανων](#),

Cæsaris vexilla linquunt, eligunt SIGNUM CRUCIS,  
Proque ventosis Draconum, quæ gerebant, palliis,  
Proferunt INSIGNE LIGNUM, quod Draconem subdidit.

"They leave the ensigns of Cæsar; they choose the standard of the cross; and instead of the dragon flags which they carried, moved about with the wind, they bring forward the illustrious wood that subdued the dragon."

When the apostle saw the woman in *heaven*, well might he call it, in the spirit of prophecy, *a great wonder*.

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 11. **And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb**] Here is given the reason why the followers of Christ prevailed at this time against all their adversaries. It was because they fought against the dragon in the armour of God. *They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb*-by proclaiming salvation to sinners through Christ crucified, and by their continual intercession at the throne of grace for the conversion of the heathen world.

**And by the word of their testimony**] By constantly testifying against the errors and follies of mankind.

**And they loved not their lives unto the death.**] They regarded not their present temporal estate, but even gladly delivered up their lives to the fury of their persecutors, and thus sealed the truth of what they spake with their blood.

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Verse 12. **Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in them.**] Let the Christians, who are now partakers of the present temporal prosperity, and advanced to places of trust in the empire, praise and magnify the Lord who has thus so signally interfered in their behalf. But it is added:—

**Wo to the inhabitants of the earth, and of the sea! for the devil is come down unto you**] By *the inhabitants of the earth* are meant the people in subjection to the Roman empire; and by the *sea*,

those parts of the Roman dominions appear to be intended that were reduced to a state of anarchy by the incursions of the barbarous nations. It is not without precedent to liken great hosts of nations combined together to the sea. See #Eze 26:3. Here then is a wo denounced against the whole Roman world which will be excited by the devil, the father of lies, the heathen party being thus denominated from the method they pursued in their endeavours to destroy the religion of Jesus. See Clarke on "Re 12:15".

**Having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.]** The Christian religion, the pagan party see with great regret, is rapidly gaining ground everywhere; and, if not timely checked, must soon brave all opposition.

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 13. **And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth]** When the heathen party saw that they were no longer supported by the civil power:—

**He persecuted the woman which brought forth the man child.]** The heathens persecuted the Christian Church in the behalf of which Divine Providence had raised up a dynasty of Christian Roman emperors.

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 14. **And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle]** του αετου του μεγαλου. *Of the great eagle.* The great eagle here mentioned is an emblem of the Roman empire in general, and therefore differs from the *dragon*, which is a symbol of the HEATHEN ROMAN empire in particular. The Roman power is called an *eagle* from its legionary standard, which was introduced among the Romans in the second year of the consulate of C. Marius; for before that time minotaurs, wolves, leopards, horses, boars, and eagles were used indifferently, according to the humour of the commander. The Roman eagles were figures in relievo of silver or gold, borne on the tops of pikes, the wings being displayed, and frequently a thunderbolt in their talons. Under the eagle, on the pike, were piled bucklers, and sometimes crowns. The two wings of the great eagle refer to the *two grand independent divisions* of the Roman empire, which took place January 17, A.D. 395, and were given to the woman, Christianity being the established religion of both empires.

**That she might fly into the wilderness, into her place, &c.]** The apparent repetition here of what is said in #Re 12:6 has induced Bishop Newton to consider the former passage as introduced by way of *prolepsis* or *anticipation*; for, says he, the woman did not fly into the wilderness till several years after the conversion of Constantine. But that there is no such prolepsis as the bishop imagines is evident from the ecclesiastical history of the fourth century; for the woman, or true Church, *began* to flee into the wilderness a considerable time before the division of the great Roman empire into two independent monarchies. The word translated *fled* is not to be taken in that peculiar sense as if the woman, in the commencement of her flight, had been furnished with *wings*, for the original word is εφυγεν. The meaning therefore of verses 6 and 14, {#Re 12:6, 14} when taken in connection with their respective contexts, is, that the woman began to make rapid strides towards the desert almost immediately after her elevation to the *heaven* or *throne* of the Roman empire, and *in the course of her flight* was furnished with the *wings* of the great eagle *λυα πετηται*, *that she might FLY*, into *that* place prepared of God, where she should be fed a thousand two hundred and threescore

days. It is said here that the period for which the woman should be nourished in the wilderness would be *a time, times, and a half*; consequently this period is the same with the *twelve hundred and sixty days* of #Re 12:6. But in no other sense can they be considered the same than by understanding a *time* to signify a *year*; *times*, *two years*; and *half a time*, *half a year*; i.e., *three years and a half*. And as each prophetic year contains *three hundred and sixty days*, so three years and a half will contain precisely *twelve hundred and sixty days*. The Apocalypse being highly symbolical, it is reasonable to expect that its periods of time will also be represented symbolically, that the prophecy may be homogeneous in all its parts. The Holy Spirit, when speaking of *years* symbolically, has invariably represented them by *days*, commanding, e. gr., the Prophet Ezekiel to lie upon his left side *three hundred and ninety days*, that it might be a *sign* or *symbol* of the house of Israel bearing their iniquity as many years; and *forty days* upon his right side, to represent to the house of Judah in a symbolical manner, that they should bear their iniquity *forty years*. The one thousand two hundred and threescore days, therefore, that the woman is fed in the wilderness, must be understood *symbolically*, and consequently denote as many natural years. The wilderness into which the woman flies is the Greek and Latin worlds, for she is conveyed into her place by means of the two wings of the great eagle. We must not understand the phrase *flying into her place* of her removing from one part of the habitable world into another, but of her speedy declension from a state of great prosperity to a forlorn and desolate condition. The woman is nourished for one thousand two hundred and threescore years *from the face of the serpent*. The empires in the east and west were destined, in the course of the Divine providence, to support the Christian religion, at least nominally while the rest of the world should remain in pagan idolatry or under the influence of this dragon, here called the *serpent*, because he deceiveth the whole world. The words of the prophecy are very remarkable, The Christian Church is said to be supported by the eastern and western empires, *two mighty denominations*; and at the same time situated in *the wilderness*, strongly denoting that, though *many* professed Christianity, there were but *very few* who "kept the commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ."

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 15. **And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood]** The water here evidently means *great multitudes of nations and peoples*; for in #Re 17:15, the interpreting angel says, *The waters which thou sawest-are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues*. This water, then, which the dragon cast out of his mouth, must be an inundation of heathen barbarous nations upon the Roman empire; and the purpose which the dragon has in view by this inundation is, that he might cause the woman, or Christian Church:—

**To be carried away of the flood.]** Entirely swept away from the face of the earth. Dr. Mosheim, in the commencement of his second chapter upon the fifth century, observes "that the Goths, the Heruli, the Franks, the Huns, and the Vandals, with other fierce and warlike nations, for the most part strangers to Christianity, had invaded the Roman empire, and rent it asunder in the most deplorable manner. Amidst these calamities the Christians were grievous, nay, we may venture to say the principal, sufferers. It is true these savage nations were much more intent upon the acquisition of wealth and dominion than upon the propagation or support of the pagan superstitions, nor did their cruelty and opposition to the Christians arise from any religious principle, or from an enthusiastic desire to ruin the cause of Christianity; it was merely *by the* INSTIGATION *of the pagans who remained yet in the empire*, that they were excited to treat with such severity and violence the

followers of Christ." Thus the wo which was denounced, #Re 12:12, against *the inhabitants of the earth and of the sea*, came upon the whole Roman world; for, in consequence of the excitement and malicious misrepresentations of the pagans of the empire, "a transmigration of a great swarm of nations" came upon the Romans, and ceased not their ravages till they had desolated the eastern empire, even as far as the gates of Byzantium, and finally possessed themselves of the western empire. "If," says Dr. Robertson, in the introduction to his History of Charles V., vol. i., pp. 11, 12, edit. Lond. 1809, "a man was called to fix upon the period in the history of the world, during which the condition of the human race was most calamitous and afflicted, he would, without hesitation, name that which elapsed from the death of Theodosius the Great to the establishment of the Lombards in Italy, a period of *one hundred and seventy-six years*. The contemporary authors who beheld that scene of desolation, labour and are at a loss for expressions to describe the horror of it. *The scourge of God, the destroyer of nations*, are the dreadful epithets by which they distinguish the most noted of the barbarous leaders; and they compare the ruin which they had brought on the world to the havoc occasioned by earthquakes, conflagrations, or deluges, the most formidable and fatal calamities which the imagination of man can conceive." But the subtle design which the serpent or dragon had in view, when he vomited out of his mouth a flood of waters, was most providentially frustrated; for:—

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 16. **The earth helped the woman]** "Nothing, and indeed," as Bishop Newton excellently observes, "was more likely to produce the ruin and utter subversion of the Christian Church than the irruptions of so many barbarous nations into the Roman empire. But the event proved contrary to human appearance and expectation: *the earth swallowed up the flood*; the barbarians were rather swallowed up by the Romans, than the Romans by the barbarians; the heathen conquerors, instead of imposing their own, submitted to the religion of the conquered Christians; and they not only embraced the religion, but affected even the laws, the manners, the customs, the language, and the very name, of Romans, so that the victors were in a manner absorbed and lost among the vanquished." See his Dissertations on the Prophecies, in loc.

#### NOTES ON CHAP. XII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 17. **And the dragon was wroth with the woman]** The heathen party, foiled in their subtle attempt to destroy Christianity, were greatly enraged, and endeavoured to excite the hatred of the multitude against the religion of Jesus. "They alleged that before the coming of Christ the world was blessed with peace and prosperity; but that since the progress of their religion everywhere, the gods, filled with indignation to see their worship neglected and their altars abandoned, had visited the earth with those plagues and desolations which increased every day." See Mosheim's Ecclesiastical History, cent. V., part 1, and other works on this subject.

**Went to make war with the remnant of her seed]** The dragon ἀπῆλθε, departed, i.e., into the wilderness, whither the woman had fled; and in another form commenced a new species of persecution, directed *only against the remnant of her seed, who keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ*. See on verse 13 of the following chapter for an illustration of this remarkable passage. {"Re 13:13"}

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XIII.

*The beast rising out of the sea with seven heads, ten horns, and ten crowns, 1. His description, power, blasphemy, cruelty, &c., 2-10. The beast coming out of the earth with two horns, deceiving the world by is false miracles, and causing every one to receive his mark in their right hand, 11-17. His number, 666. 18.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XIII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 1. **And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea]** Before we can proceed in the interpretation of this chapter, it will be highly necessary to ascertain the meaning of the prophetic symbol *beast*, as the want of a proper understanding of this term has probably been one reason why so many discordant hypotheses have been published to the world. In this investigation it is impossible to resort to a higher authority than Scripture, for the Holy Ghost is his own interpreter. What is therefore meant by the term *beast* in any one prophetic vision, the same species of thing must be represented by the term whenever it is used in a similar manner in any other part of the sacred oracles. Having therefore laid this foundation, the angel's interpretation of the last of Daniel's four beasts need only be produced, an account of which is given in the seventh chapter of this prophet. Daniel being very desirous to "know the truth of the *fourth beast which was diverse from all the others, exceeding dreadful*, and of the *ten horns* that were on his head," the angel thus interprets the vision: "The fourth beast shall be the fourth kingdom upon earth, which shall be diverse from all kingdoms, and shall devour the whole earth, and shall tread it down, and break it in pieces. And the ten horns out of this kingdom are ten kings that shall arise," &c. In this scripture it is plainly declared that the *fourth beast* should be the *fourth kingdom* upon earth; consequently, the *four beasts* seen by Daniel are *four kingdoms*: hence the term *beast* is the prophetic symbol for a *kingdom*.

As to the nature of the kingdom which is represented by the term *beast*, we shall obtain no inconsiderable light in examining the most proper meaning of the original word חַיָּה *chayah*. This Hebrew word is translated in the Septuagint by the Greek word θηριον, and both words signify what we term a *wild beast*; and the latter is the one used by St. John in the Apocalypse. Taking up the Greek word θηριον in this sense, it is fully evident, if a power be represented in the prophetic writings under the notion of a *wild beast*, that the power so represented must partake of the nature of a *wild beast*. Hence an earthly *belligerent* power is evidently designed. And the comparison is peculiarly appropriate; for as several species of wild beasts carry on perpetual warfare with the animal world, so most governments, influenced by ambition, promote discord and depopulation. And, also, as the carnivorous wild beast acquires its strength and magnitude by preying upon the feebler animals; so most earthly monarchies are raised up by the sword, and derive their political consequence from the unsuccessful resistance to the contending nations. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is represented as "a stone cut out of the mountain without hands;" and is never likened to a *beast*, because it is not raised up by the sword as all other secular powers are, but sanctifies the persons under its subjection; in which last particular it essentially differs from all other dominations.

This beast is said to *rise up out of the sea*, in which particular it corresponds with the four beasts of Daniel; the *sea* is therefore the symbol of a *great multitude of nations*, as has already been proved; and the meaning is, that every mighty empire is raised upon the ruins of a great number of nations, which it has successfully contended against and incorporated with its dominions. The *sea*, here, is doubtless the same against the inhabitants of which a wo was denounced, #Re 12:12; for St. John was standing *upon the sand of the sea* when the vision changed from the *woman* and the *dragon* to that recorded in this chapter. It therefore follows that the kingdom or empire here represented by the *beast*, is that which sprung up out of the ruins of the WESTERN Roman empire.

**Having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns]** The beast here described is the Latin empire, which supported the Romish or Latin Church; for it has *upon his horns ten crowns*, i.e., is an empire composed of ten distinct monarchies in the interest of the Latin Church. See the *heads and horns* fully explained in the notes on #Re 17:10, 12, 16.

As the phrases *Latin Church*, *Latin empire*, &c., are not very generally understood at present, and will occur frequently in the course of the notes on this and the xviiith chapter, it will not be improper here to explain them. During the period from the division of the Roman empire into those of the east and west, till the final dissolution of the western empire, the subjects of both empires were equally known by the name of *Romans*. Soon after this event the people of the west lost almost entirely the name of *Romans*, and were denominated after their respective kingdoms which were established upon the ruins of the western empire. But as the eastern empire escaped the ruin which fell upon the western, the subjects of the former still retained the name of *Romans*, and called their dominion ἡ ῥωμαικη βασιλεια, *the Roman empire*; by which name this monarchy was known among them till its final dissolution in 1453, by Mohammed II., the Turkish sultan. But the subjects of the eastern emperor, ever since the time of Charlemagne or before, (and more particularly in the time of the crusades and subsequently,) called the western people, or those under the influence of the Romish Church, *Latins*, and their Church the *Latin Church*. And the western people, in return, denominated the eastern Church *the Greek Church*, and the members of it *Greeks*. Hence the division of the Christian Church into those of the *Greek* and *Latin*. For a confirmation of what has just been said the reader may consult the Byzantine writers, where he will find the appellations ῥωμαιοι and λατινοι, *Romans* and *Latins*, used in the sense here mentioned in very numerous instances. The members of the Romish Church have not been named *Latins* by the Greeks alone; this term is also used in the public instruments drawn up by the general popish councils, as may be instanced in the following words, which form a part of a decree of the council of Basil, dated Sept. 26, 1437: *Copiosissimam subventionem pro unione GRÆCORUM cum LATINIS*, "A very great convention for the union of the Greeks with the Latins." Even in the very papal bulls this appellation has been acknowledged, as may be seen in the edict of Pope Eugenius IV., dated Sept. 17, 1437, where in one place mention is made of *Ecclesiæ LATINORUM quæsita unio*, "the desired union of the Church of the Latins;" and in another place we read, *Nec superesse modum alium prosequendi operis tam pii, et servandi LATINÆ ECCLESIE honoris*, "that no means might be left untried of prosecuting so pious a work, and of preserving the honour of the Latin Church." See Corps Diplomatique, tom. iii., pp. 32, 35. In a bull of the same pontiff, dated Sept., 1439, we have *Sanctissima LATINORUM et GRÆCORUM unio*, "the most holy union of the Greeks with the Latins." See Bail's Summa Conciliorum, in loc. By the *Latin empire* is meant the whole of the powers which support the Latin Church.

**And upon his heads the name of blasphemy.]** ονομα βλασφημιας· *A name of blasphemy.* This has been variously understood. Jerome and Prosper give it as their opinion that the name of blasphemy consists in the appellation *urbs æterna*, eternal city, applied to Rome; and modern commentators refer it to the idolatrous worship of the Romans and papists. Before we attempt to ascertain the meaning of this passage, it must be first defined what the Holy Spirit means by *a name of blasphemy*. Blasphemy, in Scripture, signifies *impious speaking* when applied to GOD, and *injurious speaking* when directed against our *neighbour*. A name of blasphemy is the prostitution of a sacred name to an unholy purpose. This is evident from the 9th verse of the second chapter of the Apocalypse, {#Re 2:9,} where God says, "I know the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but are the synagogue of Satan." These wicked men, by calling themselves Jews, blasphemed the name, i.e., used it in an injurious sense; for he ONLY *is a Jew who is one inwardly*. Hence the term *Jews* applied to the synagogue of Satan is *a name of blasphemy*, i.e. a sacred name blasphemed. *A name of blasphemy*, or a blasphemous appellation, is said to be upon all the seven heads of the beast. To determine what this name is, the meaning of the seven heads in this place must be ascertained. If the reader refer to the notes on #Re 17:9-11, he will find that the heads are explained to have a double meaning, viz., that they signify the *seven electorates of the German empire*, and also *seven forms of Latin government*. As this is the first place in which the heads of the beast are mentioned with any description, it is reasonable to expect that that signification of the heads which is first in order in the angel's interpretation, #Re 17:9, must be what is here intended. This is, "the seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman sitteth;" the name of blasphemy will consequently be found upon the seven electorates of Germany. This, therefore, can be no other than that which was common, not only to the electorates but also to the whole empire of Germany, or that well known one of SACRUM Imperium Romanum, "The SACRED (or HOLY) Roman Empire." Here is a sacred appellation *blasphemed* by its application to the principal power of the beast. No kingdom can properly be called *holy* but that of Jesus; therefore it would be blasphemy to unite this epithet with any other power. But it must be horridly blasphemous to apply it to the German empire, the grand supporter of antichrist from his very rise to temporal authority. Can that empire be *holy* which has killed the saints, which has professed and supported with all its might an idolatrous system of worship? It is impossible. Therefore its assumption of *sacred* or *holy* (which appellation was originally given to the empire from its being the main support of what is termed the *holy catholic Church*, the emperor being styled, on this account, Christ's temporal vicar upon earth: see *Cæsarini Furstenerii Tractatus De Suprematu Principum Germaniæ*, cc. 31, 32) is, in the highest sense the word can be taken, *a name of blasphemy*. The name of blasphemy is very properly said to be upon the seven heads of the beast, or seven electorates of the German empire, because the electors are styled SACRI Imperii Principes Electores, Princes, Electors of the Holy Empire; SACRI Romani Imperii Electores, Electors of the Holy Roman Empire.

Verse 2. **And the beast which I saw was like unto a leopard]** This similitude of the beast to a leopard appears to be an allusion to the third beast of Daniel, which is well known to represent the empire of the Greeks. The Latin empire greatly resembled the modern empire of the Greeks; for that the power of the Greeks was still said to be like a leopard, even after its subjugation by the Romans, is evident from #Da 7:12: "As concerning the rest of the beasts, they had their dominion taken away; yet their lives were prolonged for a season and time." The Latin empire was, in the first place, like to its contemporary, because both adhered to an idolatrous system of worship, professedly Christian, but really antichristian; and it is well known that the Greek and Latin Churches abound in monstrous

absurdities. *Secondly*, Both empires were similar in their opposition to the spread of pure Christianity; though it must be allowed that the Latins far outstripped the Greeks in this particular. *Thirdly*, Both empires were similar in respect to the civil authority being powerfully depressed by the ecclesiastical; though it must be granted the authority of the Latin Church was more strongly marked, and of much longer continuance. The excommunication of the Greek emperor by the Patriarch Arsenius, and the consequences of that excommunication, afford a remarkable example of the great power of the Greek clergy. But the beast of St. John, though in its general appearance it resembles a leopard, yet differs from it in having feet like those of a bear. The second beast of Daniel was likened to a bear, and there can be no doubt that the kingdom of the Medes and Persians was intended; and it is very properly likened to this animal, because it was one of the most inhuman governments that ever existed, and a bear is the well known Scripture emblem of *cruelty*. See #2Sa 17:8, and #Ho 13:8. Is not *cruelty* a striking characteristic of the papal Latin empire? Have not the subjects of this empire literally trampled to death all those in their power who would not obey their idolatrous requisitions? In Fox's Book of Martyrs, and other works which treat upon this subject, will be found a melancholy catalogue of the horrid tortures and most lingering deaths which they have obliged great numbers of Christians to suffer. In this sense the feet of the beast were as the feet of a bear. Another particular in which the beast differed from a leopard was, in having a mouth like a lion. "It is," says Dr. More, "like the Babylonish kingdom (the first beast of Daniel, which is likened to a lion) in its *cruel decrees* against such as will not obey their idolatrous edicts, nor worship the golden image that Nebuchadnezzar had set up. Their stubbornness must be punished by a hot fiery furnace; fire and fagot must be prepared for them that will not submit to this new Roman idolatry."

**And the dragon gave him his power, and his seat, and great authority.]** It was said of the dragon, in #Re 12:8, that his place was found *no more* in heaven; the dragon here cannot therefore be the heathen Roman empire, as this was abolished previously to the rising up of the beast. It must then allude to the restoration of one of the DRACONIC heads of the beast, as will be seen in the explanation of the following verse, and more fully in the notes on #Re 17:1-18.

Verse 3. **And I saw one of his heads as it were wounded to death]** This is the second and last place where the heads of the beast are mentioned with any description; and therefore the meaning here must be *forms of government*, as these were noticed last in the angel's double explanation. The head that was wounded to death can be no other than the seventh draconic head, which was the sixth head of the beast, viz., *the imperial power*; for "this head," as Bishop Newton observes, "was, as it were, wounded to death when the Roman empire was overturned by the northern nations, and an end was put to the very name of emperor in Momyllus Augustulus." It was so wounded that it was wholly improbable that it could ever rise again to considerable power, for the western empire came into the possession of several barbarous nations of independent interests.

**And his deadly wound was healed]** This was effected by Charlemagne, who with his successors assumed all the marks of the ancient emperors of the west, with the titles of Semper Augustus, Sacred Majesty, First Prince of the Christian World, Temporal Chief of the Christian People, and Rector or Temporal Chief of the Faithful in Germany; Mod. Universal History, vol. xxxii., p. 79. But it is said in #Re 13:2 that the dragon gave the beast *his power*, δυναμιν, *his armies* or *military strength*; i.e., he employed all his imperial power in defense of the Latin empire, which supported the Latin Church. He also gave *his seat*, θρονον, literally *his throne*, to him: that is, his whole empire

formed an integral part of the Latin empire, by its conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. He also gave him *great authority*. This is literally true of the Roman empire of Germany, which, by its great power and influence in the politics of Europe, extended the religion of the empire over the various states and monarchies of Europe, thus incorporating them as it were in one vast empire, by uniting them in one common faith.

**And all the world wondered after the beast.]** ὅλη ἡ γῆ· *All the earth*. As the original word signifies *earth*, and not *world* as in our translation, the Latin world, which is the *earth* of the beast, is here intended; and the meaning of the passage consequently is, that the whole body of the Roman Catholics were affected with great astonishment at the mighty sway of the Latin empire, considering it as a great and holy power.

Verse 4. **And they worshipped the dragon]** *Worshipping* the dragon here evidently means the voluntary religious subjection of the members of the Latin Church to the revived western empire, because of the eminent part it has taken in the support of their faith.

**And they worshipped the beast]** Not only the dragon or revived western empire was worshipped; the beast, the *whole* Latin empire, is a partaker in the adoration. The manner in which it is worshipped consists in the subjects of it:—

**Saying, Who is like unto the beast?]** Is it not the only holy power in the universe? Is it possible for any person not a subject of it to be saved?

**Who is able to make war with him?]** Can any nation successfully fight with it? Is not the Roman empire, which is its principal bulwark, *invictissimum*, most invincible? *Invictissimus*, most invincible, was the peculiar attribute of the emperors of Germany. See modern Universal History, vol. xxxii., p. 197.

Verse 5. **And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things]** That is, There was given to the rulers of the Latin empire, who are the *mouth* of the beast, (and particularly the Roman emperors of Germany,) power to assume great and pompous titles, indicative of their mighty sway over many subjugated countries, (see the imperial instruments of the middle centuries in the Corps Diplomatique,) and also to utter against their opponents the most terrible edicts.

**And blasphemies]** The system of worship supported by the beast is a system of blasphemy, as there will be occasion to show presently.

**And power was given unto him to continue forty and two months.]** As these forty-two months are prophetic, they must mean so many *years* as there are *days* contained in them; *viz.*, 1260, each month containing 30 days. The beast, therefore, will continue in existence at least 1260 years; but when the termination of this period will take place is difficult to say, as the beginning cannot be at present indubitably ascertained.

Verse 6. **And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name]** The Latin empire is here represented as a blasphemous power in three respects. *First*, he blasphemes the

*name* of God. This has been most notoriously the case with the different popish princes, who continually blaspheme the sacred names of God by using them in their idolatrous worship. The mouth of blasphemy against God cannot be more evident than in the following impious words which form a part of the *Golden Bull* published by Charles IV. in January, 1356: "But thou, envy, how often hast thou attempted to ruin by division the Christian empire, which God hath founded upon the three cardinal virtues, faith, hope, and charity, as upon a holy and indivisible Trinity, vomiting the old venom of discord among the seven electors, who are the pillars and seven principal members of the holy empire; by the brightness of whom the holy empire ought to be illuminated as by seven torches, the light of which is reinforced by the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit!"

**And his tabernacle]** Tabernacle is any kind of dwelling place, and in an eminent sense among the Jews was a kind of tent to take up and down as occasion required, which was as it were the palace of the Most High, the dwelling of the God of Israel. It was divided into two partitions, one called the holy place, and the other the most holy place, in the latter of which, before the building of the temple, the ark of the covenant was kept, which was a symbol of God's gracious presence with the Jewish Church. All this the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in the eighth and ninth chapters, explains to prefigure the human nature of Christ. The beast's blasphemy of the tabernacle of God is, therefore, as Dr. More and others properly observe, his impious doctrine of transubstantiation, in which it is most blasphemously asserted that the substance of the *bread* and *wine* in the sacrament is literally converted by the consecration of the priest, into the very *body* and *blood* of Jesus Christ! This doctrine was first advanced among the Latins in the tenth century; and in 1215, fully received as an article of the Roman Catholic faith. It is for the pages of ecclesiastical history to record the incredible numbers which have been martyred by the papists for their non-reception of this most unscriptural and antichristian doctrine.

**And them that dwell in heaven.]** By *heaven* is here meant the throne of God, and not the throne of the beast, because it is *against God* the beast blasphemes. This must therefore allude to his impious adoration of the saints and angels, whose residence is in heaven. He blasphemes against God by paying that adoration to the celestial inhabitants which belongs to God alone. That this sort of worship has been and still is kept up among the Roman Catholics, their mass book is a sufficient evidence.

Verse 7. **And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them]** "Who can make any computation," says Bishop Newton, "or even frame any conception, of the numbers of pious Christians who have fallen a sacrifice to the bigotry and cruelty of Rome? Mede upon the place hath observed, from good authorities, that in the war with the Albigenses and Waldenses there perished of these poor creatures in France alone *a million*. From the first institution of the Jesuits to the year 1580, that is, in little more than thirty years, nine hundred thousand orthodox Christians were slain, and these all by the common executioner. In the space of scarce thirty years the inquisition destroyed, by various kinds of torture, a hundred and fifty thousand Christians. Sanders himself confesses that an innumerable multitude of Lollards and Sacramentarians were burnt throughout all Europe, who yet, he says, were not put to death by the pope and bishops, but by the civil magistrates." The dragon in a new shape, or Roman empire of Germany, acted a very conspicuous part in this nefarious warfare against the remnant of the woman's seed, who kept the

commandments of God, and had the testimony of Jesus Christ. See the imperial edict of Frederic II. against heretics, in Limborch's History of the Inquisition.

**And power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.]** As the book of the Revelation is a prophecy of all that should come upon the Christian world till the end of time, *all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*, must imply *the whole Christian world*. That the Latin empire in the course of its reign has had the extensive power here spoken of, is evident from history. It is well known that the profession of Christianity was chiefly confined within the limits of the Greek and Latin empires, till the period of the Reformation. By means of the crusades the Latins extended their empire over several provinces of the Greeks. In 1097 Baldwin extended his conquests over the hills of Armenia and the plain of Mesopotamia, and founded the first principality of the Franks or Latins, which subsisted fifty-four years, beyond the Euphrates. In 1204 the Greeks were expelled from Constantinople by the Latins, who set up an empire there which continued about fifty-seven years. The total overthrow of the Latin states in the east soon followed the recovery of Constantinople by the Greeks; and in 1291 the Latin empire in the east was entirely dissolved. Thus the Latins have had power over the whole world professedly Christian: but it is not said that the whole world was in utter subjection to him, for we read in the following verse:—

Verse 8. **And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb]** The *earth* here is the *Latin world*, as has been observed before in similar cases. The meaning therefore is, that all the corrupt part of mankind who are inhabitants of the Latin world shall submit to the religion of the empire, except, as Bishop Newton expresses it, "those faithful few whose names, as citizens of heaven, were enrolled in the registers of life."

**Slain from the foundation of the world.]** That is, of the Christian world; for this has been shown to be the meaning of *all kindreds, and tongues, and nations*. The year of the crucifixion is properly the commencement of Christianity, as the apostles then first began to promulgate the religion of Christ with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven. But as Jesus Christ was in the Divine purpose appointed from the foundation of the world to redeem man by his blood, he therefore is, in a very eminent sense, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, i.e., from the creation.

Verse 9. **If any man have an ear, let him hear.]** These words are evidently introduced to impress the reader with the awfulness of what has just been spoken—*all shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life*, as well as to fix his attention upon the following words:—

Verse 10. **He that leadeth into captivity shall go into captivity]** The Latin empire here spoken of must *go into captivity*, because it has led into captivity, by not only propagating among the various nations its abominable antichristian system, but also in compelling them to embrace it under the penalty of forfeiting the protection of the empire.

**He that killeth with the sword must be killed with the sword.]** The Latin empire must be also broken to pieces by the sword, because it has killed the saints of God. This prophecy will not receive its full accomplishment till *the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ*.

**Here is the patience and the faith of the saints.]** By these words, as Dr. Mitchell observes, "God calls upon his saints to keep in view, under all their persecutions, his retributive justice; there is no violence that has been exercised upon them but what shall be retaliated upon the cruel and persecuting government and governors of the Latin empire."

Verse 11. **And I beheld another beast coming up out of the earth]** As a *beast* has already been shown to be the symbol of a *kingdom* or *empire*, the rising up of this second beast must consequently represent the rising up of *another empire*. This beast comes up *out of the earth*; therefore it is totally different from the preceding, which rose up out of the *sea*. *Earth* here means the *Latin world*, for this word has been shown to import this already in several instances; the rising up of the beast out of *this earth* must, consequently, represent the springing up of some power out of a state of subjection to the Latin empire: therefore the beast, here called *another beast*, is *another LATIN empire*. This beast is the spiritual Latin empire, or, in other words, the Romish hierarchy; for with no other power can the prophetic description yet to be examined be shown to accord. In the time of Charlemagne the ecclesiastical power was in subjection to the civil, and it continued to be so for a long time after his death; therefore the beast, whose deadly wound was healed, ruled over the whole Latin world, both clergy and laity; these, consequently, constituted but one beast or empire. But the Latin clergy kept continually gaining more and more influence in the civil affairs of the empire, and in the tenth century their authority was greatly increased. In the subsequent centuries the power of the Romish hierarchy ascended even above that of the emperors, and led into captivity the kings of the whole Latin world, as there will be occasion to show in commenting upon the following verses. Thus the Romish hierarchy was at length entirely exempted from the civil power, and constituted *another beast*, as it became entirely independent of the secular Latin empire. And this beast came up out of *the earth*; that is, the Latin clergy, which composed a part of the *earth* or *Latin world*, raised their authority against that of the secular powers, and in process of time wrested the superintendence of ecclesiastical affairs from the secular princes.

**And he had two horns]** As the seven-headed beast is represented as having *ten horns*, which signify so many kingdoms leagued together to support the Latin Church, so the beast which rises out of the earth has also *two horns*, which must consequently represent two kingdoms; for if *horns of a beast* mean *kingdoms* in one part of the Apocalypse, *kingdoms* must be intended by this symbol whenever it is used in a similar way in any other part of this book. As the second beast is the spiritual Latin empire, the two horns of this beast denote that the empire thus represented is composed of two distinct spiritual powers. These, therefore, can be no other, as Bishop Newton and Faber properly observe, than the two grand independent branches of the Romish hierarchy, viz., the Latin clergy, REGULAR and SECULAR. "The first of these comprehends all the various monastic orders, the second comprehends the whole body of parochial clergy." These two grand branches of the hierarchy originally constituted but one dominion, as the monks as well as the other clergy were in subjection to the bishops: but the subjection of the monks to their diocesans became by degrees less apparent; and in process of time, through the influence and authority of the Roman pontiffs, they were entirely exempted from all episcopal jurisdiction, and thus became a spiritual power, entirely independent of that of the secular clergy.

**Like a lamb]** As lamb, in other parts of the Apocalypse, evidently means Christ, who is *the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world*, it must have a similar import in this passage;

therefore the meaning here is evidently that the two horns of the beast, or the regular and secular clergy, profess to be the ministers of Christ, to be like him in meekness and humility, and to teach nothing that is contrary to godliness. The two-horned beast, or spiritual Latin empire, has in reality the name, and in the eyes of the Latin world the appearance, of *a CHRISTIAN power*. But he is only so in appearance, and that alone among his deluded votaries; for when he spake:—

**He spake as a dragon.**] The doctrines of the Romish hierarchy are very similar to those contained in the old heathen worship; for he has introduced "a new species of idolatry, nominally different, but essentially the same, the worship of angels and saints instead of the gods and demi-gods of antiquity."

Verse 12. **And he exercised all the power of the first beast before him**] In the preceding verse the two-horned beast was represented as rising out of the earth, that is, obtaining gradually more and more influence in the civil affairs of the Latin world. Here he is represented as having obtained the direction and management of all the power of the first beast or secular Latin empire *before him*, *ἐνώπιον αὐτοῦ*, *in his presence*. That the Romish hierarchy has had the extensive power here spoken of, is evident from history; for the civil power was in subjection to the ecclesiastical. The parochial clergy, one of the horns of the second beast, have had great secular jurisdiction over the whole Latin world. Two-thirds of the estates of Germany were given by the three Othos, who succeeded each other, to ecclesiastics; and in the other Latin monarchies the parochial clergy possessed great temporal power. Yet extraordinary as the power of the secular clergy was in all parts of the Latin world, it was but feeble when compared with that of the monastic orders which constituted another horn of the beast. The mendicant friars, the most considerable of the regular clergy, first made their appearance in the early part of the thirteenth century. These friars were divided by Gregory X., in a general council which he assembled at Lyons in 1272, into the four following societies or denominations, viz., the Dominicans, the Franciscans, the Carmelites, and the Hermits of St. Augustine. "As the pontiffs," observes Mosheim, "allowed these four mendicant orders the liberty of travelling wherever they thought proper, of conversing with persons of all ranks, of instructing the youth and the multitude wherever they went; and as these monks exhibited, in their outward appearance and manner of life, more striking marks of gravity and holiness than were observable in the other monastic societies; they arose all at once to the very summit of fame, and were regarded with the utmost esteem and veneration throughout all the countries of Europe. The enthusiastic attachment to these sanctimonious beggars went so far that, as we learn from the most authentic records, several cities were divided, or cantoned out, into four parts, with a view to these four orders; the first part was assigned to the Dominicans, the second to the Franciscans, the third to the Carmelites, and the fourth to the Augustinians. The people were unwilling to receive the sacraments from any other hands than those of the mendicants, to whose churches they crowded to perform their devotions while living, and were extremely desirous to deposit there also their remains after death; all which occasioned grievous complaints among the ordinary priests, to whom the cure of souls was committed, and who considered themselves as the spiritual guides of the multitude. Nor did the influence and credit of the mendicants end here: for we find in the history of this (thirteenth century) and the succeeding ages, that they were employed, not only in spiritual matters, but also in temporal and political affairs of the greatest consequence; in composing the differences of princes, concluding treaties of peace, concerting alliances, presiding in cabinet councils, governing courts, levying taxes, and other occupations not only remote from, but absolutely inconsistent with, the monastic character

and profession. We must not, however, imagine that all the mendicant friars attained to the same degree of reputation and authority; for the power of the Dominicans and Franciscans surpassed greatly that of the two other orders, and rendered them singularly conspicuous in the eyes of the world. During three centuries these two fraternities governed, with an almost universal and absolute sway, both state and Church, filled the most eminent posts, ecclesiastical and civil; taught in the universities and churches with an authority before which all opposition was silent; and maintained the pretended majesty and prerogatives of the Roman pontiffs against kings, princes, bishops, and heretics, with incredible ardour and equal success. The Dominicans and Franciscans were, before the Reformation, what the Jesuits have been since that happy and glorious period, the very soul of the hierarchy, the engines of state, the secret springs of all the motions of the one and the other, and the authors and directors of every great and important event in the religious and political world." Thus the Romish hierarchy has *exercised all the power of the first beast in his sight*, both temporal and spiritual, and therefore, with such astonishing influence as this over secular princes, it was no difficult matter for him to cause:—

**The earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.]** That is, he causes the whole Latin world to submit to the authority of the Latin empire, with the revived western empire at its head, persuading them that such submission is beneficial to their spiritual interests, and absolutely necessary for their salvation. Here it is observable that both beasts have dominion over the same *earth*; for it is expressly said that the second beast *causeth THE EARTH and them that dwelt therein, to worship the first beast*; therefore it is, as Bishop Newton and others have observed, *imperium in imperio*, "an empire within an empire." We have, consequently, the fullest evidence that the two beasts consist in the division of the great Latin empire, by the usurpation of the Latin clergy, into two distinct empires, the one secular, the other spiritual, and both united in one antichristian design, viz., to diffuse their most abominable system of idolatry over the whole *earth*, and to extend the sphere of their domination. Here we have also an illustration of that remarkable passage in **#Re 16:10**, *the kingdom of the beasts*, i.e., the kingdom of the Latin kingdom; which is apparently a solecism, but in reality expressed with wonderful precision. The fifth vial is poured out *upon the throne of the beast, and HIS KINGDOM is darkened*, i.e., the Latin kingdom in subjection to the Latin kingdom or the secular Latin empire.

Verse 13. **And he doeth great wonders]** That we may have the greatest assurance possible that the two-horned beast is the spiritual Latin empire, it is called in **#Re 19:20**, a passage illustrative of the one now under consideration, *the false prophet*, "than which," as Bishop Newton observes, "there cannot be a stronger or plainer argument to prove that false doctors or teachers were particularly designed;" for *prophet*, in the Scripture style, is not unfrequently used for a *preacher* or *expounder* of God's word. See **#1Co 14:1-5**. It hence follows that the two-horned beast is an empire of false doctors or teachers.

In order to establish the Latin Church upon a foundation that can never fail, the false prophet *doth great wonders*-he attempts the most wonderful and prodigious exploits, and is crowned with incredible success. He has the art to persuade his followers that the clergy of the Church of Rome are the only true ministers of Christ; that they have such great influence in the court of heaven as to be able not only to forgive sins, but also to grant indulgences in sin, by paying certain stipulated sums. He persuades them too that they can do works of supererogation. He pretends that an

incredible number of miracles have been wrought and are still working by the Almighty, as so many evidences of the great sanctity of the Latin Church; and the false prophet has such an astonishing influence over his flock, as to cause them to believe all his fabulous legends and lying wonders. He pretends also (and is believed!) that his power is not confined to this world; that he is able by his prayers to deliver the souls of the deceased from what he calls purgatory, a place which he has fabled to exist for the purification of sinful souls after their departure from this world. His wonderful exploits, in being able to induce men possessed of reasoning faculties to believe his monstrous absurdities, do not end here; he even:—

**Maketh fire come down from heaven-in the sight of men]** *Fire*, in Scripture, when it signifies *wrath*, represents that species of indignation which is attended with the destruction of whatever is the cause of it. Thus the *wrath* of God is likened to *fire*, #Ps 18:7, 8; #Jer 4:4. Therefore the *fire* which the false prophet bringeth down from *heaven* upon the *earth*, is the *fiery indignation* which he causes to come down from the *heaven* or *throne* of the Latin empire upon all those of the *earth* or *Latin world* who rebel against his authority. All this has been fulfilled in the Romish hierarchy; the Latin clergy have denominated all those that oppose their authority heretics, they have instituted tribunals to try the cause of heresy, and all those that would not submit to their idolatry they have condemned to various kinds of tortures and deaths. It is said of the false prophet that he bringeth *fire* FROM HEAVEN upon the earth; that is to say, he will only try the cause of heresy, and pass the sentence of condemnation; he will not suffer an ecclesiastic to *execute* the sentence of the court; *the destroying fire* he causeth to come down from the *heaven* or *throne* of the Latin empire; secular princes and magistrates must execute the sentence of death upon all that are capitally condemned by the spiritual power. *He MAKETH fire come down from heaven*; he *compels* secular princes to assist him against heretics; and if any rebel against his authority he immediately puts them under the ban of the anathema, so that they are deprived of their offices, and exposed to the insults and persecution of their brethren. Thus the false prophet deceives the Latin world *by the means of those miracles which he had power try do in the sight of the beast*. Under the appearance of great sanctity he persuades men to believe all his lying doctrines, and enforces his canons and decretals with the sword of the civil magistrate.

Verse 14. **Saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.]** *The image of the beast* must designate a person who represents in himself the whole power of the Latin empire, therefore it cannot be the emperor; for though he was, according to his own account, *supremum caput Christianitatis*, the supreme head of Christendom, yet he was only the chief of the Germanic confederation, and consequently was only sovereign of the principal power of the Latin empire. The image of the beast must be the supreme ruler of the Latin empire, and as it is through the influence of the false prophet that this image is made for the first beast, this great chief must be an ecclesiastic. Who this is has been ably shown by Bishop Newton in his comment on the following verse.

Verse 15. **And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.]** I would just observe that the *Brahmins*, by repeating incantations, profess to give *eyes* and a *soul* to an image recently made, before it is worshipped; afterwards, being supposed to be the *residence* of the god or goddess it represents, it has a *legal* right to *worship*. On this verse the

learned bishop observes: "The influence of the two-horned beast, or corrupted clergy, is farther seen in persuading and inducing mankind *to make an image to the beast which had the wound by a sword, and did live*. This image and representative of the beast is the *pope*. He is properly the *idol* of the Church. He represents in himself the whole power of the beast, and is the head of all authority, temporal as well as spiritual. He is nothing more than a private person, without power and without authority, till the two-horned beast or corrupted clergy, by choosing him pope, give life unto him, and enable him to speak and utter his decrees, and to persecute even to death as many as refuse to submit to him and to worship him. As soon as he is chosen pope he is clothed with the pontifical robes, and crowned and placed upon the altar, and the cardinals come and kiss his feet, which ceremony is called *adoration*. They first elect and then they worship him, as in the medals of Martin V., where two are represented crowning the pope, and two kneeling before him, with this inscription, *Quem creant adorant*; 'Whom they create they adore.' He is THE PRINCIPLE OF UNITY TO THE TEN KINGDOMS OF THE BEAST, and causeth, as far as he is able, all who will not acknowledge his supremacy to be put to death." The great ascendancy which the popes have obtained over the kings of the Latin world by means of the Romish hierarchy is sufficiently marked in the history of Europe. As long as the great body of the people were devoted to the Roman Catholic idolatry, it was in vain for the kings of the different Roman Catholic countries to oppose the increasing usurpations of the popes. They ascended, in spite of all opposition, to the highest pinnacle of human greatness; for even the authority of the emperors themselves was established or annulled at their pleasure. The high sounding tone of the popes commenced in Gregory VII., A.D. 1073, commonly known by the name of Hildebrand, who aimed at nothing less than universal empire. He published an anathema against all who received the investiture of a bishopric or abbacy from the hands of a layman, as also against those by whom the investiture should be performed. This measure being opposed by Henry IV., emperor of Germany, the pope deposed him from all power and dignity, regal or imperial. See Corps Diplomatique, tom. i. p. 53. Great numbers of German princes siding with the pope, the emperor found himself under the necessity of going, (in January, 1077,) to the bishop of Rome to implore his forgiveness, which was not granted him till he had fasted three days, standing from morning to evening barefooted, and exposed to the inclemency of the weather! In the following century the power of the pope was still farther increased; for on the 23d of September, 1122, the Emperor Henry V. gave up all right of conferring the regalia by the ceremony of the ring and crosier, so that the chapters and communities should be at liberty to fill up their own vacancies. In this century the election of the Roman pontiffs was confined by Alexander III. to the college of cardinals. In the thirteenth century the popes (Dr. Mosheim observes) "inculcated that pernicious maxim, that the bishop of Rome is *the supreme lord of the universe*, and that neither princes nor bishops, civil governors nor ecclesiastical rulers, have any lawful power in Church or state but what they derive from him. To establish their authority both in civil and ecclesiastical matters upon the firmest foundation, they assumed to themselves the power of disposing of the various offices of the Church, whether of a higher or more subordinate nature, and of creating bishops, abbots, and canons, according to their fancy. The first of the pontiffs who usurped such an extravagant extent of authority was Innocent III., (A.D. 1198-1216,) whose example was followed by Honorius III., (A.D. 1216,) Gregory IX., (A.D. 1227,) and several of their successors." Thus the plenitude of the papal power (as it is termed) was not confined to what was spiritual; the Romish bishops "dethroned monarchs, disposed of crowns, absolved subjects from the obedience due to their sovereigns, and laid kingdoms under interdicts. There was not a state in Europe which had not been disquieted by their ambition. There was not a throne which they had not shaken, nor a prince who did not tremble at their

presence." The point of time in which the Romish bishops attained their highest elevation of authority was about the commencement of the fourteenth century. Boniface VIII., who was pope at this time, outstripped all his predecessors in the high sounding tone of his public decrees. According to his famous bull *Unam Sanctam*, published Nov. 16, 1302, "the secular power is but a simple emanation from the ecclesiastical; and the double power of the pope, founded upon Holy Scripture, is even an article of faith. God," said he, "has confided to Saint Peter, and to his successors, two swords, the one spiritual, the other temporal. The first ought to be exercised by the Church itself; and the other, by secular powers for the service of the Church, and according to the will of the pope. The latter, that is to say, the temporal sword, is in subjection to the former, and the temporal authority depends indispensably on the spiritual power which judges it, while God alone can judge the spiritual power. Finally," he adds, "it is necessary to salvation for every human creature to be in subjection to the Roman pontiff." The false prophet SAID "to them that dwell upon the earth, that they should make an image to the beast that had the wound by a sword, and did live;" that is, the Romish priesthood PREACHED UP the pope's supremacy over temporal princes; and, through their astonishing influence on the minds of the people, the bishop of Rome at last became the supreme sovereign of the secular Latin empire, and thus was at the head of all authority, temporal and spiritual.

The papists have in their various superstitions professed to worship God. But they are said, in the unerring words of prophecy, to *worship* the dragon, beast, and image of the beast, and to *blaspheme* God; for they received as holy those commandments of men that stand in direct opposition to the sacred Scriptures, and which have been imposed on them by the Romish bishops, aided by the secular powers. "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in SPIRIT and in TRUTH."

Verse 16. **And he caused all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark]** To ascertain the meaning of the *mark* which the two-horned beast causes all orders and degrees of men in the Latin world to receive, we need only refer to **#Re 14:11**, where the mark imposed by the two-horned beast is called *the mark of his name*. The *name of the beast* is the *Latin empire*: the *mark of his name* must therefore be *his LATIN worship*: for this very reason, that it is the two-horned beast, or false prophet, who causes all descriptions of persons to receive it. Now it is well known that the continual employment of the Latin clergy is to enforce the Latin idolatry upon their flocks. The mass and offices of the Church, which are in Latin, and contain the sum and substance of their idolatrous worship, are of different kinds, and abound in impious prayers to the Virgin Mary, and the saints and angels. In a word, *the LATIN worship* is the universal badge of distinction of *the LATIN Church*, from all other Churches on the face of the earth; and is therefore the only infallible MARK by which a genuine papist can be distinguished from the rest of mankind. But the two-horned beast causes all to receive this mark:—

**In their right hand, or in their foreheads]** *Right hand* in Scripture language, when used figuratively, represents the physical power of the person of whom it is spoken; and when applied to God designates a signal manifestation of Divine power against his enemies, and in behalf of his people. See **#Ps 17:7; 20:6; 21:8; 45:3, 4, &c.** The reception of the mark in the right hand must therefore mean, that all so receiving it devote the whole powers of their mind and body to the propagation of the Latin worship, and to the eradication of all they denominate heresies out of their Church. But some receive the mark *in their foreheads*. By any thing being impressed upon *the*

*forehead*, is meant the public profession of whatever is inscribed or marked upon it. See #**Re 9:4; 14:1; 22:4**, &c. The mark of the beast being received on the *forehead*, therefore, means that all those so marked make a public profession of *the Latin worship*; whereby it is evident to all that they form a part of the Latin Church. Many may be marked in the right hand who are also marked on their foreheads, but it does not follow that those marked on their foreheads are also marked in their right hand; that is to say, it is not every individual that complies with the Latin worship who, to the utmost of his power, endeavours to propagate his religious system. Hence the propriety of the words, "He causeth all-to receive a mark in their right hand, OR in their foreheads."

Verse 17. **And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark]** "If any," observes Bishop Newton, "dissent from the stated and authorized forms; they are condemned and excommunicated as heretics; and in consequence of that they are no longer suffered to *buy* or *sell*; they are interdicted from traffic and commerce, and all the benefits of civil society. So Roger Hoveden relates of William the Conqueror, that he was so dutiful to the pope that he would not permit any one in his power to buy or sell any thing whom he found disobedient to the apostolic see. So the canon of the council of Lateran, under Pope Alexander III., made against the Waldenses and Albigenses, enjoins, upon pain of anathema, that no man presume to entertain or cherish them in his house or land, or exercise traffic with them. The synod of Tours, in France, under the same pope, orders, under the like intermination, that no man should presume to receive or assist them, no, not so much as hold any communion with them, *in selling or buying*; that, being deprived of the comfort of humanity they may be compelled to repent of the error of their way." In the tenth and eleventh centuries the severity against the excommunicated was carried to so high a pitch, that nobody might come near them, not even their own wives, children, or servants; they forfeited all their natural legal rights and privileges, and were excluded from all kinds of offices. The form of excommunication in the Romish Church is to take lighted torches, throw them upon the ground with curses and anathemas, and trample them out under foot to the ringing of the bells. It is in this and similar ways that the false prophet has terrified the Latin world, and kept it in subjection to the secular and spiritual powers. Those interdicted by the two-horned beast from all offices of civil life are also such as have not:—

**The name of the beast, or the number of his name.]** See on the following verse.

Verse 18. **Here is wisdom. Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man; and his number is Six hundred threescore and six.]** In this verse we have the very name of the beast given under the symbol of the number 666. Before the invention of figures by the Arabs, in the tenth century, letters of the alphabet were used for numbers. The Greeks in the time of Homer, or soon after, are thought by some to have assigned to their letters a numerical value corresponding to their order in the alphabet: thus,  $\alpha$  was 1, because the first letter; and  $\omega$  24, being the last. It is in this manner that the books of the Iliad and Odyssey are numbered, which have been thus marked by Homer himself, or by some person who lived near his time. A system of representing numbers of great antiquity was used by the Greeks, very much resembling that afterwards adopted by the Romans. This consisted in assigning to the initial letter of the name of the number a value equal to the number. Thus  $\chi$ , the initial of  $\chiιλια$ , stood for a thousand;  $\delta$ , the initial of  $\deltaεκα$ , for ten;  $\pi$ , the initial of  $\piεντε$ , for five, &c. Herodotus, the grammarian, is the only writer of antiquity who has noticed this system, and the chronological table of remarkable events on

the Arundelian marbles the only work extant in which this method of representing numbers is exhibited. The system now in use cannot be traced to any very ancient source. What can be proved is, that it was in use before the commencement of the Christian era. Numerical letters, denoting the year of the Roman emperor's reign, exist on great numbers of the Egyptian coins, from the time of Augustus Cæsar through the succeeding reigns. See *Numi Ægyptii Imperatorii, a Geo. Zæga*, edit. Rom. 1787. There are coins extant marked of the 2d, 3d, 14th, 30th, 35th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, and 42d years of Augustus Cæsar, with the numerical letters preceded by L or Λ for *λυκαβας*, year, thus: LB, LF, LIΔ, LA, LAE, LAH, LAΘ, LM, LMA, and LMB. The following is the Greek alphabet, with the numerical value of each letter affixed, according to the generally received system:—

α ... 1	ι .... 10	ρ .... 100
β ... 2	κ .... 20	σ .... 200
γ ... 3	λ .... 30	τ .... 300
δ ... 4	μ .... 40	υ .... 400
ε ... 5	ν .... 50	φ .... 500
ζ ... 7	ξ .... 60	χ .... 600
η ... 8	ο .... 70	ψ .... 700
θ ... 9	π .... 80	ω .... 800

The method just described of representing numbers or letters of the alphabet, gave rise to a practice among the ancients of representing names also by numbers. Examples of this kind abound in the writings of heathens, Jews, and Christians. Where the practice of counting the number in names or phrases began first to be used, cannot be ascertained; it is sufficient for the illustration of the passage under consideration, if it can be shown to have been in existence in the apostolic age. Seneca, who was contemporary with St. Paul, informs us, in his eighty-eighth epistle, that Apion, the grammarian, maintained Homer to have been the author of the division of his poems of the Iliad and Odyssey into forty-eight books; for a proof of which Apion produces the following argument: that the poet commenced his Iliad with the word *μηνιν*, that the two first letters, whose sum is 48, might indicate such division. Leonidas of Alexandria, who flourished in the reigns of Nero, Vespasian, &c., carried the practice of computing the number in words so far as to construct equinumeral distichs; that is, epigrams of four lines, whose first hexameter and pentameter contain the same number with the other two. We will only notice two examples; the first is addressed to one of the emperors, the other to Poppæa, the wife of Nero.

Θυει σοι τοδε γραμμα γενεθλαικαισιν εν ωραις,  
 Καισαρ, νειλαιη μουσα λεωνιδεω.  
 Καλλιοπης γαρ ακαπνον αιει θυος· εις δε νεωτα  
 Ην εθελης, θυσει τουδε περισσοτερα.

"The muse of Leonidas of the Nile offers up to thee, O Cæsar, this writing, at the time of thy nativity; for the sacrifice of Calliope is always without smoke: but in the ensuing year he will offer up, if thou wilt, better things than this."

From the numerical table already given, the preceding epigram may be shown to contain equinumeral distichs, as follows: θυει 424, i.e., θ 9, υ 400, ε 5, ι 10; in all 424: σοι contains 280, i.e.,

σ 200, ο 70, ι 10. In like manner τοδε will be found to contain 379, γραμμα 185, γενεθλιακαισιν 404, εν 55, ωραις 1111, καισαρ 332, νειλαιη 114, μουσα 711, λεωνιδεω 1704. The sum of all these is 5699, the number in the first distich. In the second distich, καλλιοτης contains 449, γαρ 104, ακαπνον 272, αι 16, θυος 679, εις 215, δε 9, νεωτα 1156, ην 58, εθελης 267, (the subscribed iota being taken into the account,) θυσει 624, τουδε 779, περισσοτερα 1071. The sum of all 5699, which is precisely the same with that contained in the first distich.

Ουραμιον μειμημα γενεθλιακαισιν εν ωραις  
Τουτ' απο νειλογενους δεξο λεωνιδεω,  
Ποππαια, διος ευνι, σεβαστιας· ευαδε γαρ σοι  
Δωρα, τα και λεκτρων αξια και σοφης.

"O Poppæa, wife of Jupiter (Nero) Augusta, receive from Leonidas of the Nile a celestial globe on the day of thy nativity; for gifts please thee which are suited to thy imperial dignity and wisdom."

In this epigram each of the distichs contains the number 6422, viz., ουραμιον 751, (i.e., ο 70, υ 400, ρ 100, α 1, ν 50, ι 10, ο 70, ν 50, the sum of which is 751,) μειμημα 144, γενεθλιακαισιν 404, εν 55, ωραις 1111, τουτ' 1070, απο 151, νειλογενους 893, δεξο 139, λεωνιδεω 1704; the sum of all 6422. The numbers corresponding to the words of the second distich are, respectively, 322, 284, 465, 919, 415, 104, 280, 905, 301, 31, 1305, 72, 31, 988; the sum of which is also 6422.

This poet did not restrict himself to the construction of equinumeral distichs. The following is one of his distichs in which the hexameter line is made equal in number to its corresponding pentameter:—

Εις προς ενα ψηφοισιν ισαζεται, ου δυο διοις,  
Ου γαρ ετι στεργω την δολιχογραφιην.

"One line is made equal in number to one, not two to two; for I no longer approve of long epigrams."

In this distich the words of the hexameter line contain, respectively, the numbers 215, 450, 56, 1548, 534, 470, 474, and 364; the sum of which is 4111. The numbers corresponding to the words of the pentameter line are, respectively, 470, 104, 315, 1408, 358, and 1456; the sum of which is also 4111. The equinumeral distichs of Leonidas are contained in the second volume of Brunck and Jacob's edition of the Greek Anthology. It appears from ancient records that some of the Greeks in the early part of the second century, if not in the apostolic age, employed themselves in counting the numbers contained in the verses of Homer to find out what two consecutive lines were ισοψηφοι or equinumeral. Aulus Gellius, the grammarian, who lived in the reigns of Hadrian and Antoninus Pius, gives us an account (lib. xiv., cap. 6) of a person who presented him with a book filled with a variety of information collected from numerous sources, of which he was at liberty to avail himself in writing his Attic Nights. Among the subjects treated of in this book, we are informed by Gellius, was that of Homeric equinumeral verses. None of the examples are given by the grammarian; but Labbeus says, in his Bibl. Nov. MSS., p. 284, that the equinumeral verses are marked in the Codex

2216, in the French king's library. Gronovius, in his notes on Gellius, p. 655, has copied what he found in a MS. (No. 1488) upon this subject, viz., two examples out of the Iliad, and one in the Odyssey. The examples in the Iliad are lines 264 and 265 of book vii., each line containing 3508; and lines 306 and 307 of book xix., each containing 2848. The verses in the Odyssey ( $\omega$ , 110, 111) stated to be equinumeral in the MS. cited by Gronovius have not now this property, owing possibly to some corruption that may have taken place in the lines from frequent transcription.

For other examples of the computation of the number in words or phrases, the reader is referred to the *Oneirocritica* of Artemidorus, lib. ii. c. 75; lib. iii. c. 34: and lib. iv. c. 26. See also Martiani Minei Felicis Capelhæ Africarhaginensis, *De Nuptiis Philologiæ et Mercurii*, lib. ii. and vii.; Irenæus adversus Hæreses, lib. i., ii., and v.; Tertullian. *de Præscriptionibus Hæret.*, tom. ii., p. 487; Wirceburgi, 1781; Sibyll. Oracul., lib. i., &c.

Having thus shown that it was a practice in the apostolic age, and subsequently, to count the number in words and phrases, and even in whole verses, it will be evident that what is intended by 666 is, that the Greek name of the beast (for it was in the Greek language that Jesus Christ communicated his revelation to St. John) contains this number. Many names have been proposed from time to time as applicable to the beast, and at the same time containing 666. We will only notice one example, viz., that famous one of Irenæus, which has been approved of by almost all commentators who have given any sort of tolerable exposition of the Revelation. The word alluded to is  $\lambda\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , the letters of which have the following numerical values:  $\lambda$  30,  $\alpha$  1,  $\tau$  300,  $\epsilon$  5,  $\iota$  10,  $\nu$  50,  $\omicron$  70,  $\varsigma$  200; and if these be added together, the sum will be found to be equivalent to the number of the beast. This word was applied by Irenæus, who lived in the second century, to the then existing Roman empire; "for," says he, "they are LATINS who now reign." Though it is evident, from the notes on the preceding part of this chapter, that the conjecture of Irenæus respecting the number 666 having some way or other a reference to *the empire of the Latins* is well founded; yet his production of the word  $\lambda\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , as containing 666, is not a proof that it has any such reference. Bellarmin the Jesuit objected against  $\lambda\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$  being the name intended in the prophecy from its orthography; for, says he, it should be written  $\lambda\alpha\tau\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ . That the objection of the learned Jesuit has very great force is evident from every Greek writer extant, who has used the Greek word for *Latinus*, in all of whom it is uniformly found without the dipthong. See Hesiod, Polybius, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Strabo, Plutarch, Dio Cassius, Photius, the Byzantine historians, &c., &c. It hence follows that if the Greek word for *Latinus* had been intended, the number contained in  $\lambda\alpha\tau\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , and not that in  $\lambda\alpha\tau\epsilon\iota\nu\omicron\varsigma$ , would have been called *the number of the beast*. We have already observed that the beast is *the Latin kingdom* or *empire*; therefore, if this observation be correct, the Greek words signifying *the Latin kingdom* must have this number. The most concise method of expressing this among the Greeks was as follows,  $\eta\ \lambda\alpha\tau\iota\nu\eta\ \beta\alpha\sigma\iota\lambda\epsilon\iota\alpha$ , which is thus numbered:—

H	=	8	}	THE
Λ	=	30		
α	=	1	}	LATIN
τ	=	300		
ι	=	10		
ν	=	50		
η	=	8		
Β	=	2		
α	=	1	}	KINGDOM.
σ	=	200		
ι	=	10		
λ	=	30		
ε	=	5		
ι	=	10		
α	=	1		
666				

No other kingdom on earth can be found to contain 666. This is then *η σοφια*, the wisdom or demonstration. A *beast* is the symbol of a *kingdom*; THE *beast* has been proved, in the preceding part of this chapter, to be the *LATIN kingdom*; and 'H *Λατινη Βασιλεια*, being shown to contain, exclusively, the number 666, is the *demonstration*.

Having demonstrated that 'η *λατινη βασιλεια*, *The Latin kingdom*, is the name of the beast, we must now examine what is intended by the phrase in the 17th verse, {#Re 13:17,} *the name of the beast, or the number of his name*. Bishop Newton supposes that *the name of the beast*, and *the number of his name*, mean the same thing; but this opinion is totally irreconcilable with #Re 15:2, where St. John informs us that he "saw as it were a sea of glass mingled with fire, and them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name, stand upon the sea of glass, having the harps of God." In this passage it is evident that the beast, his image, and the number of his name, are perfectly distinct; and therefore no two of them can mean the same thing. Hence what is meant by *the name of the beast* is entirely different from that intended by *the number of his name*. But how can this be, when it is expressly declared that the number of the beast is 666, which number is declared to be *that* of his name? The solution of the whole mystery is as follows: Both beasts of the Apocalypse, we have already shown, have the same appellation; that it to say, the name of the first and second least is equally 'H *Λατινη Βασιλεια*, the Latin kingdom; therefore, by *the name of the beast* is meant *the Latin kingdom*, and by *the number of his name* is also meant *the Latin kingdom*. Hence only one of the beasts is numbered; the name of that which is not numbered is termed *the*

*name of the beast*, and the numbered Latin empire is denominated *the number of his name*, or 666, exactly agreeable to an ancient practice already noticed, of representing names by the numbers contained in them. Therefore the meaning of the whole passage is, that those whom the false prophet does not excommunicate, or put out of the pale of his Church, have the *mark* of the beast, that is, are genuine papists, or such as are actively or passively obedient to his Latin idolatry. Those also escape his ecclesiastical interdicts who have *the name of the beast*, or *the number of his name*. By a person having the name of the beast is evidently meant his being a *Latin*, i.e., in subjection to the Latin empire, and, consequently an individual of the Latin world; therefore those that have the name of the beast, or the number of his name, are those that are subjects of the Latin empire, or of the numbered Latin empire, viz., who are in subjection to the Latin empire, *secular* or *spiritual*. All that were in subjection to the secular or spiritual power were not papists in heart; hence the propriety of distinguishing those which have *the mark* from those which *have the name of the beast* or *the number of his name*. But which of the two beasts it is which God has numbered has been not a little contested. That it is the first beast which is numbered has been the prevailing opinion. On this side

are Lord Napier, Whiston, Bishop Newton, Faber, and others. Among those that have supposed the second beast to be the one which is numbered are, Dr. Henry More, Pyle, Kershaw, Galloway, Bicheno, Dr. Hales, &c. Drs. Gill and Reader assert that both beasts have the same number, and that the name is *Λατεινος*. Though it has been demonstrated that the *name* of the beast is the Latin kingdom, it is impossible from the mere name to say whether it is the Latin empire, SECULAR or SPIRITUAL; hence the necessity of determining which of the two beasts God has computed. That it is the second beast which is numbered is evident from three different passages in the Apocalypse. The first is in **#Re 13:17**, where it is said, "that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name." Here *the name of the beast* is mentioned before *the number of his name*, which is a presumptive evidence that *the name of the beast* refers to the first beast, and *the number of his name* to the second. The second passage is in **#Re 15:2**, where mention is made of "them that had gotten the victory over the beast, and over his image, and over the number of his name." That here styled *the beast* is evidently *the secular Latin empire*, for it was to *this* that the two-horned beast made an image; consequently there can be no doubt that *the number of his name*, or *the numbered Latin empire*, is the two-horned beast or false prophet. To feel the full force of this argument, it must be considered that the saints of God are represented as getting the victory over *the beast* as well as over *the number of his name*, which is a proof that two distinct antichristian empires are here spoken of, for otherwise it would be tautology. That the two-horned beast is the one which is numbered, is farther evident from a comparison of this passage with **#Re 19:20**. In the latter passage the words are: "And the beast was taken, and with him the false prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beast, and them that worshipped his image." Here nothing is said of the *number of his name*, which is so particularly mentioned in **#Re 15:2**, and in that chapter nothing is mentioned of the *false prophet*, the reason of which can only be, that what is termed in one passage *the number of his name*, is in its parallel one called *the false prophet*. Hence the two-horned beast, or false prophet, is also designated by the phrase *the number of his name*; and consequently it is *this beast* which is numbered. But what adds the last degree of certainty to this argument is the passage in **#Re 13:18**: "Here is wisdom. Let him that hath a mind count the number of the beast; for it is the number of a man: and his number is six hundred threescore and six." Here is the solution of this mystery: *let him that hath a mind* for investigations of this kind, find out a kingdom which contains precisely the number 666, for this must be infallibly the *name* of the beast. Ἡ Λατινὴ Βασιλεία, THE LATIN KINGDOM, has exclusively this number. But both beasts are called by this name; which is, therefore, the one that is numbered? It is said *the number of the beast* is *the number of a man*; consequently the numbered beast must be A MAN, that is, it must be represented elsewhere in the Revelation under this emblem, for in no other sense can *an empire* be denominated *a man*. Therefore, it is not the ten-horned beast, for this is uniformly styled *The Beast* in every part of the Apocalypse where there has been occasion to mention this power. It can therefore be no other than the two-horned beast, or Romish hierarchy; which, on account of its *preaching* to the world its most antichristian system of doctrines, and calling it Christianity, is likewise named in **#Re 16:13; 19:20; and #Re 20:10**, THE FALSE PROPHET.

JOHN EDWARD CLARK.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XIV.

*The Lamb on mount Sion, and his company and their character, 1-5. The angel flying in the midst of heaven, with the everlasting Gospel, 6, 7. Another angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, 8. A third angel denounces God's judgments against those who worship the beast or his image, 9-11. The patience of the saints, and the blessedness of them who die in the Lord, 12, 13. The man on the white cloud, with a sickle, reaping the earth, 14-16. The angel with the sickle commanded by another angel, who had power over fire, to gather the clusters of the vines of the earth, 17, 18. They are gathered and thrown into the great winepress of God's wrath, which is trodden without the city, and the blood comes out 1600 furlongs, 19, 20.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XIV.

Verse 1. **A Lamb stood on the mount Sion]** This represents Jesus Christ in his *sacrificial office*; *mount Sion* was a type of the Christian Church.

**And with him a hundred forty and four thousand]** Representing those who were converted to Christianity from among the *Jews*. See **#Re 7:4**.

**His Father's name written in their foreheads.]** They were professedly, openly, and practically, the children of God, by faith in Christ Jesus. Different *sects* of idolaters have the *peculiar mark* of their god on their foreheads. This is practised in the east to the present day, and the mark is called the *sectarial mark*. Between eighty and ninety different figures are found on the foreheads of different Hindoo deities and their followers.

Almost every MS. of importance, as well as most of the *versions* and many of the *fathers*, read this clause thus: *Having HIS NAME and his Father's name written upon their foreheads*. This is undoubtedly the true reading, and is properly received by *Griesbach* into the text.

Verse 2. **The voice of many waters]** That is, of multitudes of various nations.

**The voice of harpers]** Though the sounds were many and apparently confused, yet both *harmony* and *melody* were preserved.

Verse 3. **They sung-a new song]** See **Clarke on "Re 5:9"**.

**No man could learn that song]** As none but genuine Christians can worship God acceptably, because they approach him through the only Mediator, so none can understand the deep things of God but such; nor can others know the cause why true believers exult so much in God through Christ, because they know not the communion which such hold with the Father and the Son through the Holy Ghost.

Verse 4. **These are they which were not defiled with women]** They are pure from idolatry, and are presented as unspotted *virgins* to their Lord and Saviour Christ. See #2Co 11:2. There may be an allusion here to the Israelites committing idolatry, through the means of their criminal connection with the Midianitish women. See #Nu 25:1-4; 31:16.

**Follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth]** They go through good and through evil report, bear his reproach, and love not their lives even to the death.

**The first fruits unto God]** The reference appears to be to those *Jews* who were the *first converts* to Christianity.

Verse 5. **In their mouth was found no guile]** When brought before kings and rulers they did not dissemble, but boldly confessed the Lord Jesus.

Verse 6. **Another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel]** Whether this angel mean any more than a particular dispensation of providence and grace, by which the Gospel shall be rapidly sent throughout the whole world; or whether it mean any especial messenger, order of preachers, people, or society of Christians, whose professed object it is to send the Gospel of the kingdom throughout the earth, we know not. But the vision seems truly descriptive of a late institution, entitled THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY, whose object it is to print and circulate the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, through all the habitable world, and in all the languages spoken on the face of the earth. Already they have been the instruments, by actually printing (or by affording the means to different nations to print for themselves) the Bible in a vast number of languages and dialects, so that it has been sent in hundreds of thousands of copies, in whole or in part, to almost every part of the globe: viz., in their native language to the *Welsh*; in *Erse* to the *Irish*; in *Gaelic* to the *Highlands* of Scotland; in *Manks* to the *Isle of Man*; in *French, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish*, to those countries and *Switzerland*; in *Low Dutch* to *Holland, &c.*; in *High Dutch* to *Germany, Prussia, &c.* Through them a similar society has been established at St. Petersburg, by which the Bible has been sent in *Slavonic* to the Russians; and in different dialects to the people of that vast empire; besides the *Turkish, Tartaric, and Calmuck*. They have also sent the Holy Scriptures in *ancient and modern Greek* to *Asia Minor* and the different *isles* of the *Mediterranean Sea*; in *Arabic and Æthiopic* to *Egypt and Abyssinia*; in *Syriac* to the *Holy Land*, and to the *Christians at Travancore*. They have also greatly and effectually assisted a very worthy society in the East Indies, whose indefatigable and incomparable missionaries, the Rev. Messrs. Carey, Marshman, and Ward, have translated the Scriptures into the principal languages of India; and they have furnished the means of printing a complete translation of the New Testament in the Chinese language at Canton, by the Rev. Mr. Morrison. In short, almost every nation in the universe has, through this society, *directly or indirectly* received, or is receiving, the words of eternal life; so that it appears to answer the description of the Apocalyptic "angel, flying in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting Gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people."

Verse 7. **Fear God, and give glory to him]** This is the general language of the sacred writings. Worship the true God, the creator and governor of all things; and give *him* glory, for to him alone, not to idols or men, all glory and honour belong.

Verse 8. **Babylon is fallen, is fallen]** This is generally understood to be a prediction concerning *Rome*; and it is certain that *Rome*, in the rabbinical writings, is termed *Babylon*.

**That great city]** Among the same writers this city is styled קרתא רבתא *karta rabbetha*, *the great city*; and רומי רבתא *Romi rabbetha*, *the great Rome*. But *which* Rome is meant? *Pagan* or *Papal* Rome? Some parts of the description apply best to the former.

**The wine of the wrath of her fornication.]** There is an allusion here to a custom of impure women, who give *philtres* or *love potions* to those whom they wish to seduce and bind to their will; and these potions are generally of an *intoxicating* nature, greatly inflaming the blood, and disturbing the intellect.

*Fornication* and *adultery* are frequently used in Scripture as emblems of idolatry and false worship.

*The wine of the wrath* is another expression for the *envenomed* or *poisoned cup* given by such women.

No nation of the earth spread their *idolatries* so far as the *ancient Romans*; they were as extensive as their conquests. And *papal Rome* has been not less active in disseminating her superstitions. She has given her *rituals*, but not the *everlasting Gospel*, to most nations of the earth.

Verse 9. **And the third angel followed]** Bishop Bale considers these three angels as three descriptions of preachers, who should bear their testimony against the corruptions of the *papal Church*.

**The beast and his image]** See the notes on **#Re 13:1-18**.

**Mark in his forehead]** Such as the *sectarial marks* of the idolatrous Hindoos, as has been observed before.

Verse 10. **The wine of the wrath of God]** As they have drunk the intoxicating wine of idolatry or spiritual fornication, they shall now drink the wine of God's wrath, which is poured out into the cup of his indignation. This is an allusion to the *poisoned cup*, which certain criminals were obliged to drink, on which ensued speedy death. **See Clarke on "Heb 2:9"**.

**Shall be tormented with fire and brimstone]** An allusion to the punishment of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha* for their unnatural crimes.

**Presence of the holy angels, and-of the Lamb]** These being the *instruments* employed in their destruction; the *Lamb*-the Lord Jesus Christ, acting as judge.

Verse 11. **The smoke of their torment]** Still an allusion to the destruction of *Sodom* and *Gomorrha*.

Verse 12. **Here is the patience of the saints]** Here the faith of the true Christians shall be proved; they *will* follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth, they keep the commandments of God, and are steadfast in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Sometimes η υπομονη, *patience or perseverance*, is taken for the *reward* of these virtues; the text therefore may be thus understood: Here is the reward of the perseverance of the true Christians; for although they die for the testimony of Jesus, yet they shall be unutterably blessed. See the next verse.

Verse 13. **I heard a voice from heaven]** As the information now to be given was of the utmost importance, it is solemnly communicated by a voice from heaven; and the apostle is commanded to write or record what is said.

**Blessed are the dead]** Happy are they. They are *happy* in *two* respects: 1. They do not see the evil that shall come upon the world, and are exempted from any farther sufferings. 2. They actually and conscientiously enjoy happiness in a state of blessedness.

In the first sense, *Happy are the dead!* is a proverb frequently to be met in the Greek and Roman poets. *Ex. gr.*

τρις μακαρες δαναοι και τετρακις, οι τοτ' ολοντο  
τροιη εν ευρειη, χαριν ατρειδησι φεροντες.  
'ως δη εγωγ' οφελον θανεειν και ποτμον επισπειν  
ηματι τω, οτε μοι πλειστοι χαλκηρεα δουρα  
τρωες επερριψαν περι πηλειωνι θανοντι.

ODYSS., lib. v. ver. 306.

*Happy, thrice happy; who, in battle slain,  
Press'd, in Atrides' cause, the Trojan plain:  
O, had I died before that well fought wall;  
Had some distinguished day renown'd my fall,  
Such as was that when showers of javelins fled,  
From conquering Troy, around Achilles dead.*

POPE.

Thus imitated by the prince of the Roman poets:—

Extemplo Æneæ solvuntur frigore membra.  
Ingemit, et, duplices tendens ad sidera palmas,  
Talia voce refert: O terque quaterque beati,  
Queis ante ora patrum Trojæ sub mœnibus altis  
Contigit oppetere! O Danaum fortissime gentis  
Tydide, mene Iliacis occumbere campis  
Non potuisse? tuaque animam hanc effundere dextra?  
Sævus ubi Æacidæ telo jacet Hector, ubi ingens  
Sarpedon: ubi tot Simois correpta sub undis  
Scuta virum, galeasque, et fortis corpora volvit.  
VIRG., ÆN. i., ver. 93.

"In horror fix'd the Trojan hero stands,  
He groans, and spreads to heaven his lifted hands.  
*Thrice happy* those whose fate it was to fall,  
Exclaims the chief, before the Trojan wall!  
O, 'twas a glorious fate to die in fight!  
To die so bravely in their parents' sight!  
O, had I there, beneath Tydides' hand,  
That bravest hero of the Grecian band,  
Pour'd out this soul, with martial glory fired,  
And in the plain triumphantly expired,  
Where Hector fell, by fierce Achilles' spear,  
And great Sarpedon, the renown'd in war;  
Where Simois' stream, encumber'd with the slain,  
Rolls shields and helms and heroes to the main."  
PITT.

**Which die in the Lord]** These are the only *glorious* dead. They die, not in the field of battle, in either what are called *lawful* or *unlawful wars* against their fellow men; but they die in the cause of God, they die under the smile and approbation of God, and they die to live and reign with God for ever and ever.

**From henceforth]** ἀπ'αὐτοῦ· *From this time; now; immediately.* This word is joined to the following by many MSS. and some *versions*. It was a maxim among the Jews, that as soon as the souls of the just departed from this life they ascended *immediately* to heaven.

**Yea, saith the Spirit]** The Holy Spirit confirms the declaration from heaven, and assigns the reasons of it.

**That they may rest from their labours]** Have no more tribulation and distress.

**And their works do follow there.]** *εργα αυτων ακολουθει μετ' αυτων*. *And their works follow WITH them.* They are in *company*. Here is an elegant prosopopœia or personification; their good works, sufferings, &c., are represented as so many *companions* escorting them on their way to the kingdom of God.

There are some good and pertinent things in the Jewish writers on this subject. "*Rabbi Jonathan* taught, If a man perform one righteous action in this life, *it goes before him* into the world to come. But if a man commit one crime, *it cleaves to him, and drags him to the day of judgment.*" *Sota*, fol. 3, 2. *Avoda Sara*, fol. 5, 1.

"Come and see, If any man observe a precept, that work ascends to God, and says, *Such a one performed me.* But if a man transgress the law, that sin ascends to the holy blessed God, and says, *I came from such a one, who has performed me.*" *Sohar Levit.*, fol. 34, col. 136. Here the same personification is observed as that in the text.

"In that hour in which a man passes from this life into eternity, *all his works precede him*; and there they say unto him, 'This and that thou hast done in such a place on such a day.' This he shall acknowledge. They shall require that he shall subscribe this with his own hand, as it is written, **#Job 37:7**; each man shall subscribe with his own hand; and not only this, but he shall acknowledge that the sentence brought against him is most just." *Taanith*, fol. 11, 1.

The following elegant similitude *Schoettgen* gives from *Sepher Hachayim*, Part II., fol. 47, 1, 2. "A certain man had three friends, *two* of whom he loved; but the *third* he did not highly esteem. On a time the king commanded him to be called before him; and being alarmed, he sought to find an advocate. He went to that *friend* whom he loved most, but he utterly refused to go with him. The *second* offered to go with him as far as the door of the king's palace, but refused to speak a word in his behalf. The *third*, whom he loved least, not only went with him, but pleaded his cause so well before the king that he was cleared from all blame. In like manner, every man has three friends, when he is cited by death to appear before God. The *first* friend, whom he loved most, viz., his *money*, cannot accompany him at all. His *second*, viz., his *relations* and *neighbours*, accompanied him only to the *grave*, and then returned; but could not deliver him from the Judge. The *third* friend, whom he held but in little esteem, viz., the law and his good works, *went with him* to the king, and delivered him from judgment." The meaning of this most plainly is, that nothing except the *deeds* of good and evil men shall accompany them to the judgment-seat of God, and that a man's lot will be in the other world as his conduct has been in this; *Their works follow with them.*

Verse 14. **A white cloud**] It is supposed that, from this verse to the end of the chapter, the *destruction* of Rome is represented under the symbols of *harvest* and *vintage*; images very frequent among the ancient prophets, by which they represented the destruction and excision of nations. See **#Joe 3:12-14**; **#Isa 17:5**; **63:1**; and **#Mt 13:37**.

**A golden crown**] In token of victory and regal power.

Verse 15. **Thrust in thy sickle**] Execute the judgments which God has decreed.

**For the harvest of the earth is ripe.]** The cup of the people's iniquity is full.

Verse 16. **The earth was reaped.]** The judgments were executed. But *where*, or on *whom*, who can tell?

Verse 18. **Power over fire]** Probably meaning the same angel which is mentioned, #Re 8:3; 9:13, who stood by the *altar of burnt-offering*, having authority over its fire to offer that incense to God which represents the prayers of the saints.

Verse 19. **The great winepress of the wrath of God.]** The *place* or *kingdom* where God executes his judgments on the workers of iniquity, whether pagans or persecuting Christians; Rome *pagan*, or Rome *papal*.

Verse 20. **Even unto the horse bridles]** A hyperbolic expression, to denote a *great effusion of blood*. The Jews said, "When Hadrian besieged the city called Bitter, he slew so many that the horses waded in blood up to their mouths." The same kind of hyperbole with that above. See Wetstein on this verse.

**The space of a thousand and six hundred furlongs.]** It is said that the *state of the Church*, or St. Peter's patrimony, extends from Rome to the Po, *two hundred Italian miles*, which make exactly *one thousand six hundred furlongs!* If this be really so, the coincidence is certainly surprising, and worthy of deep regard.

On these two last verses pious Quesnel thus speaks: "As the favourable sickle of Jesus Christ reaps his wheat when ripe for heaven, so that of the executioners of his justice cuts off from this life the tares which are only fit for the fire of hell. Then shall the blood of Christ cease to be trampled on by sinners; and that of the wicked shall be eternally trodden down in hell, which is the *winepress of the wrath of God*."

"*And the winepress was trodden without the city*, eternally without the city of the heavenly Jerusalem, and far from the presence of God; eternally crushed and trodden down by his justice; eternally tormented in body and soul, without any hope either of living or dying! This is the miserable lot and portion of those who shall have despised the law of God, and died in impenitence. My God, pierce my heart with a salutary dread of thy judgments!"

Whatever these passages may mean, this is a prudent and Christian use of them.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XV.

*The seven angels with the seven last plagues, 1. The sea of glass, and those who had a victory over the beast, 2. The song of Moses and the Lamb, 3, 4. The temple in heaven opened, 5. Seven angels come out of the temple, who receive from one of the four living creatures seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, 6-8.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XV.

Verse 1. **Seven angels having the seven last plagues]** Under the emblems of *harvest* and *vintage* God's judgments on the enemies of his Church have already been pointed out: but these are farther signified by the *seven vials*, which are called the seven last plagues of God. The seven last plagues appear to fall under the seventh and last *trumpet*. As the *seventh seal* contained the *seven trumpets*, so the seventh trumpet contains the *seven vials*. And as seven angels sounded the seven trumpets, so seven angels are appointed to pour out the seven vials, angels being always the ministers of Providence. This chapter contains the opening vision which is preparatory to the pouring out of the vials.

The Targum of Jonathan on **#Isa 51:17**, *Awake, awake, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord the cup of his fury*, uses the same words employed by the evangelist here: "Jerusalem, thou hast received from the face of the Lord the cup of his wrath; ית פילי כסא דלוטא *yath pailey casa dilvata*, "the PHIALS of the cup of malediction " find again on **#Isa 51:22**: *I will take out of thy hand the cup of malediction;* ית פילי כסא דחמתי *yath PAILEY casa dechemti*, "the PHIALS of the cup of my indignation."

Verse 2. **A sea of glass]** A spacious lucid plain around the throne, from which fiery coruscations were continually emitted: or, the reflection of the light upon this lucid plain produced the prismatic colours of the most vivid *rainbow*.

**Over the beast, and over his image]** See the notes on **#Re 13:1-18**.

Verse 3. **They sing the song of Moses]** That which Moses sang, **#Ex 15:1**, when he and the Israelites, by the miraculous power of God, had got safely through the Red Sea, and saw their enemies all destroyed.

**And the song of the Lamb]** The same song adapted to the state of the suffering, but now delivered Christians.

**Great and marvellous are thy works]** God's works are descriptive of his *infinite power* and *wisdom*.

**Lord God Almighty]** Nearly the same as *Jehovah, God of hosts*.

**Just and true are thy ways]** Every step God takes in grace or providence is according to *justice*, and he carefully accomplishes all his *threatenings* and all his *promises*; to this he is bound by his truth.

Verse 4. **Who shall not fear thee]** That is, *All should fear* and worship this true God, because he is just and true and holy; and his *saints* should love and obey him, because he is their *King*; and they and all men *should* acknowledge his judgments, because they are *made manifest*.

Verse 5. **The temple of the tabernacle of the testimony]** The *temple* which succeeded the *tabernacle*, in which was the *testimony*, viz., the two tables, Aaron's rod, pot of manna, holy anointing oil, &c. All bearing *testimony* to the *truth* of God and his miraculous interposition in their behalf.

Verse 6. **The seven angels came out of the temple]** To show that they were sent from God himself.

**Clothed in pure and white linen]** Habited as *priests*. For these habits see **#Ex 28:6, 8**; and see Clarke's note on "Re 1:13".

Verse 8. **The temple was filled with smoke]** So was the tabernacle when consecrated by Moses, **#Ex 40:34, 35**, and the temple when consecrated by Solomon, **#1Ki 8:10, 11**; **#2Ch 5:14**. See **#Isa 6:4**. This account seems at least partly copied from those above.

When the high priest entered into the holy of holies, and the ordinary priest into the holy place, they always carried with them a great deal of *smoking incense*, which filled those places with smoke and darkness, which prevented them from considering too attentively the parts and ornaments of those holy places, and thus served to produce an air of majesty in the temple, which none dared to approach without the deepest reverence. To this *Calmet* thinks the allusion may be here.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XVI.

*The angels are commanded to pour out their vials upon the earth, 1. The first pours out his vial on the earth, by which a grievous sore is produced, 2. The second angel pours out his trial on the sea, and it is turned into blood, 3. The third angel pours out his vial on the rivers and fountains, and they are turned also into blood, 4-7. The fourth angel pours out his vial on the sun, and men are scorched with fire, 8, 9. The fifth angel pours out his vial on the throne of the beast, 10, 11. The sixth angel pours out his vial on the river Euphrates, 12. Three unclean spirits come out of the mouth of the beast, dragon and false prophet: and go forth to gather all the kings of the world to battle, in the place called Armageddon, 13-16. The seventh angel pours out his vial on the air, on which followed thunders, lightnings, earth-quakes, and extraordinary hail, 17-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XVI.

Verse 1. **Go your ways, and pour out]** These ministers of the Divine justice were ready to execute vengeance upon transgressors, having full power; but could do nothing in this way till they received *especial commission*. Nothing can be done without the *permission* of God; and in the manifestation of justice or mercy by Divine agency, there must be positive command.

Verse 2. **A noisome and grievous sore]** This is a reference to the *sixth* Egyptian plague, *boils and blains*, #Ex 9:8, 9, &c.

Verse 3. **As the blood of a dead man]** Either meaning blood in a state of *putrescency*, or an effusion of blood in *naval conflicts*; even the sea was tinged with the blood of those who were slain in these wars. This is most probably the meaning of this vial. These engagements were so sanguinary that both the conquerors and the conquered were nearly destroyed; *every living soul died in the sea*.

Verse 4. **Upon the rivers and fountains of waters]** This is an allusion to the *first* Egyptian plague, #Ex 7:20; and to those plagues in general there are allusions throughout this chapter. It is a sentiment of the rabbins that "whatever plagues God inflicted on the Egyptians in former times, he will inflict on the enemies of his people in all later times." See a long quotation on this subject from *Rabbi Tanchum* in *Schoettgen*.

Verse 5. **The angel of the waters]** The rabbins attribute angels, not only to the four elements so called, but to almost every thing besides. We have already seen the *angel* of the *bottomless pit*, #Re 9:11, and the *angel of the fire*, #Re 14:18. The *angel* of the *earth* is spoken of in *Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 13, 2, and is called *Admael*. They have also an *angel* that presides over the *grass*; another that presides over the *cattle* which feed upon the grass.

They say that God employed the *angel of the sea* to swallow up the waters at the creation, that the dry land might appear. He disobeyed, and God slew him; the name of the angel of the sea is *Rahab*. See *Baba bathra*, fol. 74, 2. It is plain from several places that the writer of the Apocalypse keeps these notions distinctly in view.

Verse 6. **Thou hast given them blood to drink]** They thirsted after blood and massacred the saints of God; and now they have got blood to drink! It is said that when *Tomyris*, queen of the Scythians, had vanquished Cyrus, she cut off his head and threw it into a vessel of blood, saying these words: *Satia te sanguine, quem sitisti, cujusque insatiabilis semper fuisti*; "Satisfy thyself with blood, for which thou hast thirsted, and for which thy desire has been insatiable." See *Justin. Hist.*, lib. i. c. 8. This figure of speech is called *sarcasm* in rhetoric.

"*Sarcasmus* with this biting taunt doth kill:  
*Cyrus, thy thirst was blood; now drink thy fill.*"

Verse 8. **Poured out his vial upon the sun]** Mr. Robert Fleming, more than *one hundred* years ago, in his *View of Scripture Prophecy*, supposed that the *sun* here meant the *French empire*, and conjectured that this vial would be poured out on that empire about the year 1794. And it is remarkable that in 1793 the French king was beheaded by the National Assembly; and great and unparalleled miseries fell upon the French nation, which nearly extinguished all their nobility, and brought about a war that lasted twenty-three years, and nearly ruined that country and all the nations of Europe.

Verse 9. **They repented not]** No moral national amendment has taken place in consequence of the above calamities in that unhappy country, nor indeed any of those nations engaged against her in that long and ruinous contest, which has now terminated, (1817,) without producing one political, moral, or religious advantage to herself or to Europe.

Verse 10. **The seat of the beast]** ἐπι τον θρονον του θηριου· *Upon the throne of the wild beast.* The regal family was smitten by the fourth vial; they did not repent: then the fifth angel pours out his vial on the throne of the wild beast, or antichristian idolatrous power.

**Was full of darkness]** Confusion, dismay, and distress.

Verse 11. **Blasphemed the God of heaven]** Neither did they repent; therefore other judgments must follow. Some think that the *sun* was *Vitellius*, the Roman emperor, and that his *throne* means *Rome*; and the darkening refers to the injuries she sustained in her political consequence by the civil wars which then took place, from which she never entirely recovered. Others apply it all to *papal Rome*, and in this respect make out a very clear case! Thus have men conjectured, but how much nearer are we to the truth?

Verse 12. **Upon the great river Euphrates]** Probably meaning the people in the vicinity of this river; though some think that the *Tiber* is intended.

**The water thereof was dried up]** The *people* discomfited, and all impediments removed.

**The kings of the east]** There seems to be an allusion here to the ruin of Babylon by Cyrus, predicted by the Prophet Jeremiah, #**Jer 50:1-51:64**. But what city or people is pointed out by this Babylon it is in vain to conjecture.

Verse 13. **Three unclean spirits]** Perhaps *false teachers*, called afterwards *spirits of devils*, which persuaded the kings of the earth by *lying miracles* to come forth to the place of general slaughter, #Re 16:14, 16,

Some good critics apply this to *Vespasian*, and his pretended *miracles*. See the account in Tacitus, lib. iv. c. 81.

Verse 15. **Behold, I come as a thief.]** Here is a sudden but timely warning to put every man on his guard, when this sudden and generally unexpected tribulation should take place.

**Keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked]** Here is a plain allusion to the office of him who was called the *prefect* or *overseer, of the mountain of the temple*. His custom was to go his rounds during the watches of the night; and if he found any of the Levites sleeping on his watch, he had authority to beat him with a stick, and burn his vestments. See *Middoth*, fol. 34, 1, and *Tamid*. fol. 27, 2; 28, 1. Such a person being found on his return home *naked*, it was at once known that he had been found *asleep at his post*, had been *beaten*, and his *clothes burnt*; thus his *shame* was seen—he was reproached for his infidelity and irreligion.

Verse 16. **Armageddon.]** The original of this word has been variously formed, and variously translated. It is **הַר מְגִדּוֹן** *har-megiddon*, "the mount of the assembly;" or **חֹרְמָה גְדֵהוֹן** *chormah gedehon*, "the destruction of their army;" or it is **הַר מְגִדּוֹ** *har-megiddo*, "Mount Megiddo," the valley of which was remarkable for two great slaughters: one of the Israelites, #2Ki 23:29, the other of the Canaanites, #Jud 4:16; 5:19. But *Mount Megiddo*, that is *Carmel*, is the place, according to some, where these armies should be collected.

But what is the *battle of Armageddon*? How ridiculous have been the conjectures of men relative to this point! Within the last twenty years this battle has been fought at various places, according to our purblind seers and self-inspired prophets! At one time it was *Austerlitz*, at another *Moscow*, at another *Leipsic*, and now *Waterloo*! And thus they have gone on, and will go on, confounding and being confounded.

Verse 17. **Poured out his vial into the air]** To signify that this plague was to be widely diffused, and perhaps to intimate that pestilences and various deaths would be the effect of this vial. But possibly *air* in this place may have some emblematical meaning.

**It is done.]** It is said, #Re 10:7, that in the days of the seventh trumpet *the mystery of God should be finished*; so here we find it *completed*. **γέγονε**. All's over! Fuimus Troes! Ilium fuit! Once there were Trojans, and they had a city; but now all are extinct.

Verse 18. **A great earthquake]** Most terrible commotions, both civil and religious. Or a convulsion, shaking, or revolution.

Verse 19. **The great city]** Some say Jerusalem, others *Rome pagan*, others *Rome papal*.

**The cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.]** Alluding to the mode of putting certain criminals to death, by making them drink a cup of poison. **See Clarke on "Heb 2:9".**

Verse 20. **Every island fled away]** Probably meaning the capture of seaport towns, and fortified places.

Verse 21. **A great hail-about the weight of a talent]** Has this any reference to *cannon balls* and *bombs*? It is very doubtful; we are all in the dark in these matters.

The words *ως ταλαντιαια*, *as a talent*, are used to express something *great, excessively oppressive*; as *νοσηματων ταλαντιαιων*, *terrible diseases*, not diseases of the *weight* of a *talent*. See *Rosenmuller*.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XVII.

*The judgment of the great whore, which sits on many waters, 1, 2. Her description, name, and conduct, 3-6. The angel explains the mystery of the woman, of the beast, &c., 7-18.*

This chapter is, on several accounts, very important, and particularly as it appears to explain several of the most remarkable symbols in the book. The same author who has written so largely on the twelfth and thirteenth chapters, has also obliged me with his interpretation of this chapter. Not pretending to explain these things myself, I insert this as the most elaborate and learned exposition I have yet seen, leaving my readers at perfect liberty to reject it, and adopt any other mode of interpretation which they please. God alone knows all the secrets of his own wisdom.

### NOTES ON CHAP. XVII., BY J. E. C.

Verse 1. **And there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither; I will show unto thee the judgment of the great whore that sitteth upon many waters]** That idolatrous worship is frequently represented in Scripture under the character of *a whore* or *whoredom*, is evident from numerous passages which it is unnecessary to quote. See #1Ch 5:25; #Eze 16:1-63; 23:1-49, &c. The woman mentioned here is called *a great whore*, to denote her excessive depravity, and the artful nature of her idolatry. She is also represented as *sitting upon many waters*, to show the vast extent of her influence. See Clarke on "Re 17:13".

Verse 2. **With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabitants of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.]** What an awful picture this is of the state of the religion of the world in subjection to this whore! Kings have committed spiritual fornication with her, and their subjects have drunk deep, dreadfully deep, into the doctrine of her abominable errors.

Verse 3. **So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness]** This wilderness into which the apostle was carried is the desolate state of the true Church of Christ, in one of the wings of the once mighty Roman empire. It was a truly awful sight, a terrible desert, a waste howling wilderness; for when he came hither he:—

**Saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads and ten horns.]** No doubt can now be entertained that this woman is the Latin Church, for she sits upon the beast with seven heads and ten horns, which has been already proved to be the Latin empire, because this empire alone contains the number 666. See Clarke on "Re 13:18". This is a representation of the Latin Church in her highest state of antichristian prosperity, for she SITS UPON the scarlet coloured beast, a striking emblem of her *complete domination* over the secular Latin empire. The state of the Latin Church from the commencement of the fourteenth century to the time of the Reformation may be considered that which corresponds to this prophetic description in the most literal and extensive sense of the words; for during this period she was at her highest pitch of worldly grandeur and temporal authority. The beast is *full of names of blasphemy*; and it is well known that the nations, in support of the Latin or Romish Church, have abounded in blasphemous

appellations, and have not blushed to attribute to themselves and to their Church the most sacred titles, not only blaspheming by the improper use of sacred names, but even by applying to its bishop those names which alone belong to God; for God hath expressly declared that he *will not give his glory to another, neither his praise to graven images.*

Verse 4. **And the woman was arrayed in purple and scarlet colour, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornication]** This strikingly represents the most pompous and costly manner in which the Latin Church has held forth to the nations the rites and ceremonies of its idolatrous and corrupt worship.

Verse 5. **And upon her forehead was a name written, Mystery, Babylon the Great, the Mother of Harlots, and Abominations of the Earth.]** This inscription being written upon her forehead is intended to show that she is not ashamed of her doctrines, but publicly professes and glories in them before the nations: she has indeed *a whore's forehead, she has refused to be ashamed.* The inscription upon her forehead is exactly the portraiture of the Latin Church. This Church is, as Bishop Newton well expresses it, A MYSTERY *of iniquity.* This woman is also called *Babylon the Great;* she is the exact antitype of the ancient Babylon in her idolatry and cruelty, but the ancient city called Babylon is only a drawing of her in miniature. This is indeed *Babylon THE GREAT.* "She affects the style and title of *our HOLY MOTHER, the CHURCH;* but she is, in truth, the *mother* of harlots and abominations of the earth."

Verse 6. **And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.]** How exactly the cruelties exercised by the Latin Church against all it has denominated heretics correspond with this description, the reader need not be informed.

Verse 7. **And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel! I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carried her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.]** The apostle was greatly astonished, as well he might be, at the woman's being *drunk with the blood of the saints,* when the beast which carried her abounded with sacred appellations, such as *holy, most holy, most Christian, sacred, most sacred.* The angel undertakes to explain to St. John the vision which had excited in him so great astonishment; and the explication is of such great importance, that, had it not been given, the mystery of the dragon and the beast could never have been satisfactorily explained in all its particulars. The angel begins with saying:—

Verse 8. **The beast that thou sawest was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition]** The beast is the Latin kingdom; (*ἡ λατινὴ βασιλεία;*) consequently the beast *was,* that is, was in existence previously to the time of St. John; (for Latinus was the first king of the Latins, and Numitor the last;) *is not* now, because the Latin nation has ceased long ago to be an independent power, and is now under the dominion of the Romans; but *shall ascend out of the bottomless pit,* that is, the Latin kingdom, the antichristian power, or that which ascendeth out of the abyss or bottomless pit, is yet in futurity. But it is added:—

**And they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, whose names there not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world, when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.]** By the *earth* is here meant *the Latin world*; therefore the meaning is, that all who dwell in the Latin world shall adhere to the idolatrous and blasphemous religion of the Latin Church, which is supported by the Latin empire, except those who abide by the *sacred Scriptures*, receiving them as the only rule of faith and practice. These believe in the true Sacrifice, and keep themselves unspotted from the corruption that is in the world. But the inhabitants of the Latin world, under the dominion of the Romish religion, shall wonder when they behold the beast, or Latin empire; that is, as Lord Napier remarks, "shall have in great admiration, reverence, and estimation, this great monarchie." They shall wonder at it, by considering it the most sacred empire in the world, that in which God peculiarly delights; but those that so wonder have not their names written in the book of life, but are such as prefer councils to Divine revelation, and take their religion from *missals, rituals, and legends*, instead of the sacred oracles: hence they are corrupt and idolatrous, and *no idolater hath inheritance in the kingdom of God*. In the preceding part of the verse the beast is considered in *three* states, as that which *was, and is not, and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit*; here a fourth is introduced, *and yet is*. This is added to show that, though the Latins were subjugated by the Romans, nevertheless the Romans themselves were Latins; for Romulus the founder of their monarchy, was a Latin; consequently that denominated in St. John's days *the Roman empire* was, in reality, *the Latin kingdom*; for the very language of the empire was the Latin, and the Greek writers, who lived in the time of the Roman empire, expressly tell us that those formerly called Latins are now named Romans. The meaning of the whole verse is therefore as follows: The corrupt part of mankind shall have in great admiration the Latin empire yet in futurity, which has already been, but is now extinct, the Romans having conquered it; and yet is still in being; for, though the Latin nation has been subjugated, its conquerors are themselves Latins. But it may be objected against the interpretation here given, that these phrases are spoken of the beast upon which the apostle saw the woman, or Latin Church, sit; for the angel says, *The beast that THOU SAWEST was, and is not, &c.*; what reference, therefore, can the Latin empire, which supports the Latin Church, have to the Latin kingdom which subsisted before St. John's time, or to the Roman empire which might properly be so denominated! This objection has very great weight at first sight, and cannot be answered satisfactorily till the angel's explanation of the heads and horns of the beast have been examined; therefore it is added:—

Verse 9. **Here is the mind which hath wisdom.]** It was said before, **#Re 13:18, Here is wisdom.** *Let him that hath A MIND, or understanding, (νοουν,) count the number of the beast.* Wisdom, therefore, here means a correct view of what is intended by the number 666; consequently the parallel passage, *Here is THE MIND which hath WISDOM*, is a declaration that the number of the beast must first be understood, before the angel's interpretation of the vision concerning the whore and the beast can admit of a satisfactory explanation.

**The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.]** This verse has been almost universally considered to allude to the seven hills upon which Rome originally stood. But it has been objected that modern Rome is not thus situated, and that, consequently, pagan Rome is intended in the prophecy. This is certainly a very formidable objection against the generally received opinion among Protestants, that papal Rome is the city meant by the woman sitting upon seven mountains. It has been already shown that *the woman* here mentioned is an emblem of *the Latin*

*Church* in her highest state of antichristian prosperity; and therefore the city of Rome, seated upon seven mountains, is not at all designed in the prophecy. In order to understand this scripture aright, the word *mountains* must be taken in a figurative and not a literal sense, as in **#Re 6:14; 16:20**. See also **#Isa 2:2, 14; #Jer 51:25; #Da 2:35, &c.**; in which it is unequivocally the emblem of *great and mighty power*. The mountains upon which the woman sitteth must be, therefore, *seven great powers*; and as the mountains are *heads* of the beast, they must be the *seven GREATEST eminences* of the Latin world. As no other power was acknowledged at the head of the Latin empire but that of Germany, how can it be said that the beast has *seven heads*? This question can only be solved by the feudal constitution of the late Germanic league, the history of which is briefly as follows: At first kings alone granted fiefs. They granted them to laymen only, and to such only who were free; and the vassal had no power to alienate them. Every freeman, and particularly the feudal tenants, were subject to the obligation of military duty, and appointed to guard their sovereign's life, member, mind, and right honour. Soon after, or perhaps a little before, the extinction of the Carlovingian dynasty in France, by the accession of the Capetian line, and in Germany by the accession of the house of Saxony, fiefs, which had been entirely at the disposal of the sovereign, became hereditary. Even the offices of duke, count, margrave, &c., were transmitted in the course of hereditary descent; and not long after, the right of primogeniture was universally established. The crown vassals usurped the sovereign property of the land, with civil and military authority over the inhabitants. The possession thus usurped they granted out to their immediate tenants; and these granted them over to others in like manner. Thus the principal vassals gradually obtained every royal prerogative; they promulgated laws, exercised the power of life and death, coined money, fixed the standard of weights and measures, granted safeguards, entertained a military force, and imposed taxes, with every right supposed to be annexed to royalty. In their titles they styled themselves dukes, &c., *Dei gratia*, by the grace of God; a prerogative avowedly confined to sovereign power. It was even admitted that, if the king refused to do the lord justice, the lord might make war upon him. The tenants, in their turn, made themselves independent of their vassal lords, by which was introduced an ulterior state of vassalage. The king was called *the sovereign lord*, his immediate vassal was called *the suzerain*, and the tenants holding of him were called the *arrere* vassals. See *Butler's Revolutions of the Germanic Empire*, pp. 54-66. Thus the power of the emperors of Germany, which was so very considerable in the ninth century, was gradually diminished by the means of the feudal system; and during the anarchy of the long interregnum, occasioned by the interference of the popes in the election of the emperors, (from 1256 to 1273,) the imperial power was reduced almost to nothing. Rudolph of Hapsburg, the founder of the house of Austria, was at length elected emperor, because his territories and influence were so inconsiderable as to excite no jealousy in the German princes, who were willing to preserve the forms of constitution, the power and vigour of which they had destroyed. See *Robertson's* Introduction to his History of Charles V. Before the dissolution of the empire in 1806, Germany "presented a complex association of principalities more or less powerful, and more or less connected with a nominal sovereignty in the emperor, as its supreme feudal chief." "There were about three hundred princes of the empire, each sovereign in his own country, who might enter into alliances, and pursue by all political measures his own private interest, as other sovereigns do; for if even an imperial war were declared he might remain neuter, if the safety of the empire were not at stake. Here then was an empire of a construction, without exception, the most singular and intricate that ever appeared in the world; for the emperor was only the chief of the Germanic confederation." Germany was, therefore, speaking in the figurative language of Scripture, a country abounding in *hills*, or containing an immense number of distinct principalities.

But the different German states (as has been before observed) did not each possess an equal share of power and influence; some were more eminent than others. Among them were also a few which might, with the greatest propriety, be denominated *mountains*, or states possessing a very high degree of political importance. But the seven mountains on which the woman sits must have their elevations above all the other eminences in the whole Latin world; consequently, they can be no other than the SEVEN ELECTORATES of the German empire. These were, indeed, mountains of vast eminence; for in their sovereigns was vested the sole power of electing the head of the empire. But this was not all; for besides the power of electing an emperor, the electors had a right to capitulate with the new head of the empire, to dictate the conditions on which he was to reign, and to depose him if he broke those conditions. They actually deposed Adolphus of Nassau in 1298, and Wenceslaus in 1400. They were sovereign and independent princes in their respective dominions, had the *privilegium de non appellando illimitatum*, that of making war, coining, and exercising every act of sovereignty; they formed a separate college in the diet of the empire, and had among themselves a particular covenant or league called *Kur verein*; they had precedence of all the other princes of the empire, and even ranked with kings. The heads of the beast understood in this way, is one of the finest emblems of the German constitution which can possibly be conceived; for as the Roman empire of Germany had the precedence of all the other monarchies of which the Latin empire was composed, *the seven mountains* very fitly denote the *seven* PRINCIPAL powers of what has been named the holy Roman empire. And also, as each electorate, by virtue of its union with the Germanic body, was more powerful than any other Roman Catholic state of Europe not so united; so was each electorate, in the most proper sense of the word, one of the highest elevations in the Latin world. The time when the seven electorates of the empire were first instituted is very uncertain. The most probable opinion appears to be that which places their origin some time in the *thirteenth* century. The uncertainty, however, in this respect, does not in the least weaken the evidence of the mountains being the seven electorates, but rather confirms it; for, as we have already observed, the representation of the woman sitting upon the beast is a figure of the Latin Church in the period of her greatest authority, spiritual and temporal; this we know did not take place before the commencement of the *fourteenth* century, a period subsequent to the institution of the seven electorates. Therefore the woman sits upon the seven mountains, or the German empire in its elective aristocratical state; she is said to sit upon them, to denote that she has the whole German empire under her direction and authority, and also that it is her chief support and strength. Supported by Germany, she is under no apprehension of being successfully opposed by any other power: she sits upon the seven mountains, therefore she is higher than the seven highest eminences of the Latin world; she must therefore have the secular Latin empire under her complete subjection. But this state of eminence did not continue above two or three centuries; the visible declension of the papal power in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, occasioned partly by the removal of the papal see from Rome to Avignon, and more particularly by the great schism from 1377 to 1417, though considered one of the remote causes of the Reformation, was at first the means of merely transferring the supreme power from the pope to a general council, while the dominion of the Latin Church remained much the same. At the council of Constance, March 30, 1415, it was decreed "that the synod being lawfully assembled in the name of the Holy Ghost, which constituted the general council, and represented the whole Catholic Church militant, had its power immediately from Jesus Christ; and that every person, of whatsoever state or dignity, EVEN THE POPE HIMSELF is obliged to obey it in what concerns the faith, the extirpation of schism, and the general reformation of the Church in its head and members." The council of Basil of 1432 decreed "that every one of whatever dignity or condition, NOT EXCEPTING THE POPE HIMSELF, who

shall refuse to obey the ordinances and decrees of this general council, or any other, shall be put under penance, and punished. It is also declared that the pope has no power to dissolve the general council without the consent and decree of the assembly." See the third tome of *Du Pin's Ecclesiastical History*. But what gave the death blow to the temporal sovereignty of the Latin Church was the light of the glorious reformation which first broke out in Germany in 1517, and in a very few years gained its way, not only over several of the great principalities in Germany, but was also made the established religion of other popish countries. Consequently, in the sixteenth century, the woman no longer sat upon the seven mountains, the electorates not only having refused to be ruled by her, but some of them having also despised and abandoned her doctrines. The changes, therefore, which were made in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, in the number of the electorates, will not affect in the least the interpretation of the seven mountains already given. The seven electors were the archbishops of *Mentz, Cologne, and Triers*, the *count palatine of the Rhine*, the *duke of Saxony*, the *marquis of Brandenburg*, and the *king of Bohemia*. But the heads of the beast have a double signification; for the angel says:—

Verse 10. **And there are seven kings]** *καὶ βασιλεῖς ἑπτὰ εἰσὶν*. *They are also seven kings*. Before, it was said, *they are seven mountains*; here, *they are also seven kings*, which is a demonstration that *kingdoms* are not here meant by *mountains*: and this is a farther argument that the seven electorates are represented by seven mountains, for though the sovereigns of these states ranked with kings, they were not kings: that is to say, they were not absolute and sole lords of the territories they possessed, independently of the emperor, for their states formed a part of the Germanic body. But the seven heads of the beast are also seven kings, that is to say, the Latin empire has had seven supreme forms of government; for *king* is used in the prophetic writings for any supreme governor of a state or people, as is evident from **#De 33:5**, where Moses is called a king. Of these seven kings, or supreme forms of Latin government, the angel informs St. John:—

**Five are fallen, and one is]** It is well known that the first form of Latin government was that of *kings*, which continued after the death of Latinus 428 years, till the building of Rome, B.C. 753. After Numitor's decease the Albans or Latins instituted the form of a republic, and were governed by *dictators*. We have only the names of two, viz., Cluilius and Metius Fufetius or Suffetius; but as the *dictatorship* continued at least eighty-eight years, there might have been others, though their names and actions are unknown. In the year before Christ 665 *Alba*, the metropolis of the Latin nation, was destroyed by Tullus Hostilius, the third king of the Romans, and the inhabitants carried to Rome. This put an end to the monarchical republic of the Latins; and the Latins elected two annual magistrates, whom Licinius calls *dictators*, but who are called *prætors* by other writers. This form of government continued till the time of P. Decius Mus, the Roman consul; for Festus, in his fourteenth book, informs us "that the Albans enjoyed prosperity till the time of King Tullus; but that, Alba being then destroyed, the consuls, till the time of P. Decius Mus, held a consultation with the Latins at the head of Ferentina, and the empire was governed by the council of both nations." The Latin nation was entirely subjugated by the Romans B.C. 336, which put an end to the government by *prætors*, after it had continued upwards of three hundred years. The Latins from this time ceased to be a nation, as it respects the name; therefore the three forms of government already mentioned were those which the Latins had during that period which the angel speaks of, when he says, *The beast which thou sawest WAS*. But as five heads, or forms of government, had fallen before St. John's time, it is evident that the two other forms of government which had fallen must be among those of

the Romans; first, because though the Latin nation so called, was deprived of all authority by the Romans, yet the Latin power continued to exist, for the very conquerors of the Latin nation were *Latins*; and, consequently the Latins, though a conquered people, continued to have a *LATIN government*. Secondly, the angel expressly says, when speaking to St. John, that *one* is, that is, the sixth head, or Latin form of government, was then in existence; which could be no other than the *imperial power*, this being the only independent form of Latin government in the apostolic age. It therefore necessarily follows, that the Roman forms of government by which Latium was ruled must be the remaining heads of the beast. Before the subjugation of the Latins by the Romans four of the Roman or draconic forms of government had fallen, the *regal power*, the *dictatorship*, the *decemvirate*, and the *consular power* of the military tribunes, the last of which was abolished about 366 years before the commencement of the Christian era; none of these, therefore, ruled over the *WHOLE Latin nation*. But as the Latins were finally subdued about 336 B.C., the *consular government* of the Romans, which was then the supreme power in the state, must be the *fourth* head of the beast. This form of government continued, with very little interruption, till the rising up of the *triumvirate*, the fifth head of the beast, B.C. 43. The *dictatorship* of Sylla and Julius Cæsar could not be considered a new head of the beast, as the Latins had already been ruled by it in the persons of Cluilius and Fufetius. The *sixth* head of the beast, or that which existed in the time of St. John, was consequently, as we have already proved, the *imperial power* of the heathen Cæsars, or the seventh draconic form of government.

**And the other is not yet come]** Bishop Newton considers *the Roman dutchy*, under the eastern emperor's lieutenant, the exarch of Ravenna, the *seventh* head of the beast. But this cannot be the form of government signified by the seventh head, for a *head of the beast* as we have already shown, *is a supreme, independent form of Latin government*; consequently the Roman dutchy cannot be the seventh head, as it was dependent upon the exarchate of Ravenna; and the exarchate cannot be the head, as it was itself in subjection to the Greek empire. The Rev. G. Faber has ascertained the truth exactly in denominating the *Carlovingian patriciate* the seventh head of the beast. That this was a supreme, independent form of government, is evident from history. Gibbon, in speaking of the patriciate, observes that "the decrees of the senate and people successively invested Charles Martel and his posterity with the honours of *patrician of Rome*. The leaders of a powerful nation would have disdained a servile title and subordinate office; but the reign of the Greek emperors was suspended, and in the vacancy of the empire they derived a more glorious commission from the pope and the republic. The Roman ambassadors presented these patricians with the keys of the shrine of St. Peter as a pledge and symbol of sovereignty, and with a holy banner, which it was their right and duty to unfurl in defense of the Church and city. In the time of Charles Martel and of Pepin, the interposition of the Lombard kingdom covered the freedom, while it threatened the safety of Rome; and the patriciate represented only the title, the service, the alliance, of these distant protectors. The power and policy of Charlemagne annihilated an enemy, and imposed a master. In his first visit to the capital he was received with all the honours which had formerly been paid to the exarch, the representative of the emperor; and these honours obtained some new decorations from the joy and gratitude of Pope Adrian I. In the portico Adrian expected him at the head of his clergy; they embraced as friends and equals; but in their march to the altar, the king, or patrician, assumed the right hand of the pope. Nor was the Frank content with these vain and empty demonstrations of respect. In the twenty-six years that elapsed between the conquest of Lombardy and his imperial coronation, Rome, which had been delivered by the sword, was subject, as his own, to the sceptre

of Charlemagne. The people swore allegiance to his person and family, in his name money was coined and justice was administered, and the election of the popes was examined and confirmed by his authority. Except an original and self-inherent claim of sovereignty, there was not any prerogative remaining which the title of *emperor* could add to the *patrician of Rome*." The seven heads of the beast are therefore the following: The *regal power*, the *dictatorship*, the power of the *prætors*, the *consulate*, the *triumvirate*, the *imperial power*, and the *patriciate*.

**And when he cometh, he must continue a short space.]** The seventh form of government was only to remain a short time, which was actually the case; for from its first rise to independent power to its utter extinction, there passed only about forty-five years, a short time in comparison to the duration of several of the preceding forms of government; for the primitive regal government continued at least four hundred and twenty-eight years, the dictatorship was in power about eighty-eight years, the power of the prætors was in being for upwards of three hundred years, the consulate lasted about two hundred and eighty years, and the imperial power continued upwards of five hundred years.

Verse 11. **And the beast, that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.]** That is to say, the Latin kingdom that has already been, but is now no longer nominally in existence, shall immediately follow the dissolution of the seventh form of Latin government; and this dominion is called *ογδοος*, *an eighth*, because it succeeds to the seventh. Yet it is not an eighth *head* of the beast, because the beast has only *seven* heads; for to constitute a new head of the beast the form of government must not only differ in *nature*, but also in *name*. This head of the beast is, therefore, *εκ των επτα*, *ONE of the seven*. Consequently the form of government represented by this head is the restoration of one of the preceding seven. The restored head can be therefore no other than the regal state of the Latins, or in other words *the Latin kingdom*, (*ἡ λατινη βασιλεια*.) which followed the patriciate or seventh head of Latin government. But the beast in his eighth state, or under his first head restored, *goeth into perdition*. No other form of Latin government shall succeed; but the beast in his last or antichristian condition shall be taken together with the false prophet that wrought miracles in his sight, "and cast alive into a lake of fire burning with brimstone."

It is observable that the eighth Latin power is called by the angel *the beast*, and also *one* of his heads. This apparent discordance arises from the double signification of the heads, for if we take the beast upon which the woman sits to be merely a representation of that secular power which supports the Latin Church, then the seven heads will represent the seven electorates of the Germanic empire; but if by the beast we understand the general Latin empire from first to last, then what is, according to the angel's first interpretation of the heads, called *the beast*, is in this case only *one* of his heads. **See Clarke on "Re 17:18".**

Verse 12. **And the ten horns which thou sawest are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.]** The meaning of *horns* has already been defined when speaking of those of the dragon. The meaning is therefore as follows: Though the Latin empire be now in existence, the ten horns refer to ten Latin kingdoms yet in futurity, and consequently they have received no dominion AS YET; for that part of the Latin domination now in power is the *sixth* head, or imperial government of the heathen Cæsars. But the ten states of the Latins receive dominion as monarchies *μιαν ωραν*, *one time*, (as it may be properly

translated,) i.e., at the same time with the beast, or that which ascendeth out of the bottomless pit; consequently, the Latin empire here intended is the one which was in futurity in the apostolic age.

Verse 13. **These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.]** Therefore the ten horns must constitute the principal strength of the Latin empire; that is to say, this empire is to be composed of the dominions of ten monarchs independent of each other in every other sense except in their implicit obedience to the Latin Church. The *beast* in this and the preceding verse is distinguished from its *horns*, as the WHOLE Latin empire is distinguished in history from its constituent powers. See Clarke on "Re 17:16".

Verse 14. **These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them; for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings: and they that are with him are called, and chosen, and, faithful.]** The ten powers of the beast must compose the secular kingdom of antichrist, for they make war *with the Lamb*, who is Christ Jesus. This is perfectly true of all popish states, for they have constantly opposed, as long as they have had any secular power, the progress of pure Christianity. They make war with the Lamb by persecuting his followers; *but the Lamb shall overcome them, for he is the Lord of lords, and King of kings*-all lords have their authority from him, and no king can reign without him; therefore the ten Latin kings are God's ministers to execute his vengeance upon the idolatrous nations. But when these antichristian monarchies have executed the Divine purpose, those that are with the Lamb-the called, the chosen, and the faithful, those who have kept THE TRUTH in the love of it, shall prevail against all their adversaries, because their battles are fought by the Lamb, who is their God and Deliverer. See #Re 19:19, 20.

Verse 15. **And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.]** "So many words," Bishop Newton observes, "in the plural number, fitly denote the great extensiveness of her power and jurisdiction. She herself glories in the title of the *Catholic Church*, and exults in the number of her votaries as a certain proof of the true religion. Cardinal Bellarmine's first note of the true Church is, *the very name of the Catholic Church*; and his fourth note is, *amplitude, or multitude, and variety of believers*; for the truly Catholic Church, says he, ought not only to comprehend all ages, but likewise all *places*, all *nations*, all *kinds* of men."

Verse 16. **And the ten horns which thou sowest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.]** Here is a clue to lead us to the right interpretation of *the horns* of the beast. It is said the TEN *horns* shall *hate* the whore; by which is evidently meant, when connected with what follows, that *the whole* of the ten kingdoms in the interest of the Latin Church shall finally despise her doctrines, be reformed from popery, assist in depriving her of all influence and in exposing her follies, and in the end consign her to utter destruction. From this it follows that no Roman Catholic power which did not exist so late as the Reformation can be numbered among the horns of the beast; the horns must, therefore, be found among the great states of Europe at the commencement of the Reformation. These were exactly ten, viz., *France, Spain, England, Scotland, The Empire, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Portugal*. In these were comprehended most of the minor states not styled monarchies, and which, from their first rise to the period of the Reformation, had been subdued by one or more of the ten grand Roman Catholic powers already named. Consequently, these ten

constituted *the power and strength of the beast*; and each minor state is considered a part of that monarchy under the authority of which it was finally reduced previously to the Reformation.

But it may be asked, How could *the empire*, which was the revived *head* of the beast, have been at the same time one of its *horns*? The answer is as follows: *Horns of an animal*, in the language of prophecy, represent the powers of which that empire or kingdom symbolized by the animal is composed. Thus the angel, in his interpretation of Daniel's vision of the ram and he-goat expressly informs us that "the ram with two horns are the kings of Media and Persia." One of the horns of the ram, therefore, represented the kingdom of Media, and the other the kingdom of Persia; and their union in one animal denoted the united kingdom of Media and Persia, viz., the Medo-Persian empire. In like manner the beast with ten horns denotes that the empire represented by the beast is composed of ten distinct powers, and the ten horns being united in *one beast* very appropriately show that the monarchies symbolized by these horns are united together to form *one empire*; for we have already shown, in **Clarke's notes on "Re 13:1"**, that *a beast* is the symbol of *an empire*. Therefore, as the *horns* of an animal, agreeably to the angel's explanation, (and we can have no higher authority,) represent *all* the powers of which that domination symbolized by the animal is composed, the Roman empire of Germany, as one of those monarchies which gave their power and strength to the Latin empire, must consequently have been *A HORN of the beast*. But the Germanic empire was not only *a LATIN power*, but at the same time was acknowledged by all Europe to have *precedency* of all the others. Therefore, as it is not possible to express these *two* circumstances by *one* symbol, it necessarily follows, from the nature of symbolical language, that what has been named the holy Roman empire must have a *double* representation. Hence the empire, as *one* of the powers of the Latin monarchy, was *a horn* of the beast, and in having *precedency* of all the others was its revived *head*. See a similar explanation of the tail of the dragon in **Clarke's notes on "Re 12:4"**.

Verse 17. **For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.]** Let no one imagine that these ten Latin kingdoms, because they support an idolatrous worship, have been raised up merely by the power of man or the chances of war. No kingdom or state can exist without the will of God; therefore let the inhabitants of the world tremble when they see a wicked monarchy rise to power, and let them consider that it is raised up by the Lord to execute his vengeance upon the idolatries and profligacies of the times. It is said of the kings in communion with the Church of Rome, that *God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will*. How is this Divine will accomplished? In the most awful and afflictive manner! In causing ten Latin kings to unite their dominions into one mighty empire for the defence of the Latin Church. Here is a dreadful dispensation of Jehovah; but it is such as the nations have most righteously deserved, because when they had *the truth* they lived not according to its most holy requisitions, but loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. Therefore hath "the Lord sent them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they might all be damned who believe not the truth, but have pleasure in unrighteousness." But this deplorable state of the world is not perpetual, it can only continue till every word of God is fulfilled upon his enemies; and when this time arrives, (which will be that of Christ's second advent,) then shall the Son of God slay that wicked "with the spirit of his mouth, and shall consume him with the brightness of HIS COMING."

Verse 18. **And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.**] It has already been shown that the woman sitting upon the seven-headed beast is a representation of the Latin Church; here we have the greatest assurance that it is so, because the woman is called *a city*, which is a much plainer emblem of *a Church*, as the word is used unequivocally in this sense in so many parts of Scripture that we cannot well mistake its meaning. See **#Re 3:12; 11:2; 21:10; 22:19**; and also **#Ps 46:4; 87:3; #Heb 12:22**, &c. The *woman* therefore must be *the Latin Church*; and as the apostle saw her *sitting* upon the beast, this must signify that *η εχουσα βασιλειαν*, *she hath A KINGDOM over the kings of the earth*, i.e., over the kings of the Latin world, for that this is the meaning of *earth* has been shown before in numerous instances. That KINGDOM which the woman has over the kings of the Latin world, or secular Latin empire, or in other words THE KINGDOM of the Latin Church, is the numbered Latin kingdom or Romish hierarchy. See Clarke on "**Re 13:18**". The woman is also called *a GREAT city*, to denote the very great extent of her jurisdiction; for she has comprehended within her walls the subjects of the mighty dominations of France, Spain, England, Scotland, The Empire, Sweden, Denmark, Poland, Hungary, and Portugal. What an extensive city was this! Surely such as to justify the prophetic denomination, *that GREAT city*.

HAVING now gone through the whole of the angel's interpretation of St. John's vision of a whore sitting upon the seven-headed and ten-horned beast, it will be essentially necessary to examine a little more attentively the eighth verse of this chapter. {**#Re 17:8**} It has already been shown that the phrases, *was, is not, shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and yet is*, refer to the Latin kingdom which existed before the building of Rome, to the Roman empire in the time of St. John, and to the Latin empire which was in futurity in the apostolic age. But as the words *was, is not, &c.*, are spoken of the beast upon which the apostle saw the woman, or Latin Church, sit; how can it be said of *this beast* that it had an existence before the date of the Apocalypse, when the woman whom it carried was not in being till long after this period? And what connection has the Latin empire of the middle ages with that which derived its name from Latinus, king of the Aborigines, and was subjugated by the ancient Romans; or even with that which existed in the time of the apostle? The answer is as follows: St. John saw the beast upon which the woman sat with *all* his seven heads and ten horns. Consequently, as the angel expressly says that *five* of these seven heads had already fallen in the time of the vision, it therefore necessarily follows that the apostle must have seen that part of the Latin empire represented by the seven-headed beast which had already been under the emblem of *five* heads. Therefore the woman sat upon the *beast that WAS*. But it is plain from the angel's interpretation that the whole of the seven heads fell, before the beast upon which the woman sat arose; and yet the woman is represented as sitting upon the seven-headed beast to denote, as we have before observed, that it is the Latin kingdom in its last estate, or under one of its heads restored, which is the secular kingdom of antichrist. The beast is also said not to have any existence in the time of the vision; from which it is evident that the monarchy of the *Latins*, and not that of the *Romans*, is here intended; because the latter *was* in the time of the vision. Again, the beast which St. John saw had not ascended out of the bottomless pit in his time; consequently the whole seven heads and ten horns were in futurity, for all these heads and horns rose up out of the abyss *at the same time* with the beast. How is this apparent contradiction reconciled? In the most plain and satisfactory manner, by means of the angel's double interpretation of the heads; for if the seven heads be taken in the sense of *seven mountains*, (*head* in the Scripture style being a symbol of *precedency* as well as *supremacy*.) then the beast with all its heads and horns was altogether in futurity in the apostle's

time, for the seven heads are the seven electorates of the German empire, and the ten horns the ten monarchies in the interest of the Latin Church. Finally, the beast is said to exist in the time of the vision; therefore the Roman empire, which governed the world, must be here alluded to; and consequently the phrase *and yet is* is a proof that, as the beast is the Latin kingdom, and *this beast* is said to have an existence in the time of the apostle, the empire of the Cæsars, though generally known by the name of *the Roman*, is in a very proper sense *the Latin kingdom*, as the Latin was the language which prevailed in it. Hence the seven-headed and ten-horned beast is at once the representation of the ancient Latin power, of the Roman empire which succeeded it, and of the Latin empire which supports the Latin Church. Here is then the connection of the ancient Latin and Roman powers with that upon which the woman sits. She sits upon the beast *that was and is not*, because three of his heads represent the three forms of government which the ancient Latins had before they were subjugated by the Romans, viz., the regal power, the dictatorship, and the power of the prætors. She sits upon the beast which SHALL ASCEND *out of the bottomless pit*, because all his seven heads, taken in the sense of *mountains* were in futurity in the apostolic age. She sits upon the beast that *yet is*, because four of his heads represent four forms of government of the Roman or Latin empire now in existence, viz., the consulate, the triumvirate, the imperial power, and the patriciate. It is hence evident that *the beast*, in the largest acceptation of this term, is a symbol of the *Latin* power in general, from its commencement in Latinus to the end of time; his seven heads denoting seven kings or supreme forms of Latin government, during this period, *king* or *kingdom*, as we have already observed, being a general term in the prophetic writings for any kind of supreme governor or government, no matter by what particular name such may have been designated among men. Thus the Latin power from the time of Latinus to the death of Numitor was the beast under the dominion of his *first* head; from the death of Numitor to the destruction of Alba it was the beast under the dominion of his *second* head; from the destruction of Alba to the final subjugation of the Latins by the Romans the beast under the dominion of his *third* head. And as the four Roman forms of government which were subsequent to the final conquest of the Latins, were also *Latin* dominations, the Latin power under these forms of government was the beast under the dominion of his *fourth*, *fifth*, *sixth* and *seventh* heads. The beast of the bottomless pit, which followed the fall of all the heads of the sea beast or general Latin empire, is, according to the angel's interpretation, *ογδοος, (βασιλευς,)* *an EIGHTH king*, i.e., an eighth species of Latin power, or, in other words, a supreme form of Latin government essentially differing from all the foregoing; yet, as it is *nominally* the same with one of the preceding seven, it is not accounted an eighth *head* of the beast. The first beast of **#Re 13:1** is a description of the *eighth* or *last* condition of the *GENERAL Latin empire*, and is said to arise *εκ της θαλασσης*, *out of the sea*, because the heads are there taken in a double sense, *sea* being a general term to express the origin of every great empire which is raised up by the sword; but when (as in **#Re 17:11**) one of the heads of the sea beast (viz., that secular power which is still in being, and has supported the Latin Church for more than a thousand years) is peculiarly styled *The Beast*, the Holy Ghost, speaking of *this* secular Latin empire exclusively, declares it to be *εκ της αβυσσου*, *FROM the bottomless pit*.

**JOHN EDWARD CLARKE.**

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XVIII.

*A luminous angel proclaims the fall of Babylon, and the cause of it, 1-3. The followers of God are exhorted to come out of it, in order to escape her approaching punishment, 4-8. The kings of the earth lament her fate, 9, 10. The merchants also bewail her, 11. The articles in which she trafficked enumerated, 12-16. She is bewailed also by shipmasters, sailors, &c., 17-19. All heaven rejoices over her fall, and her final desolation is foretold, 20-24.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XVIII.

Verse 1. **The earth was lightened with his glory.**] This may refer to some extraordinary messenger of the everlasting Gospel, who, by his *preaching* and *writings*, should be the means of diffusing the light of truth and true religion over the earth.

Verse 2. **Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen**] This is a quotation from **#Isa 21:9**: *And he said, Babylon is fallen, is fallen; and all the graven images of her gods he hath broken unto the ground.* This is applied by some to Rome *pagan*; by others to Rome *papal*; and by others to *Jerusalem*.

**Is become the hold of every foul spirit**] See the parallel passages in the margin. The figures here point out the most *complete destruction*. A city utterly sacked and ruined, never to be rebuilt.

Verse 3. **The wine of the wrath**] The punishment due to her transgressions, because they have partaken with her in her sins. **See Clarke's note on "Re 14:8"**.

Verse 4. **Come out of her, my people**] These words appear to be taken from **#Isa 48:20**; **#Jer 1:8**; **51:6, 45**. The poet Mantuanus expresses this thought well:—

*Vivere qui sancte cupitis, discelite; Romæ  
Omnia quum liceant, non licet esse bonum.*

"Ye who desire to live a godly life, depart; for, although all things are lawful at Rome, yet to be *godly* is unlawful.

Verse 5. **Her sins have reached unto heaven**] They are become so great and enormous that the long-suffering of God must give place to his justice.

Verse 6. **Reward her even as she rewarded you**] These words are a prophetic declaration of what shall take place: God will deal with her as she dealt with others.

Verse 7. **How much she hath glorified herself**] By every act of transgression and sinful pampering of the body she has been preparing for herself a suitable and proportionate punishment.

Verse 8. **Therefore shall her plagues come]** *Death*, by the sword of her adversaries; *mourning* on account of the slaughter; and *famine*, the fruits of the field being destroyed by the hostile bands.

**Utterly burned with fire]** Of what *city* is this spoken? Rome *pagan* has never been thus treated; Alaric and Totilas burnt only some parts with fire. Rome *papal* has not been thus treated; but this is true of Jerusalem, and yet Jerusalem is not generally thought to be intended.

Verse 9. **The kings of the earth]** Those who copied her superstitions and adopted her idolatries.

Verse 10. **Standing afar off]** Beholding her desolations with wonder and astonishment, utterly unable to afford her any kind of assistance.

Verse 11. **The merchants of the earth]** These are represented as mourning over her, because their traffic with her was at an end.

*Bishop Bale*, who applies all these things to the Church of Rome, thus paraphrases the principal passages:—

"The mighty *kinges* and potentates *of the earth*, not having afore their eyes the love and feare of God, have committed with this whore moste vile filthynesse; abusing themselves by many straunge or uncommaunded worshippings, and bynding themselves by othe to observe hyr lawes and customs. At the examples, doctrines, counsels, and perswasions of hyr holy whoremongers, have they broken the covenants of peace; battailed, oppressed, spoyled, ravished, tyrannously murdered innocents; yea, for vain foolish causes, and more vaine titles, as though there were neither heaven nor hel, God nor accounts to be made.

"And her mitred *marchantes*, hyr shorne souldiers, hir massemongers, hyr soulesellers, and hir martbrokers, waxed very riche, through the sale of hir oyles, creme, salt, water, bread, orders, hallowings, houselinges, ashes, palme, waxe, frankensence, beades, crosses, candlesticks, copes, belles, organes, images, reliques, and other pedlary wares.

"They have gotten in unto them pallaces and princely houses, fat pastors and parkes, meadowes and warrens, rivers and pondes, villages and towns, cities and whole provinces, with the divill and all els; besides other men's wives, daughters, mayde servantes, and children, whom they have abominably corrupted. What profite they have drawn unto them also by the sale of great bishopricks, prelacies, promociions, benefices, *tot quoties*, pardons, pilgrymages, confessions, and purgatory; besides the yearely rents of cathedrall churches, abbayes, colleges, covents, for sutes and suche other.—Specially shal they be sore discontented with the matter, which have with hir committed the whordom of the spyrite, by many externe worshipings of drye waffer cakes, oyles, roods, relyques, ladyes, images, sculles, bones, chippes, olde ragges, showes, (*shoes*,) bootes, spurres, hattes, breches, whodes, night capes, and such like.

"And they that have *lived wantonly* with hir, (**#Re 18:9**,) in following hir idle observacions, in mattenses, houres, and masses; in sensinges, halowings, and font halowing; in going processions

with canapye, crosse, and pyx; with banneres, stremers, and torche light; with such other gaudes to folish for children.

"*Alas, alas, that great cyty (#Re 18:10) that beautiful Babilon, that blessed holy mother the Church, which sometime had so many popes pardons, so many bishoppes blessinges, so many holye stations, so many cleane remissions a pena et culpa, so many good ghostly fathers, so many religious orders, so much holy water for spirites, and Saint John's gospel, with the five woundes and the length of our Lord for drowning, is nowe decayed for ever!*

'Alas, alas, who shall pray for us now? Who shall singe dirges and trentoles? Who shal spoile us of our sinnes? Who shal give us ashes and palmes? Who shal blesse us with a spade, and singe us out of purgatory when we are deade? If we lacke these things we are like to want heaven. These are the desperate complaints of the wicked."

Verse 12. **The merchandise of gold, and silver, &c.]** The same author, *Bishop Bale*, who was once a priest of the Romish Church, goes on to apply all these things to that Church; and whether the text have this meaning or not, they will show us something of the religious usages of his time, and the *real mockery* of this intolerant and superstitious Church. Speaking in reference to the *Reformation*, and the general light that had been diffused abroad by the word of God, which was then translated into the vulgar tongue, and put into the hands of the people at large, he says:—

"They will pay no more *money* for the housell sippings, bottom blessings; nor for 'seest me and seest me not,' above the head and under of their chalices, which in many places be of fine *gold*. Neyther regarde they to kneele anye more downe, and to kisse their pontificall rings which are of the same metal. They will be no more at coste to have the ayre beaten, and the idols perfumed with their sensers at princypall feastes; to have their crucifixes layde upon horses, or to have them solemply borne aloft in their gaddings abroad; with the religious occupyings of their paxes, cruettes, and other jewels which be of *silver*.

"Neyther passe they greatly to beholde precyous stones any more in their two-horned miters, whan they hollow their churches, give theyr whorische orders, and tryumphantly muster in processions. Nor in costuous pearles in theyr copes perroures, and chysibilles, whan they be in their prelately pompous sacrifices. Men, knowing the worde of God, supposeth that their ornaments of *silk*, wherewith they garnishe their temples and adorne their idolles, is very blasphemous and divillish. They thinke also, that their fayre white rockets of raynes, or fine linnen cloath; their costly gray amices, of calaber and cattes tayles; theyr fresh purple gownes, whan they walke for their pleasures; and their read scarlet frockes, whan they preach lyes in the pulpit, are very superfluous and vayne.

"In their *thynen wood* (whom some men call *algume trees*, some *basill*, some *corall*) may be understande all theyr curious buildings of temples, abbeys, chappels, and chambers; all shrines, images, church stooles, and pews that are well payed for; all banner staves, paternoster scores, and peeces of the holy crosse.

"The *vessels of ivory* comprehendeth all their maundy dyshes, their offering platters, their relique chestes, their god boxes, their drinking horns, their sipping cuppes for the hiccough, their tables

whereupon are charmed their chalises and vestiments; their standiches, their combes, their muske balles, their pomaunder pottes, and their dust boxes, with other toyes.

"The *vessels of precious stone*; which after some interpretours, are of precious stone, or after some are of *most precious wood*; betokeneth their costuous cuppes, or cruses of jasper, jacinct, amel, and fine beral; and their alabaster boxes, wherwith they annointe kinges, confirme children, and minister their holy whorish orders. Their pardon masers, or drinking dishes, as St. Benit's bole, St. Edmond's bole, St. Giles's bole, St. Blythe's bole, and Westminster bole, with such other holy re-liquies.

"Of *brasse*, which containeth latten, copper, alcumine, and other harde metals, are made all their great candlesticks, holy water kettles, lampes, desks, pyllers, butterasses, bosses, bells, and many other thinges more.

"Of strong *yron* are the braunches made that holde up the lightes before their false gods; the tacks that sustayne them for fallinge; the lockes that save them from the robberye of thieves; their fyre pans, bars, and poolyes, with many other straunge ginnes besides.

"With marble most commonlye pave they their temples, and build strong pillers and arches in their great cathedrale churches and monastries; they make thereof also their superalities, their tumbs, and their solemne grave-stones; besides their other buildinges, with free-stone, flint, ragge, and brick, comprehended in the same.

Verse 13. **And cinnamon]** "By the sinamon is ment all maner of costly spyces, wherewith they bury their byshops and founders, lest they shoulde stinke when they translate them agayne to make them saintes for advauntage.

"By the smellynge *odours*, the swete herbes that they strew abroad at theyr dedications and burials; besydes the damaske waters, bawmes, muskes, pomaunder, civet, and other curious confections they yet bestow upon theyr owne precious bodyes.

"The *oyntments* are such oyles as they mingle with rose water, aloes, and spike, with other mery conceits, wherwith they anoynt their holy savours and roods, to make them to sweat, and to smell sweete when they are borne abroad in procession upon their high feastfull dayes.

"*Frankinsence* occupye they ofte as a necessarie thinge in the sensyng of their idols, hallowinge of their paschal, conjuringe of their ploughes; besydes the blessing of their palmes, candles, ashes, and their dead men's graves, with *requiescant in pace*.

"With *wine* syng they theyr masses for money, they housell the people at Easter, they wash their aultar stones upon Maundy Thursday; they fast the holy imber dayes, besydes other banketinges all the whole years, to kepe theyr flesh chaste.

"With *oyle* smere they yonge infantes at baptisme and bishopping; they grease their massmongers, and gere them the mark of madian; they anele their cattell that starveth; and do many other feates els.

"*Fyne floure* is suche a merchandyse of theirs as far exceedeth all other, and was first geven them by Pope Alexander the first, thinkinge Christes institution not sufficient, nor comly in using the common breade in that ministerie. For that ware hath brought them in their plentifull possessions, their lordshippes, fatte benefices, and prebendaries, with innumerable plesures els.

"*Wheat* have thei of their farms, whereof they make pardon bread and cakes, to draw people to devocion towards them.

"*Cattell* receive they, offered unto their idols by the idiots of the countries, for recover of sondrye diseases; besides that they have of their tithes.

"*Shepe* have they, sometime of their owne pastures, sometime of begginge, sometime of bequestes for the dead, to cry them out of their feareful purgatorye, when they be asleepe at midnight.

"Great *horses* have they, for mortuaries, for offices, for favers, giftes, and rewardes, to be good lords unto them, that they may holde still their farmes, and to have saunder waspe their sonne and their heire a priest; or to admitte him unto a manerly benefice, that he may be called 'maister person,' and suche lyke.

"*Charets* have they also, or *horse litters*, of al manner of sorts, specially at Rome, with foote men runninge on both sides of them, to make roome for the holy fathers. Of whom some carye their owne precious bodyes, some theyr treasure, some the blessed sacramente, some holy reliques and ornamentes, some their whores, and some their bastardes. The *bodyes of men* must needes be judged to be at their pleasure, so long as Christen provinces be tributaries unto them, princes obediente, people subject, and their lawes at their commaundement to slea and to kyll. And to make this good, who hath not in England payd his Peter peny, sometime to acknowledge hymselfe a *bondman* of theirs, at the receit of his yerely howsell? Furthermore yet, besides their market muster of monkes, fryars, and priestes, they have certayne *bondmen*, of whom some they sell to the *Venicians*, some to the *Genues*, some to the *Portingales*, and some to the *Turks*, to row in their galleis. And laste of all, to make up their market, least any thing should escape theyr hands, these unmercifull bribers maketh marchaundise of the *soules of men*, to deprive Christe of his whole right, sending many unto hell, but not one unto heaven, (unlesse they maliciously murder them for the truths sake,) and all for mony. After many other sortes els, abuse they these good creatures of God, whom the Holy Ghost heere nameth. Much were it to shew here by the cronicles severally of what Pope they have received authoritye, power, and charge, to utter these wares to advauntage, and how they came firste by the old idolatrous."

Several of the most reputable MSS. versions, and some of the *fathers*, after *cinnamon*, add *καλ αρωμον*, and *amomum*. What this shrub was is not easy to say, though mentioned and partially described by *Pliny* and *Dioscorides*. Some think it was a species of *geranium*; others, the *rose of Jericho*. It was an odoriferous plant supposed to be a native of Assyria; and is thus mentioned by *Virgil*, *Eclog.* iv., ver. 25:—

—————Assyrium vulgo nascetur amomum.

"The Assyrian amomum shall grow in every soil."

This is translated by some *spikenard*; by others *lady's rose*.

**Thyine wood**] The *Thyne* or *Thyin* is said to be a tree whose boughs, leaves, stalks, and fruit, resemble the cypress. It is mentioned by *Homer*, *Odyss*, lib. v., ver. 60; by *Theophrastes*, *Hist. Plant*, v. 5; and by *Pliny*, *Hist. Nat.* lib. xiii. c. 16. How much the different articles mentioned in the 12th and 13th verses were in request among the ancients, and how highly valued, every scholar knows.

**Slaves**] σωμάτων· *The bodies of men*; probably distinguished here from ψυχας, *souls of men*, to express *bondmen* and *freemen*.

Verse 14. **And the fruits that thy soul lusted after.**] και η οπωρα της επιθυμιας της ψυχης σου. As οπωρα signifies *autumn*, any and all kinds of *autumnal fruits* may be signified by the word in the above clause.

**Dainty and goodly**] τα λιπαρα· *Delicacies* for the *table*. τα λαμπρα,, what is *splendid* and *costly* in *apparel*.

Verse 15. **Stand afar off**] See #Re 18:10.

Verse 16. **Clothed in fine linen, and purple, &c.**] The verb περιβαλλεσθαι, which we here translate *clothed*, signifies often *to abound, be enriched, laden with*, and is so used by the best Greek writers; see many examples in *Kypke*. These articles are not to be considered here as *personal ornaments*, but as articles of trade or merchandise, in which this city trafficked.

Verse 17. **Every shipmaster**] Captains of vessels; some think *pilots* are meant, and this is most likely to be the meaning of the original word κυβερνητης. This description appears to be at least partly taken from #Eze 27:26-28.

**And all the company in ships**] και πας επι των πλοιων ο ομιλος· *The crowd or passengers aboard*. But the best MSS, and versions have και πας ο επι τοπον πλεων, *those who sail from place to place*, or such as *stop at particular places* on the coast, without performing the *whole voyage*. This sufficiently marks the traffic on the coast of the Mediterranean Sea. Some might debark (in sailing from Rome) at the island of *Sicily*, others at different ports in *Greece*; some at *Corinth*, others at *Crete*, or the various islands of the *Ægean Sea*; some at *Rhodes, Pamphylia, &c., &c.*; as in those times in which the compass was unknown, every voyage was performed *coastwise*, always keeping, if possible, within sight of the land.

Verse 18. **What city is like unto this great city!**] Viz. in magnitude, power, and luxury.

Verse 19. **They cast dust on their heads]** They showed every sign of the sincerest grief. The lamentation over this great ruined city, #Re 18:9-19, is exceedingly strong and well drawn. Here is no dissembled sorrow; all is real to the mourners, and affecting to the spectators.

Verse 20. **Rejoice over her, thou heaven]** This is grand and sublime; the fall of this bad city was cause of grief to bad men. But as this city was a *persecutor of the godly*, and an *enemy to the works of God*, angels, apostles, and prophets are called to rejoice over her fall.

Verse 21. **Thus with violence shall that great city Babylon be thrown down]** This action is finely and forcibly expressed by the original words: οὕτως ὀρηματι βληθησεται βαβυλων η μεγαλη πολις. The millstone will in falling have not only an accelerated force from the law of gravitation, but that force will be greatly increased by the projectile force impressed upon it by the power of the destroying angel.

**Shall be found no more at all.]** In her government, consequence, or influence. This is true of ancient *Babylon*; we are not certain even of the *place* where it stood. It is also true of *Jerusalem*; her government, consequence, and influence are gone. It is not true of *Rome pagan*; nor, as yet, of *Rome papal*: the latter still exists, and the former is most intimately blended with it; for in her religions service Rome papal has retained her language, and many of her heathen temples has she dedicated to *saints* real or reputed, and incorporated many of her superstitions and absurdities in a professedly *Christian* service. It is true also that many idols are now restored under the names of Christian saints!

Verse 22. **The voice of harpers, &c.]** This seems to indicate not only a total destruction of influence, &c., but also of *being*. It seems as if this city was to be *swallowed up by an earthquake*, or *burnt up by fire from heaven*.

Verse 23. **By thy sorceries]** Political arts, state tricks, counterfeit miracles, and deceptive manoeuvres of every kind. This may be spoken of many great cities of the world, which still continue to flourish!

Verse 24. **In her was found the blood of prophets, &c.]** She was the persecutor and murderer of prophets and of righteous men.

**And of all that were slain upon the earth.]** This refers to her *counsels* and *influence*, exciting other nations and people to persecute and destroy the real followers of God. There is no city to which *all* these things are yet applicable, therefore we may presume that the prophecy remains yet to be fulfilled.

*Bishop Bale*, who applies this, as before, to the Romish Church, has, on #Re 18:22, given some information to the curious *antiquary*.

"But be certaine," says he, "and sure, thou miserable Church, that thou shalt no longer enjoy the commodious pleasures of a free cittye.-The merry noyes of them that play upon *harpes*, *lutes*, and *fidels*; the sweet voice of musicians that sing with *virginals*, *vials*, and *chimes*; the armony of them that *pipe* in *recorders*, *flutes*, and *drums*; and the shirle showt of *trumpets*, *waits*, and *shawmes*, shall

no more be heard in thee to the delight of men. Neyther shall the sweet *organs* containing the melodious noyse of all maner of *instruments* and *byrdes* be plaied upon, nor the great *belles* be rong after that, nor yet the *fresh discant*, *prick-song*, *counter-point*, and *faburden* be called for in thee, which art the very sinagog of Sathan. Thy lascivious armonye, and delectable musique, much provoking the weake hartes of men to meddle in thy abhominable whordom, by the wantonnes of idolatry in that kinde, shall perish with thee for ever. No cunning *artificer*, *carver*, *paynter*, nor *gilder*, *embroderer*, *goldsmith*, nor *silk-worker*; with such other like of what occupacion soever they be, or have bene to thy commodity, shall never more be found so agayne.

"Copes, cruettes, candelstickes, miters, crosses, sensers, crismatoris, corporasses, and chalices, which for thy whorische holines might not sometime be touched, will than for thy sake be abhorred of all men. Never more shall be builded for marchants of thi livery and mark, palaces, temples, abbeys, collages, covents, chauntries, fair houses, and horcherds of plesure. The clapping noise of neyther wyndmil, horsemil, nor watermil, shal any more be heard to the glutenous feeding of thy puffed up porklings, for the maintenaunce of thine idle observacions and ceremonies. For thy mitred marchaunts were sumtimes princes of the earth, whan they reigned in their roialty. Thy shorn shavelinges were lordes over the multitude whan they held their priestly authority over the soules and bodies of men. Yea, and with thy privy legerdemain, with thy juggling castes, with thy craftes and inchauntmentes of thy subtile charmes, were all nacions of the world deceyved."

This is very plain language, and thus on all hands a monstrous system of superstition and idolatry was attacked by our Reformers; and with these unfurbished weapons, directed by the Spirit of the living God, popery was driven from the *throne*, from the *bench*, from the *universities*, and from the *churches* of this favoured kingdom. And by a proper application of Scripture, and by the universal diffusion of the word of God, it may be soon driven from the face of the universe. And when the inventions of men are separated from that Church, and it becomes truly regenerated, (and of this it is highly capable, as, among its monstrous errors and absurdities, it contains all the essential truths of God,) it will become a praise and a glory in the earth. Protestants wish not its *destruction*, but its *reformation*.

Some there may be, who, in their zeal for truth, would pull the whole edifice to pieces; but this is not God's method: he destroys what is evil, and saves what is good. It is *reformation*, not *annihilation*, that this Church needs.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XIX.

*The whole heavenly host give glory to God, because he has judged the great whore, and avenged the blood of his saints, 1-6. The marriage of the Lamb and his bride, 7-9. John offers to worship the angel, but is prevented, 10. Heaven is opened, and Jesus the Word of God appears on a white horse; he and his armies described, 11-16. An angel in the sun invites all the fowls of heaven to come to the supper of the great God, 17, 18. The beast, the false prophet, and the kings of the earth, gather together to make war with him who sits on the white horse; but they are all discomfited, and utterly destroyed, 19-21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XIX.

Verse 1. **I heard a great voice of much people in heaven]** The idolatrous city being destroyed, and the blood of the martyred saints being avenged, there is a universal joy among the redeemed of the Lord, which they commence with the word יהללו יה Hallelu-Yah, *praise ye Jah or Jehovah*; which the *Septuagint*, and St. John from them, put into Greek letters thus: αλληλουια, *Allelou-ia*, a form of praise which the heathens appear to have borrowed from the Jews, as is evident from their *pæans*, or hymns in honour of Apollo, which began and ended with ελελευ ιη, *eleleu ie*; a mere corruption of the Hebrew words. It is worthy of remark that the *Indians of North America* have the same word in their religious worship, and use it in the same sense. "In their places of worship, or *beloved square*, they dance sometimes for a whole night always in a bowing posture, and frequently singing *halleluyah Ye ho wah*; praise ye Yah, Ye ho vah:" probably the true pronunciation of the Hebrew יהוה, which we call *Jehovah*. See Adair's History of the American Indians.

**Salvation]** He is the sole author of *deliverance from sin*; the *glory* of this belongs to him, the *honour* should be ascribed to him, and his *power* is that alone by which it is effected.

Verse 2. **For true and righteous]** His judgments displayed in supporting his followers, and punishing his enemies, are *true*-according to his *predictions*; and *righteous*, being all according to infinite *justice* and *equity*.

Verse 3. **Her smoke rose up]** There was, and shall be, a *continual evidence* of God's judgments executed on this *great whore* or *idolatrous city*; nor shall it ever be restored.

Verse 4. **The four and twenty elders]** The true Church of the Lord Jesus converted from among the Jews. See #Re 4:10; 5:14.

Verse 5. **Praise our God, &c.]** Let all, whether redeemed from among *Jews* or *Gentiles*, give glory to God.

Verse 6. **The voice of a great multitude]** This is the catholic or universal Church of God gathered from among the *Gentiles*.

**The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.]** βασιλευσε κυριος ο θεος ο παντοκρατωρ. Many excellent MSS., most of the *versions*, with *Andreas* and *Arethas*, the two most ancient commentators on this book, add ημων, *our*, after ο θεος· and according to this the text reads emphatically thus: *OUR Lord God, the Almighty, reigneth.* What consolation to every genuine Christian that *HIS Lord and God* is the *Almighty*, and that this *Almighty* never trusts the reins of the government of the universe out of his hands! What therefore has his Church to fear?

Verse 7. **The marriage of the Lamb is come]** The meaning of these figurative expressions appears to be this: After this overthrow of idolatry and superstition, and the discomfiture of antichrist, there will be a more glorious state of Christianity than ever was before.

Verse 8. **Arrayed in fine linen]** A prediction that the Church should become more *pure* in her *doctrines*, more *pious* in her *experience*, and more *righteous* in her *conduct*, than she had ever been from her formation.

*The fine linen* here spoken of is not the *righteousness of Christ imputed to believers*, for it is here called *the righteousness of the saints*-that which the grace and Spirit of Christ has wrought in them.

Verse 9. **Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage supper]** This is an evident allusion to the *marriage of the king's son*, #Mt 22:2, &c., where the incarnation of our Lord, and the calling of Jews and Gentiles, are particularly pointed out. See the notes there. *Blessed* are all they who hear the Gospel, and are thus invited to lay hold on everlasting life.

Verse 10. **I fell at his feet to worship him.]** Great as this angel was, St. John could not mistake him either for Jesus Christ, or for God the Father; nor was his prostration intended as an act of *religious worship*. It was merely an act of that sort of reverence which any *Asiatic* would pay to a *superior*. His mistake was, the considering that he was under obligation to the angel for the information which he had now received. This mistake the angel very properly corrects, showing him that it was from God alone this intelligence came, and that to him alone the praise was due.

**I am thy fellow servant]** No higher in dignity than thyself; employed by the same God, on the same errand, and with the same testimony; and therefore not entitled to thy prostration: *worship God*-prostrate thyself to him, and to him give thanks.

**The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.]** As this is a *reason* given by the angel why he should not worship him, the meaning must be this: I, who have received this *spirit of prophecy*, am not superior to thee who hast received the *testimony of Christ*, to preach him among the Gentiles; for the *commission* containing such a testimony is equal to the *gift of the spirit of prophecy*. Or, the spirit of prophecy is a general testimony concerning Jesus, for he is the *scope* and *design* of the whole *Scripture*; *to him gave all the prophets witness*. Take Jesus, his grace, Spirit, and religion out of the Bible, and it has neither *scope*, *design*, *object*, nor *end*.

Verse 11. **A white horse]** This is an exhibition of the triumph of Christ after the destruction of his enemies. The white horse is the emblem of this, and FAITHFUL and TRUE are characters of Christ. See #Re 3:14.

**In righteousness he doth judge and make war.]** The wars which *he* wages are from no principle of ambition, lust of power, or extension of conquest and dominion; they are *righteous* in their *principle* and in their *object*. And this is perhaps what no earthly potentate could ever say.

Verse 12. **His eyes were as a flame of fire]** To denote the piercing and all-penetrating nature of his wisdom.

**On his head were many crowns]** To denote the multitude of his conquests, and the extent of his dominion.

**A name written, that no man knew]** This is a reference to what the rabbins call the *shem hammephorash*, or *tetragrammaton*, יהוה YHVH; or what we call *Jehovah*. This name the Jews never attempt to pronounce: when they meet with it in the Bible, they read אדני *Adonai* for it; but, to a man, they all declare that *no man can pronounce it*; and that the *true pronunciation has been lost*, at least since the Babylonish captivity; and that *God alone knows its true interpretation and pronunciation*. This, therefore, is *the name which no man knew but he himself*.

Verse 13. **He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood]** To show that he was just come from recent slaughter. The description is taken from #Isa 63:2, 3, where Judas Maccabæus, or some other conqueror, is described.

**The Word of God.]** Written in the Targum, and in other Jewish writings, מֵימְרָא דֵי יְיָ *meimera daiya*, "the word of Jehovah;" by which they always mean a *person*, and not a *word spoken*. See Clarke's notes on "Joh 1:1", &c.

Verse 14. **The armies which were in heaven]** Angels and saints over whom Jesus Christ is *Captain*,

**Clothed in fine linen]** All holy, pure, and righteous.

Verse 15. **Out of his mouth goeth a sharp sword]** See Clarke on "Re 1:16". This appears to mean the word of the Gospel, by which his enemies are confounded, and his friends supported and comforted.

**With a rod of iron]** He shall execute the severest judgment on the opposers of his truth.

**He treaded the winepress]** As the grapes are trodden to express the juice, so his enemies shall be bruised and beaten, so that their life's blood shall be poured out.

Verse 16. **On his vesture and on his thigh a name written]** Dr. Dodd has well observed on this passage, that "it appears to have been an ancient custom among several nations to adorn the images of their deities, princes, victors at public games, and other eminent persons, with *inscriptions*, expressing either the character of the persons, their names, or some other circumstance which might contribute to their honour; and to that custom the description here given of Christ may possibly have some allusion.

"There are several such images yet extant, with an inscription written either on the *garment*, or on one of the *thighs*, or on that part of the garment which was over the thigh; and probably this is the meaning of the apostle. And as these inscriptions are placed on the *upper garment*, Grotius seems very justly to have explained the words *ἐπι το μαιτιον*, by *his imperial robe*, that his power in this victory might be conspicuous to all. But as a farther confirmation of this sense of the passage it may not be improper here to describe briefly several remarkable figures of this sort, which are still extant." This description I shall give from my own examination.

1. HERODOTUS, *Euterpe*, lib. ii. p. 127, edit. *Gale*, speaking of the actions of *Sesostris*, and of the images he set up in the countries which he conquered, has the following words: *εἰσι περι ἰωνιῆν δυο τυποὶ ἐν πετρῆσι ἐγκεκολλημένοι τουτου του ἀνδρος, κ. τ. λ.* "Two images likewise of this man are seen in Ionia, on the way that leads from Ephesus to Phocæa, and from Sardis to Smyrna. The figure is five palms in height; in his right hand he holds a *dart*, in his left a *bow*, armed after the manner of the Egyptians and Ethiopians. On a line drawn across the breast, from one shoulder to the other, are these words, written in Egyptian hieroglyphics: *εγο τηδε την χωρην ωμοισι τοισι εμοισι ἐκτησαμην* 'I obtained this country by these my shoulders;' i.e., by my own power.

2. In the *Etruria Regalis* of *Dempster*, in the appendix at the end of vol. ii., there is a beautiful female figure of brass, about twelve inches high, the hair gracefully plaited, and the head adorned with a diadem. She has a *tunic* without sleeves, and over that a sort of *pallium*. On the outside of the *right thigh*, close to the tunic, and probably *on* it, in the original, is an *inscription* in Etruscan characters. What these import I cannot say. *Dempster* has given a general explanation of the *image* in the appendix to the above volume, p. 108. The plate itself is the eighty-third of the work.

3. There are two other images found in the same author, vol. i., p. 91, tab. xxiv.; the first is *naked*, with the exception of a short loose jupe, or petticoat, which goes round the loins, and over the left arm. On the *left thigh* of this image there is an *inscription* in Etruscan characters. The second has a similar jupe, but much longer, which extends to the calf of the leg, and is supported over the bended left arm. Over the *right thigh*, on this vesture, there is an Etruscan *inscription* in two lines.

4. MONTFAUCON, *Antiquite Expliquee*, vol. iii., part 2, p. 268, has introduced an account of two fine images, which are represented tab. CLVII. The first is a warrior entirely naked, except a collar, one bracelet, and boots. On his *left thigh*, extending from the groin to a little below the knee, is an *inscription* in very ancient Etruscan characters, in two lines, but the import is unknown.

The second is a small figure of brass, about six inches long, with a loose tunic, which is suspended from the left shoulder down to the calf of the legs. On this tunic, *over the left thigh*, is an *inscription* (perhaps) in very ancient *Latin* characters, but in the *Etruscan* language, as the learned author conjectures. It is in one line, but what it means is equally unknown.

5. In the same work, p. 269, tab. CLVIII., another Etruscan *warrior* is represented entirely naked; on the *left thigh* is the following words in uncial Greek letters, *καφισοδωρος*, and on the *right thigh*, *αισχλαμιου*, i.e., "Kaphisodorus, the son of Aischlamius." All these inscriptions are written *longitudinally* on the thigh.

6. GRUTER, vol. iii., p. DCCCCLXXXIX, sub. tit. *Affectus Servorum et Libertinorum inter se, et in suos*, gives us the figure of a naked warrior, with his left hand on an axe, the end of whose helve rests on the ground, with the following *inscription* on the inside of his *left thigh*, longitudinally written, as in all other cases:—

A. POBLICIUS. D. L. ANTIOC.

TI. BARBIUS. Q. P. L. TIBER.

7. The *rabbins* say, that "God gave to the Israelites a *sword*, on which the *ineffable name* יהוה *Yehovah* was *inscribed*; and as long as they held that sword the angel of death had no power over them." *Shemoth Rabba*, sec. 51, fol. 143, 2. *Bemidbar Rabba*, sec. 12, fol. 214, 2.

In the latter tract, sec. 16, fol. 232, 3, and in *Rab. Tanchum*, fol. 66, mention is made of the *guardian angels* of the Israelites, who were *clothed with purple vestments*, on which was inscribed שם המפפורש *shem hammephorash*, the ineffable name. See more in *Schoettgen*.

8. But what comes nearer to the point, in reference to the *title* given here to Christ, is what is related of *Sesostris* by DIODORUS *Siculus*, lib. i. c. 55, p. 166, edit. *Bipont*, of whom he says: "Having pushed his conquests as far as Thrace, he erected pillars, on which were the following words in Egyptian hieroglyphics: τηνδε την χωραν οπλοις κατεστρεψατο τοις εαυτου βασιλευς βασιλεων, και δεσποτης δεσποτων, σεσοωσις." *This province, Sesosisis, (Sesostris,) KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS, conquered by his own arms.* This inscription is conceived almost in the *words* of St. John. Now the Greek historian did not *borrow* the words from the apostle, as he died in the reign of Augustus, about the time of our Lord's incarnation. This cannot be the same inscription mentioned above by *Herodotus*, the one being in Ionia, the other in Thrace: but as he erected several of those pillars or images, probably a nearly similar inscription was found on each.

9. This custom seems to have been common among the ancient *Egyptians*. Inscriptions are frequently found on the images of *Isis, Osiris, Anubis, &c.*, at the *feet*, on the *head*, on the *back*, on the *girdle*, &c., &c. Eight of those ancient images in my own collection abound with these inscriptions.

1. *Osiris*, four inches and a quarter high, standing on a thrones all covered over with *hieroglyphics* exquisitely engraved.

2. *Anubis*, six inches high, with a tiara, on the back of which is cut ΑΕΓΟΡΝΥΘ, in uncial Greek characters.

3. The *Cercopithecus*, seven inches long, sitting on a pedestal, and at his feet, in the same characters, ΧΑΔΕΟ.

4. An *Isis*, about eight inches high, on her back ΑΡΥΓΟ.

5. Ditto, seven inches, beautifully cut, standing, holding a serpent in her left hand, and at her feet ΕΤΑΠΥΓΙ.

6. Ditto, five inches and a quarter, round whose girdle is ΠΙΕΥΧΥΔΙ; but part of this inscription appears to be hidden under her-arms, which are extended by her side.

7. Ditto, five inches high, hooded, with a loose stola, down the *back* of which are seven lines of Greek uncial characters, but nearly obliterated.

8. Ditto, four inches high, with a *girdle* going round the back immediately under the arms, the front of which is hidden under a sort of a stomacher; on the part that appears are these characters, XENAA. These may be all intended as a kind of *abrasaxas* or tutelary deities; and I give this notice of them, and the inscriptions upon them, partly in illustration of the text, and partly to engage my learned and antiquarian readers in attempts to decipher them. I would have given the *Etruscan* characters on the other images described above, but have no method of imitating them except by an engraving.

As these kinds of inscriptions on the *thigh*, the *garments*, and *different parts of the body*, were in use among different nations, to express character, conduct, qualities, and *conquests*, we may rest assured that to them St. John alludes when he represents our sovereign Lord with an *inscription upon his vesture* and *upon his thigh*; and had we not found it a custom among other nations, we should have been at a loss to account for its introduction and meaning here.

Verse 17. **An angel standing in the sun**] Exceedingly luminous; every part of him emitting rays of light. From this representation, Milton has taken his description of *Uriel*, the angel of the sun. *Paradise Lost*, b. iii. l. 648:—

"The Archangel Uriel, one of the *seven*  
Who, in God's presence, nearest to his throne  
Stands ready at command and are his eyes  
That run through all the heavens, or down to the earth  
Bears his swift errands over moist and dry,  
Over sea and land."

**All the fowls that fly**] The carcasses of God's enemies shall be food for all the fowls of heaven. This is according to a Jewish tradition, *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 114, n. 25: "In the time when God shall execute vengeance for the people of Israel, he shall feed all the beasts of the earth for twelve months with their flesh and all the fowls for seven years." It is well known that both beasts and birds of prey are accustomed to frequent fields of battle, and live upon the slain.

Verse 18. **That ye may eat the flesh of kings**] There shall be a universal destruction; the kings, generals, captains, and all their host, shall be slain.

Verse 19. **I saw the beast**] See the notes on chapters xii., xiii., and xvii. {#Re 12:1-13:18; 17:1-18}

Verse 20. **And the beast was taken, and-the false prophet**] See Clarke's notes on "Re 17:8", &c.

**That worshipped his image.]** The *beast* has been represented as the *Latin empire*; the *image of the beast*, the *popes of Rome*; and the *false prophet*, the *papal clergy*.

**Were cast alive into a lake of fire]** Were discomfited when *alive*-in the zenith of their power, and destroyed with an utter destruction.

Verse 21. **With the sword of him that sat upon the horse]** He who sat on the white horse is Christ; and his *sword* is his *word*-the unadulterated *Gospel*.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XX.

*An angel binds Satan a thousand years, and shuts him up in the bottomless pit, 1-3. They who were beheaded for the testimony of Jesus, who have part in the first resurrection, and shall reign with Christ a thousand years, 4-6. When the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, shall go forth and deceive the nations, and shall gather Gog and Magog from the four corners of the earth, 7, 8. These shall besiege the holy city; but fire shall come down from heaven and consume them, and they and the devil be cast into a lake of fire, 9, 10. The great white throne, and the dead, small and great, standing before God, and all judged according to their works, 11, 12. The sea, death, and hades, give up their dead, and are destroyed; and all not found in the book of life are cast into the lake of fire, 13-15.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XX.

Verse 1. **An angel came down from heaven]** One of the executors of the Divine justice, who receives criminals, and keeps them in prison, and delivers them up only to be tried and executed.

The *key* of the prison and the *chain* show who he is; and as the *chain* was *great*, it shows that the culprit was impeached of no ordinary crimes.

Verse 2. **The dragon]** See Clarke's notes on "Re 12:9".

**That old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan]** He who is called the *old serpent* is the DEVIL-the *calumniator*, and SATAN-the *opposer*. He who supposes that the term *old serpent* here plainly proves that the creature that tempted our first parents was actually a *snake*, must enjoy his opinion; and those who can receive such a saying, why let them receive it. *Selah*.

**A thousand years]** In what this *binding* of Satan consists, who can tell? How many visions have been seen on this subject both in ancient and modern times! This, and what is said #Re 20:3-5, no doubt refers to a time in which the influence of Satan will be greatly restrained, and the true Church of God enjoy great prosperity, which shall endure for a long time. But it is not likely that the number, a thousand years, is to be taken literally here, and *year* symbolically and figuratively in all the book beside. The doctrine of the *millennium*, or of the saints reigning on earth a thousand years, with Christ for their head, has been illustrated and defended by many Christian writers, both among the ancients and moderns. Were I to give a collection of the conceits of the primitive fathers on this subject, my readers would have little reason to applaud my pains. It has long been the idle expectation of many persons that the millennium, in *their* sense, was at hand; and its commencement has been expected in every century since the Christian era. It has been fixed for several different years, during the short period of my own life! I believed those predictions to be vain, and I have lived to see them such. Yet there is no doubt that the earth is in a state of progressive moral improvement; and that the light of true religion is shining more copiously everywhere, and will shine more and more to the perfect day. But *when* the religion of Christ will be at its meridian of light and heat, we know not. In each believer this may speedily take place; but probably no such time shall ever appear,

in which evil shall be wholly banished from the earth, till after the day of judgment, when the earth having been burnt up, a new heaven and a new earth shall be produced out of the ruins of the old, by the mighty power of God: righteousness alone shall dwell in them. The phraseology of the apostle here seems partly taken from the ancient prophets, and partly rabbinical; and it is from the Jewish use of those terms that we are to look for their interpretation.

Verse 3. **He should deceive the nations no more]** Be unable to blind men with superstition and idolatry as he had formerly done.

Verse 4. **I saw thrones]** Christianity established in the earth, the kings and governors being all Christians.

**Reigned with Christ a thousand years.]** I am satisfied that this period should not be taken *literally*. It may signify that there shall be a long and undisturbed state of Christianity; and so universally shall the Gospel spirit prevail, that it will appear as if Christ reigned upon earth; which will in effect be the case, because his Spirit shall rule in the hearts of men; and in this time the martyrs are represented as living again; their testimony being revived, and the truth for which they died, and which was confirmed by their blood, being now everywhere prevalent. As to the term *thousand years*, it is a mystic number among the Jews. *Midrash Tillin*, in **#Ps 90:15**, *Make us glad according to the days wherein thou hast afflicted us*, adds, "by Babylon, Greece, and the Romans; and in the days of the Messiah. How many are the days of the Messiah? Rab. *Elieser*, the son of R. Jose, of Galilee, said, The days of the Messiah are a *thousand years*."

*Sanhedrin*, fol. 92, 1, cited by the *Aruch*, under the word קִרְיָאָה says: "There is a tradition in the house of Elias, that the righteous, whom the holy blessed God shall raise from the dead, shall not return again to the dust; but for the space of a *thousand years*, in which the holy blessed God shall renew the world, they shall have wings like the wings of eagles, and shall fly above the waters." It appears therefore that this phraseology is purely rabbinical. Both the Greeks and Latins have the same form of speech in speaking on the state of the righteous and wicked after death. There is something like this in the *Republic of Plato*, book x., p. 322, edit. Bip., where, speaking of *Erus*, the son of *Armenius*, who came to life after having been dead twelve days, and who described the states of departed souls, asserting "that some were obliged to make a long peregrination under the earth before they arose to a state of happiness, εἶναι δὲ τὴν πορείαν χίλιετη, for it was a journey of a *thousand years*," he adds, "that, as the life of man is rated at a hundred years, those who have been wicked suffer in the other world a *ten-fold* punishment, and therefore their punishment lasts a *thousand years*."

A similar doctrine prevailed among the Romans; whether they borrowed it from the Greeks, or from the rabbinical Jews, we cannot tell.

Thus *Virgil*, speaking of the punishment of the wicked in the infernal regions, says:—

Has omnes, ubi MILLE rotam volvere per annos,  
Lethæum ad fluvium Deus evocat agmine magno:  
Scilicet immemores supera ut convexa revisant,  
Rursus et incipiant in corpora velle reverti  
ÆN., lib. vi., 748.

"But when a *thousand rolling years* are past,  
So long their dreary punishment shall last,  
Whole droves of spirits, by the driving god,  
Are led to drink the deep Lethean flood  
In large, forgetful draughts, to sleep the cares  
Of their past labours and their irksome years;  
That, unremembering of its former pain,  
The soul may clothe itself with flesh again."

How the apostle applies this general tradition, or in what sense he may use it, who can tell?

Verse 5. **The rest of the dead lived not again]** It is generally supposed from these passages that all who have been *martyred* for the truth of God shall be raised a thousand years before the other dead, and reign on earth with Christ during that time, after which the dead in general shall be raised; but this also is very doubtful.

Verse 6. **Blessed]** μακαριος; Happy. *And holy*; he *was* holy, and therefore he suffered for the testimony of Jesus in the time when nothing but *holiness* was called to such a trial.

**The first resurrection]** Supposed to be that of the *martyrs*, mentioned above.

**The second death]** Punishment in the eternal world; such is the acceptance of the phrase among the ancient Jews.

**Hath no power]** ουκ εχει εξουσιαν· *Hath no authority-no dominion* over him. This is also a rabbinical mode of speech. In *Erubin*, fol. 19, 1; *Chagiga*, fol. 27, 1: "Res Lakish said, The *fire of hell* hath *no power* over an Israelite who sins. Rab. Elieser says; The *fire of hell* hath *no power* over the disciples of the wise men."

Verse 7. **Satan shall be loosed]** How can this bear any kind of *literal* interpretation? Satan is bound a thousand years, and the earth is in peace; righteousness flourishes, and Jesus Christ alone reigns. This state of things may continue for ever if the imprisonment of Satan be *continued*. Satan, however, is loosed at the end of the thousand years, and goes out and deceives the nations, and peace is banished from the face of the earth, and a most dreadful war takes place, &c., &c. These can be only symbolical representations, utterly incapable of the sense generally put upon them.

Verse 8. **Gog and Magog]** This seems to be almost literally taken from the *Jerusalem Targum*, and that of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, on #Nu 11:26. I shall give the words at length: "And there were two men left in the camp, the name of the one was Eldad, the name of the other was Medad, and on them

the spirit of prophecy rested. Eldad prophesied and said, 'Behold, Moses the prophet, the scribe of Israel, shall be taken from this world; and Joshua the son of Nun, captain of the host, shall succeed him.' Medad prophesied and said, 'Behold quails shall arise out of the sea, and be a stumbling block to Israel.' Then they both prophesied together, and said, 'In the very end of time Gog and Magog and their army shall come up against Jerusalem, and they shall fall by the hand of the King Messiah; and for seven whole years shall the children of Israel light their fires with the wood of their warlike engines, and they shall not go to the wood nor cut down any tree.'" In the Targum of *Jonathan ben Uzziel*, on the same place, the same account is given; only the latter part, that is, the conjoint prophecy of Eldad and Medad, is given more *circumstantially*, thus: "And they both prophesied together, and said, 'Behold, a king shall come up from the land of Magog in the last days, and shall gather the kings together, and leaders clothed with armour, and all people shall obey them; and they shall wage war in the land of Israel against the children of the captivity, but the hour of lamentation has been long prepared for them, for they shall be slain by the *flame of fire which shall proceed from under the throne of glory*, and their dead carcasses shall fall on the mountains of the land of Israel; and all the wild beasts of the field, and the wild fowl of heaven, shall come and devour their carcasses; and afterwards *all the dead of Israel shall rise again* to life, and shall enjoy the delights prepared for them from the beginning, and shall receive the reward of their worlds.'"

This account seems most evidently to have been copied by St. John, but how he intended it to be applied is a question too difficult to be solved by the skill of man; yet both the account in the rabbins and in St. John is founded on Ezekiel, **#Eze 38:1-39:29**. The rabbinical writings are full of accounts concerning *Gog* and *Magog*, of which *Wetstein* has made a pretty large collection in his notes on this place. Under these names the enemies of God's truth are generally intended.

Verse 9. **The beloved city**] Primarily, Jerusalem, typically, the Christian Church.

Verse 10. **And the devil-was cast onto the lake**] Before Satan was *bound*, that is, his power was curtailed and restrained; now, he is *cast into the lake of fire*, his power being *totally* taken away.

Verse 11. **A great white throne**] Refulgent with glorious majesty.

**Him that sat on it**] The indescribable Jehovah.

**From whose face the earth and the heaven fled away**] Even the brightness of his countenance dissolved the universe, and annihilated the laws by which it was governed. This is a very majestic figure, and finely expressed.

**There was found no place for them.**] The glorious majesty of God filling all things, and being all in all.

Verse 12. **The dead, small and great**] All ranks, degrees, and conditions of men. This description seems to refer to **#Da 7:9, 10**.

**And the books were opened**] See **#Da 12:1**. "Rab. Jehuda said: All the actions of men, whether good or bad, *are written in a book*, and of all they shall give account."-*Sohar* Gen., fol. 79, col. 298.

"How careful should men be to shun vice, and to act uprightly before the holy blessed God, seeing there are so many which go throughout the earth, see the works of men, testify of them, and *write them in a book!*"-Ibid., fol. 105, col. 417.

"In the first day of the new year the holy blessed God sits that he may judge the world; and all men, without exception, give an account of themselves; and *the books of the living and the dead are opened.*" *Sohar Chadash*, fol. 19, 1.

The books mentioned here were the books of the *living* and the *dead*, or the *book of life* and the *book of death*: that is, the account of the good and evil actions of men; the former leading to *life*, the latter to *death*. St. John evidently alludes here to **#Da 7:10**, on which the rabbinical account of the books appears to be founded. The expressions are *figurative* in both.

**According to their works.]** And according to their *faith* also, for their works would be the proof whether their *faith* were *true* or *false*; but faith exclusively could be no rule in such a procedure.

Verse 13. **The sea gave up the dead]** Those who had been drowned in it, and those millions slain in naval contests, who had no other grave.

**And death]** All who died by any kind of *disease*. Death is here *personified*, and represented as a keeper of defunct human beings; probably no more than *earth* or the *grave* is meant, as properly belonging to the empire of death.

**And hell]** *Ἅιδης*, *Hades*, the place of separate spirits. The *sea* and *death* have the *bodies* of all human beings; *hades* has their *spirits*. That they may be judged, and punished or rewarded according to their works, their bodies and souls must be reunited; *hades*, therefore, gives up the *spirits*; and the *sea* and the *earth* give up the *bodies*.

Verse 14. **And death and hell were cast into the lake]** Death himself is now abolished, and the *place* for separate spirits no longer needful. All dead bodies and separated souls being rejoined, and no more separation of bodies and souls by death to take place, consequently the existence of these things is no farther necessary.

**This is the second death.]** The *first death* consisted in the separation of the soul from the body for a season; the second death in the separation of body and soul from God for ever. The first death is that from which there may be a resurrection; the second death is that from which there can be no recovery. By the first the *body* is *destroyed* during *time*; by the second, *body* and *soul* are *destroyed* through *eternity*.

Verse 15. **Written in the book of life]** Only those who had continued faithful unto death were taken to heaven. All whose names were not found in the public registers, who either were not citizens, or whose names had been *erased* from those registers because of crimes against the state, could claim none of those emoluments or privileges which belong to the citizens; so those who either did not belong to the new and spiritual Jerusalem, or who had forfeited their rights and privileges by sin, and had died in that state, *were cast into the lake of fire*.

THIS is the way in which God, at the day of judgment, will proceed with sinners and apostates. Reader, see that thy name be written in the sacred register; and, if written in, see that it never be blotted out.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XXI.

*The new heaven and the new earth, 1. The new Jerusalem, 2. God dwells with men; the happy state of his followers, 3-7. The wretched state of the ungodly, 8. An angel shows John the holy city, the New Jerusalem, 9, 10. Her light, wall, gates, and foundations, described, 11-21. God and the Lamb are the temple and light of it, 22, 23. The nations and kings of the earth bring their glory and honour to it; the gates shall never be shut, nor shall any defilement enter into it, 24-27.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XXI.

Verse 1. **A new heaven and a new earth]** See the notes on #2Pe 3:13: The ancient Jews believed that God would renew the heavens and the earth at the end of seven thousand years. The general supposition they founded on #Isa 65:17.

**There was no more sea.]** The *sea* no more appeared than did the first *heaven* and *earth*. All was made *new*; and probably the new sea occupied a different position and was differently distributed, from that of the old sea.

However, with respect to these subjects as they stand in this most figurative book, I must express myself in the words of Calmet: *Vouloir dire quels seront ce nouveau ciel, et cette nouvelle terre, quels seront leurs ornemens et leur qualite, c'est a mon avis la plus grande de toutes les presumptions. En general, ces manieres de parler marquent de tres grands changemens dans l'univers.* "To pretend to say what is meant by this new heaven and new earth, and what are their ornaments and qualities, is in my opinion the greatest of all presumptions. In general these figures of speech point out great alternations in the universe."

Verse 2. **And I John]** The writer of this book; whether the evangelist and apostle, or John the Ephesian presbyter, has been long doubted in the Church.

**New Jerusalem]** See Clarke's notes on #Ga 4:24-27. This doubtless means the Christian Church in a state of great prosperity and purity; but some think eternal blessedness is intended.

**Coming down from God]** It is a maxim of the ancient Jews that both the tabernacle, and the temple, and Jerusalem itself, came down from heaven. And in *Midrash Hanaalem, Sohar* Gen. fol. 69, col. 271, Rab. Jeremias said, "The holy blessed God shall renew the world, and build Jerusalem, and shall cause it to descend from heaven." Their opinion is, that there is a spiritual temple, a spiritual tabernacle, and a spiritual Jerusalem; and that none of *these* can be destroyed, because they subsist in their spiritual representatives. See *Schoettgen*.

Verse 3. **The tabernacle of God is with men]** God, in the most especial manner, dwells among his followers, diffusing his light and life everywhere.

Verse 4. **There shall be no more death]** Because there shall be a general resurrection. And this is the inference which St Paul makes from his doctrine of a general resurrection, #1Co 15:26, where he says, "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." But death cannot be *destroyed* by there being simply no farther death; death can only be *destroyed* and *annihilated* by a *general resurrection*; if there be no general resurrection, it is most evident that death will still retain his empire. Therefore, the fact that *there shall be no more death* assures the fact that there shall be a *general resurrection*; and this also is a proof that, after the resurrection, *there shall be no more death*. See the whole of the note on "1Co 15:27".

Verse 5. **Behold, I make all things new.]** As the creation of the world at the beginning was the work of God alone, so this new creation.

**These words are true and faithful.]** *Truth* refers to the *promise* of these changes; *faithfulness*, to the *fulfilment* of these promises.

Verse 6. **It is done.]** All is determined, and shall be fulfilled in due time. The great drama is finished, and what was intended is now completed; referring to the period alluded to by the angel.

**I am Alpha and Omega]** See Clarke on "Re 1:8".

**The fountain of the water of life]** See on #Joh 4:10, 14; 7:37, &c.

The rabbins consider *the fountain of the world to come* as one of the particular blessings of a future state. In *Sanhedrim*, *Aboth R. Nathan*, c. 31, it is said, "He will show them the excellency of the *fountain of the future world*, that they may accurately see and consider, and say, Wo to us! what good have we lost! and our race is cut off from the face of the earth."

Verse 7. **Inherit all things]** Here he had no inheritance; there he shall inherit the kingdom of heaven, and be with God and Christ, and have every possible degree of blessedness.

Verse 8. **But the fearful]** δειλοῖς: Those who, for *fear* of losing *life* or their *property*, either refused to receive the Christian religion, though convinced of its truth and importance; or, having received it, in times of persecution fell away, not being willing to risk their lives.

**And unbelieving]** Those who resist against full evidence. *And sinners*, καὶ ἀμαρτωλοῖς, is added here by about thirty excellent MSS., and is found in the *Syrian*, *Arabic*, some of the *Slavonic*, and in *Andreas* and *Arethas*. On this evidence Griesbach has admitted it into the text.

**The abominable]** ἐβδελυγμένοις: Those who are polluted with unnatural lust.

**And murderers]** φονεῦσι: Those who take away the life of man for any cause but the murder of another, and those who hate a brother in their heart.

**And whoremongers]** πορνοῖς: Adulterers, fornicators, whores, prostitutes, and rakes of every description.

**Sorcerers]** *φαρμακοις*· Persons who, by *drugs, philtres, fumigations, &c.*, pretend to produce supernatural effects, chiefly by spiritual agency.

**Idolaters]** *ειδωλολατραις*· Those who offer any kind of worship or religious reverence to any thing but God. All *image worshippers* are idolaters in *every sense* of the word.

**And all liars]** *και πασι τοις ψευδεσι*· Every one who speaks contrary to the truth when he knows the truth, and even he who speaks the truth with the *intention to deceive*; i.e., to persuade a person that a thing is different from what it really is, by telling only a part of the truth, or suppressing some circumstance which would have led the hearer to a different end to the true conclusion. All these shall have their *portion, το μερος*, their *share, what belongs to them*, their right, *in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone. This is the second death*, from which there is no recovery.

Verse 9. **The bride, the Lamb's wife]** The pure and holy Christian Church.

Verse 10. **To a great and high mountain]** That, being *above* this city, he might see every street and lane of it.

**The holy Jerusalem]** See Clarke on "Re 21:2".

Verse 11. **Having the glory of God]** Instead of the sun and moon, it has the splendour of God to enlighten it.

**Unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper stone, clear as crystal.]** Among precious stones there are some even of the same species more valuable than others: for their value is in proportion to their being free from *flaws*, and of a *good water*, i.e., a uniform and brilliant transparency. A *crystal* is perfectly *clear*, the oriental *jasper* is a beautiful *sea-green*. The stone that is here described is represented as a perfectly transparent jasper, being as unclouded as the brightest crystal, and consequently the *most precious* of its species. Nothing can be finer than this description: the light of this city is ever intense, equal, and splendid; but it is tinged with this *green hue*, in order to make it agreeable to the sight. Nothing is so friendly to the eye as *blue* or *green*; all other colours fatigue; and, if very intense, injure the eye. These are the colours of the earth and sky, on which the eye of man is to be constantly fixed. To these colours the structure of the eye is adapted; and the general appearance of the earth and the sky is adapted to this structure.

Verse 12. **Had a wall great and high]** An almighty defense.

**Twelve gates]** A gate for every tribe of Israel, in the vicinity of which gate that tribe dwelt; so that in coming in and going out they did not mix with each other. This description of the city is partly taken from #Eze 48:30-35.

In *Synopsis Sohar*, p. 115, n. 27, it is said: "In the palace of the world to come there are twelve gates, each of which is inscribed with one of the twelve tribes, as that of Reuben, of Simeon, &c.: he, therefore, who is of the tribe of Reuben is received into none of the twelve gates but his own; and so of the rest."

Verse 13. **On the east three gates]** The city is here represented as standing to the four cardinal points of heaven, and presenting one side to each of these points.

Verse 14. **The wall-had twelve foundations]** Probably twelve stones, one of which served for a *foundation* or *threshold* to each gate; and on these were inscribed the names of the twelve apostles, to intimate that it was by the *doctrine of the apostles* that souls enter into the Church, and thence into the New Jerusalem.

Verse 15. **Had a golden reed]** Several excellent MSS. add *μετρον*, a *measure*; he had a *measuring rod made of gold*. This account of measuring the city seems to be copied, with variations, from **#Eze 40:3**, &c.

Verse 16. **The city lieth foursquare]** Each side was equal, consequently the length and breadth were equal; and its *height* is here said to be equal to its length. It is hard to say how this should be understood. It cannot mean the height of the *buildings*, nor of the *walls*, for neither houses nor walls could be twelve thousand furlongs in height; some think this means the distance from the plain country to the place where the city stood. But what need is there of attempting to determine such measures in such a visionary representation? The quadrangular form intimates its perfection and stability, for the *square* figure was a figure of perfection among the Greeks; *αυτη τετραγωνος*, the *square* or *cubical man*, was, with them, a man of *unsullied integrity*, perfect in all things.

Verse 17. **The wall-a hundred and forty and four cubits]** This is *twelve*, the number of the apostles, multiplied by itself: for *twelve times twelve* make *one hundred and forty-four*.

**The measure of a man, that is, of the angel.]** The *cubit*, so called from *cubitus*, the *elbow*, is the measure from the tip of the elbow to the tip of the middle finger, and is generally reckoned at *one foot and a half*, or eighteen inches; though it appears, from some measurements at the pyramids of Egypt, that the *cubit* was, at least in some cases, twenty-one inches.

By the cubit of a man we may here understand the *ordinary cubit*, and that this was the angel's cubit who appeared in the form of a man. Or suppose we understand the *height* of the man as being here intended, and that this was the length of the measuring rod. Now allowing this *height* and rod to be *six feet*, and that this was intended to have some kind of symbolical reference to the *twelve tribes*, mentioned **#Re 21:12**, represented by the twelve gates; and to the *twelve apostles*, represented by the twelve thresholds or foundations; then twenty-four, the number of the tribes and apostles, multiplied by *six*, make precisely the number one hundred and forty-four.

Verse 18. **The building of the wall of it was of jasper]** The oriental jasper is exceedingly hard, and almost indestructible. Pillars made of this stone have lasted some thousands of years, and appear to have suffered scarcely any thing from the tooth of time.

**Pure gold, like unto clear glass.]** Does not this imply that the walls were made of some beautifully bright yellow stone, very highly polished? This description has been most injudiciously applied to *heaven*; and in some public discourses, for the comfort and edification of the pious, we hear of heaven with its *golden walls*, *golden pavements*, *gates of pearl*, &c., &c., not considering that

nothing of this description was ever intended to be literally understood; and that gold and jewels can have no place in the spiritual and eternal world. But do not such descriptions as these tend to keep up a fondness for gold and ornaments? In symbols they are proper; but construed into realities, they are very improper.

The ancient Jews teach that "when Jerusalem and the temple shall be built, they will be all of *precious stones*, and *pearls*, and *sapphire*, and with *every species of jewels*."-*Sepher Rasiel Haggadol*, fol. 24, 1.

The same authors divide paradise into seven parts or houses; the *third* they describe thus: "The third house is built of gold and pure silver, and all *kinds of jewels and pearls*. It is very spacious, and in it all kinds of the good things, either in heaven or earth, are to be found. All kinds of precious things, perfumes, and spiritual virtues, are there planted. In the midst of it is the tree of life, the height of which is five hundred years; (i.e., it is equal in height to the journey which a man might perform in five hundred years,) and under it dwell Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the twelve patriarchs, and all that came out of Egypt, and died in the wilderness. Over these Moses and Aaron preside, and teach them the law," &c.-*Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 13, 4. In the same tract, fol. 182, 1, we find these words: "Know that we have a tradition, that when the Messiah, with the collected captivity, shall come to the land of Israel, in that day the dead in Israel shall rise again; and in that day the fiery walls of the city of Jerusalem shall descend from heaven, and in that day the temple shall be builded of *jewels and pearls*."

Verse 19. **The foundations of the wall]** Does not this mean the foundations or *thresholds* of the *gates*? The gates represented the twelve tribes, **#Re 21:12**; and these foundations or thresholds, the twelve apostles, **#Re 21:14**. There was no entrance into the city but *through those gates*, and none through the gates but *over these thresholds*. The whole of the Mosaic dispensation was the preparation of the Gospel system: without it the Gospel would have no *original*; without the Gospel, it would have no *reference* nor proper *object*. Every part of the *Gospel* necessarily supposes the *law* and the *prophets*. They are the *gates*, it is the *threshold*; without the Gospel no person could enter through those gates. The doctrine of Christ crucified, preached by the apostles, gives a solid foundation to stand on; and we have an *entrance* into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, **#Heb 10:19**, &c. And in reference to this we are said to be *built on the FOUNDATION of the APOSTLES and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone*, **#Eph 2:20**.

**The first foundation was jasper]** A stone very hard, some species of which are of a *sea-green* colour; but it is generally a bright reddish brown.

**The second, sapphire]** This is a stone of a fine blue colour, next in hardness to the diamond.

**The third, a chalcedony]** A genus of the semipellucid gems, of which there are four species:-

1. A *bluish white*; this is the most common sort.

2. The *dull milky veined*; this is of little worth.

3. The *brownish black*; the least beautiful of all.

4. The *yellow and red*; the most beautiful, as it is the most valuable of all. Hitherto this has been found only in the East Indies.

**The fourth, an emerald]** This is of a *bright green* colour without any mixture, and is one of the most beautiful of all the gems, The true oriental emerald as very scarce, and said to be found only in the kingdom of *Cambay*.

Verse 20. **The fifth, sardonyx]** The onyx is an accidental variety of the agate kind; it is of a dark horny colour, in which is a plate of a bluish white, and sometimes of red. When on one or both sides of the white there happens to lie also a plate of a reddish colour, the jewellers call the stone a *sardonyx*.

**The sixth, sardius]** The *sardius, sardel, or sardine stone*, is a precious stone of a *blood-red* colour.

**The seventh, chrysolite]** The *gold stone*. It is of a *dusky green* with a cast of *yellow*. It is a species of the *topaz*.

**The eighth, beryl]** This is a pellucid gem of a *bluish green* colour.

**The ninth, a topaz]** A *pale dead green*, with a mixture of *yellow*. It is considered by the mineralogists as a variety of the *sapphire*.

**The tenth, a chrysoprasus]** A variety of the *chrysolite*, called by some the *yellowish green and cloudy topaz*. It differs from the *chrysolite* only in having a *bluish* hue.

**The eleventh, a jacinth]** A precious stone of a *dead red* colour, with a mixture of *yellow*. It is the same as the hyacenet or cinnamon stone.

**The twelfth, an amethyst.]** A gem generally of a *purple* or *violet* colour, composed of a strong *blue* and deep *red*.

These stones are nearly the same with those on the breastplate of the high priest, #Ex 28:17, &c., and probably were intended to express the meaning of the Hebrew words there used. See the notes on the above passages, where these gems are particularly explained.

Verse 21. **The twelve gates were twelve pearls]** This must be merely figurative, for it is out of all the order of nature to produce a *pearl* large enough to make a *gate* to such an immense city. But St. John may refer to some relations of this nature among his countrymen, who talk much of most prodigious pearls. I shall give an example: "When Rabbi Juchanan (John) once taught that God would provide *jewels* and *pearls, thirty cubits* every way, ten of which should exceed in height *twenty cubits*, and would place them in the gates of Jerusalem, according to what is said #Isa 54:12, *I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles*, one of his disciples ridiculed him,

saying, Where can such be found, since at present there is none so large as a pigeon's egg? Afterwards, being at sea in a ship, he saw the ministering angels cutting gems and pearls; and he asked them for what purpose they were preparing those. They answered, to place them in the gates of Jerusalem. On his return he found Rabbi Juchanan teaching as usual; to whom he said, Explain, master, what I have seen. He answered, Thou knave, unless thou hadst *seen*, thou wouldst not have *believed*; wilt thou not receive the saying of the wise men? At that moment he fixed his eyes upon him, and he was reduced into a heap of bones."-*Bava bathra*, fol. 77, 1, and *Sanhedrim*, fol. 100, 1, page 393. Edit. *Cocceii*. See *Schoettgen*.

Verse 22. **I saw no temple**] There was no need of a *temple* where God and the Lamb were manifestly present.

Verse 23. **No need of the sun**] This is also one of the traditions of the ancient Jews, that "in *the world to come* the Israelites shall have no need of the *sun by day*, nor the *moon by night*."-*Yalcut Rubeni*, fol. 7, 3. God's light shines in this city, and in the Lamb that light is concentrated, and from him everywhere diffused.

Verse 24. **The nations of them which are saved**] This is an illusion to the promise that the Gentiles should bring their riches, glory, and excellence, to the temple at Jerusalem, after it should be rebuilt. See **#Re 21:26**.

Verse 25. **The gates of it shall not be shut at all**] The Christian Church shall ever *stand open* to receive sinners of all sorts, degrees, and nations.

**There shall be no night there.**] No more idolatry, no intellectual darkness; the Scriptures shall be everywhere read, the pure word everywhere preached, and the Spirit of God shall shine and work in every heart.

Verse 26. **The glory and honour of the nations into it.**] Still alluding to the declarations of the prophets, (see the passages in the margin, **#Re 21:24**, &c.,) that the Gentiles would be led to contribute to the riches and glory of the temple by their gifts, &c.

Verse 27. **There shall in nowise enter into it any thing that defileth**] See **#Isa 35:8; 52:1**. Neither an *impure person*-he who turns the grace of God into lasciviousness, *nor a liar*-he that holds and propagates false doctrines.

**But they which are written**] The acknowledged persevering members of the true Church of Christ shall enter into heaven, and only those who are saved from their sins shall have a place in the Church militant.

ALL Christians are bound by their baptism to renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh; to keep God's holy word and commandments; and to walk in the same all the days of their life. This is the generation of them that seek thy face, O God of Jacob! Reader, art thou of this number? Or art thou expecting an eternal glory while living in sin? If so, thou wilt be fearfully disappointed. Presuming on the mercy of God

is as ruinous as despairing of his grace. Where God gives power both to will and to do, the individual should work out his salvation with fear and trembling.

# REVELATION

## CHAPTER XXII.

*The river of the water of life, 1. The tree of life, 2. There is no curse nor darkness in the city of God, 3-5. The angel assures John of the truth of what he has heard, and states that the time of the fulfilment is at hand, 6, 7. He forbids John to worship him, 8, 9. Again he states that the time of the fulfilment of the prophecies of this book is at hand, 10-12. Christ is Alpha and Omega, 13. The blessedness of those who keep his commandments; they enter through the gates into the city, 14. All the unholy are excluded, 15. Christ sent his angel to testify of those things in the Churches, 16. The invitation of the Spirit and the bride, 17. A curse denounced against those who shall either add to or take away from the prophecies of this book, 18, 19. Christ cometh quickly, 20. The apostolical benediction, 21.*

### NOTES ON CHAP. XXII.

Verse 1. **Pure river of water of life]** This is evidently a reference to the *garden of paradise*, and the river by which it was watered; and there is also a reference to the account, **#Eze 47:7-12**. *Water of life*, as we have seen before, generally signifies *spring* or *running water*; here it may signify incessant communications of happiness proceeding from God.

Verse 2. **In the midst of the street of it]** That is, of the city which was described in the preceding chapter.

**The tree of life]** An allusion to **#Ge 2:9**. As this tree of life is stated to be in the *streets* of the city, and *on each side of the river*, *tree* must here be an *enallage* of the singular for the plural number, *trees of life*, or trees which yielded fruit by which life was preserved. The account in Ezekiel is this: "And by the river, upon the bank thereof, on this side and on that side, shall grow all trees for meat, whose leaf shall not fade-it shall bring forth new fruit, according to his months-and the fruit thereof shall be for meat, and the leaf thereof for medicine;" **#Eze 47:12**.

**Twelve manner of fruits]** *καρπους δωδεκα*. *Twelve fruits*; that is, fruit twelve times in the year, as is immediately explained, *yielded her fruit every month*. As this was a great and spacious city, one fountain was not sufficient to provide water for it, therefore a river is mentioned; a great river, by which it was sufficiently watered. Some think that by this *tree of life* the *Gospel* is indicated; the *twelve fruits* are the *twelve apostles*; and the *leaves* are *Gospel doctrines* by which the nations-the *Gentiles*, are healed of the disease of *sin*. But this seems to be a fanciful interpretation.

Verse 3. **No more curse]** Instead of *καταναθεμα*, *curse*, the best MSS., versions, &c., read *καταθεμα* *cursed person*. As there shall be no more sinning against God, so there shall be no more curse of God upon the people; for they shall be all his *servants*, and *serve him*. Our first parents came under the curse by sinning against their Maker in paradise; these shall never apostatize, therefore neither *they* nor the *earth* shall be *cursed*.

Verse 4. **See his face]** Enjoy what is called the beatific vision; and they shall exhibit the fullest evidence that they belong entirely to him, for *his name* shall be *written on their foreheads*.

Verse 5. **There shall be no night there]** See the 23d and 25th verses of the preceding chapter. {#Re 21:23, 25}

Verse 6. **These sayings are faithful and true]** See the preceding chapter, #Re 21:5. From this verse to the end of the chapter is reckoned the *epilogue* of this book. 1. The angel affirms the truth of all that had been *spoken*, #Re 22:6-11. 2. Jesus Christ confirms what has been affirmed, and pledges himself for the fulfilment of all the prophecies contained in it, #Re 22:12-17. 3. John cautions his readers against adding or diminishing, and concludes with the apostolical blessing, #Re 22:18-21.

**The things which must shortly be done.]** There are many sayings in this book which, if taken *literally*, would intimate that the prophecies delivered in the whole of the Apocalypse were to be fulfilled in a *short* time after their delivery to John; and this is a strong support for the scheme of Wetstein, and those who maintain that the prophecies of this book all referred to those times in which the apostle lived, and to the disturbances which then took place, not only among the *Jews*, but in the *Roman* empire. What they all mean, and when and how they are to be fulfilled, God in heaven alone knows.

Verse 8. **I fell down to worship]** I prostrated myself before him as before a superior being, to express my gratitude, and give him thanks for the communications he had made. See on #Re 19:10.

Verse 10. **Seal not the sayings]** Do not lay them up for future generations; they concern the present times; *they must shortly come to pass, for the time is at hand*. See above, #Re 22:6. What concerned the Jews was certainly *at hand*.

Verse 11. **He that is unjust, let him be unjust still]** The time of fulfilment will come so *suddenly* that there will be but little space for repentance and amendment. What is done must be done instantly; and let him that is holy persevere, and hold fast what he has received.

Verse 12. **Behold, I come quickly]** I come to establish my cause, comfort and support my followers, and punish the wicked.

Verse 13. **I am Alpha and Omega]** See Clarke on "Re 1:8"; "Re 1:18".

Verse 14. **Blessed are they that do his commandments]** They are happy who are obedient.

**That they may have right to the tree of life]** The original is much more expressive, *ἡ ἐξουσία αὐτοῦ ἐπὶ τὸ ξύλον τῆς ζωῆς*. *That they may have authority over the tree of life*; an authority founded on *right*, this *right* founded on *obedience* to the commandments of God, and that *obedience* produced by the *grace* of God working in them. Without *grace* no *obedience*; without *obedience* no *authority* to the tree of life; without *authority* no *right*; without *right* no *enjoyment*: God's grace through Christ produces the good, and then rewards it as if all had been our *own*.

Verse 15. **Without are dogs]** All those who are *uncircumcised* in heart. The Jews call all the uncircumcised *dogs*. "Who is a dog? Ans. He who is not circumcised." *Pirkey Elieser*, chap. 29.

**And sorcerers]** See Clarke's note on "Re 21:8".

Verse 16. **I Jesus]** The Maker, the Redeemer, and Judge of all men.

**Have sent mine angel]** An especial messenger from heaven.

**I am the root and the offspring of David]** Christ is the *root* of David as to his *Divine nature*; for from that all the human race sprang, for *he* is the *Creator of all things*, and *without him was nothing made which is made*. And he is the *offspring* of David as to his *human nature*; for that he took of the stock of David, becoming thereby heir to the Jewish throne, and the only heir which then existed; and it is remarkable that the whole regal family terminated in Christ: and as *HE liveth for ever*, he is the alone true David and everlasting King.

**The bright and morning star.]** I am splendour and glory to my kingdom; as the *morning star* ushers in the sun, so shall I usher in the unclouded and eternal glories of the everlasting kingdom.

Verse 17. **The Spirit and the bride]** All the *prophets* and all the *apostles*; the Church of God under the Old Testament, and the Church of Christ under the New.

**Say, Come.]** Invite men to Jesus, that by him they may be saved and prepared for this kingdom.

**Let him that heareth]** Let all who are privileged with *reading* and *hearing* the word of God, join in the general invitation to *sinner*s.

**Him that is athirst]** He who feels his need of salvation, and is longing to drink of the living fountain.

**And whosoever will]** No soul is excluded: Jesus died for every man; every man may be saved; therefore let him who *wills*, who *wishes* for salvation, come and take the *water of life freely*-without money or price!

Verse 18. **If any man shall add]** Shall give any other meaning to these prophecies, or any other application of them than God intends, *he*, though not originally intended, shall have the plagues threatened in this book for his portion.

Verse 19. **If any man shall take away]** If any man shall lessen this meaning, curtail the sense, explain away the spirit and design, of these prophecies, *God shall take away his part out of the book of life*, &c. Thus Jesus Christ warns all those who consider this book to beware of indulging their own conjectures concerning it. I confess that this warning has its own powerful influence upon my mind, and has prevented me from indulging my own conjectures concerning its meaning, or of adopting the conjectures of others. These visions and threatenings are too delicate and awful a subject to trifle with, or even to treat in the most solemn manner, where the meaning is obscure. I

must leave these things to *time* and *event*, the surest interpreters. No jot or tittle of Christ's word shall fall to the ground; all shall have its fulfilment in due time.

This is termed a *revelation*, but it is a revelation of *symbols*; an exhibition of *enigmas*, to which no particular solution is given, and to which God alone can give the solution.

Verse 20. **Surely I come quickly]** This may be truly said to every person in every age; Jesus the Judge is at the door!

**Even so, come, Lord Jesus.]** The wish and desire of the suffering Church, and of all the followers of God, who are longing for the coming of his kingdom.

Verse 21. **The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ]** May the favour and powerful influence of Jesus Christ *be with you all*; you of the seven Churches, and the whole Church of Christ in every part of the earth, and through all the periods of time.

Instead of *παντων υμων*, *you all*, the most excellent MSS. and versions have *παντων των αγγων*, *all the saints*. This reading Griesbach has received into the text as indisputably *genuine*.

**Amen.]** So be it! and so shall it be for ever and ever. The opinion of Dr. Priestley, concerning the *authenticity* of this book, and the *manner* in which it is written, should not be withheld from either the learned or pious reader. "I think it impossible for any intelligent and candid person to peruse this book without being struck in the most forcible manner with the peculiar dignity and sublimity of its composition, superior to that of any other writing whatever; so as to be convinced that, considering the age in which it appeared, none but a person *divinely inspired* could have written it. These prophecies are also written in such a *manner* as to satisfy us that the events announced to us were really foreseen, being described in such a manner as no person writing without that knowledge could have done. This requires such a mixture of *clearness* and *obscurity* as has never yet been imitated by any forgers of prophecy whatever. Forgeries, written of course after the events, have always been *too plain*. It is only in the Scriptures, and especially in the book of *Daniel*, and this of the *Revelation*, that we find this happy mixture of clearness and obscurity in the accounts of future events." -*Notes on Revelation*.

The *Subscriptions* to this book are both few and unimportant:—

The CODEX ALEXANDRINUS has simply-The Revelation of John.

The SYRIAC doubles the *Amen*.

The ÆTHIOPIC.-Here is ended the vision of John, the Apocalypse; Amen: this is, as one might say, the vision which he saw in his life; and it was written by the blessed John, the evangelist of God.

VULGATE and COPTIC nothing.

ANCIENT ARABIC.—By the assistance of our Lord Jesus Christ, the vision of John, the apostle and evangelist, the beloved of the Lord, is finished: this is the Apocalypse which the Lord revealed to him for the service of men. To Him be glory for ever and ever.

HAVING now brought my short notes on this very obscure book to a conclusion, it may be expected that, although I do not adopt any of the theories which have been delivered concerning it, yet I should give the most plausible *scheme* of the ancients or moderns which has come to my knowledge. This I would gladly do if I had any scheme to which I could give a decided preference. However, as I have given in the *preface* the *scheme* of *Professor Wetstein*, it is right that I should, at the *conclusion*, give the scheme of *Mr. Lowman*, which is nearly the same with that of *Bishop Newton*, and which, as far as I can learn, is considered by the most rational divines as being the most consistent and probable.

The scheme of the learned and pious *Bengel* may be found in the late *Rev. John Wesley's* notes on this book; that of *Mr. Lowman*, which now follows, may he found at the end of *Dr. Dodd's* notes.

Among other objections to this and all such schemes, I have this, which to me appears of vital consequence; its dates are too late. I think the book was written *before* the *destruction* of Jerusalem, and not in 95 or 96, the date which I follow in the margin; which date I give, not as my own opinion, but the opinion of others.

See Ancillary Writings for:  
**Mr. Lowman's Scheme and Order of  
The Prophecies of the Apocalypse.**

See Ancillary Writings for:  
**PRINCIPLES WHICH,  
ON CAREFULLY READING AND STUDYING THE SACRED WRITINGS,  
I THINK I FIND UNEQUIVOCALLY REVEALED THERE.**

*Finished correcting for a new edition, Jan. 9, 1832.—A. C.*

**END OF THE NEW TESTAMENT**